

CREDO

Prayer and Bible Study

- I. Welcome and Introduction—Membership vows. 3 General Rules. Shapes—personal piety. Today we're talking about Prayer and Bible Study. Maybe you've been a student of Scripture for your whole life and you learned to pray the same as you learned to talk, or maybe you're not comfortable with either. Wherever you are on that spectrum, I hope you walk away with something new and helpful this morning, when it comes to growing closer in your life of faith.
 - A. I'm going to introduce and teach some things pretty quickly, but you have a handout to take home!
- II. Matthew 6:5-15, The Lord's Prayer
 - A. About prayer
 1. Private and public; address to our Father
 - B. Bible
 1. We know how to speak because we listen and have been spoken to; must read scripture
- III. Prayer
 - A. In pairs, not someone you've shared with before (you may have to move), share with each other, "What's your earliest memory of prayer?" Think of the Who? Where? When? What? ...5 minutes
 - B. What is prayer?
 1. Not our changing God's mind, but God changing us (CR 29)
 - C. Methods
 1. The Lord's Prayer
 2. ACTS—Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication
 3. Five-Finger Prayer—those closest to me, those who point me to Christ, those in leadership/power, those who are weak, myself
 4. Contemplative (Jesus) Prayer—"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner."
 - a) Pray out of the richness of Scripture, rather than the poverty of our hearts (Bonhoeffer)
 5. Psalms—who is praying this psalm if not me?
 - a) How do you learn the psalms? pray them.
 6. RESPONSES—which of those feels most helpful, and that you might try? not picking it up?
- IV. Bible Study
 - A. What is the Bible? A word about translations.
 1. True in the way it claims to be true
 - B. What feels comfortable to you in the Bible? What feels uncomfortable/foreign?
 - C. Methods
 1. SOAPY
 2. Lectio Divina
 - D. Wesley's guides for reading Scripture... "use what you learned immediately"
 1. 1. To set apart a little time, if you can, every morning and evening for that purpose 2. At each time if you have leisure, to read a chapter out of the Old, and one out of the New Testament: if you cannot do this, to take a single chapter, or a part of one 3. To read this with a single eye, to know the whole will of God, and a fixed resolution to do it In order to know his will, you should, 4. Have a constant eye to the analogy of faith; the connexion and harmony there is between those grand, fundamental doctrines, Original Sin, Justification by Faith, the New Birth, Inward and Outward Holiness. 5. Serious and earnest prayer should be constantly used, before we consult the oracles of God, seeing "scripture can only be understood through the same Spirit whereby "it was given." Our reading should likewise be closed with prayer, that what we read may be written on our hearts. 6. It might also be of use, if while we read, we were frequently to pause, and examine ourselves by what we read, both with regard to our

hearts, and lives. This would furnish us with matter of praise, where we found God had enabled us to conform to his blessed will, and matter of humiliation and prayer, where we were conscious of having fallen short. And whatever light you then receive, should be used to the uttermost, and that immediately. Let there be no delay. Whatever you resolve, begin to execute the first moment you can. So shall you find this word to be indeed the power of God unto present and eternal salvation.¹

2. Read for transformation, not information

E. RESPONSES? What are your habits of Bible study now?

1. A few suggestions—Sunday's readings; one book at a time (Genesis, Luke, Psalms); join Wed. am women's study; start a new one!

V. What are your habits of prayer and Bible study now?

A. How might you take one more step to grow in that practice?

¹ <http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/john-wesleys-notes-on-the-bible/preface-to-the-old-testament-notes/>