

Call to Worship Luke 11:1-4 (Common English Version)

Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." **Jesus told them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, uphold the holiness of your name. Bring in your kingdom.'**

Give us the bread we need for today. **Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who has wronged us. And don't lead us into temptation.'"**

Prayer of Invocation

Lord, we now pray that all things may work together for good for those who love you, those who reject you, those who serve you, and those who deny you, and we pray we may have a hand in bringing the good news to every corner of the world!

We look to you, Teaching God, for help when our words stumble, or when our words come freely but our thoughts are elsewhere. We rely on your Spirit to guide and direct us in our worship today. Hear us! Amen.

The Word I Timothy 4:1-10 (Common English Bible)

The Spirit clearly says that in latter times some people will turn away from the faith.

They will pay attention to spirits that deceive and to the teaching of demons. They will be controlled by the pretense of lying, and their own consciences will be seared. They will prohibit marriage and eating foods that God created—and he intended them to be accepted with thanksgiving by those who are faithful and have come to know the truth.

Everything that has been created by God is good, and nothing that is received with thanksgiving should be rejected. These things are made holy by God's word and prayer.

If you point these things out to the believers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus who has been trained by the words of faith and the good teaching that you've carefully followed.

But stay away from the godless myths that are passed down from the older women. train yourself for a holy life! While physical training has some value, training in holy living is useful for everything. It has promise for this life now and the life to come.

This saying is reliable and deserves complete acceptance. We work and struggle for this: "Our hope is set on the living God, who is the savior of all people, especially those who believe." These are the things you must insist on and teach.

Living the Word

What do you want to know? In the rest of your life, what do you want to know? To achieve something you have to set a goal. The goal for life is what? Happiness? Getting rich? or maybe a rich and full life. Let's make that the goal, which of course would be defined differently for each of us. What information or learning will get you there?

Some might say: No more! My head is full and I want no more information. But, is it full of the 'right stuff' (this is also to be defined differently by each person.) They might add – I went to school for my allotted years; I went to Sunday School as well. That is good then, you should have the level one: basics.

What did you retain from level 1-Christian Education? The Lord's Prayer – A disciple asked Jesus – "*Lord, teach us to pray...*" So Jesus gave them the basics in prayer form so they could at least know how to address God, ask for the basic needs of food and then ask for forgiveness and shelter from our own humanity.

Any other Bible passages you have retained? *"Love one another. "Do unto others as you would have them do to you."* And some songs: 'The B.I.B.L.E, yes that's the book for me!' and of course 'Jesus loves me.' Here are enough basics for us to get started in our faith. These things are still taught in some form in Sunday School: Basic level one.

Some might say: no more! I went beyond Sunday School to Confirmation – for what that was worth. My own experience was more about the 'drama within the class,' dynamics of 8th grade boys and girls, than in learning much. I do remember the slide show of the Pastor's trip to the Holy Land.

As I have taught Confirmation through the years as a Pastor, I remember those forgettable classes and try to do better. My goal is to give them the next level of understanding and questions - asking around and about our faith. I would share my experiences with them, including that sometime in those years, I received a wall hanging with the 23rd Psalm on it and out of anger and boredom one day I read it over and over until it was written on my heart.

Parts of level 2: expanding the basic stories and allowing us to begin processing and beginning to understand that the stories can be applied to our lives in some way, if we stay connected to them. Confirmation time should be a time of 'getting it' for ourselves, which includes reflection and beginning to ask questions about all of it.

Some might say: No more! I have so much information in my head already. I understand that, but we all decide what we will receive and what we will retain. The old computer saying was 'garbage in, garbage out.' We could say: good stuff in, good stuff out! Or God enters in and then God shines out.

Before the 2012 presidential elections, I mentioned to my husband Bob, that there were only two more months until the elections and I hadn't seen or heard as much propaganda that time around. I realized that I was keeping up by choosing what I would read and watch as it came across my internet pages, but I hadn't watched TV for almost a month.

Of course 2016 was a different kind of election, without an incumbent running and with rather distinctive new options. So for different reasons, I only watched with one ear and one eye, filtering what I wanted to absorb.

We all choose what we will fill our heads with. Some of us have our favorite TV shows, some of us love baseball and football and spend our time watching sports. Not being a big professional sports fan myself, I went for years in my smug way, telling people, I just wondered what God really thought about the time spent watching professional sports and that my first question to God when I got to heaven was going to be : "God, how do you really feel about football?"

One day the answer came to me as I envisioned myself standing before God with my question: and God replied to me, "Wait until halftime and I will tell you." So I am not defining how you should spend your time anymore. It just may be different than I do.

So the question that remains is: What do you want to know? Some might say: Enough to get by! What is enough to have a richer fuller life? Statistics show that people that continue to stimulate their minds keep their minds clearer for longer. That is why Crossword and Sudoku puzzles are so popular. We want to keep our minds as clear as possible for as long as possible.

That, then includes asking questions to find new information. You might have heard it said: If you are not growing, you are dying. Of course there is more to learn than can be absorbed by any one person, but by filtering out some of the unnecessary information and by training your brain, there is room for all that you will need for a richer, fuller life.

According to Wikipedia: *"The '10% of brain myth' is the widely perpetuated urban legend that most or all humans only make use of 20%, 10% or some other small percentage of their brains. It has been misattributed*

to people including Albert Einstein. By association, it is suggested that a person may harness this unused potential and increase intelligence.

Though factors of intelligence can increase with training, the popular notion that large parts of the brain remain unused, and could subsequently be "activated", rests more in popular folklore than scientific theory. Though mysteries regarding brain function remain—e.g. memory, consciousness and most paradoxical of all the fact that the tool we must use to comprehend the brain is the brain itself—the physiology of brain mapping suggests that most if not all areas of the brain have a function."

Still, we can train the brain to receive and retain what we choose it to. Level one and two may be enough to get by, but you may miss the whole point of what you have learned. When you have to face adult issues, you may want an adult faith. In my level 3 understanding, I applied level 1&2 work to my life and put together 'the still waters' of Psalm 23, as the place I escape to – the lake, to fish. "God leads me beside the still waters, he restores my soul." Level three builds on what you already know and helps you find that richer, fuller life – the goal.

How to have a rich and full life? By comparing our situations with others through healthy conversation and discussions; Comparing our situations to the Bible Characters, knowing that humanity is still often making the same mistakes. Edmund Burke, British Statesman and Philosopher from the 1700s is quoted as saying "*Those who don't know history are destined to repeat it.*"

By learning the stories of the Biblical characters we learn about them: their mistakes, but also what it took for them to have a rich and full life. We can also see how God has responded to each one, somehow loving them through their situations.

As children we were taught about David the shepherd, who killed the evil giant Goliath with a slingshot and a few stones. As youth we learned there was more to the story about David. He had eyes for Bathsheba and that led to some wrong choices in his life. But we wait until we are adults to share that there is a Bible passage where David dances naked in the streets, knowing that these things have a different understanding to us as adults than they might as children or youth.

We tell the children about Moses, who floated down a river in a basket. As youth we explain why that happened and what it meant for Moses to lead his people out of Egypt. But it isn't until we mature more that we discuss things like why he didn't get to enter the Promised Land with the people he had led in the desert for 40 years. All of the people in The Book, have stories to guide our lives as we are able to process the 'where was God' and 'why did that happen within God's wonder for all of us.'

Christian education isn't just for your childhood years, and your teen years. God gave us minds to continue to learn and grow in our faith and understanding. It can get us through our most difficult decisions and our hardest times. Christian education is about comparing and sharing your understandings and beliefs with God and with others, to define who you are. It helps you put your Creator as the point of reference for all you learn and all that you do and all that you say in your life.

Luke 11:1 - *One day he was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said, "Master, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples."* The location is undefined, the disciple is unidentified, maybe to protect the innocent, but someone at some point wanted to be able to pray like Jesus did, pray like the disciples of John could, and so he asked for help.

How many of you wish sometimes that you knew what to say to someone in their crisis. If you knew it would help, has anyone ever wished they could feel confident enough to pray with them? When was the last time you were in an environment that you could ask those questions and grow your courage and faith?

Prayer is talking with God. There are many ways to talk with God and many different kinds of prayers. Jesus taught his disciples to pray and gave them an example that we still use today. We call this example the Lord's Prayer.

The Children, level one, Sunday School should discover that:

- * The Bible tells us that Jesus was a man who frequently talked with God;
- * The disciples were curious about how Jesus prayed;
- * Jesus taught the disciples a special prayer;
- * Christians today still pray this prayer; it is called the Lord's Prayer;
- * Talking with God helps us feel closer to God;
- * We can talk with God at any time about anything;
- * There are many ways to pray.

Of course most of you as level-one-graduates know all of this already, but in case you don't, I invite you to take a copy of the sermon home and let it all sink in. At this point the children will begin to learn the Lord's Prayer.

If then they are brought to worship, possibly by someone who agreed in their baptismal vow to bring them up in the church, during worship they can repeat what they have learned in Sunday School at every worship, seeing the example of their elders who also repeat it every week.

A youth would parallel the children, in the Confirmation classes. They are also asking God "Lord, teach us to pray." This means something different for them and they will explore level 2 ways of understanding these things. One week they might help serve at Ruby's Pantry passing out food and find out what it means to add some labor to your prayers to make a difference for another person.

As adults we have the same opportunities to go through the same topics with them. Prayers can mature with you, creating a richer and fuller life. What level are you at in your prayer life? There are opportunities for you to join an adult group here at church, on Sunday morning at 8:30am there is a class that comes together to watch a short video and then discuss it. Often there is a book that goes with the class, but Isn't need unless you personally want more study.

Wednesdays, 12:30 – 2 pm, beginning on September 12, we will begin a 12 week study of the Old Testament. This class comes with a book and 15 minutes a day of homework. It will present to you an over view of the books of the Old Testament and during class times we will review what we have read and have discussions around Creation, Sin Deliverance, Order, Leadership, Wisdom, Hope along with other topics, as we hear the stories of God's people in the Bible. There is still room for more in this class.

Once a month the Book Club reads and discusses a current book and the implications of that book on their lives. Last month we read a book that took us through the life of a woman who traveled to Burma to discover her family roots there. I was fascinated by the descriptions of that country, which I had never read about before.

In the Apostle Paul's letter to Timothy, who was a young disciple going out to do God's work, Paul writes this: *"Train yourself for a Holy Life! While physical training has some value, training in holy living is useful for everything. It has promise for this life now and the life to come."*

You don't have to give up the football games, or the TV shows, but find some balance that adds to your faith. If you watch two hours of TV, I invite you to take a Biblical Tithe, that is 10% for God. So of that two hours, you could make God your focus for 12 minutes. That would be enough time to read a devotional, study, pray or open your Bible. It's just a thought...

I Timothy 4 also says this: *This saying is reliable and deserves complete acceptance. We work and struggle for this: "Our hope is set on the living God, who is the savior of all people, especially those who believe."*