



DATE(S)

May 7-8, 2022

SERIES AND LESSON TITLE

Step It Up – Week 3 (Prayer)

TAKE-HOME POINT (THP)

Prayer builds our relationship
with God.

SCRIPTURE FOCUS

Galatians 5:25; 1 Thessalonians 5:16
Philippians 4:6; Matthew 6:9-13
1 John 5:14

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Give any Campus-Specific Announcements

OPENING GAME / GROUP TIME

LARGE-GROUP GAME/ACTIVITY

Did It Sell 4?

There are always crazy items sold on Ebay! Your goal is to decide whether or not these ten items were sold. Play individually or in groups – the tiebreaker question has an item that sold, but you must guess how much. The person closest to the actual amount wins the tiebreaker! Have fun...and save your money not buying these things!

OPENING SMALL GROUP

QUESTIONS

ACTIVITIES

Take attendance and make sure to welcome anyone who is a first-time guest!

What was the highlight of your week?

How does everyone feel about public speaking? Why? Do you feel the same way about praying out loud? Why?

When you're finished (and there's time), pray for our time of worship/singing.

STUFF TO ASK TO UNIQUELY CONNECT THE LESSON TO KIDS' LIVES

STUFF TO DO SO THINGS AREN'T BORING



LARGE-GROUP SCRIPT

THE MESSAGE

"Step It Up" – Week 3 (Prayer)
May 7-8, 2022

Hope everyone is having a good day! We are in a series called "Step It Up" and we have been looking at some ways to put our faith into practice. You might say we are going over the basics; the tools God has given us to strengthen our relationship with Him! Let's look at the Bible verse we have been going over each week of this series – it's from the New Testament in Galatians 5:25 which says, *"Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit."*

Today, we are going to look at a third way to grow in our faith and it's something that I'm almost positive everyone in this room, whether silently or out loud, has done at least once in their life: pray. You've probably all prayed before. Some of us think prayer is very difficult because we may think, "I don't know what to say to God. I don't have the right words, or I don't know what to pray about." I'm sure if we were all honest (even the adult & high school leaders in this room), we would probably say we have felt like that at one time or another.

(Teacher's Note: Share a quick story where it was personally awkward for you to pray out loud. It doesn't have to be serious – it can be light-hearted or humorous as well!)

Maybe you can relate to my story about prayer. In reality, prayer is really just spending time talking with God. I mean, that makes sense, right? If you want to become better friends with someone and grow your relationship with that person, conversation and getting to know one another is an important part of that. It's no different with God.

Here's the **THP (Take Home Point)** for today! **Prayer builds our relationship with God!**

Let's look at one of the most challenging verses in the whole Bible. It also happens to be one of the shortest: it's 1 Thessalonians 5:16 in the New Testament. It says this: *"Pray continually."* Another translation says, *"Never stop praying."* Whoa! How is it even possible to ALWAYS pray or never stop praying? Does that mean we have to walk around all day with our head bowed and eyes closed bumping into things? No, probably not...but I think it is challenging us to really take prayer seriously – at least more seriously than we currently do.

If our relationship with God is the most important relationship in our life, and if prayer is one of the best ways to build our relationship with God and make it better and stronger, then of course prayer would be important! However, I think for a lot of us prayer has been reduced to just something we do before we eat, when someone in our family or our pet is sick, or when we're afraid we might get in trouble with our parents so we pray and ask God, "Oh please don't let them find out!"

THE MESSAGE

It's not that those things aren't important. It just means that most of the time, we might only be praying when it **BENEFITS** us rather than doing it to **BUILD** our relationship with God simply to get to know more of Him! **We pray because we find God BEAUTIFUL, INCREDIBLE, AWESOME – not merely because we find Him USEFUL.**

Here are a few more verses about prayer in the Bible. In the New Testament, Paul says this in Philippians 4:6 – *“Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done.”* I love that phrase “Tell God what you need.” That's pretty reassuring, isn't it? However, if I'm honest (and maybe you can relate to this), I sometimes struggle with determining whether I need something or just want something.

God is not a magical genie that just grants our wishes every time we ask Him for something. In fact, God already knows what we need **AND** what we want already. We're not giving him information that he doesn't already know. He wants us to pray because it means we will have to push away other distractions and really focus on spending time with Him. That's the **REAL** purpose of prayer!

In the New Testament in Matthew 6:9-13, Jesus gives us a good outline of **WHAT** to pray for...here's what that verse says: *“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”*

If you're familiar with this passage, you may know it as “The Lord's Prayer.” This passage of Scripture says God's name is “hallowed” which means “holy” or “special.” It's like saying, “God, you're amazing! You're awesome! There is no one else like you.” Then, it says to pray for God's will to be done, which is like saying, “God, whatever you think is best for me, my family, my friends, and our world...I pray that will happen!” Next, it tells us to “give us today our daily bread.” Do you stop to thank God for the food you have? This could also mean things other than food...maybe things we take for granted like our house, health, our ability to go to school, etc. It is simply saying, “God, give me what I need today.” After that, it says to ask God to forgive our sins and to help us forgive those who have sinned against us. Lastly, Jesus tells us to pray to God and ask him to keep us from being tempted to do the wrong thing and keep us safe from the evil one: the devil.

As you can see, prayer is really IMPORTANT! In fact, it's played a major role in my life. Let me share a quick example.

(Teacher's Note: Briefly share how prayer has helped you in a particular situation.)

THE MESSAGE

No matter what you're going through in life, you should pray! Just like our **THP (Take Home Point)** says: **Prayer builds our relationship with God.** No matter how you're feeling – happy, sad, angry, hurt – never stop praying! In fact, I believe every emotion we experience should be processed with God in prayer. Seriously. It will help us build our relationship with God when we tell Him how we feel. Through simply doing that, we can find comfort, hope, strength, and love in God.

I know that sometimes it can feel like God is not answering your prayers or even hearing them. Trust me...He does listen, and He does care. God answers prayers in one of two ways: He will either give you what you ask for – or He will give you what you would have asked for if you knew what He knew. Sometimes, it's hard to understand why God does certain things, but the Bible says that God works all things together for good. ALL THINGS! Sometimes God answers prayer in a different timing or different way than you want Him to. I can understand the frustration with that. However, if God really is a good God (and He is), His timing might be hard to understand, but it is NEVER wrong!

1 John 5:14 in the New Testament says this: *"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us."* Here's my challenge: spend some time in prayer this week. It will require focus and you may get easily distracted at first, but prayer forces us to put things on hold and really concentrate on talking to God and spending time with Him. What is one intentional step you can take this week to make sure you're spending time in prayer? Think about that question as we head into our group discussion time. Let me pray before we get started!

(Teacher's Note – Close in prayer and then transition into a time of miracle prayer)



CLOSING GROUP TIME

CLOSING SMALL GROUP

QUESTIONS

*****Leader's Note:** Make sure to have some Bibles for students to use.

What was the THP today and why was that important during the message?

Now let's do a **SOAP** study, which is an acronym for **Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer**. It's a way to study the Bible.

SCRIPTURE – Have someone read the Scripture out loud two times.

Philippians 4:6 – "Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done."

OBSERVATION – Write down words or phrases that stick out to you, that you don't understand, or that are interesting to you. Questions are also great!

APPLICATION – Think about and write down how the Scripture applies to your actual life and how you can live differently because of it this week.

PRAYER – Pray together at the end of your group discussion! Ask God to help you remember and apply what you learned from the Bible today!

How will the THP help you to live differently this week? Be specific.

How can this group pray for you this week?

ACTIVITIES

When you close the message, move into a time of miracle prayer. This can be done with all the students or in the group setting. Whatever you choose, make sure to coach/prepare the leaders well for this moment!

Encourage the students to take a couple of minutes to write down observations and applications during their SOAP study. We want it to be different than simply responding to a question like we usually do. You can set a timer for this, and when it's done, go around and have the students share their observations. Once enough people have shared, move to the applications.

After your group is finished with your discussion questions, close in prayer!



PREP NEEDS

SMALL-GROUP SUPPLIES

Some Bibles for students to share during group discussion
Pen/paper for SOAP study (optional)

LARGE-GROUP SUPPLIES

Stupid Video of the Week
Message script
Message slides

AUDIO/VISUAL NEEDS

Pro Presenter or Playlister

