

I. Introduction:

- A.** Tonight we explore a subject that is relatively uncomfortable for many Christians. That subject is prejudice. Though it has many forms, prejudice is an often imperceptible “blind spot” that causes us to view particular groups of people with contempt. This could be due to race, socio-economic status, class, etc. It could be due to church denomination, political affiliation, gender, etc. It could be due to city, state or nation. There are many ways the enemy seeks to sow discord, and unchecked prejudice is one of the major ways he does so. Jesus desires that His church overcome biases and prejudices. As we do by the Spirit’s gracious and helpful leading, our love will deepen, our representation of Christ will be more authentic and we will bring more people to Him (we will become more effective among diverse groups instead of only people who are just like us).

II. The importance of understanding the process of spiritual maturity (also called discipleship or sanctification).

- A.** There are two very important truths related to understanding spiritual maturity:

- 1. That Jesus is seeking to mature you the rest of your life.** (This refers to both internal character and external calling.) He focuses on one or maybe two main areas in each season that impacts many other areas. He does not “deal with us” on lots of issues at once. Jesus patiently smooths “rough edges” in our character throughout each season. This process lasts a lifetime.

- “but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—” (Ephesians 4:15). “this is the will of God, your sanctification” (1 Thessalonians 4:3; see also 5:23-24). “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matthew 4:19). “Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more” (John 8:11). Even Jesus had to grow! (Luke 2:40).
- Jesus always calls us to maturity, but never in a condemning way. We mature spiritually as we obey (not as we age).

- 2. That He is incredibly patient in doing so.**

- “Love is patient” (1 Corinthians 13:4). God is love (1 John 4:8), and love is patient—therefore God is patient (Romans 15:5). When we discover over time by revelation how patient Jesus is with us in our spiritual development, we become more patient with ourselves and with others. We give ourselves and others grace in the areas we or they are growing slowly—which, to be honest, is most areas for most of our lives. Jesus does not nitpick, and we should not either.
- The patience of Christ is key to overcoming spiritual malcontent—which can exist as a subtle self-loathing or a full-blown self-hatred. Many Christians are deeply disappointed with themselves because they feel they should be so much more spiritually and emotionally mature by now. Compounding this internal tension is often the thought that God Himself is deeply disappointed with them, which is not true.
- Think for a moment how we view our own children. We deeply love our little kiddos—though they drive us up the wall at times—despite the fact that they are not spiritually or emotionally mature. How much more God toward us!

III. The patience of Christ in the life of Peter. (Read Acts 10:9-Acts 11:18 and prayerfully reflect on its application in your life.)

- A.** Throughout the gospels, we see many of Peter’s foibles (we looked at these two weeks ago). These foibles actually give us insight into how patient Jesus is not only with Peter, but with us. We all, like Peter, have many weaknesses—more than we realize.
- B.** Although Jesus would eventually address the prejudice toward Gentiles in Peter’s heart, He waited until the young apostle had received the Holy Spirit. There were other issues that Jesus addressed first. Namely, the critical issue of revealing His heart of restoration after Peter’s denial of Him. This gives us insight into how Jesus “spreads out” the process of maturity/sanctification/discipleship even on very important issues. Personally, I believe there are some things we will never overcome or grow in until we have an encounter and relationship with the Holy Spirit (the third Person of the Trinity).
- C.** When God wants to do a work in the wider body of Christ, He often begins with senior leadership. He works in them, and the work trickles downward to those under their influence. Leaders must be most willing to admit wrong and grow.

IV. The importance of overcoming prejudices as we follow Jesus.

- A.** As we follow Jesus, He eventually wants to help us to overcome contemptuous thoughts and emotions, and begin to love “those people” (fill in the blank as the Spirit gives insight). Let’s pray tonight that the Spirit of Christ would begin this work in us and carry it to completion in the most fruitful way and timing. Let’s also remember how patient He is with us as we mature in our faith. “Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ” (2 Thessalonians 3:5).

Help me improve my notes! The first person to point out a legitimate mistake/typo on this document (during service) gets \$1.

Greater Peoria House of Prayer Announcements for August 19, 2022.

1. **Welcome** to the Greater Peoria House of Prayer... we're glad you're here and blessed to be worshipping God with you! Be sure to pick up the **free** materials at the back table in the prayer room or the desk near the front of the downstairs fellowship area, which includes teaching notes, stickers, pens, prayer cards and more. **Daily schedule:** We have morning prayer right here in this room seven days a week from 7-8 a.m. Monday - Friday and 8-9 a.m. Saturday and Sunday. We have afternoon prayer four days a week: Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday from 11:30 a.m. - noon. We have evening prayer with live worship from 6-8 p.m. Monday - Saturday. On Friday's, we have an extra prayer gathering from 10 a.m. - noon. Our **Friday Encounter Night** is from 6-9 p.m. and is our main corporate gathering each Friday evening featuring live worship and a teaching to inspire love for Jesus and prayer.
2. **UPCOMING EVENTS:** We pray from 7 - 8 p.m. every night seven days a week. Come on out! The Central Illinois Leadership Summit: Voices of Wisdom is September 7 - 9. Visit gphop.org/events. The Central Illinois School of Prayer Fall 2022 semester begins September 15. Visit gphop.org/school.
3. **Prayer room ministry opportunities:** If you are interested in leading or ministering during a live worship set by singing, playing an instrument, prayer leading or behind the sound board, please contact us at info@gphop.org. We'd love to have you serve on one of our teams! **Team ministry opportunities:** If you feel the Lord has gifted you in the prophetic (or would like to grow in this gifting) and would consider helping on a prophetic team, send an email to info@gphop.org. Contact Mandy Kistner at mandy@gphop.org if you would like to schedule a future healing ministry appointment or help out on the healing team.
4. **Missions:** Please keep the following missionaries we support in prayer as well as be sensitive to their financial needs: **Ashley Bucknam** (YWAM, Hawaii); **Alicia Wright** (India); **Tim and Blair Fraim** (Florianopolis House of Prayer; Florianopolis, Brazil); **Eric and Erin Simmons** (Minnesota House of Prayer Network; Twin Cities, MN); **Austin and Amy Zhu** and **Phil Kellenberger** (International House of Prayer; Kansas City, MO); **Babett Mueller** (111 Global; Kansas City, MO). Also keep friends **Tyler and Sarah Cook** and family in prayer who lead the Illinois Valley House of Prayer in Ottawa, IL.
5. **Military:** Please keep the following members of our military in prayer as they valiantly serve the United States of America: **Jake Gerst**, stationed in Grafenwoehr/Grafenwöhr, Germany. **Kyle Nix**, stationed in Lackland Air Force Base in Bexar County, Texas.
6. **Social media:** Follow us on Facebook (Greater Peoria House of Prayer - GPHOP), Twitter (@GPHOPrayer), Instagram (@GPHOPrayer), Vimeo and YouTube for regular updates and inspiration. Use these social media sites to get the word out, share pictures, quotes you heard, etc. Contact Derek at derek@gphop.org if you're interested in helping with GPHOP's social media.
7. **Haven ministries:** Do you need space to pray just one-on-one. Maybe your Christian group needs a place to meet every once in awhile. We're making available the upper Prayer Room and lower-level Gathering Grounds for rent by donation. Email info@gphop.org if interested.
8. We provide **free Wi-Fi** to everyone here! The password for the **GPHOP** router is on the chalkboard in the downstairs fellowship area. You can also connect to either the CableWiFi or xfinitywifi routers if you have a personal Comcast account.
9. **Prayer requests:** If you would like our community to pray for something specific, please submit it to info@gphop.org.
10. **Giving:** If you have been blessed by the GPHOP and would like sow financially into the ministry, we would be more than blessed. You can give in cash, but if you would like to give to GPHOP with a check, please make it out to "Greater Peoria House of Prayer" or "GPHOP"—your gift is tax deductible. Thank you for your generosity! It's helping make day and night prayer with worship possible in central Illinois. You can place your gift in the Saturday night offering during the 7 p.m. teaching or drop it in either of the two black donation boxes. Donations can also be mailed to our physical address at 117 East Washington Street, East Peoria, IL 61611. Donors can also use PayPal or our website (gphop.org/donate) to give electronically.

*Thank you for helping to **keep this prayer room sacred** by ensuring conversations with others are brief and kindly reminding others to do the same. Use the large Gathering Grounds fellowship area downstairs if you would like to chat at length.*