

Lesson 12 / November, 2009

Prayer Always Perseveres

for use as

STEP 1

Lesson 12

Focus:

Keep on praying.

Lesson 12

Bible Basis:

Genesis 18:17-33

Lesson 12

Memory Verse

I urge, then, first of all,
that requests, prayers,
intercession and
thanksgiving be made
for everyone.

—1 Timothy 2:1

Students will discern between self-centered and God-centered prayers as they study the model of Abraham.

Materials:





- a computer with Internet access (optional)

Prayer. Ancient mystics loved it, orthodox believers practice it, and authors love to write about it. Its methods have been interpreted by pagans, Eastern religions, mainstream denominations, and followers of Jesus Christ. It's not surprising that teenagers—especially those without a strong biblical background—can be confused by prayer and all its variations. Is it an insurance policy? A back-up plan? A comforting bit of fluff in times of stress? Or is it something else entirely?

While statistics vary, most reports indicate that between 70 and 80 percent of Americans pray at least once a week—and teens perhaps even more often. If so, it is even more important that the Bible is the template for understanding prayer.

As you begin this week's lesson, show your students one or more cartoons from "The Back Pew" website: [http://thebackpew.com/backpew/walk_prayer.htm]. If you do not have Internet access, print out copies of the cartoons for your students before class.

Have your students ever been tempted to treat prayer as it's depicted in one of the cartoons? (the spare-tire prayer, the drive-thru prayer, the phone prayer, etc.) As you show each one, ask your students one or more of the following questions:

-  **What type of prayer is this cartoon depicting?**
-  **What makes this kind of prayer so tempting? What does it tell us about human nature?**
-  **Is this sort of prayer biblical? How does it misrepresent God?**
-  **How would you live your life differently if prayer operated the way it's depicted here?**

In today's lesson, your students will study Abraham's persistence in prayer, showing them that, unlike self-centered or "quickie" prayers, perseverance and trust affect our prayers over a lifetime of intimacy with God.

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your *High School Teacher's Guide*; Step 4 appears below.)

Lesson 12 / November, 2009

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STEP 4

Lesson 12 Focus:

Keep on praying.

Lesson 12 Bible Basis:

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Lesson 12 Memory Verse

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—1 Timothy 2:1

This activity will help your students consider the very real conditions that prompt prayer in their own lives.

Start by dividing the class into several small groups. The number of groups depends on the size of your class. It might be best to have no more than four in each group.

Provide each group with a sheet of paper and assign a scribe to write down the group's answers. Explain to the groups that for each type of prayer you mention, they are to write down a specific example from their own lives where they used this type of prayer. Let them know that there are no right or wrong answers here—just a chance to discuss situations where prayer is not only encouraged but necessary to a life of faith. (Perhaps give them a time limit for each one, simply to keep each group from drifting off topic or lapsing into gossip.)

A “never-quit” prayer—something you might pray for over many years.

An intercessory prayer for someone you don't like.

A prayer of gratitude.

An “I'm scared” prayer during times of stress.

A prayer right out of the Bible.

A plea for forgiveness; a prayer of honest confession.

A worshipful prayer—the kind that might happen spontaneously.

An honest request on behalf of someone you love.

After you've given the groups time to discuss each one, consider opening up the discussion to the larger group. As with any lesson, it is always appropriate to close in prayer.

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