KINGSWOOD UNIVERSITY

PRAYER AS THE FOUNDATION TO BIBLE STUDY

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**Prayer as the Foundation to Bible Study**

Prayer IS the foundation of Bible study. Period. Prayer is the way that we as Christians communicate with our God. Prayer is the way that we prepare our hearts, our souls and our minds to be in-tune with what God *is* saying to us, is *trying* to say to us, and is *going* to say to us. Personally, one thing that I found to be new, or perhaps more so, a fresh reminder, is the concept of actually *praying the scriptures*. What I mean by that, is that while I have always used the Scriptures as inspiration for prayer, and will often quote parts of, or refer to scriptures in my prayers, I have not often undertaken the practice of using a scripture *as* a prayer in and of itself in its entirety. Prayer used particularly before a time of Bible study serves to prepare our hearts. It is a time where we can ask God to tune us in to Him, to acknowledge His goodness, and to ask Him to speak to us further through the study we are about to embark on. Certainly prayer during and after Bible study is also crucial, to help us to remember and apply what we have learned, but at this moment, we will focus on the aspect of prayer leading up to the time of study, and forming the foundation upon which the time of study rests. This, in part, is the WHY we pray.

The next part of prayer as a crucial component of Bible study is the HOW. How we pray can certainly vary, depending upon the subject of the prayer. We can pray prayers of thanksgiving to God, prayers of desire or longing, prayers for healing, prayers of intercession, prayers of disdain (yes, God has big enough shoulders for you to tell Him when you are upset with Him), and prayers of protection, just to name a few.

As an example of a prayer from scripture, I have selected Ephesians 3:14-19 “When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God’s love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God’s people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.”

I find this prayer to be especially powerful, as Paul is firmly declaring what he is saying. There are no ifs, ands, or buts in his prayer. “I pray that (…) He ***will*** empower you.” “Christ ***will*** make His home.” “Your roots ***will***.” Paul is declaring faithfully what he is desiring in prayer, not asking in a wishy-washy manner of “Lord, if you think that maybe it would be possible that sometime if you get around to it…” No. Paul declares what he believes, and knows that the Lord is capable of, and what a great reminder that is to us as Christians on how to pray faithfully, and boldly as we approach the Throne.