

Name: _____

Date: _____

Christian Leadership

How to influence the ideas, opinions and actions of others for Jesus Christ.

Lesson 9: Prayer of a Leader (Day One) Diamond in the Rough

A praying Christian leader is like an exquisite, brilliant, living diamond. When a diamond is cut with precision and polished with care it can catch light and make it sparkle. However, when we look at the gemstone, we don't usually think of the slow and systematic process that it took to make it so stunning. This is true of the praying leader who sparkles forth the light of Christ. We don't usually think of the deliberate and consistent practice this leader has gone through in spending quality time with God.

The process of making a diamond into a beautiful stone begins with the master diamond cutter choosing a diamond in the rough. A diamond in the rough (pronounced ruf) refers to an uncut or rough diamond. It is not polished but looks like a clear or crystal rock. The expression itself has come to mean something that has a rough exterior that hides something valuable on the inside. God, the Master Diamond Cutter, begins the process of making an individual into a praying leader by looking for those "diamonds in the rough." That is, those hearts that have a rough exterior but with something precious inside.

People do have stony hearts that resemble a diamond in its extreme hardness. In fact, our hearts are so impenetrable (cannot enter or pierce) that it is *only* through the Master's hand that we can be transformed. Just like a laser saws into this hardest of natural materials, so the Spirit can saw into the human heart.

Unlike the diamond however, the human heart must respond to the Master. When the Master is ready to begin the process, He gives His subject the opportunity to believe. This is the moment of truth. The moment of the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ.¹ The heart's positive response will be **prayer**. The subject or the person will tell God that he believes and trusts Jesus as Savior and Lord. It is with this first **prayer** of salvation that you and I are on our way to becoming a valuable, brilliant, and living diamond.

1. What thoughts come to your mind when you think of yourself as a valuable, brilliant, and living diamond? _____

¹ The Bible does not tell us how many opportunities God will give a person to believe.

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You are of great worth to God and He desires to be in fellowship with you (1 Corinthians 1:9). God loves you and has called you to shine in this world (Philippians 2:15). Prayer is not only the means of companionship with God, it is also the means by which you are able to live a life worthy of the Lord and produce good fruit (Colossians 1:9-10).

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. ^{NIV} Mark 1:35

2. According to Mark 1:35 when did Jesus, our Leadership Model pray? _____

But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed. ^{NIV} Luke 5:16

3. Read Luke 5:16 and Mark 1:35. What kind of places did Jesus go to when he prayed and why is this a good pattern for you? _____

So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me." ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me." ^{NIV} John 11:41-42

4. Did Jesus pray out loud in John 11:41-42? Yes No (Circle one) Considering that Jesus prayed alone and with others, what does this tell you about your own prayer life?

5. In John 11:41 Jesus said, "Father, I _____ you that you have _____ me.

6. In John 11:42 Jesus prayed, "I knew that you _____ hear me."

Jesus showed us that prayer is our means to connect and relate to God while alone and while with others. **Jesus was confident that God heard his prayers and that he would answer.** God wants you to be confident in Christ that your prayers are heard and will be answered according to His will. Confidence brings answers and shows that you trust in God's faithfulness and honor. A leader must pray in faith and believe God is listening and that He will act perfectly and powerfully all the time. Faithless prayers will not be answered (James 1:6-8). They are an affront (intentional insult) to God's own faithfulness and sovereignty.

7. Why do you think God wants you to be confident in praying to him? _____

Personal Application: Meditate and memorize 1 John 5:14-15 & Romans 12:1-2 and answer the question that follows.

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*This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.*¹⁵ *And if we know that he hears us-- whatever we ask-- we know that we have what we asked of him.*^{NIV} 1 John 5:14-15

*Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-- this is your spiritual act of worship.*² *Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-- his good, pleasing and perfect will.*^{NIV} Romans 12:1-2

How can you be confident of praying and knowing God's will? _____

Lesson 9: Prayer of a Leader (Day Two) Bruting the Heart

After sawing, the diamond enters a process call bruting whereby different shapes are produced. For the round brilliant diamond it means that it is crudely shaped into a circular form. This is done by rubbing the stone against another diamond on a high-speed lathe² specially designed for that purpose. Thus the bruter takes the rough form with its sharp edges and less than perfect shape and prepares it for its final design.³

God is the Bruter in our prayer life. He takes the misshapen heart and begins changing its form. Now the physical heart is the organ located in the center of the body that keeps the blood circulating throughout the human frame. In the Bible the heart also refers to the center of the human spirit, from which spring emotions, thoughts, motivations, courage and action.⁴

God wants us to have a pure, spiritual heart for prayer. He desires us to have holy emotions, thoughts and motivations. It may be somewhat easier when we are alone with God meditating on his Word and away from other people to be strong and positive. However, it gets more difficult when we come into contact with others who ignore, insult, mistreat or even physically harm us. These folks, strangers or family members, friends or enemies can be compared to the other diamonds that rub against us on that high-speed lathe.

God may even use the very ones that you are leading to scrape against you! God will use all the irritants in your life, both people and circumstances to refine and redirect your way of thinking. You will be changing and getting into better shape each day. Now the lifeless stone that we are using for our illustration won't feel pain on that lathe, but you, the *living* diamond most certainly will.

² Lathe is a machine for holding and turning pieces of wood or metal etc. against a tool that will shape them. Oxford American Dictionary, Ehrlich, Eugene, Oxford University Press, New York, Oxford 1980.

³ Hensley, Robert, "Insider Secrets for Diamond Shopper" article from Diamond Helpers, www.diamondhelpers.com.

⁴ Barker, Kenneth, The NIV Study Bible, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI

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"But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you."^{NIV} Luke 6:27-28

1. Read Luke 27-28. In verse 28, Jesus commands us to bless those who curse us and to

_____ for those who _____ us.

But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.⁴⁶ If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? Matthew 5:44-45

2. Read Matthew 5:44-45. In verse 44 Jesus tells us to love our enemies and _____ for those who persecute us, so that we may be _____ of our Father in heaven.

Although Jesus is God's only Divine Son, we can also be like Jesus and become a beloved son. Being a beloved son of God is the highest attainment for mankind. Yes, even a woman can become a son with all inheritance rights to serve and to rule (Galatians 3:28-19, 4:6-7, Hebrews 12:5-8). The word son does not imply that the woman becomes a male. The word son represents a Christian's position in relation to God.

In the first century patriarchal⁵ society, daughters did not have the same legal rights as sons. The law did not allow them to own or inherit property. Indeed in some cases they were considered property themselves. Thus Paul's statement, *There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.²⁹ If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise* (Galatians 3 28-29), would have been radical to his hearers.

Now being a son of God requires following the SON and doing the Father's will. Jesus shows us how a son prays. A Christian leader must be a son of God and follow the SON in prayer.

3. Share a time when someone hurt or insulted you and yet you still prayed for that person ?

4. Are you going through a difficult time now with someone that you can't seem to pray for? If so please share a few broad details and how your CLI "letter minister" may pray for you?

⁵ A patriarch is a male head of the family. A patriarchal society is one that is dominated by men.

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We must be on constant guard to keep our emotions in check. Understand that the mind must be disciplined just like the body. When you were a baby, you had no control over your hands, feet or even bodily functions. You really couldn't do anything for yourself. The idea of being in that stage again would be terrifying for most people.

The mind has to be disciplined just as rigorously as the body so that holy, pure and righteous thoughts are natural. God cares about the way we think and our thoughts will be judged (Matthew 5:27-30, Acts 8:22). Your aim or goal is to always think the way Christ thinks.

When you think like Christ, you will also pray like Christ. *For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.* Matthew 12:34b. Speak to God with an overflow of holiness, purity and righteousness. *Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.* Proverbs 4:23 A wellspring is the source or origin of a stream. Thus from your heart, you will pray prayers of life for yourself and others.

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 10:5

6. According to 2 Corinthians 10:5, is it possible to take captive every thought and make it obedient to Christ? Y N (Circle one)

7. Why are obedient thoughts to Christ important to your prayer life? _____

8. What are some practical ways that you can train and discipline yourself to take every thought captive so that your prayers are pure and acceptable to God? _____

Watching what goes into your mind is a good practical way to start disciplining your mind. Read Christian books and watch movies that honor Christ. If you are having a problem with a particular subject such as praying for you enemies or unforgiveness, search the Scriptures and immerse your mind with what the Bible says about those subjects. The concordance⁶ and subject index in the back of study Bibles are helpful.

Don't read, listen, or watch anything that perpetuates wrong thinking. This is war against the powers of darkness who want to trick and manipulate you into having their agenda on your mind instead of God's. Walk away from unhealthy gossip, talk or joking. Remember you are the leader and not the follower. If you are laughed at or take persecution for it, be joyful for great is your reward in heaven (Matthew 5:10-12).

⁶ A concordance is an index of the important words used in a book or an author's writings. Ehrlich, Eugene, Oxford American Dictionary, Oxford University Press, 1980, New York, Oxford, 1980.

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Pray and ask for prayer. A leader is humble and will ask for prayer from other devoted Christians in their struggle for righteousness. You need back-up. Bear in mind that you are not fighting this battle alone.

"For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ. 1 Corinthians 2:16

9. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 2:16 that we have the _____ of Christ.

I was going through a particularly hard time emotionally. Someone very close to me had hurt me. I was feeling rejected, unloved and certainly unappreciated. It was difficult not to nurse my self-righteous and poor-me attitude. In the midst of my personal storm I was seeking God. I did not like nor did I want to have these negative feelings. But it was so hard!!

As I read that I had the mind of Christ, I started saying that to myself each day. *I have the mind of Christ. I have the mind of Christ.* One day soon after I had said that *I have the mind of Christ*, unkind thoughts of that person crept into my mind. But my Mind of Christ called out: *"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."* Luke 23:34 (Now, I was not given the chapter and verse but I'm listing it here for your reference.) I was shocked at the forcefulness of the words in my mind. We most certainly do have the mind of Christ and we need to discipline ourselves to listen and respond.

Personal Application:

Ask God to bring to your mind someone who has mistreated you. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you Christian love for him or her and to lead you in praying for this person daily for one week. At the end of the week, please answer the following question:

What did the Lord reveal to you during the week about this person or situation? _____

Lesson 9: Prayer of a Leader (Day Three) Faceting the Heart in Prayer

After the bruting where the diamond has been roughly shaped into its round form, the next stage is faceting.⁷ This long and delicate process grinds each flat plane onto the diamond's surface. As with each stage in the diamond process, this step takes a lot of skill and patience.

⁷ A facet is one of the small plane surfaces made on a diamond through the cutting and preparation process. A round diamond usually has 58 facts or planes. Hensley, Robert, "Insider Secrets for Diamond Shopper" article from Diamond Helpers, www.diamondhelpers.com.

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The word facet was originally used in 1625 to describe the planes on the diamond. It is derived from the French word *facette* which means little face.⁸ When you look closely at a brilliant stone, you can see all the different faces or planes reflecting the light from within. In fact, that is why the 58 facets were designed. This design has proven very successful in refracting⁹ and reflecting the most light that falls upon the diamond and then back to the viewer.

God is faceting living stones so that they will also be successful in refracting and reflecting His light. There are many facets to a leader's prayer life such as prayer and fasting, prayers of praise and thanksgiving, intercession for healing, miracles, casting out demons, provision, mercy, revivals etc. Please study the Bible for examples of these and other kinds of prayer.

The first step in the faceting process is to grind the large facet at the top of the diamond. We might liken this to the time that you spend alone with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit because as a Christian leader, your personal and prayer relationship with God is first. The other facets of your prayer and indeed your leadership assignments will flow naturally out of your time with God.

But if from there you seek the LORD your God, you will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul. Deuteronomy 4:29

1. In Deuteronomy 4:29 Moses tells the Israelites that if you seek the _____ your God, you will find Him if you look for Him with all your _____ and with all your _____.
2. As a Christian leader, how are you seeking the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul?

One of the ways we seek God with all our heart and soul is to sit at His feet or in His presence as soon as we rise in the morning. We begin to look for Him with our first waking moment. God is on our mind and in our heart. We ask the **Holy Spirit to guide our prayers** (Romans 8:26) so

⁸ Online Etymology Dictionary

⁹ Refraction is commonly explained in terms of the wave theory of light and is based on the fact that light travels with greater velocity in some media than it does in others. When, for example, a ray of light traveling through air strikes the surface of a piece of glass at an oblique angle, one side of the wave front enters the glass before the other and is retarded (since light travels more slowly in glass than in air), while the other side continues to move at its original speed until it too reaches the glass. As a result, the ray bends inside the glass, i.e., the refracted ray lies in a direction closer to the normal (the perpendicular to the boundary of the media) than does the incident ray. A light ray entering a different medium is called the incident ray; after bending, the ray is called the refracted ray. The speed at which a given transparent medium transmits light waves is related to its optical density (not to be confused with mass or weight). In general, a ray is refracted toward the normal when it passes into a denser medium and away from the normal when it passes into a less dense medium. From Online Columbia Dictionary

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that our communication with God is pleasing to Him and brings us closer in fellowship as well as in effective service.

What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the LORD our God is near us whenever we pray to him? Deuteronomy 4:7

3. According to Deuteronomy 4:7, the LORD our God is _____ us whenever we _____

Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!' Matthew 7:23

4. Read Matthew 7:23. Do you think it likely that Jesus will tell a believer who sincerely seeks

Him in prayer each day, "I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!" Why or Why not?

The Holy Scriptures is an integral (essential, fundamental) part of prayer and knowing God. Now, God can and will work in other ways if His Word is unavailable. Missionaries in Moslem or closed¹⁰ countries where the Bible is forbidden tell stories of Jesus appearing to individuals so that they might believe. God will take care of those who absolutely have no access to His Word.

Nevertheless believers should do all they can to get and mediate on God's Word. There was a group of believers in a closed country where the Bible was not allowed. The leader of the group got a hold of one Bible and proceeded to tear out the pages so that each person would have some of God's Word. They would then exchange the pages with each other.

Most likely you are not in a closed country right now. If you are, take the Scripture in this study, memorize it and give it to other believers to write down and memorize. Share with nonbelievers as the Spirit of God leads.

The Bible is God's revelation of Himself to us. That is, He reveals and shows Himself to us through His Word. Knowing Scripture keeps us from making up things about God. It also helps us to pray as we come to know God and understand His ways. As a leader, you must pray to God in the way He desires.

For example, God is sovereign (Psalm 71:16, Isaiah 10:10). Knowing that God is in control of everything makes a big difference in how we make our requests. If you didn't know that God had the power and control of all circumstances of your life, you would lack confidence in God's ability to deliver or make good on His promises. He wants you to trust in His ability and faithfulness when you pray.

Recall the verse you memorized in day one of this lesson: *This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.* 1 John 5:14

¹⁰ A closed country is one that is not open to Christ. People will be imprisoned or killed for sharing the gospel. It is generally closed to any religion other than the one professed by the political leadership.

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6. According to 1 John 5:14, if you ask anything according to God's _____ He hears you.

Human will is the mental faculty by which a person decides upon and controls his own actions or those of others.¹¹ God's will is similar. He has determined a plan or a purpose for everything in all creation. Thus when we pray according to what He wants and approves, He brings it to pass. The Christian leader seeks God day and night to know Him and get his life in line with His plan.

Within Scripture is God's determined plan and purpose for creation. All people are part of creation and thus the plan for your life lies within the pages of Scripture. Your leadership, although unique in certain aspects will always fall within the boundaries God has outlined in His Word which is centered on Christ.

Personal Application: Below is an example of praying Scripture. Read and pray:

What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ-- the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.^{NIV} Philippians 3:8-9

Almighty God, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I willingly loose all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law or legalism, but that which is through faith in Christ –the righteousness that comes from You O God and is by faith. Amen.

Lesson 9: Prayer of a Leader (Day Four) Polishing the Heart

After the diamond is faceted, it is polished. The verb polish simply means to make smooth or shiny usually by rubbing. It also means to improve, complete or perfect in some way.

“Polish influences how well light is able to pass through a diamond and is very important to a diamond's brilliance. It is necessary to select a diamond that is laboratory certified with good, very good or excellent polish. Diamonds that have poor to extremely poor polish are less brilliant because they have microscopic polish lines that blur the surface of the diamond. These polish lines reduce the amount of light that enters or exits a diamond.”¹²

The Holy Spirit is the Christian leader's Polisher. The more highly polished that you are, the more like Christ you will shine and the more power in your prayers. Would you like to be a praying leader who is E – Excellent, Flawless with maximum power? Then welcome the Polisher into your life to start working on absolutely every aspect of your life. This includes attitudes, thoughts, dreams, family, work, finances and relationships.

¹¹ Ehrlich, Eugene, Oxford American Dictionary, Oxford University Press, New York, Oxford, 1980.

¹² Sun Jewelry website: <http://www.sunjewelry.com/diamond-education-polish.html>

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1. Have you surrendered every aspect of your life to the Spirit? Y N (Circle One).
 2. a. Is there anything that you are trying to control and have not given to God? Y N
 - b. Pray and ask God to loosen your grip on everything in your life except Him. How can your “letter minister” pray for you in this area? _____
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Laser Prayers: Just as I am inserting this note on laser praying, you also can pray at anytime or at any place. Even in the middle of a conversation with someone, you could silently ask God for help or wisdom. Your prayer is sent like a laser to God the Father and He in turn can laser a direct and precise hit. He never misses the mark and always answers and accomplishes that which He desires.

But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit.
Jude 1:20

3. Read Jude 1:20. Judas the half brother of Jesus tells us to build ourselves up in our most holy faith and _____ the Holy _____.

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. Ephesians 6:18

4. Read Ephesians 6:18. The apostle Paul tells us to pray _____ the _____ with all kinds of _____ and requests.

We are to pray **IN** the Holy Spirit with all kinds of prayers. **In** is a common word that we say all the time. It is also a simple word with just two letters.

In is a part of speech called a preposition. “The preposition establishes a relationship such as space, time, accompaniment, cause, or manner between its object and another word in the sentence.”¹³ The Holy Spirit is the object in Jude 1:20 and Ephesians 6:18 and prayer is the other word in each of these sentences or verses. Thus there is a relationship between the Spirit and our prayers.

Let’s look at some of the definitions or meanings of the word in.¹⁴ First it means within the limits, bounds, or area of such as *in the living room* or *in the water*. Praying in the Spirit means that you are totally immersed in the Spirit. He surrounds you and envelopes you.

¹³ Hodges, John C., Harbrace College Handbook, Harcourt Brace College Publishers, Fort Worth, 1994.

¹⁴ The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition copyright 1992 by Houghton Mifflin Company. Electronic version licensed from INSO Corporation.

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5. When you pray, are you aware of the Spirit's presence? Y N (Circle one)

When you are in the living room or in the water, you are conscious of your surroundings. You know where you are! In the same way, a leader needs to be sensitive, responsive and alert to the Spirit's presence. You must be intentional in looking for the manifest (evident) presence of God. Take time to look past your physical surroundings and see the good Spirit moving in and around you as you pray.

Now there may be times when you don't sense the Spirit's presence but you can still be assured that He is with you. There will be times that the Spirit is leading you and you are not aware of Him. If you have no known sin in your life there is no cause to worry. There will always be times like this in a believer's life. The point is that you are daily seeking to be conscious and aware of your Holy Guide and Confidante. He is with you and desires to be known and acknowledged.

Another definition of in is having the activity, occupation, or function of, such as a *life in politics; the officer in command*. Your activity, occupation and function of praying is guided and influenced by the Holy Spirit. For example, if one chooses a job in politics, he will function within that particular government system. As a Christian leader you are a son of the Most High God and you pray according to the Spirit's system which is also God's system. Remember the Bible is the blueprint that has all the instructions for God's system.

6. Are you functioning or performing according to the Spirit's governing body? Y N (Circle one)

Now we all fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23) and no one is functioning or performing *perfectly* according to God's Word. But the important thing is that you are seeking God's will and are purposeful in choosing His standard. You are aware of the Spirit and praying in a manner that is consistent with the Bible.

Praying, indeed living in the Spirit is a critical step. So let's take a look at another meaning of our little friend **in**. This word also means with the characteristic, attribute, or property of. The Christian leader's prayers should be characteristic of God's heart. The Father, Jesus and the Spirit are one. Therefore pray in a way that would be typical of Jesus' prayers. Search the Gospels and study how Jesus prayed and what was important to Him.

Lastly, **in** means with the aim or purpose of: *followed in pursuit*. When you pray in the Spirit, you have God's aim or purpose in mind. In other words, your prayers are God centered.

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.²⁷ And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will. Romans 8:26-27

7. Read Romans 8:26-27. How do God and the Spirit help us pray for God's purpose?

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It is important as a Christian leader to continually pray in the Spirit because God searches your heart for His Spirit. God knows the mind of the Spirit because they are one. The Spirit will intercede (asks on your behalf) in accordance with God's will. The Spirit will keep you praying with God's aim and purpose in mind.

Personal Application: How will your praying **in** the Spirit proceed or improve?

Lesson 9: Prayer of a Leader (Day Five) Cleaning the Heart

The final stage in preparing the diamond involves thoroughly cleaning it in acids, and examining it to see whether it meets the quality standards of the manufacturer.¹⁵ Let's talk about the cleaning aspect of the diamond process. It is the final stage of the diamond cutting process but in actuality it is really an ongoing process in the life of the diamond. For example, diamond jewelry will attract dust, dirt and grime. Even the natural oils from a person's body will adhere to the diamond and dull its shine. Soap and water are not strong enough for the oils to be removed but must be placed in a chemical such as ammonia with water.

Now just as the diamond is cleaned and examined, be vigilant about your prayer life. Ask the Holy Spirit, the Examiner to reveal any sin and claim the blood of Jesus, the acid that dissolves all impurities to keep you clean and free from dirt and grime. In Lesson 7 you received a *Confession Guide* that will be helpful in fully examining your life for sin.

Another way is to simply ask God if there is anything that is hindering (delaying, obstructing) your prayers. Pray: *Lord is there anything hindering my prayers?* Let's look at two areas that may cause problems to leaders in their prayers: Staying Strong and Listening.

I. Staying Strong

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9

1. Read Joshua 1:9. God is speaking to Joshua who He appointed to take over the leadership of the Israelites from Moses who had died. God commanded Joshua to be:

_____ and _____

God tells Joshua, "Do not be _____; do not be _____"

¹⁵ Wikipedia, online encyclopedia, Diamond cutting, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diamond_cutting

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2. What is the reason God gives to His leader Joshua for being strong and courageous?

3. What meaning do you think God's command to Joshua has for you as a leader?

You can be strong and humble at the same time. Being humble means seeking God and turning away from personal agendas. Joshua's assignment was to take the Israelites across the Jordan River and into the land that God had promised them through their forefathers (Genesis 12:1-3; 7). The Israelites would have to physically battle other tribes and nations for the Promised Land. This was God's plan and Joshua was to be strong and courageous because he was leading in God's will.

Just as Joshua was leading for God, our assignment is to take sinners to Christ so they may glorify God and reach the promised land of heaven (2 Peter 3:13, Revelation 21:1). God makes it clear throughout the Bible that He demands trust. God says not to be afraid or fearful because He will be with you. He anoints, sends, equips and empowers.

Now please understand we are not talking about the Biblical command of fearing the Lord. There is a difference. God wants you to fear Him so that you seek and obey Him. In Joshua 1:7-8, God reminds Joshua to obey all the law and to mediate on it day and night. Fear God and do what He says and then you don't have to fear anything or anyone else.

As a Christian leader you will be engaged in battles of your own! Leaders are to take back strongholds from the devil of darkness and those in his command. Through prayer, God's orders will flow to you from the Command Post. You say, I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength (Philippians 4:13) and "Here am I. Send me!" (Isaiah 6:8).

But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. ^{NIV} James 1:6

4. Read James 1:2-7. James is talking about praying for wisdom. How does this compare with God's command to be strong and courageous from Joshua 1:9? _____

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God does not ask you to be strong and courageous – He **commands** it. Your strength and courage follow through in your prayer life. If you feel that you lack wisdom or anything else that you need to faithfully and joyfully complete your assignments, you are to **confidently** ask God. In this way you are revealing a deep respect and trust for your Sovereign Commander. He is with you at all times and all times are under His control.

II. Listening

Joshua was a good listener. He listened to God and therefore he knew what he was supposed to do. In fact he listened so intently that we have God's words recorded for us in the Book of Joshua. Are you paying close attention to what God is saying to you? Listening is an art and can be developed. As in all things God will help you hear Him **and** to do what He asks.

'Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.'
NIV Jeremiah 33:3

5. In Jeremiah 33:3 God says to “Call to me and _____ will _____ you and _____ you _____ and _____ things you do not know.

What a great and wondrous promise! God will answer us when we pray and tell us great and unsearchable things! However if we have a one-way conversation going on we are going to miss a lot. It will also be difficult to hear from your Commander-in-Chief if you are not in a receiving mode.

The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."¹¹ And the LORD said to Samuel: "See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make the ears of everyone who hears of it tingle.
NIV 1 Samuel 3:10-11

6. Read 1 Samuel 3:10-11. What was the first thing Samuel said to God?

7. What did the LORD say to Samuel when he replied that “Your servant is listening.”

8. How do you listen to God? _____

Some practical ways to listen to God are by quietly reading the Bible and listening for God to speak to you through the text. God may speak to you through other people and circumstances throughout the day. Invite God to speak to you each day and be prepared to listen. Most of us will get a clear impression that God is speaking to us although we do not hear His audible voice.

Lesson 9

Satan, our enemy will be trying to disrupt your communication with God and sometimes you may get mixed messages. Even your own heart or will may work against you at times to interpret God’s message in the wrong way. Always pray that you hear and obey correctly.

Remember that God will not ask you to do anything that is against His commandments which are preserved for you in the Bible. Jesus says the greatest commandment is to love your God and the second is to love your neighbor. Everything that God asks you to do will be filtered though these two commandments (Matthew 22:36-40). By the way, don’t ask for new assignments until you have completed your previous ones. Immediately perform any and all duties in God’s grace.

Personal Application: Find one example of Jesus remaining strong and courageous and one example of him listening to God, the Father. Write the Bible reference.

1. Jesus strong and courageous: Book:_____ Chapter:_____ Verse:_____

2. Jesus listening to the Father: Book:_____ Chapter:_____ Verse:_____

Lesson 9: Prayer of a Leader (Day Six) Brilliant Living Diamond

Yes, a praying leader is like a brilliant living diamond. You sparkle on earth with the light of Christ serving God in love and faithfulness. The LORD has a wonderful plan for your life and He will complete it (Philippians 1:6).

God may give you a vision (image, idea, revelation) of something that He is going to do and how you will be a part of His work. It may take time to come about so do not become discouraged for all that a leader does is within God’s timetable. It could happen in the next second or it may take years. Stand firm and believe.

Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets.
NIV Amos 3:7

1. God says in Amos 3:7: Surely the _____ LORD does nothing without _____ His _____ to His _____, the prophets.

Then the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?"¹⁸ Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him.¹⁹ For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him."^{NIV} Genesis 18:17-19

2. Read Genesis 18:17-19. Did God tell Abraham what He was going to do? Y N (Circle one)

3. Was God’s plan for Abraham alone or for all nations on the earth? _____

Lesson 9

God’s plan for Abraham was for all the nations of the earth to be blessed! They would have a way to God through Christ who would be born from Abraham’s descendants. When God shares a vision with you it will be to honor God by blessing or helping others.

4. Has God given you a vision? Y N (Circle one)

5. Would you like to share your vision? _____

(If you do not have a vision ask Jesus to give you one that glorifies God and fruitful for the Kingdom.)

In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways,² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.^{NIV} Hebrews 1:1-2

6. Read Hebrews 1:1-2. Is it possible to receive a vision from God of what He is going to do apart from Jesus Christ? Y N (Circle one)

I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.^{NIV} John 15:15

7. Jesus says in John 15:15 that a servant does not know his _____ business.

Instead, I have called you _____, for everything that I learned from my _____ I have made _____ to _____

In waiting for your particular vision or Kingdom assignment, remember that Jesus has shown us by His life how to live each day. For example, He made disciples and commanded us to do the same. We need to live each day to the fullest in the Spirit while we wait for our personal promises or vision to be revealed and accomplished.

Personal Application:

We used an example of a diamond during our study on prayer to give you a visual of how precious and brilliant you shine when you communicate and live in God’s presence. Contemplate (think about) your own prayer life as a leader and make changes as necessary.

Next - Lesson 10: Faith of a Leader

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