

Session 7 How to Pray-Read the Word

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. “*The Word of God is the food by which prayer is nourished.*” —E. M. Bounds
- B. It is not enough just to study the Word—we are meant to talk with God as we read it. Bible study is meant to create an active dialogue in our hearts with God. One way in which we gain strength in our prayer lives is by feeding on the Word through engaging in conversation with God as we read it.
- C. Scripture gives us the conversational material for our prayer lives. Talking to God as we read the Word makes prayer easy and enjoyable. We speak the truths of the Word back to God as we read.
- D. ***God’s Word will abide in you.*** Great change will surely come in the spiritual life of any believer who continues to abide in Jesus by speaking to Him as they read the Word. Over time, God’s words will abide, or live, in their heart and will affect their prayer life as Jesus promised (Jn. 15:7).
⁷***“If you abide in Me, and My words abide [live] in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.” (Jn. 15:7)***
 - 1. God’s Word living in us will cause new, godly desires to be formed in us, which will make us more sensitive to the Spirit’s leading, including which prayers we choose to pray.
 - 2. The Scriptures living in our heart will impact our mind and emotions; thus our prayer life will be more in unity with God’s heart and will for our life.
 - 3. Prayer will become enjoyable and more effective as the Word abides more in our heart.

II. TWO CATEGORIES OF SCRIPTURE TO PRAY-READ

- A. There are two broad categories of Scripture related to pray-reading the Word—***promises to believe*** and ***exhortations to obey***.
- B. Category #1: **Promises to believe**
 - 1. When we come across a *promise to believe* while reading the Word, we turn it into conversation with Jesus. There are many verses with promises to believe, such as “God loves His people” and “God forgives us” and “God will provide for and guide us.”
 - 2. **I encourage you to do two things when talking to God about a *promise to believe*.** First, thank God for that truth; second, ask the Spirit to give you more understanding of it.

3. **First, we thank God for a particular truth—turn it into a declaration of thanksgiving or trust.** For example, when reading that Jesus loves you as the Father loves Him, pray, “*Thank You, Jesus, that You love me with the same intensity with which the Father loves You.*”
⁹“As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.” (Jn. 15:9)
4. **Second, we ask God for more understanding of a specific truth.** For example, while reading that Jesus loves you as the Father loves Him, pray, “*Jesus, give me more understanding about how You love me with the same intensity with which the Father loves You.*”

C. Category #2: **Exhortations to obey**

1. When we read *exhortations to obey* in the Word, we turn them into conversation with Jesus, just as we do with God’s promises. Many verses *exhort us to obey* related to our time, money, speech, work, attitudes, food, drink, eyes, sexuality, service, relationships, etc.
2. Jesus exhorted His people to abide in His love. Obeying Him in this involves dwelling on, or focusing on, His love—searching it out and going deep in understanding it.
⁹“As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.” (Jn. 15:9)
3. I encourage you to do two things I do when talking to God about an *exhortation to obey*. First, I commit myself to obey that truth; second, I ask the Holy Spirit to help me.
4. **First, we commit to obey a truth—we make simple declarations of our resolve to obey it.** In this case we pray, “*Jesus, I commit to abide in and focus on Your love. I set my heart to study and search out this truth from Your Word and to live in it.*”
5. **Second, we ask God to empower us to obey the particular truth.** We ask Him to help us by giving us wisdom, motivation, and power to obey in specific areas. For example, when reading that we are to abide in love, simply pray, “*Jesus, help me to abide in Your love.*”

III. BENEFITS OF PRAY-READING

- A. When you pray the Word, you and the Spirit flow together, resulting in Him teaching you in a way that is tailor-made for your life. When you talk to God while reading the Word, you say new things to God. It is the Spirit speaking through you, giving new insights—ones coming from your mouth.
²⁷But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things... (1 Jn. 2:27)
- B. Take time to journal—to record your thoughts and prayers as you pray-read the Bible. Journaling will help you capture the truths the Spirit gives you and develop language to talk with God.