

# Elemental Teachings - Prayer

## Introduction

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### Pre-intro

Disclaimer - I have given up on prayer more often than I have functioned in it. I have had more faith in the faith of others who prayed than I did in God. Ever been there?

As a teacher I prefer to teach on things on which I feel I have a grasp, if not some authority.

This is not one of those areas. I don't have any amazing stories of things I have prayed for and they miraculously happened. I have stories of God's sovereignty and provision, not no good prayer stories. This is a good thing because it means we all have to rely on the authority of Jesus' words, and not mine.

I'm going to leave you with more questions than answers, and that isn't a bad thing either.

You need to wrestle with the Lord, be stretched, and grow in this area for yourself. All I plan to do is lay out some equipment on which you can work out.

### Actual intro

I want to fit in size 34 jeans, again. So, why am I fat? I don't want to be fat, I want to be skinny. I think about being skinny. I dream about being skinny. It would be nice to be skinny. I really wish I was skinny. I've worked out, been a gym member, dieted, tried supplements, but none of it really worked, so I stopped trying so much.

I want to be like Jesus who was strong in faith and the power of God. So, why am I spiritually weak in faith? I want to have faith in prayer. I think about praying. I think of things and people I should pray for. I really wish I didn't feel so spiritually weak. I have prayed, been to prayer meetings, read books on prayer, been prayed for, but none of it really seemed to work, so I stopped trying so much.

Fitting into size 34 jeans is optional. But if I really want to fit into them, doing what it takes isn't optional because if I don't do them, I won't fit into them. Being like Jesus is optional. But if I really want to be like Him, doing what it takes isn't optional because if I don't do them, I won't be like Him.

## To be like Jesus is to pray

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Disciple and Master review.

Matthew 4 temptation, 14:23 after feeding the 5K, 19:13 for children, 26:36 before betrayal/trial/crucifixion, Mark 1:35 before going out to preach, Luke 3:21 at His own baptism, 5:16 as a habit, 6:12 choosing the Apostles, 9:18 habit, 9:28-29 the transfiguration, 11:1 habit inspired, John 17 after dinner and pre arrest.

Jesus was a man of prayer. Not just because He was the Son of God, not just because He wanted to be an example, not just because He was supposed to, but because He understood that through prayer we have fellowship/relationship with God, we are empowered by God, and we are sustained by God.

To pray is to be like Jesus. Jesus was God. Jesus was also a person with the same wants, needs, feelings, experiences as us. Even been jealous of Jesus' life, at least in some regards? To be like Jesus is to pray. To pray is to be like Jesus.

## What Jesus said about prayer

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Radical statements [2]

Matthew 7:7-8  
Mark 11:24  
John 15:7  
Philippians 4:19  
1 John 5:15

Sound pretty radical, eh? They are pretty radical. Is prayer as simple as that? Yes, and no.

## Some things to understand

[3] Prayer requires and produces intimacy with the Father, co-inhabitation with Jesus, saturation with the Spirit.

[4] Prayer is a faith-building muscle exercise. Sometimes prayer isn't answered until that muscle has been built up. Hebrew 11:1

[5] Three answers to pray; yes, no, not yet. God will always prayers with a "yes" for the things He has already promised to do or to give, and things He has put in you to desire and ask for. God will always answer prayers with a "no" for things that are contrary to what He has promised or are against His will and word. God will answer with a "not yet," which seems like silence, when there is a timing question and when He wants to build up your faith muscles.

## When, not if, you pray

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[6] **Matt 6:5-8** Intimacy with the Father. In one sense Jesus is addressing two cultural issues. For us, intimacy and genuineness.

[7] **Matthew 7:7-11** Intimacy with the father, faith muscle. Repetition means emphasis. Luke account includes Holy Spirit as thing being asked for. Notice the Father's heart.

[8] **Mark 11:22-24** faith muscle.

[9] **John 4:21-24** Spirit saturation. spirit - addresses religious issue of location of worship. truth - addresses woman's attempt to deceive Jesus. Means "non-concealment." Coming to God in spirit (spiritually) and in truth (nothing concealed, hidden, dressed-up).

[10] **John 15:1-8** Intimacy with the father, co-inhabitation with Jesus.

## Wrap up

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I'm going to leave you with more questions than answers, and that isn't a bad thing either. You need to wrestle with the Lord, be stretched, and grow in this area for yourself. All I plan to do is lay out some equipment on which you can work out.

Four prayers: [11] Lord I believe, help my unbelief. [12] Lord, teach me to pray. [13] Help me. [14] Thank You.

## Recommended reading [15]

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**With Christ in the School of Prayer**, Andrew Murray

**Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire**, Jim Cymbala

**Prayer**, Chuck Smith