Developing Christian Character through Prayer
II Chronicles 7:14

A. Prayer is a word that we use often. We should be familiar with its meaning.
B. One writer said: Prayer lifts the heart above the battles of life and gives it a glimpse of God’s resources. Which spell hope and victory.
C. Prayer is the free utterance of one’s heart toward God, asking benefits for others and ourselves.
D. God’s promises of grace and salvation are conditioned by faith and obedience.
E. God is not pleased with man casual approach to prayer.
F. Let us learn of:

I. Man’s Posture of Humility.

A. God makes great promises.
B. After Solomon and led in the dedication of the temple the Lord appeared to him at night and told him his people were to humble themselves. II Chronicles 7ff.
C. The Psalmists wrote: He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant forever: holy and revered is his name. Psalm 111:9
D. Contrition is the proper attitude before God.
E. God is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart. Psalm 34:18
F. Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord, and he will lift you. James 4:10

II. God’s Promise to Hear.

A. See verse 12 God to Solomon: I have heard thy prayer.
B. God heard David after delivering him from Saul. In my distress I called unto the Lord, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears, Psalm 18:6
C. God wants to hear about the things that interest us, even the smallest details.
D. Even though he already knows what we are going to say; He still wants us to talk to him. He is near. He is listening.
E. This proves that God desires to fellowship with us. The righteous cry and
the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. Psalm 34:17
   F. The Lord has promised to hear our prayers. Proverbs 15:29

III. God’s Promise to Help.
   A. Isaiah wrote: Fear thou not: for I am with thee; for I am thy God: I will strengthen Thee; yea, I will help thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Isaiah 41:10
   B. When Jesus spoke of his departure he promised that another helper would come. The Holy Spirit is our helper.
   C. Likewise the spirit helpeth our infirmities for we know not what we should pray for as we ought. Romans 8:26
   D. He walks with us; guiding and teaching.
   E. He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.
   F. Men are to pray without ceasing.

IV. God’s Promise to Heal.
   A. Hear the Psalmists plea (41:4): I said: Lord, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee.
   C. God forgives our iniquities and heals all diseases. Psalm 103: 3
   D. Sometime God’s help is not what we expect. Note Paul’s plea in II Corinthians 12:9
   E. Return ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backsliding. Jeremiah 3:22
   A. Believers will find rest in the arms of God.
   B. God does not retain his anger. He delights in mercy.
   C. God has also promised to save us from life’s difficulties. From the fowlers snare and the deadly pestilence. Psalm 91:4
   D. God not only protects us but also supplies our needs.
   E. Cast all your cares upon him for he careth for you. 1 Peter 5:7

Developing Christian Character through Obedience
I Samuel 15:22

Introduction:
   A. The rebuke of Samuel is a fundamental principle asserting the moral superiority of moral worship over ritual worship.
   B. We learn that God can only be worshipped with the heart.
   C. Saul’s resistance to the will of God is revealed.
   D. We also learn that sorrow over sin does not being forgiveness. We must repent. Turn away
   E. Let us learn of obedience character. Obedience is:

I. Obedience Is a Choice. Choose

   A. Choose you this day whom ye will serve. REF:
   B. Saul had led the people to embrace witchcraft, iniquity and idolatry.
   C. Disobedience renders useless and wicked the most solemn acts of worship.
D. Note Isaiah’s words: Here am I send me.
E. Those who know the will of God and prefer their own way are in grave danger.

II. Obedience is a Conviction. Trust

A. Saul did confess: I have sinned. Note carefully his words in verse 23: I feared the people.
B. Bare conviction sorrow of sin may not true repentance. Turn away stop activity.
C. David said: It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. Psalm 118:8
D. The Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength. Isaiah 26:4
E. The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth their trust in the Lord shall be safe. Proverbs 29:25

III. Obedience is a Condition. Obey

A. Mark 12:33
B. Peter said: We ought to obey God rather than man. Acts 5:29
C. Obeying God brings the promise of a long life. I Kings 3:14
D. See Christ’s words about housing in Matthew 7: 24 rock/ sand.
E. If a man loves God He will come unto him and abide with him. John 14:23

IV. Obedience is a Concern. Hear

A. The ear of the wise seeketh knowledge. Proverbs 18:15
B. Paul: What will Thou have me to do? Acts 9:6
C. But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth much fruit with patience. Luke 8:15
D. In his work to serve God, Saul turned away from God making an idol of self.
E. James said: Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath. James 1:19

Conclusion:

A. We should be careful not to compare our thoughts with God’s thoughts.
B. Sudden outbursts of zeal may be a sign of an uneasy conscience.
C. The folly of excuses for sin is seen by all except the sinner himself.
D. Ill-gotten gain is not acceptable by God when laid upon his altar in worship.
E. Deceitfulness is the ruinous character of every act of pleasure when engaged in the worship of God.

Developing Christian Character through Love

John 15: 12-13

Introduction:

A. Def: express concern for; be faithful towards; to delight in.
B. The way we treat others speaks volumes about our love for God.
C. The closer we draw to God the greater our love becomes.
D. Let love be without dissimulation. Romans 12:9
E. A man that hath friends must shew himself to be friendly... Let us learn that:

I. Love is the Blessing of the Father.

A. In love, God gave. John 3:16  
B. In love, God reveals himself. John 14:23  
C. In love, God gave the Comforter. John 14:16  
D. In love, God saves the lost. I Peter 1:8  
E. In love, God preserves the faithful. Psalm 31:23

II. Love is the Basis of Forgiveness.

A. Jesus was crucified, as an innocent man, being made sin for us. John 19:6  
B. Through Jesus blood our sins are purged. Hebrews 9:20-22  
C. Jesus forgives sin. John 3:17  
D. READ Matthew 5:43-44 “Ye have heard that it has been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thy enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good unto them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you;”  
E. Because Jesus lives in the lives of the believer; we have a new and living way to access God’s Throne. Hebrews 10: 23-24

III. Love is the Bond of Friendship.

A. Our love for others is a testimony to others that we are Christ disciples. John 13:35  
B. Therefore our love should not be partial. Romans 12:9  
C. Johnathan and David shared a close, brotherly love for each other. I Samuel 18:1ff.

D. Ruth said to Orpah: “... whither thou goest, I will go, and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God shall be my God.” Ruth 1:16  
E. “A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.” Proverbs 17:17

IV. Love is the Bounty of Fellowship.

A. The meaning of bounty is: a blessing, grace, from heart of sincerity.  
B. Those who sow bountifully will reap bountifully. II Corinthians 9:6  
C. The evidences of God’s bounty is seen in Galatians 5; 22 referring to the fruits of the spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering (patience) gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance.  
D. David said: “I will sing unto the Lord for he that dealt bountifully with me. Psalm 13:6  
E. Let us pray that God will deal bountifully with us that we may live and keep his word. Psalm 119:17

Conclusion:

A. Jesus said that greater love hath no man than this, that a may lay down his life for his friends. I have call you friends because I have told all things whatsoever the father hath told me. John 15  
B. You are my friends if you keep my commandments.  
C. Keep yourself in the love of God. Jude 21
Developing Christian Character through Worship

Psalm 95:6-7a

Introduction:
A. Def: Worship=worth ship. An action motivated by an attitude that revers, honors or describes the worth of another.
1. The method of worship is seen in the Greek word; proskuneo meaning to kiss the ground.
2. The practice of worship is seen in the Hebrew word, 'abad and the Greek word, therapuo which mean to serve.

B. True worship:
1. Honors God.
C. Spurgeon wrote: Verse 6 of our text is the heartbeat of this Psalm.
D. Verse 7 gives us the reason for our worship.
E. The combined thought of verse 6 and verse 7 is a Psalm of invitation to worship.

I. The Call. "Come"

A. This call is addressed to everyone.
B. We are not puppets. If you worship God it is by personal choice.
C. It is a call to be thankful.
D. It is a call to be prepared.
1. If you come to church angry chances are you will leave the same way.
2. The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart: and saveth such as be of a contrite heart. Psalm 34:18
   E. It is a call to know God.
   F. It is a call to learn of God. If you will receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee: Then shall thou understand the fear of the Lord. Proverbs 2:3

II. The Condition. "Bow down"

A. When Job received the news of his great loss; he worshipped God. Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground, and worshipped". Job 1:20
B. Many people are not able to worship God because they refuse to accept their places in life, their jobs, their careers, their children, etc.
C. Job looked beyond his circumstances and see the goodness of God in His plan. Job
said: "He knows the way I take: when he shall has tried me, I shall come forth as gold." Job 23:10
D. "Let us draw near with a true heart." Hebrews 10:22
E. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart." Psalm 51:17

III. The Confession. "He is our God"

A. Because man needs security, Sigmund Freud wrote, that man created God. (The future of an illusion)
B. Jesus said: Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. Matthew 10:32
C. Here is good news: Confession of sin leads to salvation.
D. There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus: I Timothy 2:5
E. When John the Revelator fell to the ground as dead when he saw his Savior. Revelation 1:17

IV. The Connection. "We are his people" "We are his sheep"

A. Who has the right to go into God's house? Only those who seek him!
B. Paul wrote: I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies, that ye present your body a living sacrifice, holy acceptable, unto God, which is your reasonable service. Romans 12:1
C. Reasonable (pertaining to reason) service (idea of priest offering sacrifices)
D. Believers are to offer themselves as a servant to be broken and poured out.
E. God only expects from us what He has given to us.
F. Many people are trying to sew up the rent vail in the temple with their good works.

Conclusion:

A. True worship begins with the fear of God.
B. Worship is the activity of a forgiven soul.
C. Worship brings joy to the worshipper.
D. As God dwells in your thoughts you will be worshipping and God will be accepting.
E. It is not where you worship but WHOM you worship that is important.

Developing Christian Character through Godly Living
I Corinthians 2: 1-5

Introduction:

A. Paul declared the he wanted to know nothing but Christ and him crucified.
B. Jesus said that he came to earth to do the Fathers will.
C. These two examples give us a pattern for Godly living.
   Jesus but the and following in his footsteps
D. We achieve this goal one step at a time.
I. Rest in Hope of Salvation in Jesus.

A. The theological expression of salvation rests in three thoughts: We have been saved; we are being saved; we will be saved.

B. Through hope Abraham became the father of many nations. Romans 4:18

C. We are saved by hope. It is a simple message. Romans 4:24

D. This hope is stored up in heaven for believers. Col 1:5

E. This hope promises a resurrection of each believer. Acts 24:15

II. Live Peaceably in Jesus.

A. Through God’s mercy he guides us along the path of peace. Luke 1:78, 79

B. The spiritual minded man can live in peace. Romans 8:6

C. One blessing from God is the joy of his peace. Psalm 29:11

D. Isaiah (26:3) wrote: Thou shalt keep them in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

E. The peace of God passes all understanding.

III. Surrender to God’s Will in Jesus.

A. By humility and fear of the Lord are riches, and honor, and life. Proverbs 22:4

B. The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart. Psalm 34:18

C. He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but he whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy. Proverbs 28:13

D. Through a sincere faith and pure heart we minister to others. I Timothy 1:5

E. Consider the examples found in (READ) Hebrews 11:33, 34

IV. Enjoy Freedom from Sin’s Power in Jesus.

A. The law of the Spirit in Christ has made us free from the law of sin and death. Romans 8:2

B. John 8:32

C. If God be for us who shall be against us? Romans 8:31

D. READ John 8:31-33

E. When Jesus cast out a demon from a man the man spoke and the people wondered. Luke 11:14

Conclusion:

A. The Jews required a sign and the Greeks sought after wisdom.

B. Provide both and what do you have? You have a people filled with pride and still separated from God.

C. Jesus said that we should seek him first and all these things shall be added unto them.

D. The blessing of a godly life is a personal choice.

E. Will you put Jesus first?
Developing Christian Character through Service
II Corinthians 9:8-15

Introduction:
A. Jesus and his disciples were men of low stature in society.
B. They did not possess means.
C. Many of these men possessed little formal education if any at all.
D. Men at their best are altogether weak and dependent.
E. Therefore, in serving God we must

I. By Relying on God’s Resource. Vs.8
A. Men are at their best when they rely upon God.
B. Men serve God through the supply of His grace.
C. Note the relationship between God and is servants.
D. We can only give others what God gives us.
E. We are constrained by the love of God and the cross of Christ.

II. By Sowing the Seed of Truth. Vs.10
A. God’s truth reveals the fallen condition of man.
B. God’s truth extends the power to redeem.
C. God’s truth provides bread for growth.
D. God’s truth blesses righteousness with fruit.
E. God’s truth satisfies the submissive servant.

III. By Using God’s Tools Exclusively. Vs.12
A. God chose the weak things... foolish things.
1. The Psalmists wrote: “Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength. Psalm 8:2
2. James wrote: “Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith?” James 2:5
B. God also chose the base things and things that are not.
1. Example of John’s sermon as recorded in Mathew 3:9 “… for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.”
C. Through freedom proclaim the message.
D. Through faithful giving.
E. Through the consideration of other’s needs first.

IV. By Thanking God For His Blessings. Vs. 12
A. The administration of this service supplies the wants of his servants. Thearupo - therapy
B. Servicing God hushes the sorrow of the distresses soul.
C. Serving God heals the wounds of the afflicted.
D. Serving God relieves the poverty of the indigent.
E. Serving God dispels the darkness of the ignorant.
Conclusion:
A. Remember through grace God provides our every need.
B. First of all there is the grace that brings salvation.
C. Then He supplies our needs enabling us to do his work.
D. We are without excuse, God supplies.
E. Let us surrender to do his will beginning now!

The Character of Ethical Conduct
Philippians 1: 9 - 12

Introduction:
A. Def: pertaining to right conduct.
B. Paul’s prayer reveals a need for Christian to develop a pattern for ethical conduct.
C. This goal is achieved through the help of our Lord.
D. It is a process of continued growth.
E. It requires:

I. A Love for Others. Vs. 9
A. It is divine in its origin.
B. God had begun a work of faith in them.
C. It was a faith that produces love.
D. It has no metes and bounds.
E. “Owe no man any thing, but to love one another.” Romans 13:8

II. An Understanding of Others. Vs.10
A. Christian love increases by knowledge.
B. This knowledge is the discriminating power that allows a man to understand the true nature of things.
C. This knowledge allows a man to test those things that are really important.
D. This knowledge allows a man to find goodness in the midst of tragedy.
E. Remember the old saying: Walk a mile in another man’s shoes.

III. A Pattern of Godly Living. Vs. 11
A. God looks for the fruits of righteousness.
B. Paul wrote: “Being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, righteousness and the end everlasting life.” Romans 6:22
C. Remember the fruits of the Spirit are through Jesus Christ.
D. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify God.”
E. A righteous life is endured by the abundance of God’s love.

IV. An Appreciation of Suffering. Vs. 12
A. READ verse 12.
B. See verse 13
C. See verse 14
D. Paul’s courage during his sufferings gave hope to others who were struggling as well.
E. Paul measured his condition, not by present hardship but by what it did to spread the Gospel.
Conclusion:

A. We should cultivate the habit of intercessory prayer.
B. We should pray for the continued growth of others.
C. Christians are exposed to the evil effects of this present world.
D. We should not think we could serve God better if our circumstances were different.
E. We should not become despondent.

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Our Spiritual Diary

I think we are all more or less interested in good records in life. When in school we strive to make our report card measure up to a certain standard. As we grow into womanhood and manhood we undertake to build a good credit record and a reputation of unquestionable integrity. We like to have it said, "There is a man of his word!"

While we are making all these records and writing our earthly diary there is another diary and record being written. It is our heavenly record. This is the one that counts for eternity. This one will contain no exaggerations and no good work small or great will go overlooked or unrewarded. In this life we may do many things that we will not be credited with or rewarded for.

With our heavenly record it is different. God does not overlook the smallest work in his name. If we give a glass of cold water in His name it will be recognized and credited to our record and we will receive a reward for it.

I. NAME WRITTEN IN HEAVEN
   Luke 10:20

   No entrances made until this occurs. In order to have your name written in Heaven you will have to choose the right kind of salvation. You must be born into this family in order to get your name entered on the roster. John 3:3, Titus 3:5

   People swear lies and get into the United States and are registered as citizens. They use fraud and sometimes buy their papers and all the time they hate and despise our government. In heaven it is different, God knows every liar that professes to know him. That kind of person will not have his name written down for there are no mistakes in the courts of Glory and there will be no erasures.

II. RIGHT BAPTISM RECORDED IN MY DIARY.

   In the early days of the church baptism was automatic and synonymous with their profession of faith. Acts 10:47 and Acts 2:41

   As soon as our names are registered in the Lamb's book of life we should be immersed in water. Jesus said "thus it
becometh us to fulfill all righteousness"
Matt 3

Not just any kind, but the kind that Jesus had. Matt. 3:16. I want to find out what happened to Jesus and find a duplicate as far as humanly possible.

III. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP RECORDED IN MY DIARY

Often you hear the expression, "Oh I can live as good a Christian out of the church as in it". This is as consistent as saying "I can be just as good a citizen of my country and never vote or pay taxes".

Have we stopped to consider the value Jesus placed on the church? He gave his blood to purchase it. Acts 20:28. He gave the responsibility of preaching the gospel to the church. Matt 28:9-20

"Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus" Ephesians 3:21. "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together" Heb 10:25

IV. I WANT MY DIARY TO SAY THAT I GAVE AS THE BIBLE TAUGHT ME TO GIVE

Regularly - on the first day of the week. As prospered - a percentage of my income. 1 Cor. 16:1-2. As a man purposeth in his heart so let him give, not grudgingly but cheerfully for the Lord loveth a cheerful giver.

We can pad reports and make it look like to others that we are giving a lot to the church but you do not pad this heavenly record. God keeps accurate books. A friend of mine who worked for the internal revenue office told about one man who told him that he had given a tenth of his income to the church. Upon being asked which church the man could not remember - the tax collector then asked him to give the name of the preacher and he was still stumped. You can draw your own conclusion as to the honesty of this man. But the records in heaven, his heavenly diary (if he has one?) will show how much he gave to the cause.

When we rob God we bring a curse on our church and nation as well as ourselves. Notice the Word of God in Mal. 3:8-9. You cannot out give God. He gave His only begotten Son.

V. I WANT IT WRITTEN IN MY DIARY THAT I WAS WILLING TO GIVE MY LIFE

A person may give millions of dollars to the church and to charity, but if they do not give their lives to the Lord it can be of no benefit to them. "Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall loose it; and whosoever shall loose his life shall preserve it". Luke 17:33 Lot's wife loved her possessions more than a life for God.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove
what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. Rom 12:1,2

VI. THAT I WAS A SOUL WINNER

What a thrill it gives you when you have been responsible for someone coming out to the house of God to hear the blessed story of Jesus' love for sinners. How much greater thrill is there to be the means of a lost benighted soul coming to a saving knowledge of Jesus?

"He that winneth souls is wise" Prov. 11:30
"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Psa 126: 5-6
Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. Luke 15:10

If you are not a soul winner you will fail to see the fields that are white unto harvest even now. We can be soul winners by "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into His harvest." Matt. 9:38 "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Prov. 29:18

"The spirit and the bride say come and let whosoever heareth say come, and let whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" Rev. 22:17

VII. WRITTEN IN MY DIARY THAT I TOOK UP MY CROSS - was FAITHFUL.

If you had been in Simon's place when he was offered the privilege of bearing the cross to Calvary, what would you have done? Would you have said "no the danger is too great or I am too busy today or the cross is too heavy" "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily, and follow me" Luke 9:23

Not weekly or once a year but every day.

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." II Tim. 4:7-8

WHICH ONE WILL YOU CHOOSE?