

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

LESSON 3: COMMUNICATING WITH GOD

THE TARGET: Men's Ministries believes you are called to fight a spiritual battle. You are commissioned to be part of a group that will make a spiritual impact on your family, church, and in your marketplace. This type of impact will happen through prayer. In this lesson, you will learn how prayer helps you grow closer to God, demolish strongholds, and expand the Kingdom of God in your home, church, and marketplace.



SIGHTLINE: Acquire Your Target

Words are a powerful tool within every single person on the planet. Words can calm the troubled soul, bring hope to the hopeless, express the passion of your heart to another person, and launch vision for tomorrow to those struggling with today. Words can state a truth that changes a person's life. Conversely, words can create unforgettable pain. Even saying nothing can communicate fear of being misunderstood or hated.



The original purpose of words was for Adam to communicate with God.

After sin, the spiritual purpose of communication became reconnecting with God—sharing your feelings, emotions, pain, hopes, and love with Him—and asking for forgiveness through Jesus Christ. This godly purpose for communication is captured by Paul in Romans 10:8-13.

But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is the word of faith that we proclaim); because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.” For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Therefore, prayer or communicating with God is basically talking with Him, hearing what He is saying, and receiving from Him what is needed (Mark 11:24; James 4:2-10,16). When you spend time with God in communication, **first**, you get to know Him better. **Second**, you take on more of His characteristics, attributes, and behaviors. And **third**, you become stronger in your ability to live for Him.

God desires for man to stay connected to Him (Mark 1:35-36). Jesus understood the necessity to talk daily to His Father and at times to be alone with God the Father; likewise, you should follow the example Christ gave for daily prayer and times of being alone with Father God. Prayer is how you communicate with God (Matthew 6:5-7). When you communicate with God, you tap into His power and receive His help (Luke 11:9-11). It is through prayer that your heart connects with God’s heart.

There are many ways to pray. Each one has a purpose, a sightline for you to follow. We begin with the **prayer of supplication**. This type of prayer is a humble and earnest request. **The sightline for this prayer is the seriousness of its intent**. This prayer has a zeal and serious attention (Matthew 11:12; Luke 22:39-44). You could almost say this prayer is the prayer from the depths of your heart. It is the cry of your spirit man wanting a conversation where both parties talk and listen in deep respect to what the other is saying (John 17:6-12).



Then there is the **prayer of thanksgiving**. This prayer focuses on **giving an expression of thanks**. This form of prayer is vitally important and yet can be overlooked or forgotten. To many people, the prayer of thanksgiving could be classified as praise and worship. It is imperative that as Christian men, we cultivate a thankful heart and learn how to express gratitude for all God has done. When you learn to give God thanks, you get your eyes off of what has not happened or what is not working, and onto all of God's goodness and faithfulness that you have already experienced in your life (Psalm 100:4).

The next prayer is called **intercession**. Intercession begins with praying God's Word over a situation. It is different than supplication in the position you adopt as you communicate with God. **This type of prayer intercepts the plans of the enemy and, as such, is spiritual warfare**. The sightline for intercessory prayer is for **nations, people groups, and urgent requests which may take days, weeks, months, or years to come to pass**. You can also intercede for another person (Isaiah 59:16; Ezekiel 22:30; Romans 8:22,34). This type of prayer pleads for or even begs for the answer to the need. And the intercessor does not give up. He stays focused on communicating with God and waits for His answer.

Finally, there is **prophetic prayer**. This prayer type moves beyond praying for your family or personal problems to praying God's desire for the future. **Prophetic prayer aligns you with what God wants to communicate to your family, church, and community**. This prayer challenges you to find the activity of God in your current situation and pray from your lips what God places on your heart (Hebrews 7:25).

When someone comes to you wanting to give you a prophetic word, remember to confirm that information with your pastor. Too many people have allowed someone to speak into their lives only to find out later that the word spoken wasn't Scriptural or even truthful. The person may build their hopes and dreams around that word with tragic results. If you feel you have a word for someone, please give the person you speak to the opportunity to share what you said with his pastor. Private words can do public damage. Study 1 Corinthians 14 to gain the Holy Spirit's wisdom concerning this type of prayer.

Most of your spiritual formation will not be accomplished without allowing room for the Holy Spirit to speak to your spirit man. Many believers know how to pray, but few know how to recognize and listen to the voice of



God. In order to have real conversations with God, give God time to talk, respond to all you are saying and asking Him to do in your life, and to share His heart and desire for you. As you grow in this spiritual discipline, you must be able to hear the voice of the Spirit.

Beyond training, process, and strategy, strive to walk by faith and not by sight, which comes from hearing the voice of God. There is a supernatural dimension to spiritual formation, and it is found by keeping an ear open to heaven. To develop your spiritual ear, ask yourself three questions.

First, can you hear God's voice? **Second**, is the noise level of your life low enough so that you can hear God's voice when He speaks? **Third**, do you have the guts to obey Him even if you do not understand Him?





CROSSHAIR: Focus on Your Target

God commonly speaks to believers today in five ways.

First, God speaks by the Holy Spirit **through the Bible**. To understand how powerful the Word of God is, consider 2 Timothy 3:16: “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.” Furthermore, Psalm 119:105 declares, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”

Second, God speaks through His **preachers and teachers**. Paul states this principle in Romans 12:6: “Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith.”

Third, God speaks **prophetically through His church**. Prophets functioned within the New Testament church as Spirit-filled proclaimers and interpreters of the Word of God, called by God to warn, exhort, comfort, and edify. They were not to be regarded as infallible. Their prophecies were subject to the evaluation of the church, other prophets, and God’s Word. **You are required to discern and test whether their witness is from God**. Remember, it is God who appoints them, not men.

Fourth, God speaks through **personal impressions from the Holy Spirit**. According to John, here is how Jesus explains this principle in John 14:26: “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”

A word of caution is needed. Some people are rationalists. They believe God quit speaking after apostolic times. The other extreme is a group some would call the mystics. They think every impression is from God. They attribute every action to a God-inspired impression. One way to make sure you are on track is to **judge everything you hear and are told by the Word of God**. Balance is key.

Fifth, God speaks **through circumstances**. God speaks through a variety of circumstances: pain, open and closed doors, etc. While experience is an important part of the Christian life, make sure you balance this with biblical revelation. C. S. Lewis said, “God whispers to us in our pleasure . . . but shouts



in our pains.”¹ The Psalmist describes this powerfully in Psalm 119; “Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep your word (Psalm 119:67); “It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes” (Psalm 119:71); and “The law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces” (Psalm 119:72).

¹ Daniel Ritchie January 16, 2017 <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/god-shouts-to-us-in-our-pain> (accessed June 30, 2020).





BULLSEYE: Hit Your Target

How does God communicate with you today? From the burning bush with Moses, to an angel with Gideon, to a cloud telling the Israelites when to move, to a dream with Joseph, and even through a donkey with Balaam, God speaks. *The testimony of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation is that God speaks to His people.* From this study, you have learned that God speaks to you in a variety of ways: The Bible, prayer, circumstances, and the church (other believers). None of these methods on their own may be clear enough to indicate God's direction. However, when God says the same thing through several or all of these ways you have confidence to proceed. When you communicate with God, remember, He will never contradict His written Word.

PRAYER CHART

Read the following verses and then answer the five questions.

| Read | God Speaks Through |
|---|---------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Kings 22 | The Bible |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 34:5-7 | His Character |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Kings 12:6-19 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Samuel 9:6-8 | Christian Leadership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 13:1-3; 16:6 | Activity of God |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 15:22-35 | Peace of the Holy Spirit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 47:13-27 | Wisdom |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 12:5-17 | Supernatural Intervention |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 28:10-17 <input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 37:5-11 | Dreams |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 10:1-22 | Visions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 9 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Samuel 3:2-14 | Audible Voice |

1. To whom did God speak in the passage?
2. How did God speak to them?



3. What was their response to what God said?
 4. How does God use that specific method to speak today?
 5. What can interfere with your ability to hear God when He uses this method?
 - On a scale of 1-4 with 1 being very deep and 4 being shallow, rate yourself on the depth of your relationship with God. Write out a plan to deepen your relationship with God over the next 90 days.
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- How does this study affect your relationship with God and others? You experience God's Word in action as you use it to direct your journey with Him and those around you.
 - Take some time to listen to the Lord about what you just studied. How did this study help deepen your love for God?



- Write down a thought from this study that you experienced this week.

Next Step:

- Courage:** Commit to five minutes a day for twelve weeks of communication with God.
- Strength:** Commit to fifteen minutes a day for twelve weeks of communication with God.
- Endurance:** Commit to thirty minutes a day for twelve weeks of communication with God. Journal your thoughts and impressions.

FireBible:

- Read the *FireBible* article, “Effective Praying.”
 - » Summarize the three reasons for prayer.
 - » With which of the five requirements for effective praying do you most resonate? Why?



» After reading the “Biblical Elements and Methods of Effective Praying” section, what can you glean from these elements?

• Read the *FireBible* article, “Intercession.”

» What can you glean from the section “The Intercession of Christ and the Holy Spirit?”

» After reading “The Intercession of the Believer” section, what are two things that spoke to your heart? Why?

Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®)
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