

TEACHING FOCUS:

PRAYER IS A PRIVILEGE FOR CHRISTIANS AND IT CAN BE A POWERFUL FORCE FOR BELIEVERS.

PURPOSE:

STUDENTS SHOULD COME AWAY FROM THIS LESSON MOTIVATED TO PRAY FOR OTHERS.

INTRODUCTION

Activity: "I Need a Candy Bar!"

Ask for a volunteer in the group who is really hungry and likes candy bars. Now ask for a second volunteer who is not easily talked into doing things. Give a candy bar to Volunteer #2 and tell him or her to make it extremely hard on Volunteer #1. Tell Volunteer #1 to beg for the candy bar as if it was the last candy bar on earth. After some begging, ask the group how good the begging is – usually not good enough. Allow some time for more begging. Finally, ask Volunteer #2 to give in and hand the candy bar over. Ask Volunteer #2 how long he or she would have made Volunteer #1 beg before handing the candy bar over.

What does this crazy activity have to do with prayer? We will discover the answer to that in just a minute.

The freedom to pray is alive and well. An adult cannot lead students to pray in public school anymore, but students have the freedom to talk to God wherever they go. Like one parent told me, "As long as there are pop tests, there will be prayer in school." As Christians we are called on to "pray without ceasing." Since we have a relationship with God through Christ, we can talk to God about anything (including, but not limited to, pop tests), anytime.

The freedom to pray is a privilege Christians often take for granted. According to George Barna, the average Christian spends more time watching television in one evening than he or she spends reading the Bible and praying during the entire week. (Detour Note: Read Luke 5:16 & Mark 1:35– If Jesus often went off by himself to pray, how often should we get alone to pray?) We have the freedom to pray. The tragedy is, most Christians don't use that freedom. Christians must return to the discipline of prayer.

Most of us know we should pray for our nation, our president, our military, our local politicians, our teachers, our parents, our pastors, not to mention, our lost friends. Most of us know we should pray, but some just don't know how or the motivation to pray just isn't there. Let's look at some practical tips about praying for others.

Three Practical Tips About Prayer

1. BE PERSISTENT.

Who will read Luke 18:1-8?

"Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up He said: 'In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.' For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she

gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!' And the Lord said, 'Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?' (Luke 18:1-8)

Illustration: I met a guy who told me that he had given up on praying for America. I asked him why and he told me that he had prayed for an entire week and nothing happened. What's wrong with that kind of attitude?

Illustration: Think about the activity we did to start this lesson and also think about Luke 18:1-8. In this passage, Jesus tells a story about two people. The first person is a judge who was a lot like volunteer #1. He could care less about the needs of other people and this judge did not even care about God or what God wanted him to do. The second person is a poor widow who was a lot like volunteer #2. She kept pleading and appealing and basically would not leave the judge alone. Because the poor widow kept bothering the judge and begging him, he finally honored her request.

Question: Jesus told the story in Luke 18:1-8 for one very specific reason, can you find it?

Answer: Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. (Luke 18:1)

Question: In Luke 18, a guy who doesn't care about God or other people does something for a lady who keeps asking him. How much more willing is God who cares about you and all of the people you pray for willing to intervene in your life?

Answer: God hears your prayers, cares about your needs, and responds to your requests.

How many consecutive days have you ever prayed for a national leader?

How many consecutive days have you ever prayed for someone to be saved?

"I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. "
(1 Tim 2:1-4)

Who does God want us to pray for? (everyone, kings - political leaders) Who are "all those in authority over us?" When is the last time you prayed for your family? This nation is only as strong as the family. Pray for your parents. When you pray for someone, you are obeying God.

Pray for those in authority in your life. Pray for this country. Pray for the lost. Don't give up and don't give in. Be persistent.

2. BE confident.

Who will read Hebrews 4:16 for us?

"Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (Hebrews 4:16)

How confident are you that God will answer your prayers in a powerful way?

Illustration: "Where am I?"

Explosions, walls collapsing, weapons everywhere, things being demolished... (in a war zone, watching a war movie, playing the latest video game, watching a drug bust on TV)

Would you believe me if I told you – in the middle of a youth group's prayer time?

Who will read 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 for us?

"For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

When you pray, you are involved in spiritual warfare.

"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." (Ephesians 6:12)

As Christians, we are not waging war against flesh and blood or against physical or material things, but against spiritual forces that lie behind the evils of the world, unbelief and arguments against God.

Our prayer is that arguments and pretensions that wage war in the hearts and minds of people would be demolished so they can see the Truth and experience God's love.

Quote: People can laugh at our beliefs or make fun of our faith, but they are defenseless against our prayers.

Our prayers are described as weapons. Prayer unleashes "divine power." You can **be confident** that your prayers can turn the hearts of people to God.

3. BE SPECIFIC.**Who will read Romans 10:1 for us?**

"Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved." (Romans 10:1)

In this verse, what is Paul's specific prayer?

When we pray, we must not say, bless all of the missionaries or bless all of the politicians. We need to specifically pray for their hearts and their decisions.

What are some specific things we can pray for those in authority over us?

(Pray that God would protect and guide them, God would bless them and their families, their hearts would be open to God's leadership, their minds would discern the truth, their decisions would side with justice, etc.)

Pray for people by name.

Have you ever prayed for the president by name?

Have you ever prayed for a Supreme Court Justice by name?

Have you ever prayed for anyone in Congress by name?

Have you ever prayed for a lost friend by name?

List three politicians you can pray for that represent your state or district.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



List three people you can pray for who are not saved yet:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Example of specific prayer based on the Bible:

Holy Spirit, please convict _____ of his/her sin and need for You. (John 16:7-8)

★ ★ ★ CONCLUSION

What do you expect to happen if you are persistent in praying for your lost friends?

Illustration: I heard a story one time about a young girl who wrote a letter to a missionary. It was a prayer letter and she was trying to lend her support to the missionary. Evidently she'd been told not to request a response to her letter because the missionaries were very busy. So the missionary laughed after reading her letter. It said, "Dear Mr. Missionary, we are praying for you. But we are not expecting an answer."

I think that little girl summarized the prayers lives of most Christians. We may pray, but if we are honest, we often don't expect an answer. Let us expect God to answer our prayers for America. We have the freedom to pray with persistence and confidence specifically for the leaders of our nation. (From the president to our parents and everyone in between.)

NOTE: The following page is a handout to give to your students to follow along during the session.

 **INTRODUCTION**

“I Need a Candy Bar”

 **Three Practical Tips About Prayer**

1. BE _____. (Luke 18:1-8)

“Pray for a whole week.”

How many consecutive days have you ever prayed for a national leader? _____

How many consecutive days have you ever prayed for someone to be saved? _____

2. BE _____. (Hebrews 4:16)

“Where am I?”

3. BE _____. (Romans 10:1)

Pray for people _____.

List three politicians you can pray for that represent America, your state or district.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

List three people you can pray for who are not saved yet:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

