

(A Good Foundation) 8. God's Word and Prayer

by Zac Poonen

God's Word and prayer are essential for our spiritual growth, and they are the keys to overcoming Satan's attacks and fulfilling God's plan for our lives.

Scripture: Psalm 1:2, Psalm 119:11, Matthew 11:25, Luke 18:1, John 7:17, Ephesians 6:17, Hebrews 5:7, Hebrews 6:1, Revelation 12:11

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Prayer Life"

Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of spiritual nourishment and growth, likening it to a newborn baby's need for food and air. He highlights the significance of God's Word as our spiritual food and prayer as our vital breath, essential for our spiritual development. Poonen stresses the need to move from 'milk' to 'solid food' in our understanding of the Bible, depending on our obedience to God's light. He explains that a pure heart, humility, and obedience are key to receiving revelation and understanding God's Word, as Jesus taught. Additionally, Poonen discusses the power of God's Word as a weapon against Satan, encouraging believers to use Scripture to overcome the enemy's accusations and temptations.

Transcript

The two things that a new-born baby needs on birth, are food and air. It's exactly the same with those who experience a spiritual birth. The newborn child of God needs to eat and to breathe.

God's Word is to be his food, and prayer is to be his vital breath.

God's Word - Our Spiritual Food

A child needs milk to start with, but he needs solid food later on. The Bible contains both milk and solid food. The milk is called "the elementary teaching about the Christ" (Hebrews 6:1); and the solid food is called "the word of righteousness" (Hebrews 5:13).

How soon we move on to solid food, depends on how quickly we obey any light that God gives us.

Our spiritual growth is dependent on faith and obedience.

God has given us promises in His Word so that we can trust Him. He has also given us commands to obey. If we meditate on God's Word regularly and trust and obey Him we will find that we are deeply rooted in God, like an evergreen tree that never withers. God will then be able to bless us in such a way that we prosper in everything we do (Psalm 1:2, 3).

We can't understand God's Word by intellectual study alone. We need the revelation of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said that spiritual truths were hidden from the clever and the intelligent and revealed to babes (Matthew 11:25).

What do babes have, that clever, intelligent people don't have?

A pure heart!

God looks at the heart and not at the head. He gives revelation to those who are humble and who tremble at His Word (Isaiah 66:2).

Jesus said that only those who were willing to do the will of God would understand God's Word (John 7:17).

God's Word - The Sword of the Spirit

God's Word is also the weapon that we use in our warfare against Satan.

It is called "the sword of the Spirit" in Ephesians 6:17.

Jesus Himself used this weapon with great effect, during the last three temptations in the wilderness. Each time, he countered Satan's temptations with "It is written...." (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10).

That's how He overcame; and that's how we can overcome too.

Satan is the Accuser. We must distinguish between his accusations and the conviction of the Holy Spirit. Satan always seeks to harass us and make us feel condemned by his accusations. The Holy Spirit's conviction, on the other hand, is always gentle and full of hope.

We can overcome the Accuser only by "the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony" (Revelation 12:11). His accusations concerning our past sins can be overcome only as we give him our testimony that the blood of Christ has cleansed us and justified us thoroughly. We have to use the same weapon that Jesus used: "It is written....."

Confessing God's Word to Satan is the way to overcome not only Satan's accusations, but also discouragement and anxiety and a host of other temptations with which Satan assails our mind.

That's why it is important to know God's Word well, so that the Holy Spirit can bring to our mind the right Scripture at the time of our need.

It is good therefore to have a time every day when we meditate on God's Word asking Him to speak to us. As we hide God's Word in our heart, it will keep us from sinning against Him (Psalm 119:11).

God's Plan for Our Lives

God has a perfect plan for our lives. And He wants to guide us into fulfilling it. The most blessed life that we can ever live on earth is one in which we fulfil that plan completely. In choosing a career or in marriage, how wonderful it is to know that God has already charted a course for us to take! If we choose His way, we can avoid the many pitfalls that Satan has lined up for us. It is through His Word primarily, that God guides us into that plan.

Finding the will of God is an exhaustive subject and has been covered more fully in my book entitled 'FINDING GOD'S WILL'.

Approaching marriage in a spiritual way has been covered in another book of mine entitled 'SEX, LOVE & MARRIAGE - The Christian Approach'.

Prayer - Speaking to God

Communication with God is a two-way matter. We hear God speaking to us through His Word first. And then we speak to Him.

But prayer is not just making requests to God. A primary part of prayer should be having fellowship with God, like a bride with her bridegroom.

There are no rules on how a bride should speak to her bridegroom.

But as a discipline, it's good for our prayers to consist of:

praise to our Father for Who He is;

confession of sin and failure;

petitions concerning the kingdom of God;

petitions concerning our own needs;

intercession for the needs of others;

thanksgiving for what God has done; and

thanksgiving for what God will do.

Jesus told us to "pray at all times" (Luke 18:1).

A good habit to develop is to learn to speak to God about the little things of daily life - and thus to be in a spirit of prayer throughout the day. Thus, speaking to God will become a joy for us and not a ritual. We'll also find that God speaks to us in our hearts in surprising ways.

But these are just the kindergarten-lessons in the school of prayer. We can progress further if we are faithful.

In any case, prayer should never be allowed to degenerate into a dry, empty ritual. Prayer is like breathing. When our breathing becomes difficult for us, then we know that something is wrong! Prayer was never meant by God to be dry or boring.

But as we progress, we will find that prayer becomes hard work. If we are faithful with the little burdens God lays on our heart to pray about, we'll find that God gives us more and more of His burdens. Thus we can become co-workers with God, in His work of blessing others.

Jesus prayed 'with loud crying and tears' (Hebrews 5:7). Once when He prayed in Gethsemane, His sweat became like great drops of blood (Luke 22:44). His praying was so intense.

Once He spent a whole night in prayer (Luke 6:12). He had a habit of slipping off frequently into the wilderness to pray (Luke 5:16). As someone has said "Like tourists look for sights to see, whenever they come to a new place, Jesus always looked for a quiet place to pray wherever He went."

Jesus' example shows us how important prayer is. If He needed to pray so much, how much more you and I need to.

Fight the battle against laziness then, and determine to be a man/woman of prayer at any cost.

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