



Week 1—Keys to Consistency

When you hear someone described as having a prayer life, what thoughts come to mind? (Do you think of someone who prays for hours at a time or someone old who doesn't have "things to do"?)

This week we are going to learn what Jesus teaches as the foundation of a healthy prayer life. Let's find some keys to establishing a prayer life.

Read Matthew 6:6.

1. What seems to be the first step that Jesus states about establishing a prayer life? (Find a place.)
 - Where is a good place for you to pray on a daily basis? (For example, your room, your closet, etc.)
2. How does Jesus tell us to deal with distractions when it comes to having a prayer life? (Jesus said to close the door.)
 - What are some things that distract you when you try to pray? (Distractions may include phones, the time, chores, etc.)
 - What are some ways that you can "close the door" on distractions when you're praying? (Make a list as things come to mind that must be done that day; tell everyone in your house that you need some time alone.)

Conclusion

All Christians can have a strong prayer life if they'll establish a regular place and time to meet with God and shut out the distractions in life long enough to meet with God.

(Encourage students to commit to a daily time of prayer and have them announce where and when they're going to daily pray before they leave the group.)

Close in prayer.



Week 2—What to Say!

Have you ever heard someone pray publicly and it sounded more like a speech than a prayer? Have you ever felt like you can't pray because you don't have the "right words"? What makes a prayer good?

In this week's study, we're going to learn that true prayer comes from your heart, not the depth of your spiritual vocabulary. Let's see what Jesus said about what we should say once we're in our secret place with God.

Read Matthew 6:7,8.

1. What is the first thing that Jesus says about what to say in your prayer time? (Don't pray long and empty words.)

- To whom does Jesus compare people who pray long and empty words? (Jesus compares them to the pagans. The key here is that just as God despises the prayer of the pagans, He also despises our rattling on about nothing when we're praying to Him.)

2. What does Jesus say to comfort us when we can't find the right words to pray? (Jesus said, "For your Father knows what you need even before you ask Him" [Matthew 6:8, NIV].)

- What are some things that are hard to pray about in your life? (The key here is that often we don't know how to pray or don't have the right words.)
- What are some ways that you can turn those prayer needs over to God? (Be honest with God by saying, "God, I'm not sure what to say, so I'm giving it over to You for Your will to be done." Search your Bible for answers or ask a spiritual leader how to pray about that situation.)

Conclusion

Jesus teaches us in this passage that prayer is simply a conversation with God. It's not just about you saying a bunch of things to God. It's about spending time with someone who cares about you and your needs.

What are some things you can begin doing right now to have a more quality prayer time with God? (Work on saying how you truly feel. Stop trying to have all the right words.)

Close in prayer.



Week 3—Your Most Important Prayer

If you could name one thing in the world that you think God wants His people to pray about, what would it be? (Responses will vary. Don't give a right or wrong answer yet. This study will bring the right answer into focus.)

In this week's study we're going to learn how to pray for the very thing that Jesus died for. Let's look at Jesus' example of prayer.

Read Matthew 6:9,10.

1. What is the first thing Jesus tells us to ask for in prayer? (The first thing to ask is for His kingdom to come.)

- What does Jesus mean by praying for His kingdom to come and for His will to be done? (This means to ask for what He wants to become a reality on earth.)
- (Have a student read 2 Peter 3:9; have another read Luke 19:10.)
- What is God's will for lost people? (God's will is for them to be saved.)

2. (Read Matthew 9:37,38.) What did Jesus tell us to pray so that lost people would come to know Him? (He told us to pray for workers to be sent into the harvest field.)

- What does Jesus state as the problem with reaching the lost? (There is a large harvest, but only a few workers.)

Conclusion

Jesus died to save people from sin and its horrible results. To pray for God's kingdom to come is to pray for the lost to be saved. It's His will that none should perish.

How are your prayers for the lost being answered? (Be an answer to your own prayer by being a worker in the harvest field. Pray for others to reach out to the lost in your school and community.)

Close in prayer.



Week 4—A Look Into the Mirror

Have you ever looked in a mirror early in the morning and wondered who was staring back at you? How much time do you typically spend looking in the mirror on a daily basis? (Let this be a fun time, and encourage those who have acne or blemishes that, “This too shall pass.”)

This week we’re going to look into the mirror of God’s Word and see if we’re reflecting Him. Let’s see what God says about whom and what we are supposed to reflect in life.

Read Genesis 1:26.

1. In whose image were humans created? (We were created in God’s image.)

- Even though humans were created in God’s image or reflection, do you think most humans reflect God in the way they live? (Responses will vary, but stick with the main issue that humans have fallen from their true purpose for existence—to be a reflection of the Creator.)

2. (Read James 1:22-24.) To whom does James compare those who are disobedient to God’s Word? (James makes a comparison to those who look in the mirror and walk away, forgetting what they looked like.)

- What are some difficult things that Jesus has commanded us to do in His Word? (For example, to love our neighbor as ourselves, to love our enemies, etc.)
- In your life, can you tell of a time you were a good reflection of God and a time when you maybe didn’t do what you know you should have done? (Responses will vary, but be sure to spin the negative to a positive by asking them what they’ve learned from the wrong choices they’ve made.)

Conclusion

God has made us to be a reflection of Him in the world. When people see us and how we live, do they see Him? If we’re obedient to His Word, the Bible tells us that we’ll reflect Him to others.

What are some things you can begin doing right now to be a better reflection of God to your family, friends, and community? (For example, you could improve how you deal with stress, compliment others instead of tearing them down, go out of your way to help someone, etc.)

Close in prayer.



Week 5—Living Like No One Else!

Have you ever heard someone refer to Christians as hypocrites? If you haven't, you will in your lifetime. Don't say their name, but have you ever met someone who didn't live up to what they claimed to be? Describe their actions. How did what they were doing make you feel? (Responses will vary, but make sure students understand that even Christians make mistakes and sin.)

In this week's study, we're going to see how God wants us to live. Let's see what God says about how we are to live in this world.

Read 2 Corinthians 6:15-18.

1. What do you think separates you from someone who isn't saved? (God lives in you! You're His temple.)
 - When you think of a temple or a church, what are some descriptive words that come to mind? (Ultimately the church is a holy place. Typically, even the worst people would not do certain things at church that they might do somewhere else.)
2. What does God command us to do in order to live a life separated unto Him? (He orders us to come out from among them—the world.)
 - What does it mean to "come out from among the world"? (It means to live a pure life; make good choices; don't be seen or heard speaking things contrary to Christian behavior.)
 - Living pure and holy is tough when we're surrounded by so much impurity and ungodliness. What are some simple things you can do to stay separated from the world's standard of living? (Don't watch or listen to things that are impure or ungodly; don't go to places where ungodly activities are occurring; take captive your thoughts; control your tongue.)

Conclusion

Holiness is not about being weird or out of touch. It's about finding out what pleases God and living it! While we separate ourselves from the world, we must be sure that we don't come across as self-righteous or "holier than thou."

What are some ways you make Christianity attractive to others, but still remain separate? (For example, being outgoing, making friends, inviting people to hang out with you, etc.)

Close in prayer.



Week 6—Loving God, Loving People

When we say we love something, do we realize what we're saying? Our society uses the word love loosely. We say we love pizza; we love this movie or that song; we love our boyfriend or girlfriend; and then we say we love our parents or we love God.

In this week's study, we're going to see that God has called each of us to live a life of love. Let's see what God says about the love that a Christian should have.

Read 1 John 4:16.

1. What does the Bible say God is? (God is love!)

- In what ways does God show His love to the world and to you? (Answers will vary, but one example is that He blesses us with many things.)

2. What is the one way that we know for sure that we're living for God? (We know we're living for God if we live a life of love.)

- (Read 1 John 2:15.) What are we commanded not to love? (We are commanded not to love the world.)
- Jesus said the greatest commandment is to "love the Lord your God" with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. The second greatest commandment, He said, is to "love your neighbor as yourself." (See Mark 12:29-31, NIV.) As Christians, how can we express our love to God and to people? (We can express our love by worshiping God, spending time with Him, reaching out to people who are in need, listening to people, etc.)

Conclusion

Living a life of love is a daily choice. Loving God and loving people are not options for a Christian, but rather they are the true fulfillment of God's will for our lives.

What are some things you can begin doing now to show your love for God and your neighbor? (Responses will vary. Be sure that personal, practical ideas are expressed, not just theories.)

Close in prayer.



Week 7—Preach, Preacher!

We would consider the last words of those that we've loved in life to be very important. What if someone you loved made a request of you before they passed on? Would you set out to make sure you accomplished what they asked you to do? How would it change your priorities? Would you easily forget your assignment, or would it be in the front of your mind until you were able to complete it?

This week we're going to see that the last recorded words of Jesus were an assignment, a responsibility, to accomplish. Let's read some of the last recorded words of Christ.

Read Mark 16:15.

1. What do the last words of Christ show us about His love for the world? (Ideal response: God loves the world so much that He wants to use us to tell the world the good news.)
 - What is some of the bad news the world is hearing right now? (For example, hatred, war, violence, abuse, scandals, etc.)
2. Why is the message of Christ good news to a world full of bad news? (God's love is greater than the problems of this world. Christ's death made a way for us to have peace, security, and hope of a better place—heaven.)
 - Jesus tells His followers in this passage to "preach." What thoughts come to mind when you hear the words *preach* or *preacher*? (Let students be honest about their thoughts of preachers.)
 - Did you know that God has called you to preach? Some people have said that if we simply live for God, then people will see our lives and be convinced that they need to be saved.
 - (Read Romans 10:14,15.) How does the Bible say people will have the opportunity to be saved? (They will have an opportunity through those who are sent to preach the gospel.)

Conclusion

Preaching the gospel simply means telling others the good news about Christ and what He has done for them.

As a campus missionary, you've committed to telling at least five of your friends about Christ. What steps will you take this year to share Christ with them? (Encourage students to pray for the right words to say.)

Close in prayer.



Week 8—Unashamed!

Have you ever done something in public and felt totally embarrassed? Tell of a time when you did something so embarrassing you wanted to immediately disappear! (Encourage students to laugh at themselves. You may need to lead out on this one!)

This week we're going to see how we can overcome the fear of embarrassment and the fear of what people will think if we talk about God openly. Let's see what the Bible says about being a bold witness for God.

Read Romans 1:16.

1. Of what was Paul unashamed? (Remember, *gospel* means good news!)

- We've probably all felt ashamed or embarrassed at some point about our faith. Can you tell of a time when you made a stand for God and for what was right? How did you feel afterwards? (Let students share personal stories of standing up for what was right. Sometimes doing what is right is simply not doing the wrong thing along with everyone else.)

2. Why did Paul say he was unashamed of the gospel? (The gospel "is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes" [Romans 1:16, NIV].)

- There are two key phrases we must look at: "power of God" and "salvation of everyone who believes."
 - Why is the gospel the power of God? (Nothing else can change and impact our lives like Jesus can.)
 - We must be convinced that God's desire is to save everyone!
- (Read 2 Timothy 1:7.) What Spirit did God give us to counteract the spirit of timidity and fear? (His Holy Spirit, who gives us power, love, and discipline.)

Conclusion

Being unashamed about God is an attitude you must have if you're going to be a bold witness.

How can you overcome your fears of witnessing and telling others about Christ? (Rely on the Holy Spirit, rebuke your fears, quote God's Word, step out in faith, etc.)

Close in prayer.



Week 9—Tongue Tied?

Have you ever been asked something you know you should have the answer to, yet found yourself lost for words? Don't you feel frustrated having the answer to the question, but being unable to say it? We've all been there!

In this week's study, we're going to prepare ourselves to give an answer about what we believe and why we believe it. Let's see what the Bible says when we're asked the tough questions about our faith.

Read 1 Peter 3:15.

1. What does the Bible say about being asked about our faith? ("Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have" [1 Peter 3:15, NIV].)
 - Can you tell of a time when someone has asked about your faith or beliefs, even if they asked in a demeaning way? (For example: Why do you go to church? Do you believe in God?)
2. Why do you think it's important to be ready at all times to have a response to people's questions about our hope in Christ? (You never know when or where someone might need a straight answer about God from a true Christian.)
 - According to the Bible, you must be ready to answer for the hope that you have. In your own words, can you explain the hope that you have in Jesus Christ? (Allow students to share in their own words about their hope in Jesus as their Lord and Savior.)
 - Do you know that the way you respond is just as important as what you say in response to people who try to put you on the defensive?
 - How does the Bible say to answer those who are asking the questions about our beliefs? (We're to answer with gentleness and respect.)

Conclusion

Being ready to respond to people who question your beliefs must take some preparation on your part.

What can you do today to be prepared to answer the questions that the world may ask you about your faith in God? (For example, write out why you believe what you believe, or write your testimony.)

Close in prayer.



Week 10—You Got Served!

Respect—it's something most students are dying to receive. Just to be treated and talked to like a human being would make your day. Let's go beyond even that and ask, "Have you ever been treated like royalty?" (Let students tell of a time they were treated not only fairly, but were also a little pampered.)

In this week's study, we're going to see how Christ, even though He is God, was the greatest servant who ever lived. Let's see what the Bible says about the way Jesus served humanity.

Read John 13:3-5.

1. What does the Bible say Jesus knew? (Jesus knew God had put everything under His power!)
 - Jesus had all the authority in the world, the Bible says, yet He got down on His hands and knees and washed the nasty feet of His disciples.
 - In verses 6-8, the Bible says that Peter didn't want Jesus to wash his feet.
 - How would you have responded if you were one of those disciples at that moment? (Make sure students understand the impact of this story by detailing what it meant to wash someone's feet in those days.)
2. Why do you think Jesus did this for His disciples? (Responses will vary.)
 - (Read John 13:14,15.) Why do you think Jesus washed the feet of His disciples? (One response may be because He wanted to set an example of being a servant.)
 - (Read John 13:16.) What was Jesus saying when He said, "No servant is greater than His Master"? (He was saying, "I'm your Master, and look what I've done to serve you. If you're My servants, how much more should you serve others!")

Conclusion

Jesus is the Lord and King of the universe, yet He stooped washed dirt off of twelve men's feet one day. He's done that for us too! He's blessed us even though He didn't have to!

How can you begin to follow Christ's example of being a servant today? (For example, you could volunteer to do things no one else wants to do at church, at home, and in your community.)

Close in prayer.



Week 11—Serving Man, Serving God!

Have you ever been asked to do something that seemed beneath you? You know, the kind of job that we all wish we could pass off on someone else? (Answers may include scrubbing the bathroom, cleaning out the garage, or helping at a homeless shelter.)

This week we're going to see that when we sign up to do the jobs no one wants to do, we're actually doing it unto God. Let's see what the Bible says about how God looks at our acts of service, especially the ones no one else wants to do.

Read Matthew 25:34-40.

1. Whom did the King welcome and give an inheritance in this passage? (The King welcomed those who served the needy and lonely.)
 - Do you think people in your community are suffering from unmet needs and loneliness? Why or why not? (Students can take this time to reflect. Allow them to share certain needs that they see in their community.)
 - Why do you think God calls you to help those who are hurting? (As servants of God, we must do what Jesus would have done. If we don't reach out to them, who will?)
2. Who does the Bible say that the righteous actually fed, clothed, and visited? (The Bible says when we do it to the least of these, we are doing it unto Him!)
 - It's hard for us to imagine the God of the universe in great need, but what if you saw Jesus today in need of your help? How would you respond? (Feel free to make up a scenario and let the students feel the excitement of the possibility of actually helping God.)
 - (Read Matthew 25:44-46.) What is the point Jesus is making in this passage? (We need to slow down long enough to realize that when we serve man, we're actually serving the God who created man!)

Conclusion

What are some ways you can begin to organize serving your church and community in areas that they need it most? (Encourage students to make a list of needs that they see around your church and community, and then offer some ways they can serve as solutions. Close in prayer.)

Close in prayer.



Week 12—Saved to Serve!

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to be able to sing, act, paint, or play a sport like someone else? Have you ever wished you had someone else's talents? Most of us have wanted to be something we're not at some point in our lives. Why do you think students in your generation are constantly feeling pressure to be something they're not? (Let students respond about the pressure they feel.)

This week we're going to see that God has called us to serve Him with our own unique gifts and talents. Let's see what the Bible says about how God has gifted each one of us individually.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12,14-21,27.

1. What does the Bible compare the members of the Church to? (It compares the Church to the parts of a body.)
 - What lesson can you learn from the fact that the body is made up of many unique parts? (Students can learn that they're special and set apart for a specific function that no one else can do.)
 - What is the danger in wanting to have the same gifts and talents that others have? (When this happens, the Bible teaches that the entire body will not function if its members are confused about their purpose.)
2. Why should you serve God with your unique gifts and callings? (Without your involvement, the Church will be lacking just like a body would be if it had no legs, arms, or eyes.)
 - Matthew 25 tells the story of three men who received "talents" (money) from their Master according to their abilities. One received five, another two, and another one talent. When he returned, the first two had invested their talents and gave the Master twice as much as they received. However, the third man had buried his one talent. When the Master returned, he called the man a wicked and lazy servant.
 - Why do you think the last servant hid his talent? (He felt like it wasn't very much and was afraid of losing what little he had.)
 - Have you ever felt like what you have to give to God is little compared to others? Why do you think God called the last servant wicked? (He buried, his talent—kept it secret and hidden.)

Conclusion

What gifts do you feel like God has given you to serve within your church and youth ministry? (Encourage students to make a list of their talents and then find a way to use their gifts in your youth ministry and church.)

Close in prayer.



Week 13—Why and How We Give

Giving—it's a word that many don't understand in today's world. If we'll be honest, most of us are great at receiving, but not so good when it comes to giving. Share about a time in your life when it felt good to give something. (Responses will vary.)

In this week's study, we're going to see why we should give and then how to determine how much to give. Let's see what God has to say about giving.

Read 2 Corinthians 9:6,7.

1. What does the Bible say will happen if you sow or give little? (You'll reap little—get back little in return.)

- Have you ever done something half-heartedly and later regretted not working harder? Tell of a time when this happened in your life. (For example, a time when you didn't study hard enough for a test, didn't practice seriously for the game, etc.)
- In life, if you aren't focused on giving your best, you can't expect to have the best results. Why does God always want you to give your best? (God has blessed us with everything we have—our gifts, talents, money, home, etc. If we're thankful for that, we're going to give back.)

2. How much does this passage say we should give to God? (Each person should give what he/she has decided in his/her heart to give.)

- These words tell us that it's important to make a *pledge* or *faith promise* to God when it comes to giving our finances. (A faith promise is a specific amount of money that someone promises to give. This promise is made with awareness that God is leading the individual to make the commitment. The person has faith that God will ultimately provide both the money and discipline to give the promised amount.) Have you ever made a pledge or faith promise before? If so, were you able to meet your goal? (Some students may share good testimonies of what they've given, while others may have never even thought about making a pledge.)
- How are we to know how much we're supposed to give? (The amount should be decided in our hearts.)

Conclusion

Take a moment and search your heart, asking yourself, "What amount can I commit to give God this week, this month, this year?" (Encourage students to prayerfully consider making a giving goal before leaving the group.)

Close in prayer.



Week 14—An Attitude of Gratitude!

Have you ever known people who seem to have everything yet seem so reluctant to give? What are some words we use to describe such people? (For example, tight wad, greedy, cheap skate, scrooge, etc. Students will have their own set of words for these people.)

This week we're going to see that our attitude in giving is more important than how much we're giving. Let's see what the Bible says about our attitude when giving.

Read 2 Corinthians 9:7,10,11.

1. How does the Bible say not to give? (It says to not give reluctantly or under compulsion.)
 - *Reluctantly* means "unwilling or offering resistant; opposing." What would be some things that would cause you to be reluctant to give? (We don't have the money. We want to spend the money on other things for ourselves. We don't really believe in the cause.)
 - *Under compulsion* means "to feel obligated, forced, or pressured." What does it mean when it says that God doesn't want us to give under compulsion? (He doesn't want us to feel like we have to give. When we do, we've missed the true blessing in giving!)
2. What does this passage say that God loves? (God loves a cheerful giver!)
 - The word *cheerful* here means "enthusiastic, excited, and optimistic."
 - What are some things you get excited about in life? (For example, seeing your favorite team win, passing the test, getting gifts, etc.)
 - What kind of offering do you think God would be excited about? (God would be excited to get the kind of offering where His people give their very best.)

Conclusion

What practical things can you do to be more cheerful, excited, and enthusiastic about your giving? (Set some goals; pray for the right attitude; watch to see the difference your offering will make.)

Close in prayer.



Week 15—All He Wants Is All You Have!

When you think about someone who gives his/her very life to something, what comes to mind? (Consider, for example, soldiers, sailors, and airmen in the armed services.)

In this week's study, we're going to see that Jesus calls us to give away everything we have so we can have everything He wants to give. Let's see what the Bible says about giving God our all.

Read Luke 9:23-25.

1. What does Jesus require us to do in order to be considered one of His followers? (He requires us to take up our cross daily.)
 - What was a cross used for in Bible times? (Execution.)
 - If a cross is to die on, is Jesus saying we must physically die? (No.) Then what is He saying? (We must die daily to what we want.)
2. What does the Bible say will happen to you if you try to save your life rather than give it away to Him? (You'll lose it!)
 - Have you ever lost something of great value? Talk about it. (Responses will vary.)
 - How can we be sure to save our lives? (We can be sure by giving our lives away to God.)
 - What does giving our lives to God mean? (It means to surrender everything to Him—our desire, dreams, ambitions, hopes, plans, wants, etc.)
 - Have you ever known someone who seems to have everything—popularity, fame, money, looks? Did you know that the Bible teaches that even if they gain all that but don't give their lives to God, they'll end up with nothing in the end?
 - How should you live, knowing that you could wake up one day and find that all you've worked for is in vain if you haven't given your life to God? (We should live our lives not in pursuit of the things this world is trying to gain, but rather live lives that are abandoned and sold out to God.)

Conclusion

The world says, "Get all you can while you can!" The Bible teaches, "Give and you'll receive!" What a difference in these two mindsets!

How can you show that you're not living by the world's standard, trying to gain popularity, fame, and fortune? (You can show that you're living by God's standards by being sold out to God and giving your very best every day to His purpose for your life!)

Close in prayer.