

Lesson 6

Spending Time with the Architect

Read

Chapter 6

Author's Note: *Chapter 6 marks the beginning of Part II of the book. On the first part of the book (chapters 1-5,) I have attempted to expose some of the issues that may or may not be present in your life, and which may have become obstacles in developing strong, unshakeable faith.*

As I mention on the introduction of this chapter, the second part of the book is designed to help you establish strong habits that will help you keep a strong Faith Bridge.

If you are doing this study with a group, please start this week's lesson by reading item 6. and make sure to spend time with God as I suggested before your group meets to discuss this chapter.

Chapter 6 is about evaluating your prayer life. Let's start by talking about that famous "hole" within the human heart:

1. *"There is a hole in man's heart that only God can fill." In 1670, Blaise Pascal introduced this concept in his book "Pensées," written as a defense of Christianity. The concept of the "God-shaped hole," however, has taken on a life of its own and has been used by various theist authors to refer to that perpetual thirst in man's soul that only God is able to quench. Many spend their lives attempting to fill that void with possessions, food, relationships or accomplishments, and often get to the end of their lives feeling hopeless and defeated." (p.77, 78)*

I can easily list things that I have used to try to fill that void in my life. People, entertainment, food, you name it. Even years after walking with the Lord and watching how He operates... Knowing that the only way to have true fulfillment in life is by walking close to Him and spending time with Him, I still struggle at times, tempted to fill that void with fleshly or material things. Can you relate? What are some of the things that you have used (or still use today) when that "hole" aches to be filled?

2. On pages 79 and 80, I talk about seeing God as a Daddy (Abba).

It's no secret that our relationship with our earthly father shapes the way we see and relate to Abba. What was your experience with your father? Was your father loving and present? Or did he seem to be always too busy for you? Did your daddy tell you how beautiful and special you are? Or was he critical and unaccepting? On this part of the discussion, I would like for you to think about that crucial relationship and how it may have impacted the way you see our Heavenly Father. Jot down some of your thoughts below.

As you think about your relationship with your earthly father, did you identify flaws that have impacted your prayer life? If so, spend some time in prayer, asking God to show you that even the best earthly fathers' love does not compare with His love for you.

Sit for a moment in His presence, thinking about all He has done for you. Meditate upon some of His awesome names listed below. You can jot down circumstances in your life when Abba has filled that "hole" in your life as one of these:

My Redeemer

My Friend

Faithful

My Provider

My Healer

Merciful

My Peace

My Rock

Almighty

3. On page 84, I talk about my experience regarding the Lord's Prayer as a child and then later, after becoming a born-again Christian and studying the deeper meaning of Jesus' words. Which of the 4 petitions found in the prayer (pages 85-88) changed your view regarding what Jesus taught on how our prayers should be focused?

Write down some of your insights below and discuss your conclusions with your group:

4. Let's talk about Persistence in Prayer (p.89): Right after the Lord's Prayer in Luke 11, Jesus tells us a parable illustrating two lessons: First about discouragement while waiting for our prayers to be answered and, secondly, about how sometimes we may be praying about something that does not pass God's grid (Does this request glorify Him? Does it honor His Word?)

As you think about past experiences regarding unanswered or delayed answers to prayers, can you identify times when these two lessons were clear and the outcome made your faith stronger? Can you thank God today for not answering some of these prayers? Please share your thoughts and experiences with your group. Your conclusions can help you or someone learn how to wait upon the Lord in peace!

5. On pages 92-94, I talk about four possible reasons for what I call “God’s Silence,” which is that gap (which can last years!) between a prayer and the answer.

On the space below, write down experiences you may have had when God’s silence accomplished deeper faith or a clearer understanding of God’s perfect ways. You may have experienced one, two or all four reasons. After writing down your experiences, share them with your group to encourage those who are currently waiting on God:

Reason # 1 - As we keep on pleading, we draw closer to Him:

Reason # 2 - We may be asking for the wrong thing:

Reason # 3 - It may just not be the right time yet:

Reason # 4 - We may be expecting the answer in the wrong way:

6. On pages 81 and 82, I talk about one day realizing that my prayer life was suffering from A.D.H.D. I would start praying when a certain thought would cross my mind and, before I knew it, I was planning dinner and everything in between, rather than praying. I believe this is so very common, mainly this day and time, when the world and our activities stretch us to the max.

I also shared with you my decision to follow my pastor's advice and clear a place in my house where I can sit in God's presence, sometimes in complete dark. In our house, we finally got rid of the useless junk that piled in the closet under our stairs and made it our Prayer Room.

I would like to invite you to find a dark place in your house at least one day this week.

As you enter the place, say a prayer, asking God to speak to you. Sit in silence and wait for His voice. It may take more than one time doing this exercise before you hear that "still small voice" in your heart. Make sure you have your Bible with you in case He brings a verse or passage to your mind.

What did you think about this experience? Write down some of your thoughts and/or share them with your group:

7. In the space below, share some of the life-changing principles that you have learned in this lesson, or any new commitments that you have decided to make regarding your prayer life.
Share them with your group if you desire.