

Welcome Fellow-saint!



This focused Bible study on Sonship Prayer is designed to provide you with practical resources to explore God's word on the subject of prayer, deepen your understanding of prayer in the dispensation of grace, and help your prayer life flourish.

This is the second part of this study, where we will discover the various types of Sonship Prayer.

Wherever you find yourself in your Christian life, may this study encourage your spirit to delight in intelligent sonship prayer and conform you to the image of God's Son.

PART II

Various Kinds of Sonship Prayers



Intelligent Sonship Prayer (ISP) means understanding the will of God in the various circumstances of life, and praying in accordance with it. Prayer that is effectual requires that we know the doctrine.

By now we should understand that prayer is dispensational. Prayer under the Law, back in the time of God's program with Israel, was connected to a performance system. But now, we are not under the Law, but under grace, and our prayers should reflect that change. As members of the body of Christ, there are no national distinctions. In other words, God is no longer dealing with us as He previously did with the nation of Israel, and our prayers should change accordingly.

For many, once they learn that God is no longer intervening in the outward circumstances of our lives, but rather God is working in our inner man to produce the life and character of His Son, their prayer life falls off. It's not that they don't want to pray, but they don't know what to pray. Those who have struggled with their prayer life are about to find an easy way to get back on track and stay on track.

If this is what has happened with you, there is good news! You are about to have a huge turnaround in your prayer life. So be encouraged; we are about to learn how to pray like the adult sons and daughters we are in Christ.

Prayer is part of the sonship partnership we have with God. What you are about to learn is very exciting. Thank you for joining us on this journey as we study Sonship Prayer.

CHAPTER 5

Preparatory Prayer

What is Preparatory Prayer? Preparatory Prayer (PP) is prayer that prepares us to listen to the word of truth being taught and get the most out of it. For example, our assembly has teaching sessions on Sundays at 1:00 CST and on Tuesday evenings at 7:00 CST. For some people who live around the world, those times are not convenient, so they watch the recordings on YouTube, Vimeo or our Dropbox.

What I am suggesting is that before the session begins, whether you join that lesson live, or on Zoom, or even if you watch the recording, each of us might spend a few moments with our heavenly Father to focus our minds on the teaching before us. This helps get us “up to speed” immediately and it does away with distractions. It primes us to better understand the doctrine and enhances our ability to apply the doctrine in our everyday lives.

But there is something else Preparatory Prayer does for us. Because of the way that prayer begins early in the week, it provides a pattern for sonship prayer. This is very exciting.

I challenge you to integrate Preparatory Prayer into your life for 30 days and see the difference it makes. It doesn’t have to overload your already busy week, but the dividends are spectacular. So, without further delay, let’s jump into Preparatory Prayer.

PREPARING OURSELVES TO LEARN THE DOCTRINE

I often pray a preparatory prayer when I begin to study. You can pray a preparatory prayer before we begin each session on Sundays and Tuesdays. This prayer is always about understanding the doctrine.

But why pray this prayer? Because preparing for any task makes the task more successful, including studying the doctrine.

So how does Preparatory Prayer increase our learning? It paves the way for the doctrine to be understood by doing five things: 1) it focuses our minds so that we are immediately ready to engage with the doctrine, 2) it tests our attitude as we approach the doctrine, 3) it presents an immediate commitment to the doctrine, 4) it presents a future commitment to the doctrine, and 5) this prayer shines a spotlight on Satan's tactics to hinder our understanding.

The prayer that you might pray on Sunday afternoon just before the start of the session is the product of other things you have been praying all week. Back in the book of Romans, I introduced to you the 9:59 plan. This is where you commit to spending 9:59 seconds every day to engage with the doctrine in some way. If you can spend more than 10 minutes per day on your Sonship Life, then so much the better, but let's invest at least a minimum of 10 minutes each day, no matter what is going on or how tired you are. Can you do that?

Why
Pray?

	<p>If you do, by the end of the week you will have spent a minimum of an hour with the doctrine. This is what gives depth and meaning to our short prayer just before the study begins. Let me explain this process by using our study in Ephesians 5:22 as an example.</p> <p>When the session is ended on Sunday, it is a good idea to list all the major points of that lesson. There is a worksheet at the end of this chapter where you can do that, and we will start adding that to all the notes.</p>
Start on Monday	<p>On Monday, go over those major points and review them to make sure you understand them. Then, read the scriptures that we will cover next Sunday. Lastly, take the elements to Preparatory Prayer, and work on one of them each day. The first step is to focus your mind on the doctrine. I usually pray about three things to focus my mind on the doctrine.</p>
Step 1: Focus My Mind	<p>For example, on Monday, after you have reviewed the Major Points (MP) of the previous week, and read the scriptures for next Sunday you would pray about three issues, all of them pertaining to the doctrine. The first issue is to identify the doctrine and write it down on your worksheet.</p>
A. Identify the Doctrine	<p>Sometimes Paul gives us the name of the doctrine in a passage, as he did in I Corinthians 12, where the subject is spiritual gifts. Other times, Paul will not name the doctrine, but he tells you all about it in such a way that you know what he is talking about. An example of that would be in Ephesians 5:22-33. This is the great passage in the Bible on marriage, but Paul never uses the word “marriage.” But he does say “husbands” and “wives” a lot, so we know he is talking about the divine institution of marriage. So, the first thing is to tell God what you understand is the doctrine, and write it down on your worksheet. This is the first step to focus your mind on the doctrine.</p>

The second step is to thank God for some aspect of the doctrine. By expressing my love for God or thanking Him in connection with the doctrine, (in this case, marriage), I am deepening my focus on the doctrine. Therefore, most of my prayers usually start with an expression of love for my heavenly Father, or thankfulness for something He has done in connection with the doctrine.

As I do this, I am following a pattern which Paul set forth. Paul often talks about thankfulness in relation to our prayers. Philippians 4:6 includes thankfulness as a requisite part of “letting our requests be made known unto God.”

And not just thankfulness in general, but specific to the doctrine at hand. This thankfulness raises a couple of questions: 1) Have I ever expressed thanks to God for this particular doctrine? Using the Ephesians 5:22 subject as an example, have you ever thanked God for your marriage? Or for the marriage of your parents.? Or for the marriage of your children? Or for marriage in general?

The next logical question is: “Why am I thankful for marriage?” This requires us to stop and think about this. Just have a conversation with God like He is sitting in the room with you (because He is in the room with you). He is your Father, so just talk through why you think you should be grateful for marriage...or whatever the doctrine at hand is.

Do you get what I am saying to you? That Monday’s prayer is both an end (as it is a genuine sonship prayer about some doctrine) and that helps me right then and there in several ways. But it is also a means, which has the final Preparatory Prayer (PP) in view as I recall my earlier prayers just before the start of the session.

B. Thank God

Philippians 4:6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

C. Glorify God

So, I get the benefit of that Monday prayer on Monday (as I develop my prayer life) and next Sunday (as I seek to focus my full attention on the doctrine at hand).

The third issue which I use to get my mind focused is the Glory of God. I want you, in your prayer on Monday, to make a statement to God's glory, and make sure it is in connection with the doctrine you will hear next Sunday. Again, this is something you might have to stop and think about. Go through the mental process to determine what you can say that will glorify God about -- (in this case) marriage. Just talk to God the whole time you are thinking about this, only say it out loud. It is not so God can hear; it is because things happen in your mind when you hear yourself say things out loud. This is a great way to practice your sonship praying.

By the time I have named the doctrine, thanked God for some aspect of it, and given Him glory in connection with it, my mind is pretty well engaged. And that is what the final prayer will do as it conjures up all of that previous praying just before we start the lesson: it focuses my attention on the doctrine. When you pray the final PP just before the session, your mental juices are already flowing and you are ready to jump right into the doctrine.

Do you see what all this is doing for you? You have reviewed last week's Major Points. You have been reading the Bible text, so you are familiar with it. You have been praying about the doctrine in several different ways, and those early prayers have caused you to think about the doctrine in ways you might not have before. And even though your final PP is short and to the point, it does exactly what it is designed to do; focus your mind on the doctrine at hand. Everything else is out of your mind and you are now engaged with one subject: the doctrine.

I put all three of these aspects into one sentence in my final prayer, but you don't have to do that. Here is my example of these three aspects put together into a single sentence.

**Heavenly Father, thank you that, in your great wisdom,
you created marriage.**

You can do it in two sentences if you want. And you can choose different aspects, although the thankfulness aspect follows Paul's pattern, so I would be reluctant to omit it, unless you are going to include it somewhere else. All of this was to reinforce the point that our PP on Sunday is a consolidation of several longer prayers during the week.

This is often the way I focus my own mind prior to beginning a study. You can find other ways to get your mind focused if you like. The important thing is that this allows us to practice praying in accordance with Paul's pattern for prayer in this dispensation of grace.

The second step for Preparatory Prayer is to Make My Request: To Understand the Doctrine. You are either praying for an initial understanding of the doctrine, or for a further, more advanced understanding of the doctrine.

I don't just state the request, even though I could. I orient myself edificationally. What I mean by this is I remind myself of where I am in the doctrine and what I am doing here.

Here is the thinking behind this orientation: Ephesians is beyond the scope of Romans doctrine because it is perfecting my faith. I should not be surprised when I am confronted by the doctrine to do something more than I am already doing. I realize ahead of time that this doctrine is going to take me out of my comfort zone in some areas. Therefore, I say it in my prayer.

**Step 2:
Understand the Doctrine**

A. Orient Myself

So, at some time previous to Sunday, I would have a fuller discussion about this with my heavenly Father; about how I view myself in the education. But, I will condense it in this final prayer, just as I have done here.

I know that by this doctrine you are training me to be a wise son/daughter, therefore I pray to understand the doctrine.

C. Stablish the Process

The next part of Step 2 is to Stablish the Process. Stablishing the process reminds me I am being trained in the “wise” level of my sonship education. That way, instead of the subtle thoughts of the Adversary tempting me to choose whether or not I will obey this doctrine (either before or after I hear it); I remind myself I am here on purpose. This is all part of the plan. Maybe it’s not my flesh’s plan, but it’s my plan, and it’s God’s plan. Part of getting to where you are going, is knowing where you are – this statement makes me acknowledge where I am in the doctrine and what I am doing here.

That last phrase “I pray to understand the doctrine,” is meant to establish the edification process in my thinking. This part of the prayer is my recognition that before I can be trained, I must first understand the doctrine. It puts the emphasis on “first things first.” In other words, I am articulating to my Father, my understanding of the edification process.

B. Articulate the Process

“Articulating the Process” is an important part of the prayer as you are first engaged in either process of edification and/or sonship prayer.

In other words, if you are just now establishing a process which you purposefully engage in, to get the doctrine working in you, articulating the process will be an important tool for establishing the edification process.

Eventually, once the practice of the process is established in your subconscious mind, articulating the process may fade out of your prayers. Until then, let it do its job of establishing a certain kind of thinking in you. What you will find is that once that establishment has taken place, you won't feel the need to articulate it to God. There is no need to "hurry the process." It does no harm if you hang on to Articulating the Process.

Step 3: Declare My Immediate Commitment.

In this part of my prayer, I am setting myself up to receive the doctrine. How do I do this? I do this by talking about my part in the process and declaring my commitment to it.

In order to be edified, I must understand the doctrine therefore I am declaring my commitment to do so. I am hearkening back to the second of those three commitments I made early on in Sonship, 1) honest attendance, 2) **interactive learning**, and 3) top priority.

Praying this (especially out loud) is a very powerful tool for setting us up mentally to hear and receive the doctrine. This is another one of those aspects which may eventually fade away because the work to prepare you to receive the doctrine will become a part of you, as the word transforms your inner man. But again, don't worry too much about rushing this process. Here is the prayer:

I commit to you Father, that if I do not understand something, then I will ask about it, and continue to read and study until I do understand.

Step 3: Declare My Immediate Commitment

A. Interactive Learning

Step 4: Declare My Future Commitment

A. Anchor My Commitment

Step 4: Declare My Future Commitment.

This part of the prayer accomplishes several things:

A) By praying to apply the doctrine, I am making a commitment to follow through with my edification. In a sense, I am anchoring, or cementing my commitment in place by praying this prayer.

And once I understand, I pray to put the doctrine into practice so that I can accomplish your great purpose of manifesting Christ and the church to the whole creation, and I love you for that privilege.

By declaring my future commitment to living the doctrine, I am doing three things: A) I am making my commitment more sure thereby anchoring my commitment.

B. Test My Understanding

B) I am also measuring the intelligence of my sonship prayer by stating what the doctrine is designed to do. If I find myself stumbling to articulate it, then I know I am not clear on the doctrine. But this “intelligent prayer” can only pertain to doctrine I know about and am working on.

If I have not yet heard the doctrine, then I may not be able to articulate this yet. And that is fine. I just have to make sure when the study is over, I can pray intelligently about the doctrine.

C. Increase My Love

C) I am just about always going to find a way to express my love for my heavenly Father. It is a common aspect of all of my prayers. But, I want my love for God to increase and abound.

If I am about to be faced with a new doctrine, then this is an opportunity for my love to abound. (This is another reason to love my Father.) If it is a doctrine I already know about, this is an opportunity for my love to deepen. If you recall that at the beginning of our prayer, we were thinking about why we are thankful for the doctrine, so think about how this doctrine makes your love for your heavenly Father deepen or abound.

This may take some time, but it is a worthy investment. Why? Because this is one of the ways in which you will develop a real Father/son relationship with God.

If you recall that at the beginning of our prayer, we were thinking about why we are thankful for the doctrine, so think about how this doctrine makes your love.

And this brings us to the last major point of our prayer.

Step 5: Anticipate the Adversary.

This is my way of reminding myself of any attempts for Satan to plant thoughts into my mind which are contrary to the doctrine, or a hindrance to me applying the doctrine.

I pray to be aware of the tactics of the Adversary to prevent me from being conformed to the image of your Son in this area of marriage.

If I encounter them, I will identify them for what they are, and cast them off by countering them with the truth from God's word. If they reveal a stronghold they are connected to, I will stop and take the time to pull down that stronghold in accordance with what I learned back in *Sonship Transformation*.

At this point, the prayer is basically over, but I don't like to end a prayer focused on the Adversary and his attacks. So, I reaffirm my commitment to the process of edification.

Father, whatever you ask of me, I commit to following you.

This demonstrates my complete confidence in my heavenly Father by committing to the doctrine no matter where it takes me or how uncomfortable it makes me feel, because I know it will be for my spiritual good.

I am sure of your love to me and your desire for my marriage to be successful.

**Step 5: Anticipate
The Adversary**

I am bringing this full circle; back to the subject of marriage. This is a reminder of why God is doing what He is doing. Everything God does is not just about Him, but it is all ultimately for our benefit. I don't want to lose sight of that because if I do, I may entertain temptations to second guess the doctrine, or not fully comply with it.

Therefore, I ask that you would teach me the truth about marriage, and change me and my marriage for your glory.

This is my summation of all I am asking God to do, which implies that I am going to do my part, for God will not change me or my marriage unless I engage with the doctrine.

You can pray this prayer in a dozen different ways. All I am trying to do is show you how to format the prayer by including all of the major elements which should be in a prayer like this.

What are those major elements?

- Focus my mind on the doctrine I am about to hear.
- State my request: To understand the doctrine.
- Declare my present commitment: To ask questions
- Declare my future commitment: To live the doctrine
- Anticipate the policy of evil's attacks

The last parts of the prayer are:

- To reaffirm my commitment to the doctrine
- State God's intentions with the doctrine
- Summarize my prayer

The last thing to say to you is that obviously, you should be praying a longer, more detailed version of this prayer before you ever get to the start of the session. The details only have meaning when you have fleshed this out in prayer many times beforehand. Then, when you pray this abbreviated prayer, all of the meaning is in your mind and it has its intended effect.

I have found it beneficial to keep a prayer journal. This not only helps me organize my thoughts, but it allows me to track my own growth in prayer, and construct a prayer that I will wind up praying many times during the week. I encourage you to do the same. Plus, it is a great encouragement to be able to go back and review the things you have prayed in the past. You can pass that journal down to your kids or grandkids and who knows, it may win them to Christ, or teach them about sonship, or edify them.

But even if you don't, you should take the time to construct a carefully thought out prayer which you write down on an index card, put in your Bible, and pray before the session begins. This will help develop your prayer life.

Main Points of today's lesson:

Construct your prayer for Monday to Focus Your Attention

Construct your prayer for Tuesday to Make Your Request

Construct your prayer for Wednesday to Declare Your Immediate Commitment.

Construct your prayer for Thursday to Declare Your Future Commitment.

Construct your prayer for Friday to Anticipate the Policy of Evil's Tactics.



Questions or Comments?

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