

*The Flow*

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# Growing in Prayer

**Ephesians 6:18**

**Fostering Spiritual Growth in the Church**

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**Paul J. Bucknell**

Discovering  
Love

1

LITTLE CHILDREN  
Strong security  
from His love

Establishing  
Hope

2

YOUNG MEN  
Great confidence  
in His word

Strengthening  
Faith

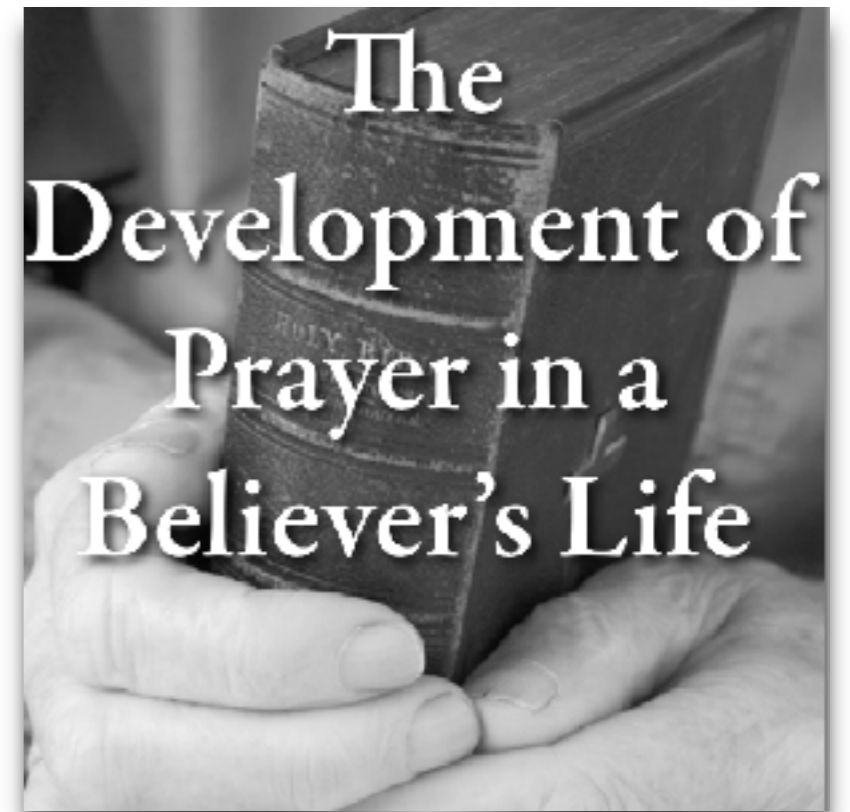
3

FATHERS  
Deep intimacy  
with God



### Growing in Prayer

Every relationship is founded on good back and forth **communication**, and so prayer becomes the key means the Christian develops his/her relationship with God. Our spiritual conversation (i.e. prayer) develops as we grow in our spiritual lives.



“With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints” (Ephesians 6:18).

### Level 1 - New Believers

Don't we all love to see how babies learn to talk despite their incorrectly formed words. If they ask amiss, we smile and offer them what is good and safe (Mat 7:10).

Think what happens when a new believer comes to know the Lord and begins talking to God. The Father is so excited at His child's first words.



### Level 1 - New Believers

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Like little children learning to talk!

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#### Affirm Faith

- New believers begin to talk to God. Every word spoken to God (i.e. prayer) is an affirmation of their faith.

=> Does your Heavenly Father delight in hearing from you?

#### Confess Sin

- The way believers prayerfully handle their sin greatly affects their spiritual lives.

=> Do you wrestle with confessing your sin?

### Level 1 - New Believers

#### Seek to please God

- The Spirit of God begins to prod us to and not to do certain things.

=> Do you question whether God's will for your life is always best for you? In what areas?

#### Thank the Father

- "In everything give **thanks**; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

=> Do you use prayer to express your growing admiration of the Father's care for you?

#### Trust Father (Protect, guide, provide, comfort)

- The believer is learning to live in God's presence, even recognizing His presence.

## Level 2 - The Young Believer



By seeing the power of God's Word at work in my life, my faith is increased, and my hope in God's work in my life is strengthened.

### Level 2 - The Young Believer

#### Being an Overcomer

- Prayer brings us to God, starting with a humble prayer
- Then proclaiming His truth, and building up our faith.
- During prayer, we exercise our shield of faith to bring clarity to our confused minds, “Taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one” (Eph 6:16).





### Level 2 - The Young Believer

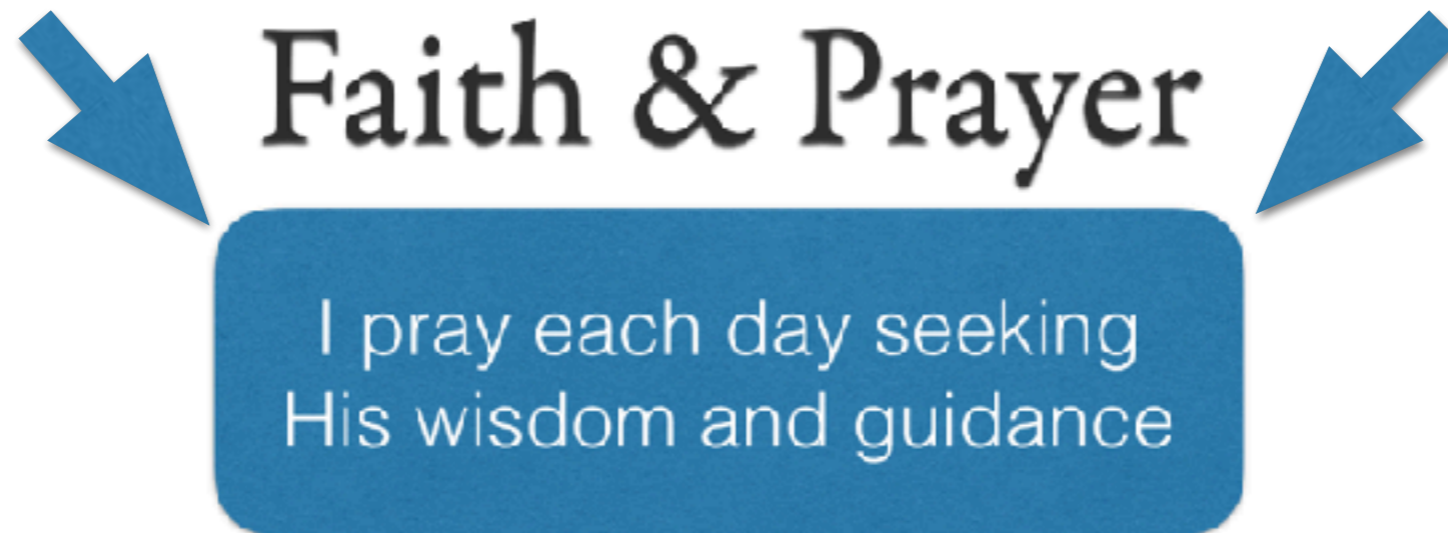
#### **Power of God's Word**

- “Because the Word of God abides in you” – 1 John 2:14
- **Power:** God's Word is the driving force in prayer providing faith as we bring our requests and praise to God.
- **Promises** (2 Peter 1:4): “He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises.”
- **Abraham** (Gen 15:8): “And he said, ‘O Lord GOD, how may I know that I shall possess it?’”
- **Exposes lies** (Eph 5:13): “But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light.”

## Level 2 - The Young Believer

No, I don't think prayer helps me gain the wisdom that I need for each day.

Yes, I really need God's help to live out each day and so I pray to gain His strength.



**Doubt about my need and God's ability to help cripples my spiritual life by a lack of consistent prayer.**

**Faith enables me to sense my need and find God's help by regularly seeking the Lord in prayer!**

### Level 3 - The Mature Believer

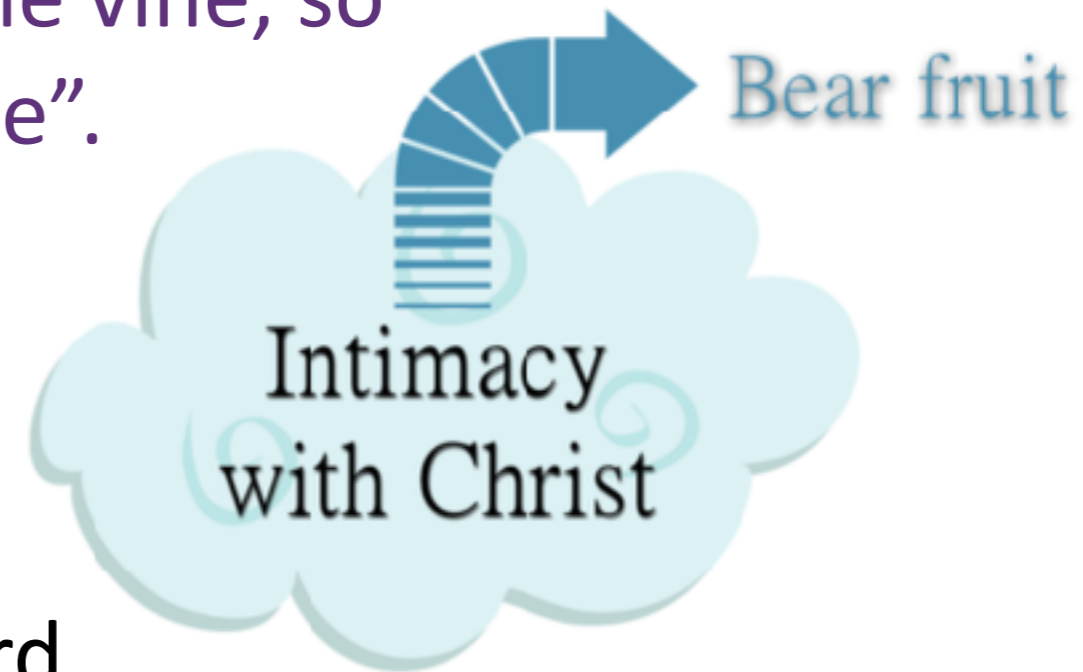
By my growing faith, I can know God and trust him even in difficult times. He takes me deeper and closer to Him so that He can bear more fruit through my life to glorify Him.

- The two previous stages are temporary while this stage does not ever end on earth.

### Level 3 - The Mature Believer

#### Abiding in Christ (John 15:4)

- “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me”.
- Abiding prayer
- Searching to please the Lord
- Prayer is an intimacy that bears fruit  
Fruit comes from intimacy with the Lord



#### Admire & Adore

- Adoration occurs at all stages but constantly matures.
- e.g., Psalms: “Blessed be the LORD, my rock, who trains my hands for war...” (Psalms 144:1).

### Level 3 - The Mature Believer

#### **Devoted despite trials**

- “The enemy has persecuted my soul; He has crushed my life to the ground; He has made me dwell in dark places, like those who have long been dead. Therefore my spirit is overwhelmed within me” (Ps 143:3-4).
- We share our difficulties with God. “I trust in Thee, Teach me the way in which I should walk” (Ps 143:8).
- We are not allowed to wallow in self-pity but are commanded to grow in our faith.

### Level 3 - The Mature Believer

#### Pray for Others

- “And pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel” (Eph 6:19).
- We need prayer support from others.
- Tests of our faith: What is it that we really want?  
How much do we want it?

#### Summary

- Our prayer lives grow as we grow in the Lord.
- Our prayers are naturally affected by our growing faith.
- God desires for us to commune with Him and for Him to work through our lives.



# The Flow

## Discussion Questions

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1. What is your biggest struggle or greatest delight in prayer?
2. What is an area of prayer that you want to learn more about or grow in?

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