

Prayer & Fasting pt 5 Standing on the Word

Intro: Stefan Duerksen Lead Pastor

Would you believe me if I said I know THREE THINGS you can start doing today that will change almost every aspect of your life.

1. Will improve ALL of your relationships. ALL of them. God and others. Even your enemies!
2. Anxiety, depression, stress and overwhelm.
3. Your outlook on suffering AND your ability to go through it well.
4. Give you the strength to overcome your bad character traits AND resist sinful temptation.
5. Your ability to learn new skills AND help you stay focused.
6. And even your ability to remember where you put your KEYS!!

Church-Wide Prayer: Heart of Prayer (Ps 27:4): Every generation to find Jesus & learn to bring their needs to Him in prayer

- **500 average attendance at Prayer Summit**
- **Empower** – for the Holy Spirit to move in power among those in attendance. That he would stretch out his hand and heal, empower, strengthen, speak, correct, teach and give his people REST.
- For the Lord himself to teach us to Ask, Seek, Knock in prayer! That we would Wake up! Persevere! Grow in Faith! Stand firm in Prayer!
- Israel - For the families of the hostages who are losing hope
- Israel - For wisdom for Israel's political and military leaders
- Israel - For the hostages themselves, especially for answers to their prayers
- Israel - For courage for believers in the nations to publicly take a stand for Israel
- Israel - For many to turn to God in Israel and Gaza, including Hamas terrorists

Recap: P. Ray spoke on persevering in prayer! INCREDIBLE!

Today: Pt 5 of our Prayer & Fasting series and will be focusing on Standing on the Word.

John 15:7-8 If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

Scripture is quite clear. Jesus wants us to bear FRUIT! He wants to answer our prayers! Let that sink in.

How many of us have doubt when we pray? Does God care? Does he listen? Does he want to answer? The answer – YES!!!!

But we need to make the 1st thing 1st – Knowing God must be our primary AIM.

A. Effective Prayer & Fasting seeks 1st to know God

He wants us to KNOW HIM.

We have looked at different barriers in this series:

- Barriers that keep God from seeing our fasting – treasured sin, mistreating others, etc.
- Barriers to answered prayer: not persevering in prayer, praying our own will and desires, not praying!

Faith doesn't work like a genie in a bottle! Where you rub the lamp and get whatever you want! Jesus wants us to know him, and follow him with our whole lives and hearts!

- Jesus wants to draw us into a deeper relationship with him! Your anxiety? Does he want you to stay in that? NO. But read Paul's letter! God used his anxiety to FIRST teach Paul to trust in GOD and not on his OWN UNDERSTANDING... THEN GAVE HIM VICTORY! (2 Corinthians 1)
- Too many people feel anxious and go to their PHONE to distract themselves from feeling. Is that learning to trust God? Or trust in man? NOT SAYING we shouldn't get help! WE SHOULD. Doctors, therapy, yes! You need people around you to make it through life's struggles! BUT GET INTO GOD'S WORD – PRAY – FAST – PERSEVERE! **Make the 1st thing 1st. knowing God and trusting Him above all else.**

John 17:3 And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

Understanding this will change your prayer life, fasting, perspective on your circumstances, and how you live your life! Make the 1st thing 1st. Knowing God above all else!

B. Standing on the Word is necessary to KNOW GOD

Many people feel like their lives are crumbling. Stress is overwhelming them to points of despair. They are losing hope. And as the frequency of the storms around us have increased – they feel like their faith and lives have been shaken and are crumbling.

Matthew 7:24-27 “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

- **Keys to building on the Rock:**
 - Read God's Word & Listen to God's Spirit
 - Obey God's Word & follow the promptings of God's Spirit
- Some people hear the word OBEY and immediately think, “we aren't saved by works.” And they push so hard against it, they don't commit their lives to OBEYING GOD'S WORD for fear of becoming a “box checker” or “legalist”.
- Let's put salvation aside as we are saved by GRACE through FAITH IN CHRIST ALONE. CHECK.
- For now. Do you want to be able to endure hardship? To persevere in difficult circumstances? To love God? If you said, YES. Then you need to be READ GOD'S WORD & OBEY GOD'S WORD.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

God gave us Scripture so we could KNOW him. In Scripture we discover who God is, what he is like, why we are here, what our purpose is, our mission, the answer for suffering in the world and in our lives, we are laid bare and discover strength and power to change, and more! It is a LIVING WORD – little wonder that we are told to STAND FIRM – or BUILD OUR LIVES ON THE WORD.

C. Standing on the Word is a daily activity

As with fasting and prayer, there are no short cuts here to help us get what we want – NOPE! There is one non-negotiable in utilizing these weapons of warfare! Total surrender!

You must surrender your heart completely to Jesus. Then approach him on his terms.

Then we patiently endure, we persevere, we draw close and we aim to Know God – to love him and obey him with our whole lives.

The BIGGEST barrier I see with people building their lives on the Word can summed up with a lack of TIME spent reading & obeying Scripture!

Exodus 16:16-21 - In Exodus God provided for the Israelites in the Wilderness by providing them with HEAVENLY food called Manna!

- He supernaturally gave them what they needed for living. BUT there was a condition.
- He only gave them what they needed for THAT DAY. If they tried to gather extra? By the following morning it would ROT!
- He was teaching them to DEPEND ON HIM DAILY with their whole lives!

My example: when I first gave my life to Jesus this was something I picked up on immediately. I knew that spending time with Jesus was more than checking a box, but also understood that growing a relationship, growing your faith, required time in the Word, time in prayer. It required boxes to be checked.

- What I found? Days that I spent time with Jesus in the Word and prayer I was able to function better in EVERY aspect of life. I did my job better, my attitude was better, I even felt like my body functioned better!
- I was learning a lesson. The Lord wanted me to LEAN on HIM for DAILY LIVING. So, he wouldn't give me everything I needed for that WEEK. He gave me what I needed for that DAY.
- HE STILL DOES THIS.

My example: message prep → he ALWAYS requires me to wrestle the message into being. It NEVER comes easy. And you know what? I AM GLAD FOR IT! It means that I am asking for prayer! Searching the Word! Praying myself! Pressing into GOD and, although it can be STRESSFUL, I THANK GOD FOR DOING IT THIS WAY.

- **If he just gave me the ability to know exactly what to say and how, he could do that! I would quickly stop relying on God and start relying on myself.**

If all we needed was to know the right answers intellectually, we could read it once, know the answer and be DONE. This would lead to defective faith & self-reliance!

The Bible is not there to help you pass an exam!

Having a biblical worldview isn't the same as just being able to give the right answers to questions about life.

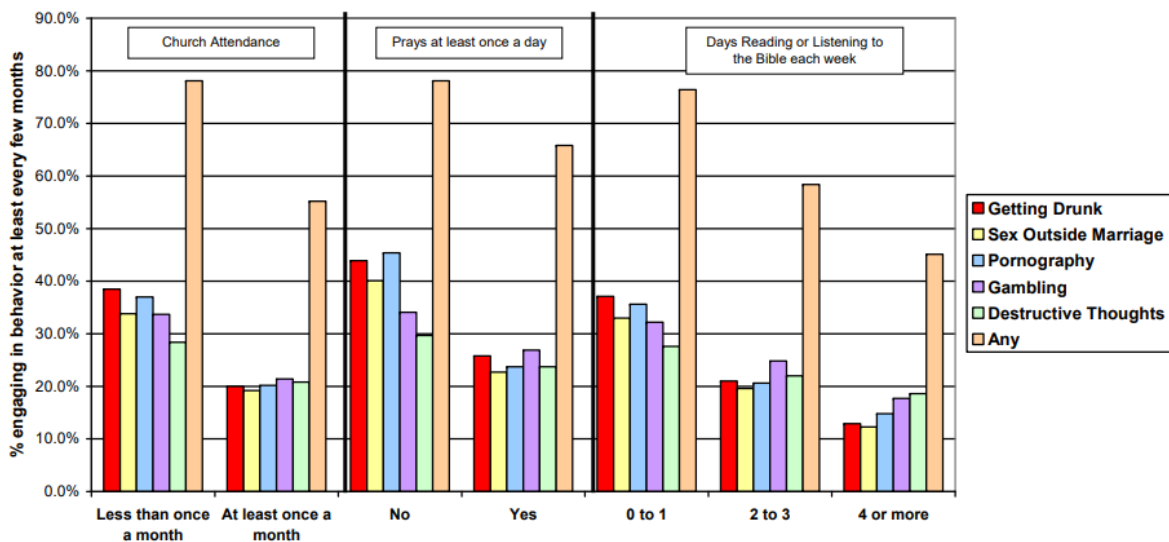
Knowing about God is good, but is NOT the same as KNOWING GOD

Don't approach the Bible as you approach the Lord of the Rings trilogy or a Science textbook! You don't read it once and check the box as "completed"

The Bible is a supernatural, prophetic Book, given by God to us so we can KNOW HIM & learn to depend on him for DAILY LIVING.

The Power of 4: <https://bttbfiles.com/web/docs/cbe/Scientific Evidence for the Power of 4.pdf>

Figure 3. Spiritual Disciplines & Risk Behaviors Among U.S. Adults.



The data collected by CBE attest to many of these effects. For example, statistical analyses reveal that, controlling for other factors, such as age, gender, church attendance, and prayer, Christians who are engaged in scripture most days of the week have lower odds of participating in these behaviors: / Getting drunk = 57% lower odds / Sex outside marriage = 68% lower odds / Pornography = 61% lower odds / Gambling = 74% lower / Any of these habits = 57% lower odds

Consistent with the findings from our previous studies, we also find that there are no statistically significant differences between those who read or listen to the Bible one to three times a week and those who spent zero days doing so. In other words, for adults, engaging scripture for less than four days a week does not appear to have the same protective factor as doing so for four or more days.

Sharing faith with others = 228% higher odds / Discipling others = 231% higher odds / Memorizing scripture = 407% higher odds

In addition, how often one reads or listens to the Bible seems a particularly strong protective factor for teens.

ALL QUOTES IN ITALICS TAKEN FROM SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE FOR THE POWER OF 4.

EXCUSE: I don't have time? MAKE THE TIME. We all have the same amount of time per day.

- Ken M, "Stefan, you do have time, we all have the same amount of time. You just don't want to make the time"

REFLECT: confess any sinful attitudes you have had towards God and his Word. Commit to reading the Word & obeying it! And ask God to open your eyes that you can KNOW HIM MORE.

D. Memorize! Permanently build God's Word into your heart

Memorization can change your life. Your prayer life. Your relationships. Your learning ability! Your ability to endure temptation! And more. It will change your life.

My Story: I have ADHD and began following Jesus, Aug 27, 2004. In 2005, the Lord challenged me to start memorizing! I resisted because of my ADHD! I struggled with MEMORY & FOCUS. The Lord rebuked me and reminded me that HE MADE ME. He knew better than me what I could/couldn't do. I finally began and memorized Matthew 5-7.

Psalms 119:9-11 How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

6 months later... I am studying the correlation with memory and attachment and came across a section on memory and your ability to learn. And was shocked to discover a few things!

- Almost everyone has a good memory. If you don't, that's usually what is labeled a learning disability. Your ability to remember is critical for EVERYTHING you do.
- Whether good or bad. Everything you do well, you do so because you remember how to do it.

- Memory works as a muscle. The more you use it, the better it works! And since everything you learn and do requires MEMORY – memorization will help you in almost EVERYTHING.
- **So here, I was begging the Lord to teach me! Help me grow in leadership! In developing the ministry I was leading! and his invitation for me to MEMORIZE was the KEY TO ANSWERING THAT PRAYER AND MANY OTHERS:** 1) never feeling satisfied, 2) Not remembering key details, 3) growing as a preacher, 4) Growing as a leader, 5) overcoming temptation

BUT MORE THAN THAT. I was writing His Word on my heart/brain! Literally. Every skill you have has a physical location in your brain. Synapses wired together. As I began to get God’s Word in my heart I was physically writing it into my BRAIN. It was becoming a part of me.

NOT SAYING: *“Read the Bible daily & memorize to be SAVED and to be a good Christian.”*

I AM SAYING: *“Do you want to experience abundant life? Freedom? Strength to persevere? Understand God’s will? Discover your purpose? Be able to resist deception? Change your relationships? Grow your prayer life? And, most importantly, do you want to KNOW GOD? THEN, Spend time reading, obeying & memorizing Scripture! Let it encourage you, correct you, teach you, rebuke you, reveal your heart to you! Let it TRANSFORM YOU.”*

START: Reading the Bible. Many of us are doing the Bible Recap on YouVersion. Obeying the Bible! Aim for daily time in the Word.

MEMORIZE: 1) look up Verses that speak on areas you want to grow in. e.g. faith, end times, eternity, character, knowing God, relationships, anxiety, peace, etc.

2) Daily: Read it 3x, Meditate on what it means, Pray the truths in the verse, Practice saying it out loud without looking. (look as necessary). DOWNLOAD: Bible Memory APP.

AFTER SERVICE PRAYER – PRAYER ROOM – 9AM and 11AM

MARANATHA!! Come soon Lord!

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SC CHURCH WIDE PRAYER REQUESTS 2023/2024

Cruise ship → → → → → Battleship

1. **Life on Mission** (Mt 28:18-20, Mt 22:37-40): Love, serve & disciple people to Jesus
 - **Each one, reach one – 500 people to say, “YES” to GC and begin discipling one person.**
2. **Gen Alpha & Z** (Ps 78:7-8): Encounters with Jesus, strong mental health, boldness & belonging
 - **MS Church during 11:00 AM**
3. **Persecuted Church & Israel** (Lk 21:13): Faith, fortitude & wisdom “to not waste the opportunity to share the Gospel”
4. **Heart of Prayer** (Ps 27:4): Every generation to find Jesus & learn to bring their needs to Him in prayer
 - **500 average attendance at Prayer Summit**
5. **Church Renewal:** Directors for India and other new countries & many global disciple makers