

Lesson 3 – The Art of Praying

John 17: 20-21

Jesus said “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word. That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”

Jesus prayed.

We have 4 circles of influence in our lives, and they can be divided into 4 categories.

1. Friends
2. Family
3. Workplace
4. Neighborhood

As you pray daily, make it a point to specifically pray for a harvest in these 4 areas of your life. As you begin to see results in the lives of the people you pray for, you’re going to discover that the results you’re seeing are not the primary benefit of your prayers.

The biggest personal impact of these prayers is going to be how they change you.

When you realize how hard it is to change yourself, you’ll realize it’s impossible to change anyone else.

Convicting and saving is God’s job. My job is to bring it Him in prayer, and He’ll do the rest. Before we can talk to people about God, we need to talk to God about people.

Matthew 18:18 says whatsoever you bind on earth will be bound in Heaven. Whatsoever you loose on earth will be loosed in Heaven. Your prayer can move Heaven and Earth!

To understand what God is doing in others’ lives and what our role might be, we can ask him three key questions to start with.

1. God where are you already at work?
2. God what does this person need right now?
3. God how can I invite this person to experience Jesus in a fresh way?

When you ask God these few simple questions - Where? What? and How? You get to participate in God’s work, not your work. This type of intentional prayer for people opens up the door for interactions that point to Jesus.

As you pray for people in various circles of your life, keep 3 goals in view:

1. Make your prayers personal
2. Make your prayers purposeful
3. Make your prayers a priority

When we pray specifically and personally, our hearts are opened in a way that doesn't happen when we pray generally.

Luke 22:31-32

Jesus tells Simon Peter that he prayed personally for him. Jesus said Simon, Simon, Satan has desired to sift you as wheat but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail.

When we pray personally, then purposefully for our families, our friends, our co-workers and neighbors, our interactions with them become more deliberate and more meaningful.

Praying is a secret act of love to others as we intercede on their behalf and as we partner with God for their good.

And thirdly and lastly, we need to make prayer a priority. When it comes to loving people toward Jesus, prayer is not optional. It's the way you shift from relying on your own abilities to relying on God's power and making disciples.

The Bible says the flesh is enmity against God. Enmity means actively hostile. Your flesh is actively hostile. It's actively opposed to God.

The reason I've got to prioritize is I want to the harvest! I want to see the harvest in my family! I want to see the harvest in my friends, my co-workers and my neighbors.

Let's practice the Art of Praying!