

STEP OF LEVI

WEEK 3

LEVI - לוי

“My Joining”

THE WEAKNESS WE ARE STRENGTHENING

Too many believers do not spend time with God regularly every day. They either neglect prayer completely, or simply throw up prayers as they go through their day. Their prayers may be ineffective because they're not praising God or confessing sins, or because of disobedience in their lives.

FOCUS

Strengthening our Prayer Life

KEY VERSE

“Pray without ceasing.”
(1 Thessalonians 5:17)

KEY POINTS

- Prayer is a NON-NEGOTIABLE habit for a follower of Christ.
- Prayer takes us the closest to God's presence.
- Prayer is the way we tap into the POWER of God.
- A believer cannot live without prayer. It is the first spiritual habit that a believer needs to develop.
- There are four different elements of prayer: *Praise, Confession of Sins, Prayer for Others* and *Prayer for Self*.

*The Step of Levi is about establishing a strong Habit of Prayer in a believer's life. Believers should move away from vain repetitions of words or from merely casting up prayers throughout the day, and **instead begin a habit of a purposeful quiet time alone with the Lord each morning before doing anything else.***

ICE BREAKER

“What is the most memorable activity/vacation you did with your family as a child?”

GROUP DISCUSSION

- 1.) *Did that family activity or event make you feel more connected, more “joined” to your family? Why or how did it make you feel more connected?*

The THIRD Step in the Path 2 Strength is the **STEP OF LEVI**.

The name Levi means “Joiner” or “My Joining.” Just as spending quality time with your family joins you closer to them, so does spending quality time with the Father join us closer to Him. Therefore, the Step of Levi is to establish a strong prayer habit in your life.

- 2.) *If you had to guess, what do you feel like the majority of Christians’ prayer lives look like? Do you feel the Church as a whole is doing well with prayer or not?*

- 3.) *How is your personal prayer life right now? If we are honest, what are some of our struggles/obstacles when it comes to prayer?*

For some, prayer is a habit that comes easy. For others, it is a struggle. A habit they are not drawn to engage. Sometimes we doubt its power, and so neglect it. Sometimes, God seems silent, and so we feel dead in our walk.

Nevertheless, prayer is a non-negotiable habit for a follower of Jesus. The Gospels show us that Jesus spent a significant amount of time praying, talking with His Father.

4.) READ the following passages:

Matthew 14:23 – “After He had sent the crowds away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening, He was there alone.”

Mark 1:35 – “In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there.”

Luke 5:16 – “But Jesus Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray.”

Even though Jesus was already intimately connected to His Father, He felt the need to spend a lot of time with Him alone. You could even say He longed to spend time with His Father more than anyone else.

So, if we are to imitate Him, we *must* pray.

And Jesus taught us there is a right way to pray and a wrong way to pray.

As Jesus said, “*And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.*” (Matthew 6:7)

This means we are not to just *repeat* the Lord’s Prayer over and over, or any other repeated phrases, but we are to be sharing our true heart with Him, to connect with Him, to JOIN with Him.

God teaches us how to pray in many different ways. From the words of the Lord’s Prayer, to symbolism encoded in nature and in the furniture in God’s Temple, He’s revealed truth about prayer in many different ways.

In ancient Israel, worship of God was conducted first at a large tent structure called the Tabernacle and then later at a very beautiful Temple. Both were built according to a pattern God had shown Moses on Mount Sinai and they symbolized God’s House, i.e. where He dwelled among His people. He encoded a lot of symbolism in its details.

Inside God’s House (the Temple), there were only three fixtures (pieces of furniture) that lay in the approach to God’s presence behind the Veil in a place called the Holy of Holies. These three fixtures represented *the* three ways we seek or approach God.

Among them was the Golden Altar of Incense. Scripture tells us this altar symbolized the prayers of the saints:

“Then another angel . . . came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.”
(Revelation 8:3)

This Altar of Incense was located *closest* to God’s Throne. ***This means that prayer takes us closest to His presence.***

Now let’s talk about nature, because God also teaches us things symbolically through nature. ***In Creation, God made trees to symbolize believers rooted in the Kingdom of God.***

5.) *What three things does a tree need to survive?*

A tree has to have water, soil, and sunlight to survive. If a tree is deprived of any of these three things for an extended period of time, it suffers.

Now, **Fresh Water** is always a symbol for God's **Power** in Scripture. **And Prayer is the way we tap into that power.**

A tree's need for water teaches us just how important prayer is for a believer.

As trees cannot live without water, so a believer cannot live without prayer. As a seed is first activated by water, so is prayer the first habit a believer needs to develop. Of course, this habit begins by a person confessing their sins to God in prayer and asking for forgiveness through the Blood of Jesus. This is the activation of the seed.

6.) **READ** Matthew 6:33

But Seek FIRST the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

7.) **For Silent Consideration:** Think on this statement for a moment:

We know that prayer is one of the primary ways we seek God. Therefore, in light of Matthew 6:33, can we honestly claim to be seeking God FIRST before all else if a time of prayer is the not the FIRST thing we do each day?

Putting God first means showing Him he's first by seeking His face in prayer before getting the kids ready, before eating breakfast, before work, before anything.

If we don't do that, then it means those other things are first.

There's really no way to dance around it or deny it. If an outsider looking in at your life cannot see God is first through your daily habits, how could you claim to them He's first at all?

And early morning prayer is an amazing blessing. It sets your day right. It gets you connected to your Loving Father before the stresses of the day have time to set in.

God has also shown us that there should be different elements in our prayers.

Four different elements to be precise:

- *Praise*
- *Confession of Sins*
- *Prayer for Others*
- *Prayer for Self*

The Lord's Prayer contains all four of these elements, and we also see them in the symbolism encoded in the 4 fragrances combined in the incense used in God's Temple. (For more information on this, see Appendix A.)

8.) *Why do you think it's important to begin prayer with Praise?*

9.) *Why do you think it's important to include Confession of Sins in our daily prayers?*

10.) *Why is it important to always include a Prayer for Others before Self?*

*Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.
(1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)*

ACTION STEPS & HOMEWORK

Action Steps

COMMIT to a daily PRAYER habit. BEGIN each day for the next seven days in Prayer, using the 4 Elements of prayer. Always pray your heart and share your true feelings and thoughts with Him.

Homework

MEMORIZE the Lord's Prayer. (Matthew 6:9-13)

