

**Theological Equipping Class – How to Pray the Bible**  
**“Delight. Display. Declare: The Mission of The Parkway Church”**

*The Parkway Church exists to Glorify God by making disciples of Jesus Christ who: Delight in Him, Display His Love to one another, and Declare Him to the World*

The Problem of Prayer

“Although there are an unlimited number of things we could talk to God about, many believers fall into a pattern of saying the same old things in prayer about the same old things in their lives. Sooner or later that repetition will anesthetize our ability to focus and feel in prayer. The inestimable privileges of talking with God becomes – dare I say – boring.” – Donald Whitney

“Before this time my practice had been...to give myself to prayer after having dressed myself in the morning. Now I saw that the most important thing I had to do was to give myself to the reading of the Word of God, and to meditate on it, that thus my heart might be comforted, encouraged, warned, reprov'd, instructed; and that thus, by means of the Word of God, while meditating on it, my heart might be brought into experiential communion with the Lord...The difference, then, between my former practice and my present one is this: formerly, when I rose, I began to pray as soon as possible, and generally spent all my time till breakfast in prayer...But what was the result? I often spent a quarter of an hour, or half an hour, or even an hour on my knees before being conscious to myself of having derived comfort, encouragement, humbling of soul, etc.; and often, after having suffered much from wandering of mind for the first ten minutes, or quarter of an hour, or even half an hour, I only then really began to pray. I scarcely ever suffer now in this way. For my heart being nourished by the truth, being brought into experiential fellowship with God, I speak to my Father and to my Friend (vile though I am, and unworthy of it) about the things that He has brought before me in His precious Word. It often now astonishes me that I did not sooner see this point.” - George Müller

What is Praying the Bible

**The Bible is meant to teach you how to pray**

- The Bible shows who God is.
- The Bible shows us examples of praying people.
- The Psalms is the Bible’s Prayer Book
  - “I have been accustomed to call this book, I think not inappropriately, An Anatomy of the Soul; for there is not an emotion of which anyone can be conscious that is not here represented as in a mirror.”- John Calvin

- “In the Psalter you learn about yourself. You find depicted in it all the movements of your soul, all its changes, its ups and downs, its failures and recoveries. Moreover, whatever your particular need or trouble, from this same book you can select a form of words to fit it, so that you do not merely hear and then pass on, but learn the way to remedy your ill.” – Athanasius
- Psalm 88:13-18 – *“But I, O LORD, cry to you; in the morning my prayer comes before you. <sup>14</sup> O LORD, why do you cast my soul away? Why do you hide your face from me? <sup>15</sup> Afflicted and close to death from my youth up, I suffer your terrors; I am helpless. <sup>16</sup> Your wrath has swept over me; your dreadful assaults destroy me. <sup>17</sup> They surround me like a flood all day long; they close in on me together. <sup>18</sup> You have caused my beloved and my friend to shun me; my companions have become darkness.”*
- Psalm 42:1-5 – *“As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. <sup>2</sup> My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? <sup>3</sup> My tears have been my food day and night, while they say to me all the day long, “Where is your God?” <sup>4</sup> These things I remember, as I pour out my soul: how I would go with the throng and lead them in procession to the house of God with glad shouts and songs of praise, a multitude keeping festival. <sup>5</sup> Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation <sup>6</sup> and my God.”*
- Psalm 145:1-6 – *“I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever. <sup>2</sup> Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever. <sup>3</sup> Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable. <sup>4</sup> One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts. <sup>5</sup> On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate. <sup>6</sup> They shall speak of the might of your awesome deeds, and I will declare your greatness.*
- “You’ll never go through anything in life in which the root emotion is not found in one or more of the Psalms. Thus the Psalms put into expression that which is looking for expression in our hearts.”- Donald Whitney
- “Scripture’s prayers, especially the psalms, are prayers we can and should take on our lips. We can pray through Scripture. It’s part of learning how to pray.” - Daniel Brendsel

### **Prayer is responding in a conversation God starts through His Word**

- “True prayer is communicative and relational. Prayer is not a strategy or mechanism to get things done. It is not a magical incantation to control the outcome of events. It is not thinking the right thoughts. It is part of a dialogue. Any growth in the life of prayer is necessarily a maturing in relationship with the one whom we would address in prayer.” - Daniel Brendsel

- “Prayer is continuing a conversation that God has started through his Word and his grace, which eventually becomes a full encounter with him.” – Timothy Keller
- “As creatures, we don’t mainly “dial him up,” like even pagans are prone to...The true God speaks first. He initiates. He tells us about himself, and about ourselves as his creatures, and about the world he made, and his Son and Spirit. And prayer is our response to God in light of what he has revealed to us.”  
- David Mathis
- “The Bible is a letter God has sent to us, prayer is a letter we send to him.” – Matthew Henry
- “Be much with God in holy dialogue, letting Him speak to you by His Word, while you speak back to Him by your prayers and praise.” – Charles Spurgeon

## How to Pray the Bible

### **Answering God:**

- “Prayer is not pleading with a God who is not already there to somehow show up. Prayer is not enticing a silent God to finally speak. Prayer is not mere sincerity and authenticity voiced to God, an outpouring to him of whatever we feel by instinct. Rather, prayer is always and properly our *response* to God’s initiating word and work. Or, as Eugene Peterson has put it, prayer is fundamentally and always “answering speech.” As a result, “What is essential in prayer is not that we learn to express ourselves, but that we learn to answer God.” - Daniel J. Brendsel
- Read → Study → Meditate → Pray
- Meditation is the “bridge” between Bible study and prayer.
  - "The great reason why our prayers are ineffectual, is because we do not meditate before them." - William Bates
  - "The word feedeth meditation, and meditation feedeth prayer...What we take in by the word we digest by meditation and let out by prayer." - Thomas Manton
  - Meditation is the best beginning of prayer, and prayer is the best conclusion of meditation. – George Swinnock
  - "Begin with reading or hearing. Go on with meditation; end in prayer." - William Bridge
- “First he speaks to us in his word, and we welcome what he has to say. We listen. We linger over it. We meditate on it. And then, once we have heard him all the way through, then we respond in prayer. We reverently “talk back” in the wonder we call prayer...Prayer is not only meditation’s handmaid but also its apex. We not only pray that God will give us eyes to see, but also once we have seen, and been aptly moved by his words, we respond back to him in adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication.” - David Mathis

Hebrews 1:1-3 – “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, <sup>2</sup> but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. <sup>3</sup> He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high”

- What is God saying through His Word?
  
- How can We Respond in Prayer?

#### **A.C.T.S.:**

Read → Study → Meditate → Pray (A.C.T.S.)

- Adoration – What can I Adore about God?
- Confession – Is there a Sin to Confess?
- Thanksgiving – How can I Thank God?
- Supplication – Any Requests to make?

Matthew 28:18-20 – “And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

- Adoration:
  
- Confession:
  
- Thanksgiving:
  
- Supplication:

## **Praying with Paul:**

1 Thessalonians 3:11-13 – *“Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you, <sup>12</sup> and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, <sup>13</sup> so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.”*

Colossians 1:9-14 – *“And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, <sup>10</sup> so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; <sup>11</sup> being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; <sup>12</sup> giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. <sup>13</sup> He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, <sup>14</sup> in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”*

Ephesians 1:15-23 – *“For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, <sup>16</sup> I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, <sup>17</sup> that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, <sup>18</sup> having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, <sup>19</sup> and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might <sup>20</sup> that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, <sup>21</sup> far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. <sup>22</sup> And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, <sup>23</sup> which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.”*

Ephesians 3:14-21 – *“For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, <sup>15</sup> from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, <sup>16</sup> that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, <sup>17</sup> so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, <sup>18</sup> may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, <sup>19</sup> and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. <sup>20</sup> Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, <sup>21</sup> to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”*

## Praying the Psalms:

### Approach #1 – Responding to God

- Take the overall message of the Psalm and respond in prayer.
- Psalm 27:1-5 - *“The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? <sup>2</sup> When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh, my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall. <sup>3</sup> Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident. <sup>4</sup> One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple.”*

### Approach #2 – “Enter into” the Psalm

- Make the Psalmists words your own words.
- Psalm 103:1-12 – *“Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! <sup>2</sup> Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, <sup>3</sup> who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, <sup>4</sup> who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, <sup>5</sup> who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. <sup>6</sup> The LORD works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed. <sup>7</sup> He made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the people of Israel. <sup>8</sup> The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. <sup>9</sup> He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever. <sup>10</sup> He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. <sup>11</sup> For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; <sup>12</sup> as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.”*
- Psalm 63:1-8 – *“O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. <sup>2</sup> So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. <sup>3</sup> Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you. <sup>4</sup> So I will bless you as long as I live; in your name I will lift up my hands. <sup>5</sup> My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips, <sup>6</sup> when I remember you upon my bed, and meditate on you in the watches of the night; <sup>7</sup> for you have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I will sing for joy. <sup>8</sup> My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me.”*
- Psalm 145:1-6 – *“I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever. <sup>2</sup> Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever. <sup>3</sup> Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable. <sup>4</sup> One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts. <sup>5</sup> On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate. <sup>6</sup> They shall speak of the might of your awesome deeds, and I will declare your greatness.”*

### Approach #3 – Pray what the Spirit brings to mind as you read a Psalm

- “Praying the Bible means talking to God about what comes to mind as you read the Bible. Usually you might read the passage first, then go back and pray through what you just read...So, for instance, if today you turned to Psalm 23 in your devotional reading, after completing it you would come back to verse 1 and pray about what occurs to you as you read “The Lord is my shepherd.” You might thank the Lord for being your shepherd, ask him to shepherd you in a decision that’s before you, entreat him to cause your children to love him as their shepherd too, and pray anything else that comes to mind as you consider Psalm 23:1. Then, when nothing else in those words prompts prayer, you continue by doing the same with the next line, “I shall not want.” And on and on you go through the psalm, line-by-line, until you run out of time.” – Donald Whitney

### Praying Scripture for Parkway and her Members:

- Acts 2:42-47 – *“And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. <sup>43</sup> And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. <sup>44</sup> And all who believed were together and had all things in common. <sup>45</sup> And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. <sup>46</sup> And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”*
- Matthew 28:18-20 – *“And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*
- Galatians 5:22-25 – *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. <sup>24</sup> And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. <sup>25</sup> If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.”*
- Colossians 3:1-4 – *“If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. <sup>3</sup> For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup> When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.”*