

Basic Lessons of the Christian Life

Lesson 4:
Prayer

The most important thing for a baby at birth is breathing. In our spiritual life, prayer is breathing and is as crucial to a new believer as breathing is to a newborn babe. Hence, after we believe in the Lord and call upon His name to be saved, we must continue to pray and call on the Lord. Then we can receive the spiritual air, which is the Lord's Spirit of life, that we may grow and be strong in the spiritual life.

I. The Significance of Prayer

The real significance of prayer is to contact God in our spirit and to absorb God Himself. Prayer is the contact of the human spirit with the Spirit of God, during which man inhales God into himself. Therefore, the emphasis of prayer lies not in asking God for things but in contacting and absorbing God.

II. The Faculty of Prayer

John 4:24 God is Spirit; and those who worship [including praying to] Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness.

Ephesians 6:18 Praying at every time in spirit [that is, praying with the spirit].

A person needs the proper faculty in whatever he does. We need our eyes in order to see, our ears in order to hear, and our spirit in order to pray.

God is Spirit, and to worship and pray to Him, we must be in our spirit, that is, we must use our spirit. Our spirit is the deepest part of our being. To pray in the spirit, or to pray with our spirit, is to use our innermost part to contact God. Therefore, we must pray not merely according to the thoughts in our mind, but according to the sense deep within our spirit. The faculty of prayer is not the mind but the spirit.

III. The Means of Prayer

Hebrews 10:19 Having therefore, brothers, boldness for entering the Holy of Holies by the blood of Jesus.

To enter the Holy of Holies is to come before God in order to contact God and pray to God. This is by means of the

redeeming blood shed by the Lord Jesus on the cross, which washes away all the sins that hinder our fellowship with God.

John 15:16 That whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give you.

We should pray to the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus. To be in the name of the Lord Jesus is to be in the Lord Himself. When we pray, we need to pray not only by means of the Lord's blood but also by means of the Lord's name, that is, by means of the Lord Himself. We cannot come before God to pray by depending on our behavior. Even if our behavior is good, it is like filthy rags in God's eyes (Isa. 64:6). Neither can we depend on ourselves, because we also are filthy and unacceptable to God. Thus, when we come before God to pray to Him, we must rely on the Lord's blood to wash away the filth in our behavior, and must depend on the Lord Himself to replace our filthy being, so that it is as if the Lord Himself is coming to pray before God. Only such prayers are acceptable to God.

IV. What to Pray According to

Prayer is not according to what your mind thinks, but according to what you sense in your spirit. You pray with your mouth whatever you sense in the spirit. When you come before God to pray, do not speak anything to God according to what you have decided on beforehand, but rather utter to God what you sense in your spirit at the time. Confess your sins if you feel in your spirit to confess, and praise the Lord if you feel in your spirit to praise. Do whatever the feeling in your spirit leads you to do.

V. Praying without Hindrance

Hebrews 10:22 Let us come forward to the Holy of Holies... having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.

Praying without hindrance requires a good conscience, that is, a conscience which does not condemn. Once there is offense or condemnation in your conscience, your prayers will be immediately hindered and even stopped.

Since we are sinful, we need to be sprinkled by the blood of the Lord Jesus from an evil conscience that we may come forward to the Holy of Holies to

draw near to God and to pray to Him. Thus, whenever we pray, we must ask the Lord to sprinkle and cleanse us with His blood so that our conscience may be void of offense. We can then come to God boldly to pray from our spirit.

VI. The Dealing in Prayer

The dealing in prayer is the confession of sins. When you come before God to pray, drawing near with a sincere heart and an open spirit, God, who is light, will shine in you to expose your real self and true condition. At this time, you must confess your sins. After you confess the first sin, you may sense another, and after you confess that, you may sense still another. You must thoroughly confess all your sins according to such feelings in your spirit. If you disregard the sense of condemnation within, surely your prayer will not touch God. It will be hard for you to pray because there is still the barrier of sin between you and God. Therefore, you must confess and deal with every sin. After you have dealt with all of your sins one by one, you should pray according to the sense in your spirit. Then you will surely touch God and absorb Him.

VII. The Benefits of Prayer

Matthew 26:41 Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation.

Hebrews 4:16 Let us therefore come forward...to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace for timely help.

Philippians 4:6-7 In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.

Prayer enables us to absorb God. Besides this, the main benefit of watchful prayer is that it keeps us from entering into temptation that we may not be tempted and seduced by the Devil to stray from the Lord.

The greatest benefit in praying before God and contacting God is that we receive mercy and find grace for timely help to meet our every need.

Another intimate benefit which we receive in coming before God to pray and make petition is that we will have the peace of God, which passes all understanding, guarding our hearts and thoughts from all anxieties. What an intimate blessing it is in the human life to be free from anxieties.

Besides this, according to the Bible, the benefits we gain from prayer cannot be fully told. May we who belong to the Lord never neglect prayer, but pray at every time (Luke 21:36), even unceasingly (1 Thes. 5:17). Then we shall surely enjoy God Himself and all His riches, and will be abundantly blessed by Him. He "is rich to all who call upon Him" (Rom. 10:12)!

Study Questions

1. What is the significance of prayer?
2. What are the benefits of prayer?
3. Spend some time to pray for any burdens the people in your group may have.

Weekly Challenge

Spend some time every day this week to pray.

Song

- 1** Pray to fellowship with Jesus,
In the spirit seek His face;
Ask and listen in His presence,
Waiting in the secret place.
- Chorus** Pray to fellowship with Jesus,
In the spirit seek His face;
Ask and listen in His presence,
Waiting in the secret place.
- 2** Pray to fellowship with Jesus,
Fully opened from within,
With thy face unveiled, beholding,
Single, pure, and genuine.
- 3** Pray to fellowship with Jesus,
Seeking Him in confidence;
Learn to touch Him as the Spirit,
Looking up in reverence.
- 4** Pray to fellowship with Jesus,
Speaking nothing in pretense;
Ask according to the spirit,
Praying by the inner sense.
- 5** Pray to fellowship with Jesus,
List'ning earnestly to Him;
Be impressed with His intentions,
Yielding to Him from within.
- 6** Pray to fellowship with Jesus,
Bathing in His countenance;
Saturated with His beauty,
Radiate His excellence.