

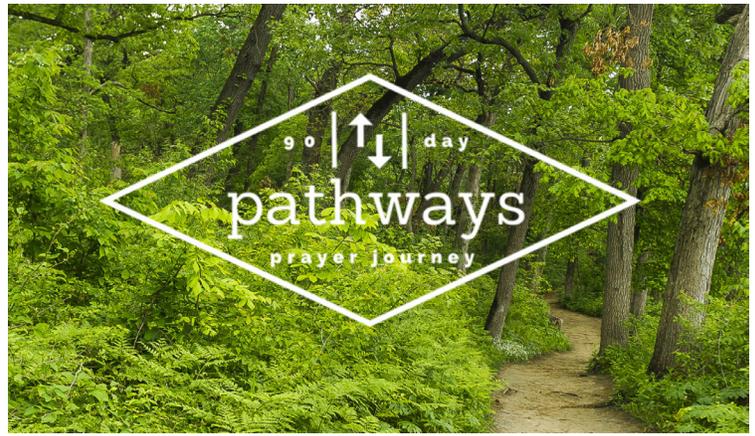
Pathways Weekly Reading & Prayer Guide

Week 2: Wisdom for the Path

February 19-25

Questions & Reflections

by Dr. Paul Suich



Opening Prayer

"Our gracious Lord and heavenly Father, as I move down this pathway into your goodness, I am grateful that you are in the process of redeeming me. I know that I bring many bad habits and that I lack of full understanding of myself and your goodness. Thank you for speaking clearly through the fog so that I can hear your voice and develop in maturity. Teach me about prayer this Spring as I participate in the Pathways lessons along with the other members of my church."

Day One (Sunday, Feb. 19)

1. Read Luke 11:1-13
2. Read Luke 11:5-10. What is Jesus teaching us about prayer?
3. Sometimes we want what we need, sometimes we are oblivious to what we need, sometimes we think that we need something that we don't actually need. When have you wanted something badly, only later to find that you didn't need it?
4. When have you been oblivious to an actual need, only later did you recognize what you needed at the time?
5. When has God met your needs?
6. When has it seemed that God has not met your needs?
7. How might you offer your prayer to God?

Day Two (Monday, Feb. 20)

1. Read Luke 11:11-13. What is Jesus teaching us about prayer?
2. What did you want to give your child that was good, that your child thought was not good (boring...not sweet enough...takes too long...)?
3. What might God want to give you as a good Father that you (as a child) might not yet want?
4. What does this passage say to you about your cynicism that God would actually answer your prayers in a satisfying manner?
5. How might you offer your prayer to God?

Day Three (Tuesday, Feb. 21)

1. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:17. What is your initial gut reaction to this calling?
2. How would you respond to this verse if God were a Pharisee who judges us harshly?
3. How would you respond to this verse if God were the best Father imaginable who loved you richly and wanted you to be in contact with Him all day long?
4. Jesus calls us to imitate His example of rising before dawn and taking walks in the mountains with His Father before the day began, of talking to Him throughout the day, and understanding all events in light of what His Dad wants. What improves our understanding of God's love?
5. What one thing would you begin to do so that you are on the Pathway towards an ongoing conversation with God?
6. Talk to God about the invitation to spend more time with Him.

Day Four (Wednesday, Feb. 22)

1. Read Daniel 6:6-15. We are especially interested in verse 10. What do we learn about Daniel's regular practice with regards to prayer?
2. What did Daniel do differently when praying to God could get you killed?
3. On a scale of 1-10, how heroic does it seem to have a practice of praying three times per day?
4. If the practice of prayer is internalized- I do this because I want this- it will be very different than if it is externalized- I do this to earn an M & M. What increases your intrinsic motivation to pray?
5. Talk to God about the frequency of your prayers.

Day Five (Thursday, Feb. 23)

1. Read Hebrews 5:14. What does this verse imply about prayer?
2. How often do you eat something? We could pray every time we eat... we must develop our prayer discipline to do so. When we were babies, we could only suck food when it was put directly into our mouths. But as we developed, we learned how to put things in our own mouths, we learned to chew, and later, we learned how to smear peas in our hair. What are the steps of moving towards the solid food of spirituality in prayer?
3. The author of Hebrews suggests that we must learn how to discriminate good from evil. If we have years of training to call violence fun, we won't see it as evil. How much help do you think you need in reviewing your life definitions of good and evil?
4. Talk to God about the frequency of your prayers.

Day Six (Friday, Feb. 24)

1. The Psalms are the original book of Common Prayer. It was put together so that the people of God could sing these songs together in worship. Some of the songs are about the praise of God, but most are about how difficult life can be. Would you like to be part of a congregation that sang about doubt, anger, depression, and anxiety?
2. The Psalms help us move from difficult times to an understanding of where God is when we hurt. What happens to our worship in the book of Psalms when we deny that we are hurting and only speak of happy notes?
3. If you prayed a Psalm a day, you would pray about delight, joy, sadness, anger, shame, and anxiety... all the feelings that humans feel... on a regular basis. Where do you turn to express the feelings of your heart in prayer?
4. Talk to God about whether you feel free to share the unpopular emotions in your times of prayer.

Day Seven (Saturday, Feb. 25)

1. Read Luke 10:38-42. We are going to focus on verse 40 and the distractions that we deal with in prayer. How many times do you get distracted per five minutes of prayer?
2. What is your typical reaction to getting distracted? What do you say to yourself or what do you do when you know that you have become distracted from your original purpose?
3. Martha got distracted because she was troubled about many things. Mary was focused because she dropped everything, sat down at Jesus's feet, and listened to everything He said. How do you calm the chatter of your mind?
4. What is a graceful response to distraction?
5. What is a harsh, legalistic, results oriented response to distraction?
6. Talk to God about the "good portion" offered to us in times of prayer.

Wisdom from Others
Book Suggested Readings
Too Busy Not To Pray (Hybels) - Chapter 2
A Praying Life (Miller) - Chapters 3-5
Prayer (Yancey) - Chapters 3-4