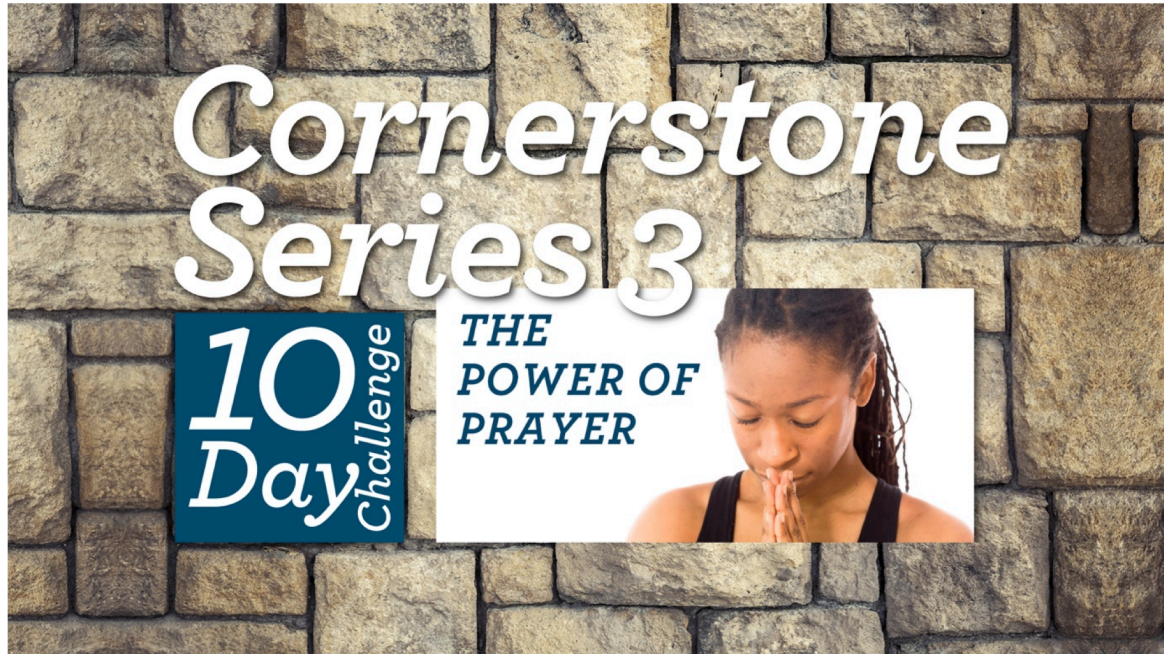




Cornerstone Discipleship Series 3

The Power of Prayer

Series 3 explores The Power of Prayer, to help various teachings on prayer from the Bible be heard and understood - to inspire a commitment to ongoing learning, and ongoing prayer.

Watch the short videos and follow these discussion guides on some common questions people have about prayer. Join us as we explore these.

- 1. Thankfulness**
- 2. Faith**
- 3. Unanswered prayers**
- 4. The power of a promise**
- 5. What praying changes**

1. Thankfulness – where prayer begins



Getting started

1. Have you ever struggled to focus when talking with someone, and as a result lost your train of thought – or even worse, started daydreaming while you were supposed to be listening? What happened?

A look at the Bible

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanks giving, present your requests to God."

Philippians 4:6

2. Do you ever struggle to focus when talking with God? What distracts you?
3. Why do you think being focused in prayer is so difficult sometimes? I mean, shouldn't it be easy to focus when we know God is listening and answers all our prayers?
4. Think of someone you know who is compulsively positive. What difference might a positive and thankful attitude make in life?
5. What difference might a thankful attitude make in your prayer life?

Our Response

6. To get started, list ten things that you are thankful to God for right now.
7. Would you be willing to stop at a given time each day in the next week to thank God for 10 more things?

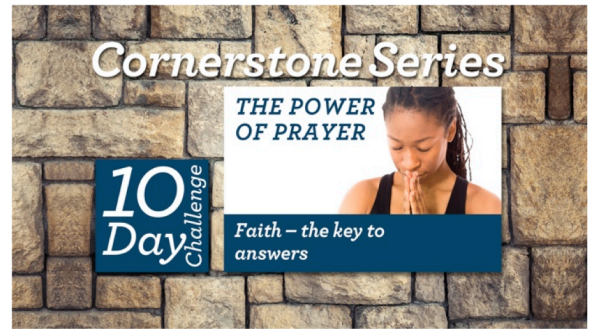
Prayer

Dear God, thank you for loving us, and for always working for our good . Please help us to develop a more thankful attitude toward you so that our faith in you will be strengthened, and our confidence in prayer increased. Right now, I thank you for 10 things in my life...

In Jesus name we pray

Amen.

2. Faith – the key to answers



Getting started

1. If you found a bottle with a magic genie in it and could wish for any one thing (other than to have more wishes) what would you wish for, and why?

A look at the Bible

"And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him."

Matthew 6:7-8

"Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."

Mark 11:24

"When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures."

James 4:3

2. Tell of a time when God miraculously answered one of your prayers.
3. In Matthew 6:7-8, what kind of approach was Jesus telling the disciples to have to prayer when he told them not to pray like the 'babbling pagans' of their day? (How complicated is prayer supposed to be, and why?)
4. What sort of faith did Jesus encourage us to have in Mark 11:24?
5. What difference might this kind of faith make to the way we feel in daily life?
6. What dynamic does James 4:3 bring to this conversation? Can we really pray with confidence for anything?

Our Response

7. What needs are there that you could pray for right now?

Prayer

Dear God, thank you for hearing all of our prayers, and for being involved in our lives to bring about what is best. There are some needs that I'd like to bring before you right now...

In Jesus name we pray

Amen.

3. Unanswered prayers – when God's way isn't ours



Getting started

1. Can you think of a time when you really wanted something from your parents, but they chose not to give it? (Alternatively, do you have a similar story about your children wanting something?) What happened?

A look at the Bible

"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know he hears us – whatever we ask – we know that we have what we asked of him."

1 John 5:14-15

"...Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will."

Romans 12:2

2. Have you ever felt really disappointed when God didn't answer one of your prayers in the way you wanted? What happened?
3. The following 6 reasons were given for why God might say 'no' or 'wait' to a prayer. Explain each in your own words: Unforgiveness – Matthew 6:14, wrong motives – James 4:3, unbelief – James 1:7, a lack of believing action – James 1:22, because of sin – 1 Peter 3:7 / to highlight sin – 2 Samuel 21, a lack of confidence to ask – Hebrews 4:16.
4. If a person felt disappointed with prayer because some of their prayers weren't answered as they hoped, how would you advise them?
5. If someone had lost confidence in prayer due to past disappointments, what might be involved in their 'journey of healing', to become confident in prayer again?

Our Response

6. What is your response to God today regarding any prayers you have prayed in the past that he does not yet seem to have answered?

Prayer

Dear God, thank you for not only hearing all of our prayers – but for also answering them in the way that is best for both us, and others. While we often cannot yet understand all your reasons, we choose to trust you because you are clearly positioned to know more than we do. Thank you for being dependable. And thank you that we are able to come to you in prayer! In Jesus name we pray

Amen.

4. The power of a promise from an unchanging God



Getting started

1. Can you think of a promise someone made to you recently (whether big or small) that brought new hope to a situation?

A look at the Bible

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth... ..And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain. For the old order of things has passed away."

Revelation 21:1-4

2. In your own words, what promise from God is reflected in these Bible verses? How does faith in this promise affect life today?
3. How important is the source of a promise? (E.g. if your neighbour promises that everything will work out in the end for you — can you believe them? How are God's promises from the Bible different to your neighbours?)
4. To help us understand the Bible's many promises, there are two different types of promises to be aware of: Conditional promises depended on what a person did in response to God's message, while an unconditional promise did not (it depended solely upon God — who said he would fulfil it). Can you think of some examples of each of these in the Bible?

Our Response

5. Make a list of 5 or 10 great promises from God, and then say prayers inspired by the hope that each of these promises creates in you.

Prayer

Dear God, thank you that you do not change, and that you keep your word! Thank you for the many promises you have given us in the Bible that fuel our prayer lives, and bring us hope. We now come to you, based on what you have promised, and ask that...

In Jesus name we pray
Amen.

5. What praying changes



Getting started

1. What has your prayer life been like since starting this short series on prayer? Has stopping to thank God for his blessings helped? What have you been praying for — and have you seen any of those prayers answered already?
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A look at the Bible

"This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven...'"

The teachings of Jesus – Matthew 6:9-10

"The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results."
James 5:16

2. Who determines the extent to which God works in and through our lives – us or God?
 3. Looking at Matthew 6, what does God want us to do on earth?
 4. With the above two Bible verses in mind — why might prayer be important?
 5. What would you like to see God do on this planet through your life?
 6. How vital might prayer be if that vision is to come about, and why?
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Our Response

7. What could you do to continue to strengthen your prayer life in the coming months?

Prayer

Dear God, thank you for your willingness to work with us to bring positive changes on this planet. We recognise that we will be able to achieve very few of these changes without your help. Please help us to pray big prayers — while attempting big things. We ask that your power would be at work through us to make this world a better place.

*In Jesus name we pray
Amen.*