

**LESSON 6: PRAYER**

**“How important is prayer in my life?”**

**KEY = COMMUNICATION**

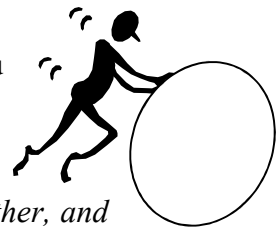
Someone once said that a Christian is only as strong as his prayer life. There is a great deal of truth in this because prayer is simply your direct communication to God. When you read the Bible, God speaks to you; and when you pray, you speak to God. Your personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ cannot grow without proper communication.

Through this study you will become acquainted with the basics of a proper prayer life so that these lines of communication can be open and effective in your life.

**I. What is the purpose of prayer?**

- A. It is NOT to move God for you or change His mind; it is for you to be conformed to His will.

Jesus, our greatest example, always prayed in agreement with God the Father. Matthew 26:39 states, *“And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.”*



- B. A proper prayer life results in peace of heart and mind.

Philippians 4:6-7

- C. To draw you close to God so He can prove His sufficiency for every need.

Because God is active in every detail of your life, He knows exactly what you need even before you ask. Matthew 6:8 states, *“...your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.”*

He does, however, allow needs to come into your life so He can draw you to Him to meet with Him. *“And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.”* Psalm 50:15

- David called upon the Lord to meet his needs. (2 Samuel 22:4-7)
- God uses those needs to draw you to a place where He can bless you and reveal to you that your only real need is simply the Lord Jesus Christ and His grace. The classic example of this tremendously important principle is Paul’s thorn in the flesh.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

*Note: The most dangerous time in your life is when every single need is met and you have need of nothing—including God (Revelation 3:16-17).*

D. Essential reminders

- Give thanks for everything, including difficult times of your life.

1 Thessalonians 5:18

- Develop a consistent prayer attitude so that your first reaction in difficult times is to go to God in prayer. If you are having a hard time praying it may mean you are having a hard time relying on God.

1 Thessalonians 5:17

**II. How do I pray?**

Romans 8:26-27 makes it clear that we don't always know how to pray, or what to pray for. That is why the Holy Spirit who lives inside you intercedes for you in prayer.

A. Here are some basic guidelines:

- Pray always—develop a lifestyle of prayer.

1 Thessalonians 5:17 – “*without ceasing*”

Luke 18:1 – “*always to pray*”

Psalms 119:163 – “*Evening, and morning, and at noon*”

- Don't repeat the same words over and over.

Matthew 6:7

- Talk to the Lord as a friend. He is your friend!



John 15  
vs 13-14  
states,

“*Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends...*”

See also: Exodus 33:11; Proverbs 18:24



- It is not the position of our prayers (kneeling, sitting, eyes closed) that matters, but the position of our heart. Psalm 119:2

- Realize that you have DIRECT access to God personally. You do not need to go through any man to talk to God. *“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”* 1 Tim. 2:5

See also: Ephesians 2:18

B. There are four basic types of prayer – 1 Timothy 2:1; 1 John 1:9

These basic types are easily remember by following a simple acronym – ACTS

1. Adoration (Worship)—giving the Lord the glory He deserves. Psalm 29:2 says, *Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.*”

- Pray using scripture, it is a great way to learn to pray and the Lord loves to hear you use His words. Here are some suggested passages:

Mercy	Psalm 106:1; 108:3-4
Mighty acts and works	Psalm 145:5-6; Jeremiah 32:17-19
His character	1 Chronicles 29:10-13

2. Confession (“Confess” means to “agree, or to say the same thing”)—confession means to agree with God about your sin, or to say the same thing about your sin that God says about it. Psalm 32:5; Psalm 38:18; 1 John 1:9

3. Thanksgiving—the expression of the gratefulness to God for His wonderful works. Psalm 26:7; 100:4

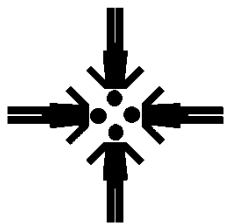


4. Supplication—specific requests. Philippians 4:6 says, *“...let your requests be made known unto God.”* Too many prayers are wasted because they are so general. (For example: “God, please give me a blessing.” Which one? How do you want me to bless you?)

See also: Psalm 140:6; Psalm 142:1

- Specific requests made on behalf of other people are referred to in scripture as “intercessions.” This is important to keep your motives pure, and to help you keep your eyes off of yourself.

C. How important is it to pray for others?



- Paul prayed for others continually, Romans 1:9 says, “...that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers” and he requested prayer on many occasions.

Hebrews 13:18; 2 Thessalonians 3:1

- Samuel said it was a sin against God not to pray for others.

1 Samuel 12:23 says, “Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you...”

- An example of effectual prayer for others is how a preacher from England named George Mueller prayed for the salvation of several people for up to 60 years. When he died, some were still unsaved. However, there were some saved at his funeral and many others were saved within the next year.

James 5:16b says, “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

- Keep at it. The full results of your prayers will never be known completely in this life.

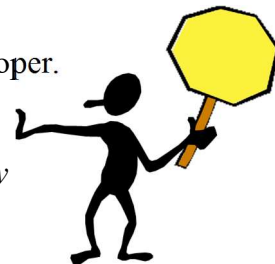


### III. Does God answer all of my prayers?

- A. Yes, but not always the way you may want Him, or at the time you want Him. Remember, God is our heavenly Father and all His ways are perfect. There will be times, when in His infinite wisdom, the best answer to our prayer will be “no” or “not yet.” In those times, simply trust Him.

God’s three answers to prayer – YES, NO, NOT YET!

- B. Be sure to keep your basic relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ proper. There are some things in your life that will **hinder** your prayers.



1. Unconfessed sin—Psalm 66:18 says, *“If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.”*

See also: Isaiah 59:1-2

2. An unforgiving spirit—Matthew 6:14-15

3. Bitterness toward your mate (as well as others)

1 Peter 3:7 – against your spouse

James 5:16 – against others

4. Not asking—James 4:2 says, *“Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.”*

See also: Matthew 7:7-8

5. Asking with selfish or other wrong motives—James 4:3 says, *Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.*

See also: Proverbs 21:13; 1 John 5:14

6. Insensitivity to the Word of God—Proverbs 28:9; Zechariah 7:11-13

*Note: There is good news...you can change these things in your life!*

**IV. Final Comments and suggestions**

- A. Making a list or prayer journal will help you remember what to pray for. Otherwise, your prayer life may not be consistent.
- B. Keeping a list of answered prayers is tremendously important to reinforce your faith in God's ability to answer prayer.
- C. Remember, communication is key in every relationship



**V. Memory Verses**

**Psalms 66:18** If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear [me]:

**1 Thessalonians 5:18** In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

**1 Timothy 2:5** For [there is] one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;