The Twelve Days of Christmas



My Father Gave to Me…

12 Disciples Praying

1. Introduction

We **must understand who we are praying to**: God, the Creator, All- powerful and Sovereign, and our Father. .
Prayer is essential for spiritual growth.

Prayer is the key to deepening our relationship with God. Prayer unleashes the power of God (James 5:16).
Prayer is not natural, it must be learned (Luke 11:1-ff). It is difficult at times.

2 Jesus' Prayer Life

* Mark 1:35 -Jesus, although very busy, found **time/ places free from distraction.** * Luke 6:12 – Jesus spends all night praying to God.
' Hebrews 5:7 - Jesus prayed with loud cries and tears. Discuss the difference between a " deep prayer life and a shallow one.

3. Keys to Effective Prayer

*:Luke 28:1-8 - Be persistent with all kinds of prayers (Ephesians 6:18). * Psalms 66:18, James 5:26-18 - Personal righteousness.
* Matthew 21:21-22 - Believe and do not doubt.
* Psalms 5:3 - Pray daily and expect prayers to be answered. * Mark 11:25, Matthew 6:14-15 - Forgiving others.
* I Peter 3:7 - Great marriage.
" Hebrews **10:19-23 - Confidence in the blood of** Jesus, **not our deeds.**
' Psalms 55:16-17, I Thess. 5:17, Phil. 4:6 • Relying on God all day for everything.
* Jeremiah 29:20-13 - **Wholeheartedness, even wrestling in prayer (Colossians 4:12).** * Acts 4:31- **Doing our part.**
" Psalm 119:147 - Helpless, needy attitude: " I can't do anything on my own,"

4. Practicals that **Help**

Pray at least one- half hour each day in a solitary place. Pray with your **wife, husband, or roommates** each day. Have daily family devotionals.
Make up a prayer list so you don't neglect praying for anyone. Be *open* **about the victories** *and* **struggles in** your prayer life. Stay out of sin and confess your sins.
' I Peter 5:7 - Cast your deepest anxieties on the Lord in prayer.

S. .Conclusion

God can and will do the **impossible through prayer.**
Prayer is vital to a dynamic walk with God.
* Jeremiah 30:21b - God is **looking for people who will devote themselves to be close to him.**
* Isaiah 30:18 - Cod longs to **answer our prayers; He's our father (Matthew 5:6).**



II The Leaping Leper

11 Kings 6: 24-29

*The situation was seemingly hopeless. They were experiencing a famine that was so sever that mothers resorted to eating their children. Have you ever felt that there was no way out of a situation, hopeless? Is there any situation or person that you feel faithless about now, that things just will not change?

II Kings 7:1-2

*When have you been critical or negative recently, at work or at home? This officer did not even believe that the Lord could help.

II Kings 7:3-10

*The lepers were hopeless :3, the death was eminent with the leprosy anyway, they were down to their last chance. They were possibly going into a fatal situation. They ended up being totally amazed at the results. God worked it out that the results were totally the opposite.

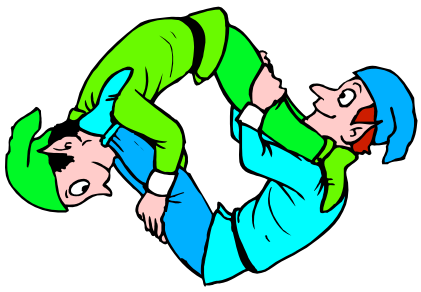
*When you first became a disciple who did you tell? Remember back when you were totally zealous, finally discovering the truth, finally knowing the purpose in your life. How grateful were you then? How many people did you share the "good news" with? How clear was it that the world was lost How many people did you pray for when first a disciple how many people did you dream would make it? It is physically very clear that had the lepers not share many would be destined to starve to death? "we're not doing right. This is a day of good news and we are keeping it to ourselves." They had to share---- because it was too good to keep to themselves----- we need to share because it is too good to keep to ourselves!

How many people do you dare to dream will become disciples now? Make a list of those people and start praying for them again with FAITH that God can make it happen!

II Kings 7: 11-20

*What was the result of the lepers taking a chance and risking their lives? When they told the "good news" how many were saved? How long did it take to change a totally hopeless situation?

*God can open the floodgates in a minute. No matter what is going on, or not going on in your life right now, you may be days or hours away from great victories! Let others know about the "great news" that God has blessed you with so that they can partake in the amazing feast that we enjoy!



IO COMMANDMENTS KEEPING

Intro: Try to write dow n the 10 Commandments before looking at Exodus 34

Read Exodus 34

*How do the 10 Commandments fit into OUR lives?

Romans 15

*For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me."[1] 4For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

5May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus.

- What Do you think the 10 Commandments teaches us about God. About his Zeal for Righteousness? About Love? About Faith?

*There are many, many reasons why God chose to give the Israelites the 10 commandments and how that affects our lives, but the one that strikes a cord in me is how 2 Corinthians 3 shows us the difference between the two covenants.

2 Corinthians 3

*Here we see the transition of coveneants explained. The promises of God are fulfilled by Jesus and we have a new covenant.

What do you think is meant by the letter kills but the spirit brings life?

Why is it important to see how the 10 commandments fit into our lives?

Ever wonder why Jesus never wrote his own book? Because you are his letter!!!!!!!



9 Fruits of the Spirit

Intro: Galatians 5:22

[22]But the fruit of the Spirit is

1. love,
2. joy,
3. peace,
4. patience,
5. kindness,
6. goodness,
7. faithfulness,
8. gentleness,
9. self-control.

Against such things there is no law. [24]Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. [25]Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. [26]Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

These are the 9 Fruits of the Spirit.

Take each one and evaluate how you have been in each of these areas of your life.

Benjamin Franklin used to keep a log of how he did in his virtues as his journal and readers of his journal could see how he grew in the vital areas of his life.

ENCOURAGEMENT: Prayer and ask God to help you to live in the Spirit!!!!

QUIZ!!!!
How do people know if you are Jesus' disciples? (This one's easy)
Matthew 7:16

How do you "keep" your fruit?
Matthew 3:8

Where does good fruit come from?
Luke 6:43

Have a fruitful day!!!!!



8 Beatitudes for Living

Intro: Matthew 5

Take some time and write down the Beatitudes and what they mean to you and ask…….

Am I Blessed Like This?

"Blessed are …" "*Matthew 5:3-10*

When we first read the statements of Jesus they seem wonderfully simple and unstartling, and they sink unobserved into our unconscious minds. For instance, the Beatitudes seem merely mild and beautiful precepts for all unworldly and useless people, but of very little practical use in the stern workaday world in which we live. We soon find, however, that the Beatitudes contain the dynamite of the Holy Ghost. They explode, as it were, when the circumstances of our lives cause them to do so. When the Holy Spirit brings to our remembrance one of these Beatitudes we say - 'What a startling statement that is!' and we have to decide whether we will accept the tremendous spiritual upheaval that will be produced in our circumstances if we obey His words. That is the way the Spirit of God works. We do not need to be born again to apply the Sermon on the Mount literally. The literal interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount is child's play; the interpretation by the Spirit of God as He applies Our Lord's statements to our circumstances is the stern work of a saint.

The teaching of Jesus is out of all proportion to our natural way of looking at things and it comes with astonishing discomfort to begin with. We have slowly to form our walk and conversation on the line of the precepts of Jesus Christ as the Holy Spirit applies them to our circumstances. The Sermon on the Mount is not a set of rules and regulations: it is a statement of the life we will live when the Holy Spirit is getting His way with us.

Oswald Chambers- The Utmost for His Highest



7 Gifts of the Spirit

Intro: Romans 12:6-8

What are the Gifts of the Spirit?

Why do you think they are described as "Gifts"?

II. What is the main purpose of us having Gifts.

1 Peter 4:10
Each one should use whatever gift he has received **to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.**

It is amazing how much God has blessed us and is it definite the we all have gifts from God.

The Parable of the Talents
14"Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property
to them. 15To one he gave five talents[1] of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent,
each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. 16The man who had received the five
talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. 17So also, the one with the two
talents gained two more. 18But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the
ground and hid his master's money.
19"After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. 20The
man who had received the five talents brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with
five talents. See, I have gained five more.'
21"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things;
I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'
22"The man with the two talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; see, I
have gained two more.'
23"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things;
I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'
24"Then the man who had received the one talent came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard
man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25So I
was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'
26"His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown
and gather where I have not scattered seed? 27Well then, you should have put my money on deposit
with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.
28" "Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. 29For everyone who has
will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be
taken from him. 30And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be
weeping and gnashing of teeth.'





6 Days of Creation
Genesis 1

Into: Look at what God does in His 6 days of creation

- Day 1 Light (so there was light and darkness
- Day 2 Sky and Water (waters separate)
- Day 3 Land and seas (waters gather); vegetation
- Day 4 Sun, moon and stars (to govern the day and the night and to mark seasons)
- Day 5 Fish and Birds (to fill waters and skies)
- Day 6 Animals (to fill the earth) and Man and Woman (to commune with God)

God says the he made us in his image.
What does that mean to you.

Isaiah 43:6 Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth-
7 everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made." 7
We were all created to be God's Glory.

We are placed in the pinnacle spot of creation and to think that God wants us to be like him can be so encouraging.

He did not put trees at the top of his creation. (Imagine if we served Treebeard from Lord of the Rings) but he put us up on top.

It is good to know that all that God created was considered GOOD.
Often Satan can get us feeling like we are worthless, no good, filthy and of little value.

We must remember how amazing God thinks of us and wants us to know that we are valuable to him!!!

5 The Golden Rule

Do to others as you would have them do to you.
Luke 6:31
So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets
Matthew 7:12

Romans 13:8
Love, for the Day is Near
*Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law.

Galatians 5:14 -
*The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

This is known as the Golden Rule. It is usually expressed by people in the negative: Don't do what you don't want done unto you!

Notice Jesus uses the positive DO!! Our love for people should involve action and have a positive effect on the people around us. It is not that hard to refrain from doing evil, but it takes love and initiative to do the good Jesus wants us to.

What are the things that you can do today, things you would want done to you?

The Golden Rule is amazing in how simple yet powerful it words can be. Jesus was setting the foundation of active goodness and mercy—the very way that God treats everyone of us every day.

Think of Good and merciful actions you can take today!!



4 Calling Gospels

Intro:

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John…the most 4 powerful books in the Bible. All of these are dedicated to revealing the Good News to the whole world.

Mark 1:1 The beginning of the **gospel** about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Take some time today to reflect on how Jesus called you with his good news.

The Call of God

"For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel."

1 Corinthians 1:17

Paul states here that the call of God is to preach the gospel; but remember what Paul means by "the gospel," viz., the reality of Redemption in our Lord Jesus Christ. We are apt to make sanctification the end-all of our preaching. Paul alludes to personal experience by way of illustration, never as the end of the matter. We are nowhere commissioned to preach salvation or sanctification; we are commissioned to lift up Jesus Christ (John 12:32). It is a travesty to say that Jesus Christ travailed in Redemption to make *me* a saint. Jesus Christ travailed in Redemption to redeem the whole world, and place it unimpaired and rehabilitated before the throne of God. The fact that Redemption can be experienced by us is an illustration of the power of the reality of Redemption, but that is not the end of Redemption. If God were human, how sick to the heart and weary He would be of the constant requests we make for our salvation, for our sanctification. We tax His energies from morning till night for things for ourselves - some thing for *me* to be delivered from! When we touch the bedrock of the reality of the Gospel of God, we shall never bother God any further with little personal plaints.

The one passion of Paul's life was to proclaim the Gospel of God. He welcomed heart-breaks, disillusionments, tribulation, for one reason only, because these things kept him in unmoved devotion to the Gospel of God



3 Solid Virtues (Faith Hope and Love)

Intro:

*1 Corinthians 13:12 Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

And now these three remain: **faith, hope and love**. But the greatest of these is love.

*Colossians 1:3

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, because

we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints-- the

faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel that has come to you. All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth.

It is interesting to see where the faith and love come from.
It comes from our hope.

What do we hope for? What should we hope for?
Why do you think or love and faith "spring" from our hope.
Why do you think the greatest virtue is love?

Find your favorite scripture on love and share it with somebody today.

***I Thessalonians 1:3**

We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Look at what the church in Thessalonica was remembered for. How can you encourage the people in your ministry to be remembered for the same virtues?

***I Thessalonians 3:8**

But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.



Finally we see the encouragement again concerning faith hope and love.
How do you see yourself concerning these virtues?
Continue to grow as you belong to this day.

2 Fishers of Men

Mark 1:14-20
"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." At once they left their nets and followed him.

1. Your Purpose:

II Corinthians 5:11-21- Ambassadors for Jesus. Motivation: The love of God compels us. .

* Acts 4:20, 5:41-42, Mark 5:20 - True disciples are consumed with telling others what Lord has done for them.

2. Keys to Effectiveness

" John 15:1-17 - Remain in Christ, rely on him daily. * Acts 17:16-17 - Strive to share your faith every day.
* John 4:34 - Believe the harvest is plentiful. * Acts 4:13, II Corinthians 3:12 - Boldness. Hindrances to:

Pride - being afraid of what others think. ** Weak conviction - not seeing people as lost. ** Selfishness - centering on your problems. ** Apathy - not caring about the lost.] ** Faithlessness - doubting that the harvest is great. ** Lack of confidence - ignorance of Scriptures.

Love and The Calling of the First Disciples

** Be the friendliest person in the world.
" Don't be "preachy", share with loving boldness. ** Serve as Jesus did (John 13:1-17)

Zeal and Commitment

** I Corinthians 9:19-27 - True disciple's attitude: 'I want to win as many as possible."
I Corinthians 2:1-5 - Be motivated by the cross. Preach the cross.

3. Practical Challenges

Make a thorough list and invite all your friends to Church/ Bible Talk. Share how Christ has changed your life.

Invite neighbors over for coffee - get to know them, share with co- workers.
Invite people that intimidate you- prominent people.
Get to know clerks at stores, gas stations, etc.
Seek lots of advice on how to share, invite. Learn the studies as soon as you can. Know them thoroughly. Develop an attractive, Christ- like character. Listen to people and confidently look them in the eye. Learn to share our faith, not just invite.
Bring people to your discipler to study with them.

And a Savior and Lord for You and Me!!!

Use this time to find your favorite scriptures about Jesus and write him a letter about your love for Him as your Savior and Lord.

Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year