

Day 1 - Prayer Defined

We are going to spend the next several weeks taking an in depth look at spiritual disciplines. In his book *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, Don Whitney defines spiritual discipline this way: "The Spiritual Disciplines are those personal and corporate disciplines that promote spiritual growth. They are the habits of devotion and experiential Christianity that have been practiced by the people of God since biblical times." While there is not a formula that is guaranteed to promote spiritual growth, there are things that mature Christians do regularly which the Spirit can and does use to grow us into the image of Christ.

The first discipline that we are going to look at is the discipline of Prayer. There are various aspects and kinds of prayers. First, we are going to take a look at what prayer is, and then, over the course of the week, we will look at various aspects of prayer that we see in the Scriptures.

If you were asked to define prayer, how would you define it?

Read 1 John 5:13-15.

Who does John say that he is writing this too? (*those who believe in Jesus Christ*)

Why does he say that he is writing? (*that they may know that they have eternal life*)

According to this passage, what is the confidence that we have toward Christ?
(*that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us*)

Does this mean that God is like Santa Clause and will give us anything we want?
(*No; the passage says if we ask anything "according to his will"*)

How can we know what is according to his will? (*His word reveals his will.*)

Now that you have thought about it, and looked at this Scripture would you change your definition of prayer?

The conclusion we draw from this is that as we grow in our knowledge and understanding of God's *word*, we grow in our knowledge and understanding of God's *will* and our prayers become more powerful.