

FUNDAMENTALS
OF THE CHRISTIAN
LIFE SERIES



Pray and Seek God

SIX BIBLE STUDY LESSONS
FOR GROUP DISCIPLESHIP

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FOR GROUP DISCIPLESHIP



EVERY NATION
P R O D U C T I O N S

How to Use this Material

In Victory, the primary venue for discipleship happens in a small group. It is called a Victory group. We strongly encourage everyone to be involved since these groups are specifically designed to help disciples grow spiritually.

A Victory group meeting has three sections: **Connect**, **Word**, and **Prayer**, and ideally lasts from forty to sixty minutes.

CONNECT (5-10 minutes)

Victory group meetings begin with a time to relate with one another. Depending on the people who comprise the group, this can be done through a variety of ways:

- Fun—such as an icebreaker activity
- Answered prayers—sharing of testimonies and updates
- Questions—such as those provided in the material, learning each other’s personal stories, and sharing feedback from the weekly message

Effective Questions During the Connect Portion:

- Are deliberately friendly to first-timers
- Ask for opinion or experiences
- Require no Bible knowledge
- Have no right or wrong answer
- Are not controversial
- Are preferably connected to the meeting’s topic

PRAY AND SEEK GOD

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Published by EVERY NATION PRODUCTIONS
P.O. Box 12229 Ortigas Center, Pasig City, Philippines
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WORD (20-30 minutes)

Teach the truth and relevance of God's Word for life application. The Victory group meeting is not primarily a Bible study. Although teaching and explanation of Scripture is involved, the goal is to minister, not finish a material.

There is no need to teach all the points in a material.

Within this section, we look at what the Bible says, its relevance to us today, and its application in our lives.

What: *What does the Bible say?*

Communicate and impart biblical truth clearly and concisely.

¹⁶All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 TIMOTHY 3:16,17

Tips for Sharing the Word Effectively

- Let the Bible speak for itself.
- Use illustrations and tell stories to explain Bible verses.
- When entertaining clarifications, be watchful not to allow the discussion to go off-tangent.
- The primary goal is to minister to the needs of the people, not to finish a Bible lesson.
- Be led by the Spirit when using the material.

So What: *What is the relevance of the Word to my life?*

Give participants the opportunity to discuss how the Word impacts the way they live.

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

ROMANS 12:2

Now What: *How do I apply the Word to my life?*

Our primary reason for sharing the Bible is so that people will know who God is and what He has done. In doing so, the participants will begin to discover who they are and what they should do.

If it is a promise, teach them to claim it. If it is a command or a principle, encourage them to put it to action by God's grace. If it is a truth, let them embrace it willingly and not under compulsion. Allow God's grace and love to win them by the way you teach God's Word.

Encourage specific, measurable action steps that are consistent with the life change that the Scripture is bringing about. We do not command people, but we spur them on toward love and good deeds.

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves.

Do what it says. JAMES 1:22

Tips for Life-Changing Application

- You may choose one of the "So What" and "Now What" questions or you may add your own.
- An effective standby application question is: "What one action step are you going to take as a result of what you heard today?"
- Designate who will be the first to answer the question asked.
- Do not allow someone to argue or be critical of others.
- Remind everyone to apply the lesson to their own lives, not to someone else's.
- Ask God for wisdom to know when to balance or correct strange or unbiblical applications. Insensitive correction or criticism can kill the group, as can unchecked heresy.
- Remind everyone that transformation is God's work, not ours, and our obedience is a response to who He is and His love for us. It is God's grace that enables us to apply and obey His Word.

PRAY (15-20 minutes)

Prayer is the most important part of the Victory group meeting. Make sure you have plenty of time left so your prayer time is not rushed. This is not a “closing prayer,” but a time for everyone in the group to take specific requests to God. This is where the action is. The goal is to create a venue where people will see God move on their behalf.

“Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.” MATTHEW 18:19

Tips for Powerful Prayer

- Listen to the Holy Spirit carefully during the Connect and Word sections for things that may need prayer.
- Spend your time praying for one another, not sharing and discussing prayer requests.
- Keep your prayers simple, sincere, and short. Most non-believers have never heard an ordinary Christian just talk to God and will be touched by the sincerity and simplicity of the prayer.
- Pray, don’t preach. Pray in simple and short sentences, not long “sermon prayers.”
- Use conversational prayer, not complicated or profound, intercessory prayer.
- Expect God to answer your prayers.

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1

Pray to Know God Better

CONNECT

- Tell us about one of the nicknames you had growing up. Why did people call you that?
- Do you feel comfortable talking to strangers? Recall an instance explaining this.
- Who is one of your closest friends? How long have you known each other? What's one of your favorite moments together?

¹⁷I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. ¹⁸I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength . . . EPHESIANS 1:17-19

WHAT

We can know God because He has made Himself known to us. We can have a relationship with Him, draw closer to Him, and ask Him for more of His Spirit and strength because we are His children. Prayer is simply communicating with God, and it is a vital part of how we grow as Christians. We pray not because God needs to know our requests, but because it helps us know Him better. Prayer changes us and keeps us in sync with the Spirit. In this lesson, we will look at four prayers from Ephesians that we can pray, too.

1 Ask for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation to know God better.

I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. EPHESIANS 1:17

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What is "wisdom"?
What is "revelation"?
Who gives this wisdom and revelation? What is the purpose of this wisdom and revelation?

2 Pray that the eyes of our hearts will be enlightened to know God more.

¹⁸I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength . . . EPHESIANS 1:18,19

Why should we know the hope we have in God and His great power?

Why do you think Paul used the imagery of "the eyes of your heart"? What is the purpose of enlightening the eyes of our hearts?

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3 Pray that God's power will strengthen your inner being.

¹⁶I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. . . .

EPHESIANS 3:16,17

Why does our "inner being" need to be strengthened? How will it be strengthened?

What is the purpose of this strengthening?

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4 Pray for God's power to help you grasp God's great love for you.

17. . . And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. EPHESIANS 3:17-19

What are the words Paul uses to describe God's love? How can we understand this love?

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Why do you think this love "surpasses knowledge"?

SO WHAT

- Why should we pray using the Scriptures? How does the Bible teach us to pray and what to pray for?
- Why do you think some people have a hard time praying? Why is prayer so important?
- Aside from praying for our needs, why should we pray to know God more? How does prayer change us?

NOW WHAT

- Do you pray? Why do you pray? How can you pray to know God more this week?
- What can you do to have a greater understanding of God's love for you? What verse can you meditate on and use to pray this week?
- Who can you pray for and speak a blessing over this week?

PRAYER

- Thank God for His Word and how He teaches us to draw closer to Him.
- Pray that you will grow deeper in your relationship with God and have a rich, powerful time of prayer every day.
- Pray for a friend or relative who needs more of God this week and whom you can bless.

"This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name . . .'"

MATTHEW 6:9

WHAT

Jesus taught His disciples how to pray. He said that we are to pray to the Father, and because of what Jesus did for us on the cross, we have access to the Father. We can approach Him with freedom and confidence. We can bring our requests to Him and we can have a relationship with Him. Though we may face many challenges, we can overcome these because of who God is—He is our Father, He is good and faithful, and He deserves our thanksgiving and praise.

1 God is our Father.

" . . . 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name . . .'"

MATTHEW 6:9

In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. EPHESIANS 3:12

Because God is our Father, we can trust Him, surrender to Him, and ask Him for provision.

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2 God is good and faithful.

⁷"Ask and it will be given to you . . . ⁹Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how

much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!" MATTHEW 7:7,9-11

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. JAMES 1:17

God's goodness and faithfulness are first and foremost seen in Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. He already solved our greatest problem—sin—so how much more will He not provide for everything else?

How has God been good and faithful to you?

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3 God deserves our thanksgiving and praise.

. . . always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. EPHESIANS 5:20

³Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. ⁴Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. ⁵For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations. PSALM 100:3-5

Because everything we have comes from God, He deserves the thanks, praise, and glory.

Why do we sometimes forget that God is our source? What does it mean to "enter His gates with thanksgiving"?

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SO WHAT

- How does your view of your earthly father affect your view of our Heavenly Father? How is God different from our earthly fathers?
- How does the promise in Deuteronomy 31:6 assure you of God’s presence and love?
- Why is thankfulness so important? What happens if we are not thankful and humble?

NOW WHAT

- Do you believe that God is your Father? Do you trust Him? How can you grow in your relationship with Him this week?
- Have you forgiven your earthly father for any offense or sin? How do you think your view of God needs to change? How can you know God more and trust Him more?
- Who can you share God’s love with this week?

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- Thank God for being such a gracious and loving Father. Thank Him for His blessings and kindness.
 - Pray that you will know and trust God more as each day passes in spite of your past and present challenges.
 - Ask God to use your life to be a testimony of His faithfulness and love. Pray that many will come to know Him through you.

3

Our Daily Bread

C O N N E C T

- What’s your favorite food? Why do you like it so much?
- Do you cook? What dish can you make?
- Are you health conscious? Tell us about one of your healthy habits.

⁹"This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, ¹⁰your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹Give us today our daily bread.'"

MATTHEW 6:9-11

WHAT

Because God is our Father, He is also our Provider. We can ask Him for our daily bread, and we can trust Him to meet our needs. There are at least three lessons we can learn from Matthew 6:11.

1 Ask God to meet your needs.

⁷"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened." MATTHEW 7:7,8

Everything we have comes from God—whether we ask Him for it or not, and whether we realize it or not. He is our source.

As His children, we should look to Him for our provision. How has God provided for you?

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2 God wants us to trust Him daily.

Then the LORD said to Moses, "I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions."

EXODUS 16:4

We are to depend on God daily—not every so often or once in a while. God did the same for the Israelites by providing them with manna for forty years.

Why do you think God wants us to depend on Him always?

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3 God graciously provides.

From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. JOHN 1:16

²⁵I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread. ²⁶They are always generous and lend freely; their children will be blessed. PSALM 37:25,26

God provides for His children. David testified that the righteous are always provided for, and we have been made righteous because of Jesus Christ.

What are some of the blessings God has given you? Why is Jesus God's greatest blessing to us (Romans 5:8)?

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⁹"This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, ¹⁰your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹Give us today our daily bread. ¹²Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.'" MATTHEW 6:9-12

WHAT

Because we are all sinners (Romans 3:23), we all need God's forgiveness. We are all guilty. But because God loves us, He forgives us. Here are three ways God forgives.

1 God forgives instantly.

... Forgive as quickly and completely as the Master forgave you. COLOSSIANS 3:13 (THE MESSAGE)

God is slow to anger and abounding in love (Psalm 103:8). He doesn't hold our sins against us and He knows we can't pay for it.

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2 God forgives readily.

... But You are God, Ready to pardon, Gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, Abundant in kindness, And did not forsake them. NEHEMIAH 9:17 (NKJV)

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What is penance?
How is this contrary
to God's Word?

God forgives us readily and freely because of His great love.

How is God described in this verse? What does "ready to pardon" mean?

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3 God forgives completely.

²Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits—³who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases . . . ¹¹For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; ¹²as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. PSALM 103:2,3,11,12

God forgives all our sins. Because Jesus took our place on the cross, He doesn't look at our sin any longer. Rather, when He sees us, He sees Christ's righteousness.

How far is the east from the west? What does this tell us about God's forgiveness?

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SO WHAT

- Why do some people feel like they haven't received God's forgiveness and they have to do something to attain it? According to Romans 8:1, why is there no more condemnation for believers?
- What is the connection between God's forgiveness and us forgiving others (Matthew 6:14,15)?
- If we have been forgiven much, why do we love much? How much are we forgiven (Luke 7:47)?

NOW WHAT

- Have you repented of your sin and asked God for forgiveness? If not, would you like to do this today?
- Do you believe God has forgiven you instantly, readily, and completely? Do you sometimes feel that God hasn't really forgiven you and you feel condemned for your sin? How can you guard against condemnation?
- Have you forgiven others, even as you have been forgiven? Who do you need to forgive? How will God be honored in that relationship?

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- Thank God for His forgiveness and love. Honor Him for His mercy and kindness and how He does not hold your sins against you.
 - Ask God for His help to guard your soul against condemnation. Pray that you will be so secure in God's love for you and that you will grow in your understanding of this every day.
 - Forgive those you who have hurt you. Ask God for the grace and strength to love others, even when it's difficult. Pray that you would share God to others with humility and courage.

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Our Deliverer

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CONNECT

- What's your least favorite household chore? Why do you dislike it so much?
- Do you like asking people for help? Why or why not? Recall an instance explaining this.
- What's the biggest challenge you've had to face this year?

⁹"This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, ¹⁰your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹Give us today our daily bread. ¹²Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'" MATTHEW 6:9-13

WHAT

Jesus taught His disciples how to pray, and this includes asking God to deliver us from temptation. Because He was tempted Himself (Matthew 4), He knows what it's like, and yet He overcame it. He gives us the strength to not give into temptation. In this lesson, we will look at three truths about temptation and deliverance from it.

1 We can't overcome temptation on our own.

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. 1 CORINTHIANS 10:13

Temptation is not sin, but it can lead to sin. Therefore, we are not to trifle with it. We need God's help.

Why are temptations "common to man"?
Who provides a way out of temptation?

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2 God delivers us from the evil one.

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." MATTHEW 6:13

God can protect us from temptation.

What does it mean to "deliver us from"?
Why should we pray that we won't even be led into temptation?

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3 God gives us the grace to say no to sin.

¹¹For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. ¹²It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age. . . TITUS 2:11,12

Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. 2 TIMOTHY 2:22

God helps us overcome temptation and say "no" to sin. Left to ourselves, we wouldn't even feel tempted—we would walk right into sin and we would always give in to it. But because of God's grace, we can say "no" and we can flee the evil desires of youth.

What does "flee" mean?
What temptation has God given you the grace to flee from and overcome?

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SO WHAT

- How did the serpent tempt Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:1-6)?
- How can we resist the devil? What happens if we resist him (James 4:7)?
- How does temptation grow and lead to sin and death (James 1:14,15)?

NOW WHAT

- What do you need to say no to this week? How do you think you can overcome it? What can you do to protect yourself from it?
- Spend some time this week meditating on 1 Corinthians 10:13. What lessons can you learn from this verse about temptation, victory over temptation, and God?
- How can you submit to God every day and grow stronger in your relationship with Him?

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- Thank God for His grace that is sufficient and His power that is made perfect in your weakness. Declare your dependence on Him.
 - Pray that you would draw near to God and submit every area of your life to Him.
 - Ask God to deliver you from the evil one. Pray that when you are tempted, you will not sin—that God will give you the strength to flee and resist the devil. Pray that God will always be honored in your life.

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Full Tank

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CONNECT

- What’s one thing you enjoy doing with children? Why?
- If money weren’t an issue, what would you give your relatives and friends for Christmas? Why?
- Tell us about the most humble person you know. Recall an instance when s/he exhibited humility.

⁵“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. ⁶But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ⁷And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.” MATTHEW 6:5-8

WHAT

As followers of Jesus, we have the privilege of communing with God and knowing Him. We can approach Him anytime, we can bring our concerns to Him, and we can grow in our relationship with Him. Jesus tells us to avoid hypocrisy and doing things for show. Rather, He craves intimacy and a true, personal relationship with us. This love He shows us is great motivation to pray and trust Him always. We can always have a full tank with God—full of love, grace, peace, hope, and faith. In this lesson, we will look at three attitudes we should have as we come to Him in prayer.

1 Confidence

⁷“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.” MATTHEW 7:7,8

(READ ALSO PSALM 4:1)

If Jesus is our Lord, we are God’s children and can approach Him anytime and with any concern. We can draw our strength, joy, and peace from Him.

How do you demonstrate confidence? Why can we be confident in approaching God?

2 Humility

“... if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.” 2 CHRONICLES 7:14 (READ ALSO LUKE 18:13,14)

God detests pride, but He blesses humility. Too often, when we pray, we expect God to answer prayers the way we want Him to, and we may even forget that because He is God, He knows best and He gets to decide about everything.

What is humility? How would you describe a humble person? Why is humility so important to the Lord?

3 Faith

¹Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. . . . ⁶And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. HEBREWS 11:1,6

Believing in God takes faith—because though we can’t see Him, we know and trust that He exists and that we base our decisions on this faith. Prayer takes faith, too. It is trusting that God hears us and He responds. And when we pray and believe Him, He is pleased with our faith.

Why can we have faith in God? Why is it impossible to please God without faith?

SO WHAT

- What should we pray about? How do you think we can guard ourselves from being anxious (Philippians 4:6,7)?
- How did Job respond when things didn't turn out well for him (Job 1:21)? If God doesn't do what we think is right, how should we respond? Does that mean God isn't good or didn't hear us?
- How does James 5:16 describe the prayer of a righteous person? Why are we righteous? Why should we pray?

NOW WHAT

- Do you have faith in God? How can your faith in Him grow this week?
- Are you confident in approaching God? What's one area or situation that you need His help in this week?
- How can you be humble before God every day? How can you guard yourself against pride?

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- Thank God that we are His children and we can seek Him every day. Pray that you would have a full, deep, and rich relationship with Him.
 - Declare your trust and dependence on God. Acknowledge that you are nothing without Him.
 - Pray for and speak a blessing over one another. Pray for your specific concerns and needs with confidence, humility, and faith.

⁹"This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, ¹⁰your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹Give us today our daily bread. ¹²Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'" MATTHEW 6:9-13

Pray and Seek God is a series of six materials for group discipleship designed to help believers grow deeper in their relationship with God and develop a lifestyle of prayer.

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Pray to Know God Better
- Our Dad, Our God
- Our Daily Bread
- Our Debts
- Our Deliverer
- Full Tank



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