

Lesson 5 - How to Pray

One of the greatest privileges in being a child of God is having free access to His presence by the blood of Jesus and prayer. Prayer is a conversation with God. Something marvellous takes place when you open your heart with same freedom and confidence you have with your best friend and speak intimately with God. He is going to speak with you through His Holy Spirit, His Word, visions and dreams.

Pray is not a monologue, but a dialogue! Never forget. Be aware when you pray, God is listening, His Holy Spirit is within you and He will often quietly respond.

Jesus said in Matthew 7:7-8:

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.”

Hebrews 11:6 says:

“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”

God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. If you can understand this, your prayer life will be rich, your faith will increase and your communion with God will grow.

Jeremiah 33:3 reaffirms this:

“Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.”

No one enters or leaves the presence of God with empty hands. For example, the Queen of Sheba travelled far and visited King Solomon, but she left his presence with far more blessing than she had when she first arrived. - 2 Chronicles 9:12 - It's the same when we spend time with our Heavenly Father! He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him!

Read Matthew 6:6:

“But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”

Psalms 145:16-19 speaks of some of God's rewards:

*“You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.
The Lord is righteous in all His ways,
Gracious in all His works.
The Lord is near to all who call upon Him,
To all who call upon Him in truth.
He will fulfil the desire of those who fear Him;
He also will hear their cry and save them.”*

This is the faithfulness of God and His promise to you!

Let's look at some common, but false beliefs about prayer:

1) Prayer is not about repetition - or just repeating words that others have composed.

Read Matthew 6:7,8:

“And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.”

This is reassuring. God, who is ALL knowing, says He hears you the 1st time! Repetition and saying the same prayer over and over again doesn't move or motivate God. He already knows what you are going to say and He is listening!

So we don't go to God in some kind of "religious" way. We are to be real, open, transparent, and completely honest with Him. He wants you to express what is deep in your heart. So again, be real, open, transparent and completely honest!

2) God is NEVER too "busy". He is interested in both the little details and the most important issues of our lives.

3) We never need to approach God through a 3rd person we consider to be closer to God than we are... like a "saint" or a other Biblical figure. This is wrong thinking. It's not necessary. Jesus said that even He would not have to go to the Father in your place! He makes access freely available to you by being your mediator. He then assures us that the Father will listen directly to your prayers prayed in His Name.

This is illustrated in John 16:26-27. Jesus says:

"In that day you will ask in My Name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you; for the Father Himself loves you..."

1 Timothy 2:5 says:

"There is one God, and only one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

Our Father God will hear and answer OUR prayers prayed in Jesus' Name. Jesus said, "No man comes unto the Father except through Me." That means we don't have to add to the legal right to be in God's presence that Jesus has given to us. He is Enough! And He is Sufficient!

4) Prayer is also not suppose to be a last resort. People often try to solve their problems first and afterward say "All we can do now is pray." No. Jesus said "Come unto me." Pray often and about any need. Your Heavenly Father's favour and answers to prayer will make your life SO much easier than relying on your own wisdom or self-effort alone.

Proverbs 3:5-6 says:

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths." - Pray for direction! God WILL lead and guide.

Jesus said, *"My sheep hear My voice, I know them and they follow Me!"* - John 10:30. This is a powerful exclamation and promise from Jesus! You will ALWAYS hear His voice and receive His direction!

James 1:5,6 says:

"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him." - Again, God promises if you pray for wisdom, you will receive it! Pray for wisdom! And the next verse says, "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering! Pray with boldness knowing that you will receive!" God will ALWAYS give you what you ask for when it comes to wisdom and direction! Anything His Word promises you will NOT be withheld!

Matthew 7:11 says:

"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! - Ask your Father for good things!

John 16:24 says, *"...ask and receive that your joy may be FULL!"*

Listen and Learn!

When praying, don't just act as if you are leaving messages on a telephone answering machine. Learn how to listen to God. If you pray for 5 or 10 minutes, try remaining silent and just quietly listening for a while afterwards.

If we listen, He will answer! Quietness within helps us hear what the LORD is saying. Reflect on this next verse and practice it everyday:

"Be still and know that I am God!" - Psalm 46:10

Isaiah 30:15 says, *"...in returning and rest shall you be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength."*

At no time in our lives does God want us worried or full of anxiety. This is part of the mental business which often keeps us from recognising what God is really saying to us. Jesus told us specifically not to worry about the affairs of this life in Matthew 6:25-34. God wants us to enjoy peace, soundness of mind, quietness and confidence! It's in this atmosphere, of His peace and stillness, when it's easiest to discern the leading of God. He said that would be our strength! God wants us to understand how great His love for us is and how much He cares!

1 Peter 5:7 says you should be *"...casting all your cares [all your anxieties, all your worries, and all your concerns, once and for all] on Him, for He cares about you [with deepest affection, and watches over you very carefully]."* - Amplified Bible

How precious these words are and they're a GREAT comfort in time of need! God promises to answer our prayers, meet our needs and care for us with deepest affection. You can already feel the peace by meditating on these words! That is God's assurance that His Word is true and that He is faithful!

Matthew 6:32 says:

"...for your Heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things." Verse 8 says, "...your Father knows what you need before you ask Him."

So how do we stay worry free?

Philippians 4:6-8 gives us the answer:

"Be anxious for nothing, but in all things by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus!"

That is a wonderful promise! Keeping your peace is the fruit of a very rich prayer life! One full of intimacy with your Heavenly Father! He's strong, He's mighty, He's faithful and He loves you! So you don't need to worry about anything! Ever! Prayer will allow you to keep your peace and will protect your heart from negative influences. So don't neglect your prayer life!!!

Jesus said, *"And whatsoever things you desire, when you pray, BELIEVE THAT YOU RECEIVE THEM, and you WILL HAVE them!"* - Mark 11:24 This is a MAJOR KEY to prayer. After you've prayed, BELIEVE it's done! Answered! Over! Be full of thankfulness from that time forward!

Isaiah 26:3 says, *"You (God) will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You."*

Isaiah 9:6 calls Jesus *"The Prince of Peace"*. He is OUR Prince of Peace! He is YOUR Prince of Peace! And He GIVES US His peace!!!

John 14:27 says:

"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you!"

We are to be Confidence and Bold When Approaching God:

1 John 5:14-15 says:

"Now this is the confidence (boldness) that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him."

Hebrews 4:16-17 says:

"Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

Coming boldly to the throne of God's grace means that we believe that God is able and willing to answer our prayer. We come with confidence that He will do exactly what He has promised. Sarah, the wife of Abraham, considered God to be faithful to do just that (Hebrews 11:11) and one of Jesus' Names is "Faithful and True" in Revelation 19:11!

Once we ask according to His will, then we KNOW that we have the petitions that we desired of Him.

This is the difference between a "prayer of faith" as James 5:15 talks about, and a prayer that doesn't have faith. God listens to faith-filled prayers. Hebrews 11:6 says, "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, because he that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

God will always reward you when you put Him 1st! (See Matthew 6:33) It's a very clear principle in scripture.

Pray with Thanksgiving!

Let's look at Philippians 4:6 again:

It says, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with THANKSGIVING, let your requests be made known to God..."

Pray with praise, worship and thankfulness. When you pray with confidence, knowing God has heard you, then you can include thanksgiving in your prayers! This is the best way to show your Heavenly Father appreciation for hearing and answering your prayers! It demonstrates that you have confidence in God and His promises to you!

Psalm 100:4 says:

"Enter His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise: be THANKFUL unto Him and BLESS His Holy Name!"

1 Thessalonians 5:17,18 says:

"Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

Always mix your prayers and petitions with thanksgiving to God, remembering all He has done for you and all He promises to do. You'll be very blessed when you do!

Lastly, when Jesus taught His disciples to pray in Matthew 6:9-15, He said that we should forgive anyone we have an offence against, so that our Heavenly Father would also forgive us. This is VERY important!

In 1 Peter 3:7 husbands are exhorted to "give honour unto the wife... as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered." Offence, strife and unforgiveness can hinder our prayers. Honouring and preferring one another keeps these and other hindrances out of our prayer life!

Implement the principles we have highlighted about prayer here and you will have an effective prayer life!

James 5:16 says:

"The effective fervent (passionate) prayer of a righteous man avails much." The Amplified Bible says, "... makes much power available!" That's YOUR prayers!

In John 14:13-14 Jesus said, "And whatever you will ask in My Name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son! If you will ask anything in My Name, I will do it!"

Pray for the things God's Word promises to all of us! Good things! Matthew 7:11, 1 Timothy 6:17, Romans 8:32, Ephesians 1:3, 2 Corinthians 1:20, James 1:16-17, John 16:23,24

MEMORY VERSE: 1John 5:14-15

"Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him."