

2017

SCHOOL OF PRAYER

SERIES

In Prayer

with **DICK EASTMAN**

NINE "IN PRAYER" CLUSTER-THEMES
FOR FRUITFUL PRAYING

LESSON EIGHT

THE GUIDANCE CLUSTER

Listening in Prayer





THE GUIDANCE CLUSTER

Listening in Prayer

- Communing in Prayer
- Searching in Prayer
- Meditating in Prayer

VOICES OF PRAYER

“Prayer is the soul’s pilgrimage from self to God; and the most effective remedy for self-love and self-absorption is the habit of listening.”

— Brigid Herman, *Creative Prayer*

Proverbs 3:5-6 (MSG)

Trust God from the bottom of your heart; don’t try to figure out everything on your own. Listen for God’s voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; he’s the one who will keep you on track.

VOICES OF PRAYER

“The purpose of all prayer is to find God’s will and to make that will our prayer.”

— Catherine Marshall

Revelation 2:7, 2:11, 2:17, 2:29, 3:6, 3:13, 3:22 (MSG)

Are your ears awake? Listen. Listen to the Wind Words, the Spirit blowing through the churches.

VOICES OF PRAYER

“Whenever the sounds of the world die out in the soul... then we hear the whisperings of God. He is always whispering to us, only we do not hear because of the noise, hurry and distraction which life causes as it rushes on.”

— F. W. Faber

1 Kings 19:11-13 (MSG)

Then [Elijah] was told, “Go, stand on the mountain at attention before God. God will pass by.” A hurricane wind ripped through the mountains and shattered the rocks before God, but God wasn’t to be found in the wind; after the wind an earthquake, but God wasn’t in the earthquake; and after the earthquake fire, but God wasn’t in the fire; and after the fire a gentle and quiet whisper [KJV: still small voice]. When Elijah heard the quiet voice, he muffled his face with his great cloak, went to the mouth of the cave, and stood there.

VOICES OF PRAYER

“We are besieged by words in our society. Billboards blaze them into our minds as we go by. Headlines scream from the newspapers... Regular prayer builds into our lives those experiences of silence and concentration when the still, small voice of our Saviour can cut through life’s howl and speak His words of peace and joy.”

— David Hubbard

God’s Gift of Guidance



VOICES OF PRAYER

“The heart of prayer is not to alter God’s will but to find it.”
— Sam Shoemaker

George Mueller’s Six Steps to Discerning the Will of God

1. I seek at the beginning to get my
heart into such a state that it has
no will of its own in regard to a given
matter.

James 4:7-8 (NKJV)

Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

2. Having done this, I do not leave the result to
feeling or simple impression. If I do
so, I make myself liable to great delusions.

Isaiah 55:8-9 (NIV)

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

3. I seek the will of the Spirit through
or in connection with the Word of God.

John 16:13 (KJV)

...when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth...

4. Next, I take into account providential

circumstances. These often plainly
indicate God's will in connection
with His Word and Spirit.

1 Samuel 10:6-7 (TLB)

At that time the Spirit of the Lord will come mightily upon you... and you will feel and act like a different person. From that time on your decisions should be based on whatever seems best under the circumstances...

5. I ask God in prayer to reveal His
will to me aright.

Jeremiah 33:3 (NIV)

Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.

6. Thus, through prayer to God, the study
of the Word and reflection, I come to a
deliberate judgment according to the best
of my ability and knowledge.

Isaiah 30:20-21 (NLT)

...You will see your teacher with your own eyes, and you will hear a voice say, "This is the way; turn around and walk here."

Case Study: A 747 Miracle Surprise



GUIDANCE CLUSTER - INSIGHT ONE

Listening

Foundational to a healthy and fruitful prayer-saturated life is the discipline of spiritual listening. Divine guidance implies receiving of specific direction supernaturally (i.e., of a divine origin) from the Lord Himself. To receive such guidance requires the act of listening. “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (Revelation 2:7, NKJV).

THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS

Thoughts

Based on Cluster Insight One, share your thoughts within your prayer cluster. What do you believe are the keys to listening in prayer? How can one be certain he or she is truly hearing the voice of the Lord in seeking guidance? (If you are alone as this teaching streams from our website or if you're watching on a DVD, take these moments to meditate on Insight One of this teaching.)

Prayers

Take a few moments of silence in your prayer cluster (or even if you are alone and viewing or listening to this lesson) and then turn what your heart hears into a prayer. You may choose to write down the impressions of your heart and turn them into prayer.

Supplemental (Partial) List of Ways God Speaks to His Children

- A particular scripture coming to mind (Acts 1:20; Acts 13:16)
- *An audible voice (Acts 9:3-5)*
- *A still small voice — a whisper in the heart (1 Kings 19:11-12)*
- A picture or vision (Acts 10:11-17; Acts 16:9-10)
- A dream (Daniel 4:4-17; Daniel 7:1-14)
- An interpretation of a dream or vision (Daniel 4:18-27; Daniel 7:15-27)
- A picture or impression of a word (Acts 10:3)
- A sensation or pain in one's body (Acts 9:8-9)
- A spiritual song (Acts 16:25; Ephesians 5:19)
- Divinely sent messengers or angels (Acts 1:9-11; Acts 8:26) (Philip is told to go south to Gaza — that's all — but along the way he bumps into a seeker, and it's obvious to Philip this is the reason he was told to come.)
- Signs and wonders (Luke 23:44-45; Acts 5:18-21; Acts 9:36-42; Acts 12:6-11)
- Restriction of movement and speech (Acts 16:6-8)

Taken from the article "Listening Prayer, the Centrality of Scripture, and Discernment" by Lina Sánchez-Herrera and Jon Ball (InterVarsity Christian Fellowship)

(Italicized bullets added by Dick Eastman)



PART 1

Communing in Prayer

VOICES OF PRAYER

“Only in quiet waters does God cast His anchor. God only draws near to a soul that enters quietness, a soul whose thoughts and feelings have been stilled.”

—Basilea Schlink

Proverbs 3:5-6 (Passion Translation)

Trust in the Lord completely, and do not rely on your own opinions. With all your heart rely on him to guide you, and he will lead you in every decision you make. Become intimate [Hebrew word: *yada*] with him in whatever you do, and he will lead you wherever you go.

Note:

The word *yada* in Proverbs 3:6 is the same Hebrew word used for the intimacy of marriage and the act of conception (e.g., “and Adam knew — *yada’d* — Eve, and she conceived”). See Genesis 4:1: *Yada* means “direct, intimate contact.” See also Daniel 11:32 (KJV): “...but the people that do know [*yada*] their God shall be strong, and do exploits.” Direct intimate contact with God [*yada*] leads to supernatural strength and divinely-empowered accomplishments.

Psalms 25:14 (MSG)

God-friendship is for God-worshippers; They are the ones he confides in.

This same passage in the Passion Translation reads:

There's a private place reserved for the lovers of God. Where they sit near him and receive the revelation-secrets of his promises.

Psalm 63:1-2 (MSG)

O God, You are my God; with deepest longing I will seek You; My soul [my life, my very self] thirsts for You, my flesh longs and sighs for You, In a dry and weary land where there is no water. So I have gazed upon You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory.

VOICES OF PRAYER

“Quietness in a man or a woman is a mark of strength. Noise is not eloquence. Loudness is not power. In all the departments of life, it is the quiet forces that effect most. Therefore, if we would be strong, we must learn to be quiet. A quiet heart will give a quiet life.”

—J. R. Miller

Psalm 73:25-28 (MSG)

You're all I want in heaven! You're all I want on earth! When my skin sags and my bones get brittle, God is rock-firm and faithful... I'm in the very presence of God—oh, how refreshing it is! I've made Lord God my home. God, I'm telling the world what you do!

Case Study: A Song of Intimate Conception



GUIDANCE CLUSTER - INSIGHT TWO

Communing

The highest level of ___*contemplative*___ prayer is the cultivation of a deep and personal ___*intimacy*___ with the Lord. Such intimacy often occurs with very few words ___*spoken*___ other than words of intimate ___*adoration*___ as one quietly ___*waits*___ in God's presence. Communing with the Lord is to listen, love, and ___*learn*___ from the Master Himself through a ___*conscious*___, though often silent, ___*soaking*___ in God's glorious presence.

THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS

Thoughts

Based on Cluster Insight Two, share your thoughts within your prayer cluster regarding the role you think intimacy with the Lord has in a healthy prayer life. How might one cultivate intimacy in prayer? (If you are alone as this teaching streams from our website or if you're watching on a DVD, take these moments to meditate on Insight Two of this teaching.)

Prayers

Turn your thoughts regarding Cluster Insight Two (or any impression from the Scripture passages shared in this teaching segment) into a prayer that expresses your desire to enter into new levels of intimacy in your prayer life.

HARVEST INCENSE *National Focus*

Revelation 8:3-4 (MSG)

Then another Angel, carrying a gold censer, came and stood at the Altar. He was given a great quantity of incense so that he could offer up the prayers of all the holy people of God on the Golden Altar before the Throne. Smoke billowed up from the incense-laced prayers of the holy ones, rose before God from the hand of the Angel.

NOTES

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PART 2

Searching in Prayer

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (MSG)

There's nothing like the written Word of God for showing you the way to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. Every part of Scripture is God-breathed and useful one way or another—showing us truth, exposing our rebellion, correcting our mistakes, training us to live God's way. Through the Word we are put together and shaped up for the tasks God has for us.

VOICES OF PRAYER

"...The Book has a voice of its own—a message and a power that remain untouched by the passage of time. To listen to that voice and test that power for oneself is well worth all the labor and discipline involved."

—Brigid Herman

2 Timothy 2:15 (AMP)

Study *and* do your best to present yourself to God approved, a workman [tested by trial] who has no reason to be ashamed, accurately handling *and* skillfully teaching the word of truth.

Psalms 119:124-125 (Passion Translation)

Let me feel your tender love, for I am yours. Give me more understanding of your wonderful ways. I need more revelation from your word to know more about you, for I'm in love with you.

VOICES OF PRAYER

We should never pray without reading the Bible, and we should never read the Bible without praying.

—Armin Gesswein

Proverbs 2:1-5 (NIV)

My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding—indeed, if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.

VOICES OF PRAYER

“To me, this is real prayer — expecting God to talk to me through His Word as I talk to Him.”

—Bill Bright

Hebrews 4:12-13 (MSG)

God means what he says. What he says goes. His powerful Word is sharp as a surgeon’s scalpel, cutting through everything, whether doubt or defense, laying us open to listen and obey. Nothing and no one is impervious to God’s Word. We can’t get away from it—no matter what.

VOICES OF PRAYER

“God’s Word is known at the throne. Use it every time you pray. It is your prayer language.”

—Armin Gesswein

Case Study: Confirming Words of Guidance



GUIDANCE CLUSTER - INSIGHT THREE

Searching

At the ___*heart*___ of all meaningful spiritual listening, and the ___*whole*___ of contemplative prayer, is the supreme importance of ___*engaging*___ with the ___*Word*___ of God during prayer. God ___*speaks*___ most clearly to His children through His Word. Wise was the sage who said, “God’s Word is ___*known*___ at the ___*throne*___. Use it every time you pray. It is your ___*prayer*___ language.”

THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS

Thoughts

Based on Cluster Insight Three, share your thoughts within your prayer cluster regarding the importance of engaging in God’s Word during prayer. What have you experienced in praying God’s Word during prayer? (If you are alone as this teaching streams from our website or if you’re watching on a DVD, take these moments to meditate on Insight Three of this teaching.)

Prayers

Practice praying God’s Word by taking a favorite life-passage you have (or select a Scripture passage shared in this teaching segment) and turn it into a prayer.



PART 3

Meditating in Prayer

VOICES OF PRAYER

“Meditation is... a spiritual act as definite and purposeful as a business engagement, a pledge of friendship, or a solemn undertaking. In it we apply spiritual facts and principles to ourselves as individuals and as citizens of the Kingdom of God... Having pondered them, we seek to appropriate their value by an outgoing of our loving desire toward God, and by exercising our will in the forming of resolutions... No meditation is really valid unless it leaves us with something to which we can return during the day’s business and find it helpful there.”

—Brigid Herman

“Meditation” Defined:

“The act of meditating; deep, continued thought; solemn reflection on sacred matters as a devotional act; biblically speaking: the practice of quieting the mind by focusing one’s attention on a theme from God’s Word or His works.”

Bible Definitions:

The Old Testament definition for the word “meditation” is *hagah*, meaning “to mutter upon” or “to muse.” This suggests a silent inner study of some spiritual theme.

The New Testament Greek word for “meditate” is *meletao*, meaning “to be careful” or “to show care” in a matter. It suggests a careful probing of a theme or spiritual insight so as to glean more from it than a casual or hasty review might provide.

Psalm 78:1-4 (MSG)

Listen, dear friends, to God’s truth, bend your ears to what I tell you. I’m chewing on the morsel of a proverb; I’ll let you in on the sweet old truths, Stories we heard from our fathers, counsel we learned at our mother’s knee. We’re not keeping this to ourselves, we’re passing it along to the next generation—God’s fame and fortune, the marvelous things he has done.

Psalm 27:4 (AMP)

One thing I have asked of the LORD, and that I will seek:
That I may dwell in the house of the LORD [in His presence]
all the days of my life, To gaze upon the beauty [the
delightful loveliness and majestic grandeur] of the LORD
And to meditate in His temple.

Joshua 1:8 (AMP)

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall read [and meditate on] it day and night, so that you may be careful to do [everything] in accordance with all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will be successful.



VOICES OF PRAYER

“The difference between the saints of old and ourselves is not one of inherent nature: it is simply that they took time to ponder God, to gaze upon Him in an act of supreme attention in which intelligent will and desire concurred in perfect harmony, while we are too greatly overrun with small activities and occupations to find leisure for such pondering.”

—Brigid Herman

Psalm 143:5 (AMP)

I remember the days of old; I meditate on all that You have done; I ponder the work of Your hands.

Philippians 4:8 (NLT)

And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.

The Message paraphrase for this same passage

(Phil. 4:8) reads: Summing it all up, friends, I’d say you’ll do best by filling your minds and meditating on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious—the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse.

VOICES OF PRAYER

“A mind stretched by a new idea can never go back to its original dimensions.”

—Oliver Wendell Holmes

GUIDANCE CLUSTER - INSIGHT FOUR

Meditating

Meditating is the silent, systematic probing and pursuing of the ways and purposes of God. It is, as ancient sages and psalmists said, “chewing on the morsel of a proverb” (Psalm 78:2, MSG), and to gaze upon “the delightful loveliness and majestic grandeur of the LORD” (Psalm 27:4, AMP). Meditation is to “fix your thoughts” on those things that are true, honorable, right, pure, lovely and admirable — things that are excellent and worthy of praise (Philippians 4:8, NLT).

THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS

Thoughts

Based on Cluster Insight Four, share your thoughts within your prayer cluster regarding your insights on why meditation is such a vital aspect of contemplative prayer. Why do you think the enemy has “hijacked” the act of meditation in so many false religions? (If you are alone as this teaching streams from our website or if you’re watching on a DVD, take these moments to meditate on Insight Four of this teaching.)



Prayers

As individuals in your group, meditate for a brief moment (30 seconds) on Psalm 27:4. Then as a group (in your cluster), pray something you gleaned from this passage as you meditated upon it.

Psalm 27:4 (AMP)

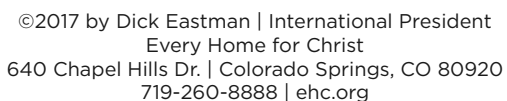
One thing I have asked of the LORD, and that I will seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD [in His presence] all the days of my life, To gaze upon the beauty [the delightful loveliness and majestic grandeur] of the LORD and to meditate in His temple.

HARVEST INCENSE *Global Focus*

Revelation 8:3-4 (MSG)

Then another Angel, carrying a gold censer, came and stood at the Altar. He was given a great quantity of incense so that he could offer up the prayers of all the holy people of God on the Golden Altar before the Throne. Smoke billowed up from the incense-laced prayers of the holy ones, rose before God from the hand of the Angel.

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