

How To Talk To God

Matthew 6:9-13

Communication is Important.

Why don't we connect this to prayer?

Communicating better with God would help us listen to Him through Scripture and the Holy Spirit.

“The Disciples’ Prayer” might be a more appropriate name for this prayer.

What Does The Bible Say?

9 Pray like this: (Matthew 6:9 NLT)

This example is Prayer Template.

Our Father in heaven, (Matthew 6:9 NLT)

Remember that prayer is a powerful tool that starts with God's interests, not ours.

Our Father in heaven, (Matthew 6:9 NLT)

We have a Dad who cares.

Our Father in heaven, (Matthew 6:9 NLT)

We have a King in complete control.

What Does The Bible Say?

Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. (Matthew 6:9 NLT)

For God is to be honored and glorified, and acknowledged by everyone.

10 May your Kingdom come soon. (Matthew 6:10 NLT)

We Have a New Heaven and Earth

10 May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, (Matthew 6:10 NLT)

May people listen and obey on earth as they do in heaven.

What Does The Bible Say?

11 Give us today the food we need, (Matthew 6:11 NLT)

God gives us our material needs for the present day.

12 and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us. (Matthew 6:12 NLT)

God gives us daily food and daily forgiveness.

13 And don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one. (Matthew 6:13 NLT)

We are weak; therefore, we need a strong God.

How Can You Obey?

Begin to view prayer as enhancing your relationship with God.

Read the Bible and let it change you.

Discover your secret location for private prayer

Additional Notes:

If you would like to use your home to disciple others, check out our training at www.crosswaveschurch.com/host. Cross Waves has produced short videos to train you how to use your home to reach others for Christ. So please check it out.

Explore:

KEY TRUTHS:

- 1. God Invites Us to Pray and Promises to Answer
(Matthew 7:7-11)**
- 2. The Holy Spirit Helps Us Pray (Romans 8:26-27)**
- 3. The Bible Gives Principles for Effective Prayer (Matthew 21:22; John 14:13-14; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10; 1 John**

3:21-22)

HOW IT FITS: Where This Lesson Fits in the Story of the

Bible: The principles of prayer found in these passages of Scripture apply throughout the Old and New Testaments.

Explore:

Every follower of Jesus begins his or her Christian walk with a prayer. The so-called “sinner’s prayer” of confessing our sinfulness and our faith in Christ, however, is just the beginning.

Prayer is intended to be an integral part of the Christian life.

Like any other topic, however, we cannot build our theology of prayer on any one or two verses. We must take into account all of what the Bible says about prayer in order to fully understand it. Understanding the foundational concepts about prayer is important for every believer.

God Invites Us to Pray and Promises to Answer

(Matthew 7:7-11)

One of the unique characteristics of the ministry of Jesus was His focus on God as Father, rather than the seemingly distant, unapproachable, and even capricious supreme authority that some Jews perceived Him to be. There is, of course, sound biblical reason for viewing God as the majestic supreme ruler of all, occupying a position far above His creation, and we see in Scripture several pictures of God that emphasize His majesty. (See Isaiah 6 for one example.)

While not downplaying the majestic authority of the Godhead, Jesus often used familial terminology and images in speaking of the Father. One good example is seen in the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15 where God (represented by the father in the story) is portrayed as patient, loving, and forgiving. That is not to say that such images are not found in the Old Testament (the book of Hosea comes to mind), but merely that Jesus, as

God in flesh, ushered in a fresh emphasis on God's love and grace.

It must have been surprising, then, to some in the audience when Jesus explained that this sovereign, all-knowing, all-powerful God, for whom nothing is impossible, actually invites us to bring our needs to Him in prayer (Matthew 7:7). Far from being a cold and distant potentate who cares little for His subjects, our God is a good and loving Father, eager to hear and respond to our needs (Matthew 7:8-11).

Bible scholars are quick to point out that the Greek text reflects persistent, continuous action: Ask and keep on asking, seek and keep on seeking, knock and keep on knocking. While persisting in prayer is an important application of these verses, the primary focus of this point is God inviting us to pray and promising to answer.

This promise, like all the promises in the Sermon on the Mount, is for believers, those who have placed their faith in Christ for salvation. Even then, this is not a blank check for whatever we desire. James made it clear that God does not promise to answer prayer motivated by fleshly or selfish desires (James 4:3).

The apostle Paul encouraged the Thessalonians to pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17). It is amazing that the God of all things wants us to commune with Him in prayer and offers to grant our requests and meet our needs.

Explore:

What can cause our prayers to go unanswered? Some possibilities: sin (Psalm 66:18), disobedience (Proverbs 28:9), doubt (James 1:5-7), and selfishness (James 4:3).

Explore:

The Holy Spirit Helps Us Pray

(Romans 8:26-27)

As human beings, we don't always know the will or purposes of God. We are often unable to put the burden of our heart into words. Thankfully, the Holy Spirit who dwells within the believer takes up our cause, interceding for us in ways beyond our own wisdom or abilities (Romans 8:26-27). This intercession takes a form that we cannot fully comprehend. The apostle Paul spoke of groanings too deep for human words.

We cannot begin to understand all the inner workings of the Godhead (Father, Son, and Spirit), but we know that the Spirit helps us as we pray, conveying our requests to the throne according to God's will. True to His promise to the disciples (John 14:18), Christ has not left us as orphans, but has given us His Spirit to intercede for us and empower our praying.

In his discussion of the believer's spiritual armor in Ephesians 6, Paul urged believers to pray in the Spirit (Ephesians 6:18). To pray in the Spirit is not a reference to "praying in tongues" as

some construe it. To pray in the Spirit is to pray in communion with and in the power of the Spirit. It is to pray in accordance with His leading, and trusting in His intercession for us. The Holy Spirit is an integral part of any meaningful prayer life.

Jude also spoke of praying in the Spirit (Jude 1:20). He seems to have viewed it as a key part of building up one's faith for the difficult days in which we live. This building up or maturing in faith is vital for all of us who live in these last days.

One thing seems abundantly clear: prayer is something every believer is called to do, but we are not called to do it alone or in our own strength. Our prayers are empowered by the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Explore:

That praying in Jesus' name recognizes that Jesus is the Sovereign Lord of all.

Explore:

The Bible Gives Principles for Effective Prayer

(Matthew 21:22; John 14:13-14; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10; 1 John 3:21-22)

On the one hand, prayer is so simple it can be taught to a child in a matter of minutes. On the other hand, prayer is so complex that we spend a lifetime learning how to do it well. While the Bible does not contain a chapter entitled “How to Pray in Seven Easy Steps,” it does include numerous principles of prayer that can aid us in praying. Let’s examine a few of these principles.

Pray in faith (Matthew 21:22). When the disciples marveled that the fig tree had withered just a day after Jesus had cursed it, the Master told them if they would believe, they could even move mountains. Then He gave them a great promise: if they would

pray in faith they would receive whatever they asked. This promise was not merely for those men of that day, it applies to us as well. This is not, however, a blank check for anything we desire. As we will see, there are other principles of prayer that also apply. Still, this does mean that as we pray, believing that God hears us and will answer our prayers, He will respond.

Pray in Jesus' name (John 14:13-14). On the night of His betrayal, Jesus issued another powerful principle regarding prayer. After clarifying His relationship to the Father (John 14:8-11), Jesus said He would do whatever His followers asked in His name. As a result, many Christians conclude their prayers by saying, "In Jesus' name, Amen," but praying in the name of Jesus means so much more. In biblical times, names were often given to reflect an individual's social status, family heritage, personality, or even the parents' ambitions for what the child may accomplish. A person's name encapsulated everything he or she was, or would be.

Thus, to pray in the name of Jesus would refer to praying . . .

According to what His name stands for. Not asking for something contrary to Christ's teaching or character.

- On His merits rather than our own or someone else's. We do not earn answers to prayer by our performance or by our "Christian" pedigree.
- In accordance with His will or, in other words, in keeping with God's character and what He wants to do.
- Praying for the glory of God, so He gets the credit rather than man.

For His sake. Praying in accordance with His divine purposes.

Pray in submission to God's will and purpose (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). God's purposes are far beyond our own. He may say no to our request in order to give something that is of far greater eternal value and consequence. For example, although Paul sought the Lord repeatedly for the removal of his "thorn in the

flesh” (likely a physical ailment of some sort) the Lord re- fused.

In retrospect, we can see that the suffering and imprisonments

Paul experienced gave birth to some of his most loved writings.

Live in obedience to Christ’s commandments (1 John 3:21-22).

Jesus made it clear that obedience is a key factor in having our

prayers answered. We cannot live in rebellion and expect God to

respond favorably to our requests. This concept is also taught in

the Old Testament (Psalm 66:18; Proverbs 28:9; Isaiah 59:2).

God will answer the unrighteous person’s prayer of repentance,

but He has not obligated Himself to answer any other prayer of

the disobedient.

These principles instruct us in how to pray effectively and also

show us what could be hindering our prayers. As we follow

these principles God has given us, we can pray with confidence

that He hears us and will answer.

Explore:

In the Lord's Prayer (also called "The Model Prayer"), Jesus gave us a model to follow in our praying (Matthew 6:9-13):

- Adoration (verse 9)
- Submission (verse 10)
- Petition (verses 11-13a)
- Benediction (verse 13b)

In addition, Dean Riding's article "How to Pray Every Day" provides readers with a simple and practical plan for making prayer a part of daily life: bit.ly/HowToPrayEveryDay.

George Mueller (1805-1898) has been called the greatest man of prayer since the New Testament. Mueller determined not to solicit funds for the support of the orphanages he established, but to depend on prayer to meet their needs. Mueller's dependence upon prayer led to some amazing answers. Teachers and group members alike will be inspired by learning the story of this great man of prayer. For an overview of his life and

ministry go to bit.ly/Wiki-GeorgeMueller. A number of videos about George Mueller (from 80 seconds to movie-length) can be found on YouTube. (See bit.ly/YouTube-GeorgeMueller.)

For an inspirational activity beyond the class time, check out the resources associated with the movie, *The War Room*: <http://WarRoomTheMovie.com/home>.

Explore:

Christianity is about more than going to church and living a good moral life. Being a Christian is about having a vibrant personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Every Sunday School teacher or Bible study leader should want to see each of his or her learners enter into this relationship—their eternal destiny depends on it. As you work toward this goal, keep the following in mind:

Following Christ is about more than a mere decision; it is about a lifelong relationship. Jesus called us to make disciples, not

mere decision-makers. Aim for long-term faith, not momentary emotion.

Salvation is a matter of grace, not works. Our works do not save us (Ephesians 2:8-9), nor do they keep us (Galatians 3:2-6).

Good works are a product of salvation, not a prerequisite to it.

Don't confuse sanctification with salvation. Holiness follows salvation; it doesn't precede it. Don't try to impose "Christian" expectations on men and women who don't know Christ.

- Keep it simple. Being born again is not complicated. Here's a simple way to explain it:

- Acknowledge your sinfulness and your need for a Savior (Romans 3:10, 23).

- Trust in Christ's sacrifice for your sins and in His resurrection (Romans 10:9-10).

Surrender your life to God's transforming power (Romans 12:1-2).

Most of all, remember that your job is to tell the truth in a way others can understand, answer their questions, and give them an opportunity to respond. If you do that faithfully, some will respond and join the band of Christ- followers. When they do, Heaven will rejoice!

Question 1 of 5

We know Adam and Eve were vegetarians in the Garden, but did people eat meat before the flood?

Question 2 of 5

What are the biggest mistakes people make when they pray?

Question 3 of 5

What can cause our prayers to go unanswered?

Question 4 of 5

What are some principles we should follow when we pray?

Question 5 of 5

Why is it important to confess your sins daily and ask for forgiveness when praying?

