



THE GATHERING WELL

PRAYER IN PRACTICE

A KNOWING JESUS GROWTH GUIDE



PRAYER IN PRACTICE

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 tells us that God's will for us is that we would **rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and give thanks in all circumstances** as a result of being in Christ Jesus.

01 REJOICE ALWAYS

02 PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

03 GIVE THANKS IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES



THE HEART OF *knowing Jesus*

The Gathering Well uses these three focus areas of Spiritual Formation to support our approach to the journey of faith.



BEGIN WITH PRAYER

Communication with God is our starting point. Any resources with this icon are designed to support and equip you to pray, using Scripture as our primary lens and providing questions and prompts to encourage you to talk with God consistently.



STUDY THE BIBLE

All of our resources are anchored in the truth of God's Word. This icon will indicate spaces where you will engage the Scriptures. We seek to provide educational resources and tools that will help God's Word come alive to you.



BUILD COMMUNITY

We believe that the life of faith is expressed in community, not isolation. Resources and prompts marked with this icon are geared toward reminding you that we are designed to be in relationship with God *and* with others.

REJOICE ALWAYS

The Greek word for rejoice is **chairó** (khah'-ee-ro) which literally means to be “favorably disposed to God's grace” and is most similar to the word *joy*. The word “disposed” can be defined as “willing.” So our definition of rejoicing will be: to be willingly filled with God's joy.

We are not always willing to rejoice.

Our circumstances and our lives are not always filled with beauty, majesty, or splendor. Often, we are faced with challenges, hardship, and suffering. This might be why God's will for us is that we would rejoice always. Because we will not always *want* to.



Grow your willingness to rejoice by identifying the glimpses of hope and joy in your circumstance and REJOICE over them. What can you rejoice in today?

We are not always filled with God's joy.

When life circumstances are steady and we aren't in the depths of despair, we are tempted to be “good, fine, OK, or just busy.” The joy of the Lord is muzzled by the mundane. This might be why God's will for us is that we would rejoice always. Because we will not always be filled with God's joy.



Grow in being filled with God's joy by reflecting on how you respond to God and others in the mundane moments of everyday life. How can you respond with rejoicing today?



THE INVITATION

Consider what it means to be willingly filled with God's joy. The root of joy is not the result of circumstances changing, but of our perspective changing. Use the prompts below to help you reflect on how you can have a perspective that is rooted in gratitude.

In difficult circumstances, it can be challenging to see the good. What is something hard you are walking through this season? Name one thing you can express gratitude for that is a part of your difficult circumstance.

Sometimes it's the little things that make the biggest difference. What is a small thing you usually don't pay special attention to, that you can express gratitude for?

How can you incorporate a gratitude practice into your everyday life? (Writing down one thing each day you are grateful for, sharing something you love with someone you love, etc.)

Read Psalm 100:1-5. Write this Psalm of giving thanks in your own words.

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

The idea of constantly praying or prayer that does not stop seems impossible. Even so, we see this as God's will for us - that we would be in constant communion with Him. But how?



We are made to pray.

Read Matthew 6:5-8 below. Notice that Jesus says “when you pray” three times. Each time He emphasizes that prayer is not a suggestion or an option. It is not “if” one chooses to pray, it is understood as something that *will* happen.

*“And **when you pray**, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But **when you pray**, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. And **when you pray**, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”*

JESUS PROVIDES SOME PRINCIPLES FOR US TO CONSIDER:

- »» Do not make it about yourself or putting on a show.
- »» Do seek God in the privacy of your heart in every moment of your day.
- »» Do not try to have all of the right words put together in the right way.
- »» Do trust God to know what you need before you even ask him.

Write Matthew 6:5-8 as a personal prayer, asking God to help you pray the way Jesus outlines for us.



We are made to pray relationally.

In Matthew 6, Jesus continues with a scripted prayer to teach us how to pray. In this prayer, the first thing Jesus does is address God as Father. In this passage, Jesus is revealing the radical (at the time) claim He has as the Son of God and modeling for us the relational posture He assumes when praying. The principle we want to see in this is **we are invited to have a relationship with God and speak with him relationally**, not transactionally. How can you relationally come before God?

To pray without ceasing will take practice without ceasing. Often, we think of prayer as a one-way communication channel. However, relational prayer involves the silence and stillness of being present with God.

In addition to the traditional ideas of prayer (in the morning, at meals, during times of need, etc.), what other ways or ideas come to your mind of how you can and perhaps already pray without ceasing?

Read Philippians 4:4-9. What does this reveal about the life God wants for us?

There are many “models of prayer” that you can find today, each with a respective acronym to help guide your prayer. These are great resources and tools! What each of them will always encourage you to do is to remember that prayer is about going before a relational God who wants to hear from you, listen to you, and is present with you. Use the following model of prayer as an example on how to get started.

ACTS MODEL OF PRAYER

adoration

Adoration is the practice of praising God for who He is. What is a characteristic of God you can praise Him for?

confession

Confession is the practice of bringing our sin before the Lord and asking for forgiveness. What is something you can confess to the Lord?

thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is the practice of thanking God for what He has done in your life. What is something you can thank God for in this season?

supplication

Supplication is the practice of bringing requests before the Lord and asking for His divine help. What is something you need God's help with this season?

GIVE THANKS IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES

God's will for us is a result of **being in Christ**. The theology of being *in Christ* is essential to your prayer life because it is what cultivates prayer as a partnership with God. Because we are in Christ and, as a result, in relationship with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit – we are invited into what God is doing through the act and gift of prayer. This is why we can give thanks in all circumstances because in all circumstances, **we are in Christ**.



Read Galatians 3:25-29. Based on these verses, how would you describe being "in Christ"?



Ask the Lord to reveal to you one or two challenging circumstances to give thanks in. How does the truth that you are in Christ help you see your circumstances differently?



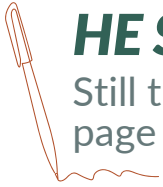
YOUR TURN!

Read John 15:4-17 and work through the questions.

Based on what you see in this passage, what does it mean to abide?

What commandments is Jesus inviting us to keep in John 15:12-13? What reason does He give for keeping these commandments?

How does abiding with or being in Christ help you to give thanks in all circumstances?



HE SEES ME HERE

Still thinking? Still reflecting? Have questions? Here you go: use this page as you wish for your own prayers and musings.

A large rectangular area filled with a light gray dot grid pattern, intended for writing or drawing.



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(psst... its free)

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THE GATHERING WELL

Helping Everyday People Become Everyday
Leaders Who Know, Follow and Grow with Jesus.

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