

Loris First Baptist Church "Twelve Marks of a Mature Disciple of Christ"

TEST TEN OF DISCIPLESHIP MATURITY

Characteristic #4 - "Knees for Prayer"

A careful study of the transformation of the Apostle Paul, from a brand new Christian (Acts 9) into a mature disciple of Jesus Christ (Acts 28), reveals that there were six key "Christ-like" characteristics he exhibited which were developed through his spiritual growth after his salvation. The failure for a Christian to have and work on these characteristics will severely hinder his or her ability to display Christ-likeness as has been commanded by The Word of God (Luke 6:40; Matthew 16:24; 1Peter 2:21; 1John 2:3-6).

One characteristic of a disciple of Jesus Christ is that he or she will have an active and passionate prayer life to maintain honest and continual communication with God (Romans 12:12; 1Thessalonians 5:17-18). The way Paul began to pray after his "born again" experience with Jesus is what convinced other believers that his conversion to Christianity was real (Acts 9:11). Paul encouraged the young pastors he was mentoring to make prayer a priority for the believers in their new churches (Colossians 4:2; 1Timothy 2:1-8). In James' New Testament Epistle, he wrote that prayer was a power and effective way for believers to be healed both physically and spiritually (James 5:15-16). Although prayer is a weakness of all believers (Romans 8:26), it is also something that can be taught and learned by true disciples of Jesus Christ (Matthew 6:5-15; Luke 11:1-13). So, do you have KNEES FOR PRAYER?

Directions: Please circle the number that best represents how you would rate yourself in response to each of the 12 questions and corresponding Scripture provided.

Scripture #1: *The Lord is far from the wicked but He hears the prayer of the righteous. (Proverbs 15:29)*

If anyone turns a deaf ear to the law, even his prayers are detestable. (Proverbs 28:9)

For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and His ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil." (1 Peter 3:12)

Question #1: I know that "prayer" (the ability to communicate directly with a Holy God) is a privilege that only those who are "righteous" (i.e. "have been forgiven and cleansed of their sins through faith in Jesus Christ") truly have. Lost sinners' and the wicked's prayers are not acknowledge by God.

I Don't Understand this Concept	I Sort Of Understand This Concept	I Totally Understand This Concept
1	2	3
4	5	6
7		

Scripture #2: *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin. Let us then APPROACH THE THRONE OF GRACE WITH CONFIDENCE, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (Hebrews 4:15-16)*

Question #2: I know that I can never be perfect or sinless no matter how hard I try. However, I am confident, that as long as I do my best to try to live an obedient life before God and confess my known sins to Him, Jesus understands my weaknesses and will still hear my prayers because of His mercy and grace. That is why I have no fear to pray “publically” or “privately” to Him for all needs.

This is Not True About Me		This is Sort of True About Me			This is Totally True About Me	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Scripture #3: *In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will. (Romans 8:26-27)*

Question #3: I believe that prayer (talking with God) is a weakness that I have because I do not always know what is the right thing to ask for nor do I know what God considers best for me. However, I choose to pray and ask God for what I think may be best, because I trust that the Holy Spirit loves me and knows how to “intercede” (“improve my prayers”) on my behalf before God.

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Scripture #4: *“One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, TEACH US TO PRAY...’ (Luke 11:1)*

“He said to them, “WHEN YOU PRAY, PRAY IN THIS MANNER...” (Luke 11:2)

Question #4: I believe that prayer is a spiritual discipline that can be taught to new disciples. The best way for me to learn how to pray is to learn what the Scriptures say about prayer, AND read how faithful biblical saints prayed (such as Elijah, Daniel, Jabez, David, etc.), so that I can model my praying life in accordance with God’s Word.

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Scripture #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. But 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."* (Matthew 6:5-6)

Question #5: I understand how praying in public can be a huge benefit, especially when we are interceding for others who are sick or hurting among us; however, I never use public prayer as an opportunity to impress others or to "preach" to listeners when I am supposed to be talking directly with God. That is why the majority of my communication with God is done in private where only He knows what I am praying.

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Scripture #6: *And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their MANY WORDS.* (Matthew 6:7)

Question #6: When I pray, I just talk and communicate with God the way I would my very best friend. Though I talk with Him with the respect due God, I use my normal simple words when I am praying and do not get stuck "reciting" clichés or memorized prayers...even if it is before a meal or before I go to sleep.

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Scripture #7: *"...PRAY CONTINUALLY; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.* (1 Thessalonians 5:17-18)

AND WHATEVER YOU DO, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. (Colossians 3:17)

Question #7: My entire day is bathed in prayer. Whether at work or play, at home or the office, by myself or with friends, I am silently but continually talking with God and allowing Him to talk to me. This keeps me aware of His presence and guidance and allows me to continually thank Him for His wisdom, blessings, and protection.

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Scripture #8: "...I tell you the truth, my Father will give you WHATEVER YOU ASK IN MY NAME. Until now you have not asked for anything IN MY NAME. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete." (John 16:23-24)

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that IF WE ASK ANYTHING IN ACCORDANCE WITH HIS WILL, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us--whatever we ask--we know that we have what we asked of him. (1 John 5:14-15)

Question #8: When I pray, I always mention "in the name of Jesus" to remind myself that access to my loving, wise, powerful Father in Heaven (who can answer all my prayers) was not earned by my righteous acts...but rather by Jesus Christ's sacrificial death, burial, and resurrection on my behalf. I also know that saying "in Jesus' name" when I pray are not some magic words that forces God to give me anything I want. Praying in Jesus' name is my allowing God to answer my prayers in accordance with His perfect will because I trust Jesus will do only what is best.

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Scripture #9: Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. (Philippians 4:6)

Question #9: Now that I know and trust the power of prayer and God's love for me, I do not worry about anything. Whenever I am facing even scary situations, I just pray and know all will be well.

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Scripture #10: 1 Timothy 2:1-3 "I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. THIS IS GOOD AND PLEASES GOD OUR SAVIOR..." (1 Timothy 2:1-3)

Question #10: I am aware of all the different prayers that God desires for me to lift up to Him. I do not just pray for myself and my own personal needs and wants.

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Scripture #11: *“But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:44)*

“So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.” (Luke 11:9)

Question #11: Because I know my Father in heaven loves me and enjoys answering my prayers, I am not afraid to ask Him for hard things. I also do not give up asking for what I want...until He gives me an answer (either “yes”, “no”, or “wait”). That is why I often pray and wait for the Lord to change my enemies’ hearts...or my ability to patiently endure their persecution.

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Scripture #12: *Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel... (Ephesians 6:19)*

Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. (Jam 5:14-15)

Question #12: I recognize the importance of prayer in the life of the local church. That is why I meet regularly with other church members to pray for my pastor, the sick, the backsliding, our missionaries, and other needs of the church to advance the Kingdom of God.

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How to Grade Yourself on “Who is Your Lord”?

- 1) Add up all of the numbers you circled for the 12 questions above. (Max score “84”).
- 2) Compare your scores to the scales below and take action as the Lord leads you:

84 – 56 *You have “knees for prayer” that demonstrates your understanding and trust in prayer. Continuing growing in your knowledge and effectual use of prayer..*

55 – 29 *You are growing as a disciple of Christ in the area of prayer. Strive to learn more from what the Bible says about prayer and how mature “prayer warriors” apply prayer to their daily lives. (Ephesians 1:18; Romans 12:12)*

28-7 *You really need to examine why you are weak in prayer. Do you not trust in God? Do you trust too much in yourself? You are missing out on so much of what it means to be a child of God by not praying as you should! (James 4:6)*