



PREVIEW

We want our prayer life to be effective. A major hinderance to effective praying is distraction. A way to remove the hindrance of distraction is to be focused while praying.

PRAISE

When we are able to focus our minds on God, we will enjoy the benefits of a friendship with him.

PARABLE

We all have friends we talk to. But have you tried to talk with someone who kept looking over your shoulder, just past you? Your eyes can't help but to notice they're not really focused. You might turn to see what they're looking at, or you might even ask, "What's up?" Or have you ever been in a conversation and all of the sudden you feel your phone vibrate in your hand. Your tempted to see who the text is from, but you don't want to. Then you give into the temptation. You look at your phone, reply, while trying to stay engaged in the conversation. The next thing you know, you try to jump back into the conversation, and with only fragments of what your friend was talking about, you try to respond. Soon you discover your response had almost nothing to do with what they were talking about, because you were distracted. Now, what about when the two of you are focused in your conversation? You find that you are able to go back and forth in the conversation. You're able to bounce thoughts, and ideas off each other. You also find that your able talk for a long time because the two of you are focused on the conversation.

When You Pray:

FOCUS

PARABLE *(continued)*

Prayer works much like that; however, we'll never find God distracted in the conversation. It's most likely we'll find ourselves unfocused in the conversation. But when you focus on God in your prayer time, you'll find you enjoy it more. You will begin to hear God speak to you. You'll stay praying longer, and even coming back more often.

PRESENT

Jesus Christ was known for prayer. Many times, when you read about him praying, you'll see that he went alone. There was a time he left his disciples and went alone into a mountain to pray. Another time he invited some disciples with him to pray, but then he goes a little further to be alone. Then when he gave a prescription for prayer, he would tell them: But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. Matthew 6:6

Notice, he instructed his listeners to enter into a closet, then they would shut the door and pray. Whether or not Jesus entered into a literal closet to pray, its unknown. We do see he gets alone to pray. If he prayed according to his prescription, his intention was to be in the moment, focused and without distraction. Because when you're in the moment you mean to be where you're at, doing what you're doing. When you're focused, your attention is on the one you're talking to. And when there's no distraction, there is nothing to pull away your attention from God when you pray.

When You Pray:

FOCUS

PRACTICE

The next time you pray at home, put your phone on "Focus Mode". Leave your phone, and iPad at the total opposite side of the house. Turn off your computer. If anyone is home, let them know you'll be praying for a while (so they'll know where you're at, and not interrupt). Find an area that's free of interruptions. Focus your mind on God and begin to talk with him. You might notice for the first little while of prayer your mind is still running all over. But you'll notice after a while of intentionally focusing on God, and not leaving when you feel to, you'll actually want to stay and pray.

PRAY

Jesus, I love you and I thank you for allowing us to get close to you. We live in a very fast paced world with so many things calling for our attention. I ask God, this week help me learn how to focus on you when I pray. When I get antsy to leave from prayer, help me stay a little longer. In Jesus name.

PLUS

For the next 7 days, find a place to pray and practice focusing on God when you pray. At times you may even want to focus your mind on God, sit in silence, and practice hearing his voice.