

# Pray #5

## PRAYING without CEASING



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Part of Connect Group Questions

July 15, 2018

“That’s impossible!” Perhaps someone’s response to the idea of “praying without ceasing” (**1 Thessalonians 5:17**). But God wouldn’t call us to it unless it IS possible. And not just possible. Rather preferable. To use Paul Miller’s words, to live “a praying life.”

This study reviews and explores the key elements identified as the expression of a praying life: **dependence** (upon the Vine and the Spirit), **alertness** (to the opportunities in life’s pathways), **vigilance** (in encountering temptation), **intentionality** (when mistreated), and **readiness** (to give thanks).

### GETTING STARTED

*In A Praying Life* (pp.95-99), Paul Miller urges that the cure to indifference in prayer, or even cynical about it, is “developing an eye for Jesus.” Surprised at the longsuffering patience of a customer in his tax office’s waiting room, he asked her, “By any chance, does Jesus make a difference in your life?” She smiled to say, “Jesus is everything to me. I talk to him all the time.” His later reflection: Jesus had been sitting in our waiting room, right in front of me, as obvious as the daylight.

Are you in the habit of looking for Jesus’ presence showing up in the course of your everyday life? What dulls our ability to see Him in the midst of our day? What needs adjusting to sharpen our perception of Him hour-by-hour?

### IN THE WORD

The Scriptures suggest that a “praying life” is expressed in the following ways. **Explore at least 2 of these** in your study time

**together:**

**dependence** (upon the Vine and the Spirit) – **John 15:1-11**

As you reflect on Jesus' illustration of "staying connected" to the vine (as a branch), how might this closeness with Jesus affect or shape what we pray?

Key question: *How do I express my dependence upon Jesus in my daily praying?*

**alertness** (to the opportunities in life's pathways) – **Ephesians 6:18**  
(note the context!)

How can we increase our alertness to what we need to pray for others?

Any tips to share? Tools to use?

Key question: *Can I identify one simple, new practice to raise my alertness level in praying?*

**vigilance** (in encountering temptation) – **Matthew 26:41**

Why was Jesus concerned about the vulnerability of his disciples to the enemy's attack? On what would that attack center?

Key question: *Is there any 'weak area' in my life that needs the strengthening that comes through prayer?*

**intentionality** (when mistreated) – **Matthew 5:44, Luke 6:28**

Why does this seem so counter-intuitive? Why do we hesitate to pray for our "enemy"?

Key question: ***What enemy in my life needs my praying these days?***

**readiness** (to give thanks) – **Psalms 104**

Scores of times in the Psalms there are calls to continually sing praise and give thanks to God. How would you assess your habit of regularly, continually giving thanks to God?

Key question: Do I do more complaining, or thanks-giving, in the course of my day?

Summary – state an intention that the Spirit has created in you about a "praying without ceasing." What is that going to look like for you going forward?

**MY LIFE - OUR MISSION**

We are now 5 weeks into the PRAY series. Important gains can be lost without reviewing what God has been saying to you. Take a moment to identify what you've been hearing from the Lord. Share with each other. Sharpen each other. Challenge each other. Encourage one another.

Take some time to pray together, eagerly, in your Father's presence!