

7 EXERCISES for SPIRITUAL STRENGTH

7. Make Prayer/Meditation a Habit -

Regular observance of the “unseen” helpers and guides, angels, or whomever you call on that surrounds you, will cause a change in you. A great exercise for spiritual strength is to pray or meditate (however you prefer) at least two times a day.

Prayer or meditation usually has a formal beginning like “Dear God,” or “Dear Heavenly Father,” or “Oh Great Healing Spirit.” Other faiths have specific rituals, such as the Muslim religion reciting “The Opening” in a specific posture. It can be practiced in a variety of ways and positions, but all will ultimately help build your spiritual strength and lead you to your best life. As you pray/meditate, sit quietly and allow the divine to come into you to strengthen and illuminate your spirit. Keep your requests in the positive tense, focusing on healing instead of sickness or disease, abundance instead of scarcity, and so on. If you acknowledge the negative energy, you claim ownership to it and allow it to stay in your life. Flood it with the positive!

LIST SOME HABITS YOUR CURRENTLY ENGAGE IN:

- Memorize scripture
- Soon as awake, thanking God
- Feeding pets
- Morning devotionals (Upper Room, Daily Bread, etc)

- Coffee with Jesus
- Watch sunrise and sunsets;
- Watching nature
- People watching
- Jeopardy (game shows, soap operas, etc)

Missing a habit makes one feel:

- Out of sorts
- Cranky, low energy
- “something’s missing”
- Apologize (to self) for missing
- Making up for missing the habit by doubling up next time

JOB 1:1-5

Job regularly made supplication on behalf of his children, especially after one CYCLE of their family gatherings. Job offered burnt offerings for each child after the round of banquets ended. Early in the morning after SEVEN feasts have occurred (based on 7 sons). God’s Sabbath rest and the year of Jubilee –50 (1 year after seven sevens). He did this to PURIFY his children in the sight of God.

HABIT or RITUAL?

Automatic (whenever)

Ritual- demands the habitual practice has a redemptive outcome. If our prayer habit is effectual, others may come to know God.

DANIEL 6:1-14

Daniel regularly prayed, 3 times a day, kneels, with open windows and toward Jerusalem. Even though there is 30-day edict banning this practice, Daniel still observes his ritual. His faith is to Almighty God, not man or an earthly king. THREE Days. A large stone. Great integrity, no charge against him; we will find no accusation unless it concerns the law of his God.

5 Steps to Develop a Habit of Prayer

How regularly do you pray? Be honest here. Has prayer become as habitual for you as brushing your teeth?

Or, do you have the best intentions to pray regularly, but sometimes just forget? Or, sometimes get busy and prayer falls to the side? Or, do you intend to pray at bedtime and fall asleep as you're starting to pray?

If you struggle to pray consistently (don't we all?), then try these 5 simple steps today to start developing a prayer habit that can change your life.

How do you develop a habit of prayer?

Habits are notoriously hard to form and even harder to change once set. Making prayer a habitual part of your day is a difficult pattern to establish, especially if it means changing other habits. Yet, what should be more essential in your day than prayer?

°MEDIAVINE

“Prayer should be a habitual attitude, not an occasional act.” ~Harry Emerson Fosdick, in *The Meaning of Prayer*



For prayer to be effective in your life, it must be regular and habitual. Something you do daily without even thinking about it. Prayer should be fully ingrained into the fabric of your life.

How many prayer requests must one have to pray so continually? Prayer isn't only about asking for things. In fact, prayer should first and foremost be about developing a relationship with God. Share your life, discuss your dreams, review your decisions, open your heart to guidance and direction, get to know God, and explore who God is.

5 Steps to Develop a Habit of Prayer

1) Start the conversation.

Just get started. Research shows that the people who are most successful at forming habits are the ones who get started and stick to it the most at the start. So, open the conversation with God. Say “hello” and share what’s on your heart.

2) Set aside specific times for daily prayer.

Schedule time with God. Be deliberate about making time for prayer in your day. If you’re calendar-driven, create an appointment with yourself. Write it in your calendar, so you’ll reserve the time and have a reminder.

No matter how busy your life might be, you’ll always make time for your top priorities. So, make prayer a priority.

3) Make a plan for your prayer time.

Especially as you’re getting started, make a plan for your prayer time. Most of us aren’t great at sitting in the silence, particularly without guidance and practice. So, use a daily prayer guide or devotional to guide your prayers. There are many [methods and templates for prayer](#), but the key is to have a plan before you start so you can stay focused.

Need a daily prayer guide to get started? I have [several options available for you in the store](#). Choose the one that fits best for your journey with prayer.

4) Set a specific duration for each phase of your habit-forming journey.

While it often takes far more than 21 days to form a habit, it can be helpful to give yourself manageable time constraints.

It's far easier to stick to a new daily routine for 21 days than to enter a change like this with an open-ended duration. With a set duration, you have a deadline and a goal to reach.

Once you reach that goal, you can set another one. Maybe it takes you three or four (or more) rounds of [21-day prayer sprints](#) to form a lasting prayer habit, but setting interim goals will help you recognize progress along the way.

5) Incorporate prayer throughout your day.

As you become more consistent about your daily prayer time, begin to add prayer into other times of your day.

Continue the conversation throughout your day, until prayer becomes the thread running throughout your day, connecting all the pieces of your life.

Consider using [prayer prompts as reminders to pray](#). Be purposeful to include God in your decision-making, concerns, stresses, and joys.

Start forming your prayer habit today!

Will you get started today? Open your calendar right now and make an appointment with God.

- Schedule a daily prayer appointment on your calendar for the next few weeks.
- Then, choose a prayer plan (use one available here, a daily Bible reading plan, or any other devotional) to help you get started.

- Set a duration for this first prayer journey and hold yourself accountable to complete it.

Give yourself grace if you miss a day, but then get back on track and keep going.

Prayer will be the best habit you ever form!

Creating a Habit of Prayer – August 18, 2020 by Val Marie Paper

Our series on prayer continues! Today, I thought I'd share some practical advice on how to make prayer a habit. I think we all wish we prayed more. We know it's a good thing. We know more time in God's presence has only positive effects. But we still struggle with it so much, don't we?

1. RECOGNIZE YOUR NEED FOR HIM.

I'll get to the more practical tips in a second but first and foremost, if we think we can do our daily lives just fine without Him, we will only call out to Him for the really tough stuff. When we start to see how desperately dependent we are on Him for every little aspect of life, we start talking. You will find yourself praying for strength to get through a meeting or just through the morning before nap time.

2. DON'T BE AFRAID OF CREATING A HABIT.

Legalism is an easy trap to fall in to. And because we know that, we try to steer clear of getting too legalistic about anything but creating a habit of prayer is a good thing. It's important, obviously, that we don't just go

through the motions to check it off a list, but if you are praying sincerely don't be afraid of the routine of prayer.

3. HAVE A MORNING ROUTINE.

This pairs with #2, but I wanted to expand a bit. I don't think it matters if you are a night person or a morning person, what we set our minds on when we wake up directs the path of our whole day. On the days I don't get my time with Jesus to reset my heart, I am less patient with my kids, less grateful for my circumstances and more concerned with what the world thinks. If we start our day with Jesus, we are more likely to continue our day with Him. How do we convince ourselves that we could fit Him in later if we can't get quiet with God before our kids get up, our phone starts dinging, our clients start emailing or our boss starts calling?

4. BUILD PRAYER INTO EVERYDAY TASKS THAT JUST REQUIRE HANDS.

Think about the things you do that don't require your brain and just require your hands or feet, like folding laundry, cooking dinner, mowing the grass. Be on the lookout for all the tasks you do each day that aren't so mental. You might be surprised to see how many opportunities you have to start a conversation with God.

5. PRAY WITH SOMEONE ON A REGULAR BASIS.

Whether it's a spouse or a friend, every day or even weekly, set something up now with someone else. We shouldn't rely solely on this time for our prayer life BUT it will help us create some consistency and accountability.

6. INSTEAD OF SAYING YOU NEED TO PRAY, JUST START PRAYING.

I have started doing this. If someone emails me and mentions a need, I'll just pray for them in the email. I'm not going to just think about prayer anymore without actually praying. It's too deceiving and convinces me I've prayed when really I have just talked about praying.

7. MAKE A COMMITMENT.

I know, I know. Everyone says this. But it's because it's one of those things we overlook because we've heard so much. If we don't commit to it, it's simply not going to just happen though. It's why we added a monthly challenge section in this journal. The urgent will take over if we aren't really committed to making this happen. So make a plan for one month. Set your alarm on your phone for 5, 10 or 15 minutes, pray and don't let anything interrupt until the alarm goes off. I am a strong believer that remembering what God has done is helpful motivation to keep praying.

8. WRITE DOWN ANSWERED PRAYERS.

If you have our prayer journal, you already know to do this at the end of the month. When we see God really working as we pray, it's easy to keep praying. I'm starting to sound like a VMP ad, but seriously, our products were designed for these reasons, to help you dig deeper in your relationship with God even in our busy world. You certainly don't have to have them though to be praying.

9. REMEMBER: THE MORE YOU PRAY, THE MORE YOU WANT TO PRAY.

In my 3 years of being the prayer journal girl, I've had countless prayer sessions that drew me back to God and had me thinking "why haven't I been praying like this every day??" And y'all, this isn't even because of the answered prayers. Although, I've learned those fuel my faith and peace too! It's easy to get sidetracked by busy schedules, but when I finally slow down to pray, I am always kicking myself for not coming back sooner because it's just sooo good.