

# The 'Discipleship Check List' Transcript

A GV247.TV Programme presented by Stewart Menelaws

## **DCL No9: Do you understand prayer and study?**

This series is for any Christian believer who is either at the very beginning of their journey with Jesus Christ or has been a believer for some years but lacks a sound understanding of the Christian faith. It should also prove to be a helpful aid which interlinks with all our resources for Shepherds, Overseers and Believers reaching out to others.

### **Laying a correct foundation:** (Matthew 7:24-27)

There are numerous books written on prayer - ie talking to God - and many claim various methods to impact the believer's life. Some are well founded biblically whilst others are not and must be avoided. While sound biblical teaching is a gift within the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:28), we must always look to the study of scripture as our foundation (2 Tim 3:16-17).

In Genesis 4:1-8 we see two brothers and their relationship with The Lord. One was accepted and the other was not. Abel was obedient to God and Cain was not, and despite being warned and given the opportunity to turn away from 'sin crouching at his door', he went onto to commit the first murder in creation.

The bible tells us that there is a way that seems right to a man but leads to death in Proverbs 14:12. We must never deviate from God's instruction, especially when scriptural correction has been brought to our attention. Prayer or communication with The Lord God Almighty must be based on His instruction.

### **What is prayer?** (With regard to the Christian disciple)

Quite simply, it is communication with the Creator – The Lord Almighty. For the Christian believer, this is communication with the Father through the Son, The Lord Jesus Christ. (John 1:12)

### **Conditions of prayer?** (With regard to the Christian disciple)

Throughout the Bible there is a required attitude that stands out time and again. (Isaiah 66:2) Humility, Contrition and the Fear of God and His Word. Un-forgiveness, pride or harsh treatment of a wife by her husband, will all be a barrier to prayer (I Peter 3:7) for The Lord opposes the proud (James 4:6). The self-righteous individual will never be justified before The Lord (Luke 18:9-14) and where there is resentment between a brother or sister, it must be resolved (Matthew 5:23-24).

### **The Lord's instruction on prayer:** (Matthew 6:5-14)

When a believer seeks to communicate with the Father, the instruction is to find a suitable place where that solemn interaction can take place without unnecessary interruption. This shows respect and is an antidote to flippancy when addressing The Almighty who is Holy (Leviticus 19:2). The Lord Jesus Christ Himself spent time away from both His disciples and the crowds (Luke 5:16).

Corporate prayer must be between believers who are in agreement (Matthew 18:19-20). And there is a warning; do not babble, do not seek to impress others and do not seek to go into an altered state of mind.

### **1: Father in Heaven hallowed be your name...**

God is Holy, and we are to be Holy (1 Peter 1:16). Reverence for The Father who is The Almighty must be at the very heart of every disciple of Jesus Christ. Prepare yourself to meet with The Lord.

### **2: Your Kingdom come, Your Will be done...**

Disciples of Christ must learn complete obedience to the Father. It is His will that is to be accomplished in time to come and His alone. Individuals looking to build their own kingdom have their own agenda.

### **3: Give us this day our daily bread...**

While we are instructed to be wise in our lives, we are told not to worry about tomorrow (Matt 6:25-34). We see that asking the Lord to bless the acceptable work of our diligent hands is for daily living and a witness to those around (1 Thess 4:11-12).

### **4: Forgive us our debts as we have forgiven our debtors...**

In 1 Corinthians 13:5 we are told not to hold a record of wrongs. Where we have fallen short and seek God's forgiveness, we must also forgive those who fall short with us. If you hold anything against a Christian brother or sister, it is important to put things right as far as you are able - and that usually entails going to the person and gracefully bring the issue out into the open so that a Godly resolution will be the outcome (Matthew 5:23 and Matthew 7:1-5).

### **5: Lead us not into temptation, deliver us from the evil one...**

We are to be alert and sober minded as our enemy the devil seeks to devour (1 Peter 5:8), we are to put on the full armour of God, praying in the Spirit on all occasions (Ephesians 6:10-18). While He who is in us (Christ) is greater than he who is in the world (the devil), (1 John 4:4) it is important to understand that this remains true only when we remain in Him (John 15:4) and we can then be confident that we are indeed protected (2 Thessalonians 3:3).

### **6: Prayer requests and conclusion...**

As with any respectful conversation, scripture teaches that we present our requests and our petitions before The Lord with thanks-giving and then to finally bring them to a close. (Philippians 4:6). In some texts we read that we should close once again with an attitude of reverence; *Father in Heaven, yours is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory for ever Amen.*

### **Particular authority when two or more are in agreement:**

Scripture has many examples where two or more individuals in agreement with each other create a binding treaty (Deuteronomy 19:15 and 2 Corinthians 13:1) hence the need to be sure that there is indeed complete agreement before putting the said treaty into action. We see the same principle in united prayer (Matthew 18:19-20). Do not say 'Amen' to something you do not agree with.

### **Prayer for those on the spiritual frontline:**

Paul exhorts in Colossians 4:2-5 to be devoted to prayer and seeks prayer himself so that an effective door to preach the gospel may open for him and that he would speak with clarity. Jesus Christ told the disciples that they need to pray with persistence (Luke 18:1-8) and in some cases fasting is part of prayer (Matt 17:21 in some manuscripts and in Acts 13:2-3). In regard to the end of the age, they are told to keep watch and pray that they will be able to stand before The Lord (Luke 21:36)

## **Praying in the Spirit:**

Paul explains about praying in the Spirit when we can find ourselves not knowing how to pray in a given situation and The Holy Spirit is the one who intercedes and enables us to pray in accordance with God's Will (Romans 8:26-27 and Ephesians 6:18).

Paul counsels further on this throughout 1 Corinthians chapter 14 verses 1-20.

## **Many scripture references throughout the Bible:**

There are many scriptures regarding prayer, be it solitary or as a corporate body; from seeking wisdom to thanksgiving and even prayer for those leading your country (1 Tim 2:1-4). However it is imperative that Christians understand that prayer can never alter The Lord's prophetic Word in regard to eschatological events that are fixed.

## **What can we not pray for?**

It is important to read the context of a passage when relating to specific prayers as we must never take a text outside of its context. Be very careful about misappropriating a biblical verse. As we seek first His Kingdom and His Righteousness (Matthew 6:33), He will guide your prayer life. Only by the renewing of your mind will you be able to test and approve God's perfect will (Romans 12:1-2).

## **The need to study God's Word!**

It is said time and again, "study the Word of God for yourself", yet many professing Christians do not do this. It is those who read The Word and put it into practice who build on a solid foundation (Matthew 7:24-27).

It is to those who are diligent in seeking God's counsel (His Word) who have understanding. We are to find out what pleases God (Ephesians 5:8-10) so that we can be approved workman handling His sacred Word with care and diligence (2 Timothy 2:15). For all scripture is God breathed and is for training in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16-17). His Word is a Lamp to the feet and a Light on the path (Psalm 119:105).

We read in Colossians how Paul and his companions earnestly prayed for the believers in Colosse that they would be filled with the knowledge of God's Will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding (Colossians 1:9-14), for maturity in Christ is the goal (Ephesians 4:12-13) - and we have many resources on GV247.TV to help you on your journey with Christ our Lord.

## **Next week (DCL No10) we look at:**

Fellowship and Accountability

The 'Discipleship Check List' series has been produced with the sole aim of encouraging the hearer / reader to study the Holy Bible so that faith in Jesus Christ will be built on Him alone. Every human work is fallible and whilst every effort has been made to represent the truths of God Almighty's Holy Words, this series is but an aid to help encourage study so that the Christian disciple of Jesus Christ will go onto maturity in the most Holy faith.

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