

Closer Than A Brother

Part 7 ⇒ Pray First



There are **massive benefits** that come when we access a deeper friendship with God, and the best way to practically build a deeper **Friendship With God** is learning to **Pray First**. Jesus modelled this in Mark 1:35 ⇒ “Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.” Prayer is most effective when it isn’t something we do every so often, but when it becomes a lifestyle we create.

God wants us to **Pray First**. The clearest description of God’s will for our lives is in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-19:

“16 Rejoice always, 17 pray continually, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. 19 Do not quench the Spirit.”

Prayer should be our first response, not our last resort : **Pray First** - Genesis 4:2-5; Proverbs 3:9-10; Matthew 6:33 ⇒ “But seek **first** his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

The best way to cultivate your **Friendship With God** is to **Pray First**.

There are incredible benefits of **Friendship With God** and **Praying First** ⇒ 2 Peter 1:2-3:

“2 Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. 3 His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.”

So **HOW** do we develop a lifestyle of prayer? We can look at the example Jesus gave us ⇒ Mark 1:35 ⇒ “Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.”



A Plan To Pray First

Luke 11:1 ⇨ “One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When He finished, one of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, teach us to pray...” Jesus did that in Matthew 6:9-15:

“9 In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name.

10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

13 And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

14 “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

15 But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

1. CONNECT WITH GOD _____ RELATIONALLY _____

“OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN...”

Romans 8:15 ⇨ “So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God’s Spirit when He adopted you as His own children. Now we call Him, “Abba, Father.”

2. WORSHIP HIS _____ NAME _____

“...HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME...”

Proverbs 18:10 ⇨ “The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe.”

Psalms 9:9-10 ⇨ “The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Those who know your name trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you.”

Here Are Some Of His Names To Help Us Worship Him Specifically And Personally:

- ♥ **God Is Righteousness** ⇨ *He Makes Me Clean* ⇨ Jeremiah 33:16; I Corinthians 1:30
- ♥ **God Is Sanctifier** ⇨ *He Calls Me & Sets Me Apart* ⇨ Exodus 31:13; Hebrews 10:10
- ♥ **God Is Healer** ⇨ *He Heals All My Diseases* ⇨ Exodus 15:26; I Peter 2:24
- ♥ **God Is Victory** ⇨ *He Defeated My Enemies* ⇨ Exodus 17:15; Ephesians 1:15-23
- ♥ **God Is Shepherd** ⇨ *He Speaks To Me, Provides, and Leads Me* ⇨ Psalm 23; John 10
- ♥ **God Is There** ⇨ *He Is Always With Me; I’m Never Alone* ⇨ Ezekiel 48:35; Hebrews 13:5
- ♥ **God Sees Me** ⇨ *He Sees, Hears, and Understands Me* ⇨ Genesis 16:13; I Peter 3:12
- ♥ **God Is Peace** ⇨ *He Is My Peace In Every Storm* ⇨ Judges 6:24; John 16:33
- ♥ **God Is All-Sufficient** ⇨ *He Is All-Sufficient & All-Bountiful* ⇨ Genesis 17:1; 2 Peter 1:3
- ♥ **God Is Provider** ⇨ *He Supplies All My Needs* ⇨ Genesis 22:14; Philippians 4:19

3. PRAY HIS AGENDA _____ FIRST _____

“...YOUR KINGDOM COME. YOUR WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN...”

Focus on what God is focused on. Check out Luke 12:29-32:

“What I’m trying to do here is get you to relax, not be so preoccupied with getting so you can respond to God’s giving. People who don’t know God and the way he works fuss over these things, but you know both God and how he works. Steep yourself in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. You’ll find all your everyday human concerns will be met.

Don’t be afraid of missing out. You’re my dearest friends! The Father wants to give you the very kingdom itself.”

Spend time focusing on what God is focused on. His priorities include:

- ♥ The whole world to know Jesus ⇨ Matthew 28:18-20,

- ♥ Blessing for those in authority ⇒ Parental, spiritual, governmental, work, school ⇒ I Timothy 2:1-4,
- ♥ Caring for the poor ⇒ Matthew 25:31-46,
- ♥ The Church around the world ⇒ Ephesians 5:25-30,
- ♥ Freedom for those in bondage ⇒ John 8:30-32; Luke 4:16-18,
- ♥ Accomplishing His purpose in our lives ⇒ Ephesians 2:10; Psalm 139:13-18.

4. DEPEND ON HIM FOR EVERYTHING

"...GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD..."

God promises to supply all our needs, and He wants us to trust Him to provide ⇒ Psalm 121:1-2 ⇒ **"I look up to the mountains—does my help come from there? My help comes from the LORD, who made Heaven and earth!"**

Ask God for what you need today. Bring your requests to Him, and trust Him enough to hand them over to Him fully. Problems can either be ours or God's; they can't be both.

10 PRAYER FOCUSES:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1) <i>Faith Life</i> | 5) <i>Ministry Life</i> | 9) <i>Attitudinal Life</i> |
| 2) <i>Marriage/Dating Life</i> | 6) <i>Financial Life</i> | 10) <i>Emotional /Mental Life</i> |
| 3) <i>Family Life</i> | 7) <i>Physical Life</i> | |
| 4) <i>Work/School Life</i> | 8) <i>Social Life</i> | |

5. FORGIVE AND BE FORGIVEN

"...FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS..."

When we turn away from our sins and receive His forgiveness, our hearts are more prepared to forgive others as well ⇒ I John 1:9 ⇒ **"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."**

Psalm 51:10-12 ⇒ **"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. 11 Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit..."**

Ask God to check your heart and life and show you areas where you might need to ask for His forgiveness. Ask Him to forgive you and to help you forgive others. We can even choose to forgive people in advance!

6. ENGAGE IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE

"...AND DO NOT LEAD US INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM THE EVIL ONE..."

We have an enemy who is trying to steal from us, kill us, and destroy us ⇒ John 10:10. As we pray, we take our stand against the enemy and fight from a place of victory through Jesus as we're empowered by His Holy Spirit. There is power in God's Word, and every lie the enemy has told us is replaced with God's truth.

Ephesians 6:12 ⇒ **"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."**

Ask God to show you any lies you're believing, or spiritual warfare happening in your life, expose the enemy, and help you receive His truth. Simply speaking the name of Jesus has great power in the spiritual realm. The Bible tells us in James 4:7 that if we resist the devil, he will flee from us. Through prayer, we can resist him and walk forward in freedom.

7. EXPRESS FAITH IN GOD'S POWER

"...FOR YOURS IS THE KINGDOM AND THE POWER AND THE GLORY FOREVER..."

Ending our prayer time by claiming God's authority and power helps focus our minds on the truth and hope of who He is and what He can do. Jeremiah 32:17 ⇒ **"Ah, Sovereign LORD, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for You."**

Remind yourself of God's power and then return to praising Him and declaring your faith in Him:

- "Yours is the Kingdom" – All authority belongs to You,
- "Yours is the Power" – All power flows from You,
- "Yours is the Glory" – All victory is complete in You.

