

GO DEEPER

use these questions for further study

Last week we focused on choosing to rejoice in Jesus. Were you able to incorporate any of the recommended practices in your life? What was your experience?

Read Philippians 4:4-8 - Why does Paul set prayer as the alternative to anxiety?

How can prayer disrupt the cycle of anxiety and reactivity?

What are the different forms of prayer Paul lists? Is there any significance to Paul using multiple words to speak of prayer? (explain)

What is your relationship to prayer? Do you find it easy, hard, satisfying, disappointing, intuitive, bewildering, etc.? Do you pray often? What characterizes most of your prayers: thanks, petition, praise, lament, etc.?

Have you ever explored forms of prayer (written, spontaneous, liturgical, scripture-based, sung, embodied, etc.) different from what you are most comfortable with? What was your experience?

When you have felt anxious, fearful, or worried have you turned to God in prayer? What was the result?

Read Matthew 7:7-12 - How does Jesus' description of our Heavenly Father affirm or challenge your conception of God? Do you believe God is good and desires good for you? Why or why not?

How might your relationship with your earthly father (or mother) affect how you view God? How might anxieties from your developmental years or from traumatic experiences affect how you view God?

How can prayer re-shape your relationship with God and restore trust?

Use the following prayer exercise this week:

1. Invite the Spirit - In Jesus' name ask God to work through the Holy Spirit to open your eyes, ears, heart, and mind to Him and His understanding.
2. Give Thanks - Think over the events of the day and remember moments of happiness, peace, and blessing. Thank God for each of them.
3. Review the Day - Consider the places and moments you felt overwhelmed, anxious, angry, sad, or lonely. Were there situations in which you wish you had responded differently? Bring all of these before God. Where needed, ask for forgiveness. Take a moment to reflect on the gift of God's forgiveness.
4. Pray for the Next Day - Ask for help for the coming day. If there are any specific needs or worries lift them up to God.

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