

Prayer 101 – Session 6. God’s Promise and the Prayer of Faith (Part 1)

Prayer Prompts based on Session 6

Day 1

Pray with the following Scripture quote:

“² And Joshua said to all the people, “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Long ago your ancestors – Terah and his sons Abraham and Nahor – lived beyond the Euphrates and served other gods.” (Joshua 24:2)

- Abraham, who is now known as our Father in Faith, grew up in a household worshipping other gods. Reflect on your family of origin. Invite the Holy Spirit to help you see how you came to your faith.
- When did your faith become an ‘adult’ faith i.e. when was the moment when you decided to follow Jesus, despite the cost?
- Are there any moments in your life when you did not put God in the first place in your life, i.e. when perhaps family worries or money problems or your career seemed to take up most of your time? When you turned to things to comfort you instead of God? Spend some time asking God’s forgiveness and mercy.

Day 2

Pray with the following Scripture quote:

“¹ Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. ² I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”⁴ So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. ⁵ Abram took his wife Sarai and his brother’s son Lot, and all the possessions that they had gathered, and the persons whom they had acquired in Haran; and they set forth to go to the land of Canaan. When they had come to the land of Canaan, ⁶ Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. ⁷ Then the Lord appeared to Abram, and said, “To your offspring I will give this land.” So he built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him. ⁸ From there he moved on to the hill country on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the Lord and invoked the name of the Lord. ⁹ And Abram journeyed on by stages toward the Negeb.” (Genesis 12:1-9)

- Lectio Divina, the prayerful reading of Scripture, invites us to use our imagination to enter into a text. Put yourself in Abraham’s place. What do you think he might be feeling when God asked him to leave his country and kindred and his father’s house?
- Now put yourself in Sarai’s shoes. What might be her experience of hearing that not only has God spoken to her husband, but that they are going to leave all they know behind to follow the voice of God?

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- Reflecting on Abram and Sarai, can you think of any times in your life in which the Lord asked you to do something like this? It could be something big like moving country etc. or it could be something smaller like trusting that something was God’s plan and acting on it.

Day 3

Pray again with the following Scripture quote:

“¹ Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. ² I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”⁴ So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. ⁵ Abram took his wife Sarai and his brother’s son Lot, and all the possessions that they had gathered, and the persons whom they had acquired in Haran; and they set forth to go to the land of Canaan. When they had come to the land of Canaan, ⁶ Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. ⁷ Then the Lord appeared to Abram, and said, “To your offspring I will give this land.” So he built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him. ⁸ From there he moved on to the hill country on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the Lord and invoked the name of the Lord. ⁹ And Abram journeyed on by stages toward the Negeb.” (Genesis 12:1-9)

- Abram was 75 when God changed His life utterly. Do you believe that God can change your life no matter what age you are? Perhaps your prayer today could be Our Lady’s: *fiat!* Let it be done unto me according to your Word.
- Abram builds altars to the Lord on his journey and invokes the name of the Lord. Pray with the following quote from St. Peter Chrysologus: “Continually burn the sweet-smelling incense of prayer. Take up the sword of the Spirit. Let your heart be an altar. Then, with full confidence in God, present your body for sacrifice. God desires not death, but faith; God thirsts not for blood, but for self-surrender; God is appeased not by slaughter, but by the offering of your free will.”¹ Make your heart an altar today and offer Him your response of faith and self-surrender.
- “Abram journeyed on by stages toward the Negeb.” Our journey towards God often takes place in stages too. God gradually draw us to Himself. Invite the Holy Spirit to show you the ways in which God has drawn you to Himself in your own life.

¹ Available online: <https://www.patgohn.net/2015/05/11/this-makes-me-think-let-your-heart-be-an-altar/>

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Day 4

Pray with paragraph 2570 of the Catechism:

“When God calls him, Abraham goes forth ‘as the Lord had told him’; Abraham's heart is entirely submissive to the Word and so he obeys. Such attentiveness of the heart, whose decisions are made according to God's will, is essential to prayer, while the words used count only in relation to it. Abraham’s prayer is expressed first by deeds: a man of silence, he constructs an altar to the Lord at each stage of his journey. Only later does Abraham's first prayer in words appear: a veiled complaint reminding God of his promises which seem unfulfilled. Thus one aspect of the drama of prayer appears from the beginning: the test of faith in the fidelity of God.” (CCC 2570)

- Is your heart ‘entirely submissive to the Word’? What might you need to respond to God’s grace to grow in attentiveness to His Word?
- Words and actions, prayer and deeds go together. “Abraham’s prayer is expressed first by deeds.” How do you express your prayer in deeds?
- “One aspect of the drama of prayer appears from the beginning: the test of faith in the fidelity of God.” Has God ever tested your faith in His faithfulness? How did you respond to this test? If you passed the test, thank God for this grace. If you failed the test, do not fall into the temptation of beating yourself up – rather ask forgiveness and for the strength to persevere in faith. It can be helpful to pray the prayer of the father of the deaf and dumb child in the gospel: “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!” (Mark 9:24)

Day 5

Pray with the following Scripture quote:

*“¹ After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, “Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.” ² But Abram said, “O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?” ³ And Abram said, “You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir.” ⁴ But the word of the Lord came to him, “This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir.” ⁵ **He brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them.”** Then he said to him, “So shall your descendants be.” ⁶ And he believed the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness. ⁷ Then he said to him, “I am the Lord who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess.” ⁸ But he said, “O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?” ⁹ He said to him, “Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.” ¹⁰ He brought him all these and cut them in two, laying each half over against the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. ¹¹ And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. ¹² **As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and a deep and terrifying darkness descended upon him.** ¹³ Then the Lord said to Abram, “Know this for certain, that your offspring shall be aliens in a land that is not theirs, and shall be slaves there, and they shall be oppressed for four hundred years;*

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¹⁴ but I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. ¹⁵ As for yourself, you shall go to your ancestors in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. ¹⁶ And they shall come back here in the fourth generation; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.” ¹⁷ When the sun had gone down and it was dark, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. ¹⁸ On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates.” (Genesis 15:1-18)

- While it was still daylight, God brought Abraham outside and asked Him to count the stars of heaven. Has God ever asked you to trust Him, even though you did not see how He was going to accomplish what He promised?
- God made a covenant with Abraham (who was still called Abram at this point). He promised Him descendants as many as the stars, even though Abraham had yet to conceive a son by his wife Sarai. Spend some time reflecting on all the promises God fulfilled in the Scriptures, culminating in the sending of His Son to redeem us and to reconcile us to the Father through the power of the Holy Spirit. Thank the Holy Trinity for their fidelity.
- We are invited over and over again to trust God and to trust in His promises. Spend some time today making acts of trust and faith, such as ‘Jesus, I trust in You’ or ‘Thy will be done’ etc.

Day 6

Pray the Litany of Trust:

“From the belief that I have to earn Your love
From the fear that I am unlovable
From the false security that I have what it takes
From the fear that trusting You will leave me more destitute
From all suspicion of Your words and promises
From the rebellion against childlike dependency on You
From refusals and reluctances in accepting Your will
From anxiety about the future
From resentment or excessive preoccupation with the past
From restless self-seeking in the present moment
From disbelief in Your love and presence
From the fear of being asked to give more than I have
From the belief that my life has no meaning or worth
From the fear of what love demands
From discouragement

Deliver me, Jesus.

That You are continually holding me, sustaining me, loving me
That Your love goes deeper than my sins and failings and transforms me
That not knowing what tomorrow brings is an invitation to lean on You
That You are with me in my suffering

Jesus, I trust in You.

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That my suffering, united to Your own, will bear fruit in this life and the next
That You will not leave me orphan, that You are present in Your Church
That Your plan is better than anything else
That You always hear me and, in Your goodness, always respond to me
That You give me the grace to accept forgiveness and to forgive others
That You give me all the strength I need for what is asked
That my life is a gift
That You will teach me to trust You
That You are my Lord and my God
That I am Your beloved one”²

- What part(s) of this prayer are easy to say?
- What part(s) of this prayer are difficult to say?
- What might God be teaching you through this?

Day 7

Look back on the quotations you have been praying with this week.

- What quotation spoke most strongly to you?
- What is the abiding thought or over-arching theme to your prayer this week?
- What do you sense the Lord is teaching you through this?

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The Catechism of the Catholic Church is available online at:
https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM

² Available online: <https://sistersoflife.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Mobile-Litany-of-Trust-English-1.pdf>