

ActNow! (Applying Christ's Teaching NOW) follows the weekly sermon series of TPMC, and challenges us to apply and put into practice the biblical truths we hear each week. It is the recommended Bible discussion material for TPMC's Connect Groups, and leader's notes are available to all Connect Group Leaders and at the Information Counter.

A Methodist Prays Constantly

1 Timothy 2:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

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SERMON SYNOPSIS

- **True prayer** involves entering into the presence of God, rather than blindly repeating the same words hoping to get prayers answered or have them answered quickly. **True prayer** is simply lifting our hearts to God at all times and in all places. True prayer involves aligning our hearts to God and seeking God. Hence, the exact words, location or form of the prayer are not as important as the posture of our hearts toward God.
- We therefore **pray constantly** when our heart is with the Lord whether we are alone by ourselves or in the company with others; or when God is in all our thoughts whether we lie down or rise up; or when we walk with God continually, having the loving eye of our minds fixed upon Him.
- Prayer changes us, and changes the world.

Prayer changes us because it is an important “means of grace.” This means that prayer conveys God’s grace to us. When we receive grace from God, we draw nearer to Him and we are changed.

Prayer changes the world because God has the power to heal, transform and overcome obstacles, whether in our lives, the lives of our loved ones, or in the world as a whole – *in alignment* to His will. The Lord *is God*, all that God wills will be done!

How blessed we are as our God is *not just* all-powerful, *but is* all-holy, all-love, all-merciful and all-gracious! And how privileged we are to change our world together with God through our prayers! Moreover, **praying for others** is an act of love and it often means very much to the people being prayed for to know that others care. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we reflect that our God cares and loves through our prayers for others and the world.

- **How to pray constantly:**
 - 1) If we are not sure what to pray for, try praying regarding how *we would please God our Father in Heaven* in the way we spend money, interact with people, and spend our time.
 - 2) Pray with our family.
 - 3) Pray for others – our loved ones, our nation, those marginalized, those suffering from injustice, or for situations in the world.
 - 4) Try and pray just a little more every day – just a few more minutes a day.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

RELATE

1. Do you pray at least once a day, every day? If “yes”, what is the time and situation you use for prayer? If “no”, where are 5 minutes in your day that you can use for prayer?

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REFLECT

2. The book of Psalms is a book of prayers for God's people to sing and refer to. It demonstrates that God's people truly are commanded to pray in every situation in life, whether good or bad, and whether God seems near or far. In Psalms 113, 51 and 39, what did the writer want God to change in (a) the people praying along, and/or (b) the wider world?

[Verses to help us go deeper: Psalm 113; Psalm 51; Psalm 39]

RESPOND

3. Over the next 3 days, do the following at least once. Spend 5 minutes making a list of prayer items with at least 3 items. Either right away or later in the day, spend 5 minutes praying for those items: try combining prayer with everyday activities such as train or bus journeys, exercise, breaks at school or work, or exercise/walks. Repeat this for as many days as you can. At the next Connect Group meeting, share with your group how the experience went.

PRAYER POINTERS

- Praise God for His infinite love, power and wisdom.
- Thank God for giving us the ability to have a relationship with Him, through Jesus Christ.
- Ask God to increase our desire to deepen this relationship, and to help us understand the benefits of praying constantly in our lives.

SCRIPTURE TO MEDITATE ON

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." [1 Thessalonians 5:16-18]