

TEACH US TO PRAY

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Teach
us to

Pray

from
the power
and ever.

and ever.

Luke 11:1

AMEN,
for ever
AMEN

TEACH US TO PRAY

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Luke 11:1

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AMEN

Written & Compiled by

Michael W. Stout

SYLLABUS

Date	Lesson
January 6	1. What is Prayer?
January 13	2. What Hinders My Prayer Life?
January 20	3. The Power of Prayer
January 27	4. Why Did Jesus Pray?
February 3	5. Pray with Humility
February 10	6. Pray with Faith
February 17	7. The Model Prayer
February 24	8. Pray without Ceasing
March 2	9. What is Jesus & the Holy Spirit's Role in Prayer?
March 9	10. When Should I Pray?
March 16	11. What Should I Pray For?
March 23	12. Who Should I Pray For?
March 30	13. Does God Hear My Prayers?
April 6	14. Are All Prayers Answered?
April 13	15. Pray with Thanksgiving
April 20	<i>Gospel Meeting</i>
April 27	16. Prayers of Supplication & Intercession
May 4	17. Prayer & Fasting
May 11	18. Prayers of Praise & Worship
May 18	19. Prayers of Confession
May 25	20. Private Prayers
June 1	21. Public Prayers in Worship
June 8	<i>Vacation Bible School</i>
June 15	22. Prayer & Anointing
June 22	23. Lessons from the Prayers of Paul
June 29	24. How Should I Pray?

Dear Bible Student,

Let me begin by welcoming you to this study on prayer. If you are anything like me, you don't pray nearly as often as you should. You don't pray nearly as effective as you should. And you don't pray nearly as confident as you should. Prayer is a wonderful privilege the Lord has supplied to us to communicate our praise, our thanksgivings, our needs, our confessions, and our desires to Him. It is an open line of communication that is available to us 24/7, 365 days a year, but, unfortunately, we don't take advantage of it as we should—well, at least I don't take advantage of it nearly as much I should.

As I was evaluating my prayer life a few months back, I realized that I need a significant amount of help in this area of my life, so I decided it was time to begin studying on the subject. As I began to study, I realized that there is a great deal to learn to become the “prayer” that God would have me to be. That's where this book was born. As I am very excited about this study for my own personal benefit, I hope you will find benefit from it as well.

I will warn you upfront that this study is extremely raw and personal. As I began the planning stages of this book, many questions about prayer popped into my head (along with the help of my lovely wife), and the majority of those questions have been turned into individual lessons in this study. Although many Christians oftentimes shy away from topics such as “prayer and fasting” and “calling upon the elders to pray and anoint with oil when you are sick,” I decided this study will be no-holds-barred. My goal has been to present as complete a study on prayer as possible during a 6-month class period.

As I have prepared this material, I have looked into the spiritual mirror and realized that my prayer life is greatly lacking, but I'm working on changing that the more I delve into this subject matter. I pray that you will also be willing to approach this study with an open heart and become the “prayer” that you should be, that you want to be, and that you need to be. To help improve everyone's personal prayer life, at the conclusion of many of the lessons in this book, I have included a section called “Enter, Shut, Pray”—*“But thou, when thou prayest, ENTER into thy closet, and when thou has SHUT thy door, PRAY to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly” (Matthew 6:6)*. This section is prayer aids for **YOUR PERSONAL USE ONLY**—I hope you will be completely open and honest with yourself and use this section to its fullest to help build your prayer muscles daily! During each Bible class period, my plan is to discuss the questions immediately following the lesson text of the week, but fear not because you will NOT be asked to discuss the details you have written on your “Enter, Shut, Pray” prayer aids—these are for your consumption only (and God's, of course). I pray that you will guard your workbook as these aids are very personal to you and extremely private, as they will help you bare your soul to God through prayer. On the flip-side, I trust that you will respect the workbooks of your fellow brethren and won't feel tempted to “take a little peek” if his/her workbook is sitting idly unattended on a pew.

This “*Teach Us to Pray*” workbook is truly a labor of love. I have been extremely excited about preparing this study, and even more excited to present it. This study ranks up there as some of my favorite material I've ever prepared to teach (right up there with “*The Lord Is My Shepherd: An In-Depth Study of Psalm 23*” and “*Sing with the Understanding*”). I have spent many loooong nights sitting at the kitchen table with my Bible and laptop preparing this material, but unfortunately mainly due to the fact that I have procrastinated at getting my thoughts typed up. Who needs sleep anyways? ;-)

I pray this will be a profitable semester for each and every one of us and that each of our personal prayer lives will increase an hundredfold.

In Christian Love,

Michael W. Stout

December 29, 2015 – 5:13 AM

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What is Prayer?

Lesson 1

So, what is prayer? It is the general term for addressing God. God has made it possible for His children to talk to Him through prayer: *“For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus”* (I Timothy 2:5). God asks His children to call upon Him (Luke 18:1-8; Ephesians 6:17,18; I Timothy 2:1-3; I Thessalonians 5:17). It is a communication with two parties involved – God listens while the Christian talks. *“The first true sign of spiritual life, prayer, is also the means of maintaining it. Man can as well live physically without breathing, as spiritually without praying”* (Guthrie).

According to a recent survey of Americans, the **most important purpose of prayer** is:

- To be close to God – 41.9%
- To seek God’s guidance – 28.7%
- To thank God for your blessings – 20.3%
- To help others – 4.7%
- To improve your own life – 2.9%
- To express your intentions – 1.5%

Prayer is the privilege and duty of the righteous (James 5:17). *“Prayer is not only the shortest distance to God’s mighty throne, it is the only way in...[God] is only a prayer away”* (Armin R. Gesswein). Jesus’ model prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) shows that prayer was designed for God’s children (John 8:42,44). Those trying to live righteously have their prayers approved of God (I Peter 3:10-12).

In Jeremiah 33:3, God says, *“Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.”* Let’s explore this verse:

- God simply says, *“Call unto Me.”* Everyone has this ability, even the speechless who can’t utter a word. This calling does not have to be vocalized.
- God said to call HIM. Through prayer, we have access to our Lord in heaven above! God is listening for our call.

“Prayer is our need crying out for help. Prayer is the voice of faith to the Father. Prayer is the Living Word in lips of faith.”

E. W. Kenyon

“Prayer is the channel through which all good flows from God to man, and all good from men to men. Prayer is a privilege, a sacred, princely privilege. Prayer is a duty, an obligation most binding, and most imperative, which should hold us to it. But prayer is more than a privilege, more than a duty. It is a means, an instrument, a condition. It is the appointed condition of getting God’s aid. It is the avenue through which God supplies man’s wants.”

E.M. Bounds

- God doesn't limit this call to certain subjects. We can call upon Him for ANYTHING!
- When we call, God says He will answer us. What an incredible thing that MY prayer can send God into action

Prayer is asking, seeking, and knocking

- Remember the words of Jesus in **Luke 11:9,10** and **Matthew 7:7-11**: *“And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.”*
- Asking petitions of God
- Seeking answers to life's problems
- Knocking to gain entrance into a more abundant life
- We must not be found guilty of asking for blessings, but not really expecting them; seeking but not really expecting to receive answers; and knocking, but not expecting to be allowed in—don't fear that God will not hear us, will not fulfill His promises, and will not admit us.
- Ask with a beggar's humility, seek with a servant's carefulness, and knock with the confidence of a friend.

“Without practice, no Christian will become a real man or woman of prayer. And practice cannot be attained without perseverance.”

O. Hallesby

Prayer is a necessary tool of warfare along with the Christian armor (**Ephesians 6:10-17**). We wear the armor (loins girt about with truth, breastplate of righteousness, feet shod with preparation of the gospel of peace, shield of faith, helmet of salvation, sword of the Spirit) to battle Satan, the flesh, and spiritual wickedness, and once we put the armor on, we are to *“Pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching therefore with all perseverance and supplication for all saints”* (**Ephesians 6:18**).

Prayer is an act of faith (**Luke 18:1-8; James 1:5-7; Hebrews 11:6; James 2:14,24**). It is not a substitute for works and is a mockery unless one strives for the most effective service possible in doing God's will. No Christian should pray for the sick, the needy, or the lost as a substitute for his responsibilities to them. *“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith”* (**Galatians 6:10**). We must *“bear the*

infirmities of the weak” (**Romans 15:1**) and *“go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature”* (**Mark 16:15,16**).

Our spiritual life and our works are typically directly proportional to our prayer life. Jack R. Taylor, in his *Prayer: Life's Limitless Reach*, made the following observations about prayer:

- No Christian's spiritual life will rise to stay above the level of his praying
- No congregation's ultimate effectiveness will rise to stay above the level of its corporate, or collective, prayer life
- No congregation's corporate prayer life will be greater than the personal prayer lives of those who make up the congregation
- No Christian's prayer life will rise to stay above the level of his or her own personal, regular, daily time of worship with God

"Non-praying is lawless, discord, anarchy. The whole force of Bible statement is to increase our faith in the doctrine that prayer effects God, secures favor from God, which can be secured in no other way, and which will not be bestowed if we do not pray" (E.M. Bounds). "Prayerlessness...could be defined as that state in which one prays less than he ought, less than the Father desires, and less than that one himself knows he should" (Taylor). Samuel told Israel, "*God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you*" (**I Samuel 12:23**).

We have a wonderful High Priest who understands our problems (**Hebrews 4:14,15**), therefore we can approach God in prayer at any time to ask for mercy and find grace to help in time of need (**Hebrews 4:16**). Don't be guilty of prayerlessness!

What is Prayer? – QUESTIONS

1. Define “prayer.”
2. Describe in detail the three aspects of prayer found in **Matthew 7:7-11**. (*Give additional scriptures for each*)
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
3. Who has the privilege and authority to pray? (*Give scriptures*)
4. List as many benefits of prayer that you can think of. (*Give scriptures*)
5. What lesson about prayer do we learn from the parable of the persistent widow in **Luke 18:1-8**?
6. According to **I Peter 3:10-12**, whose prayers does God hear, and whose prayers does He not hear?
7. Explain the relationship between prayer and the Christian armor (**Ephesians 6:10-18**).
8. How will a weak prayer life affect our service to the Lord? (*Give scriptures*)
9. What is the advantage of Christ being our High Priest (**Hebrews 4:14,15**)?
10. Explain **Hebrews 4:16**.



What Hinders My Prayer Life?

Lesson 2

Is your prayer life hot, or is it cold? If we are each completely honest with ourselves, we must admit that our prayer life is probably not what it should be, or could be. The big question we must ask ourselves is: “What hinders my prayer life?” Why don’t I pray more often? Why don’t I pray more effectively? Why am I not more enthusiastic about prayer?

When something good, or even something bad, happens to us, aren’t we anxious to share that with our spouse or our best friend? When our teenager who has just begun to drive leaves the house and takes to the highways, don’t we tell them to be careful, tell them we love them, send them on their way, and ask that they call or text us when they have arrived at their destination so we know they are safe? Why don’t we think to communicate with God as often as we do with our family members and friends? We should share everything with God, thank Him for all our blessings, petition Him for help when needed, and praise Him for all His glory!

We must realize that no one besides ourselves can hinder our prayers, and likewise, we each cannot hinder someone else’s prayers.

Are any of the following hindering your prayer life?

- **Sin in your life**
 - Sin separates us from God and as a result, He will not hear us (**Isaiah 59:2**)
 - “If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened” (**Psalm 66:18**)
- **Lack of faith**
 - The faithful Christian should pray with unwavering trust – an unstable doubter will receive nothing from God – we must “believe and not doubt” (**James 1:5-7**)
 - “And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him” (**Hebrews 11:6**)

“...ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.”

James 1:6,7

- *“If one turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination”* (**Proverbs 28:9**)
- **Unforgiving toward others**
 - How can we expect God to pour out His blessings upon us if we harbor hatred and bitterness toward others, not forgiving them?
 - We must not have an unforgiving spirit (**Matthew 6:14,15**)
 - We must not be guilty of unreconciled differences (**Matthew 5:23,24**)
 - Parable of the unforgiving servant (**Matthew 18:23-35**)
 - *“And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also Who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses”* (**Mark 11:25,26**)
- **Wickedness (Psalm 66:18)**
 - The prayers of those who will not obey God’s will are an abomination to God (**Proverbs 28:9**)
 - God hears the prayers of the righteous, not the wicked (**Proverbs 15:8; I Peter 3:10-12; James 5:16; I John 3:22**)
- **Mistreating your spouse**
 - If a husband is not considerate toward his wife and doesn’t respect her as the weaker vessel, it will hinder his prayers (**I Peter 3:7**)
 - Wives must submit to their husbands to avoid their prayers from being hindered (**Ephesians 5:22-24**)
- **Selfishness**
 - We must have a desire to use God’s blessings unselfishly, not on our own pleasures (**James 4:3**)
 - We must pray that all things be done in accordance with God’s will (**I John 5:14; Matthew 26:39**)
 - Jesus prayed, *“Yet not My will, but Yours be done”* (**Luke 22:42**)
- **Substituting prayer for obedience**
 - One cannot expect to receive blessings that are conditional upon action just by prayer
 - We cannot expect salvation without obedience (**Hebrews 5:8,9**)
 - We cannot expect restoration of health without seeking treatment
 - We cannot expect to save the lost without seeking them
 - We must remember that we will reap what we sow (**Galatians 6:7,8**)

Fortunately, if our prayers are hindered by any of the above reasons, **I John 1:9** tells us: *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”*

What Hinders My Prayer Life? – *QUESTIONS*

1. Does it matter if we allow something(s) to hinder our prayer life? Why, or why not? (*Give scriptures*)
2. How should we pray to ensure that God will hear our prayers (**James 1:5-7**)? Explain.
3. What effect does sin in our lives have on our prayers to God? What lasting effect results? (*Give scriptures*)
4. What impact should **Hebrews 11:6** have on our prayer life?
5. Explain the parable of the unforgiving servant in relation to prayer (**Matthew 18:23-35**).
6. Explain how the prayers of the wicked are an abomination to God (**Proverbs 28:9; 15:8**).
7. Why does the relationship between you and your spouse affect your prayers? (*Give scriptures*)
8. Is it wrong to ever ask God for personal (selfish) desires? Why, or why not? (*Give scriptures*)
9. What is the importance of praying that all things be done in accordance to God's will, not our own will? (*Give scriptures*)
10. How can we apply **Galatians 6:7,8** to our prayer life?



The following is a **Spiritual Inventory for Hindrances to Prayer**, a self-test that will help you see where you are spiritually. If you answer these yes/no questions honestly, it can help you to improve your walk with God and help improve your prayer life. It will show you areas in your life where you may need to improve. When taking this test, please remember that you are the only one who will be reading these answers—they will not be shared publicly in Bible class. The important thing is to see where your strong points are and where your weak points are in your spiritual walk with God. Keep in mind that you should never be satisfied with where you currently are in your spiritual walk since everyone can improve, no matter how good we think we are.

Spiritual Inventory for Hindrances to Prayer

1. Matthew 6:12,14,15 - *"Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:"*

- a. Is there anyone against whom you hold a grudge?
- b. Is there anyone whom you have not forgiven?
- c. Is there anyone you hate?
- d. Is there anyone whom you do not love?
- e. Are there any misunderstandings that you are unwilling to forgive and forget?
- f. Is there any person against whom you are harboring bitterness, resentment, or jealousy?
- g. Is there anyone you dislike to hear praised or well-spoken of?
- h. Do you allow anything to justify a wrong attitude toward another?

2. Matthew 6:33 - *"But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."*

- a. Is there anything in which you have failed to put God first?
- b. Do you make decisions after your own wisdom, rather than seeking God's will?
- c. Does anything interfere with your surrender and service to God: ambition, pleasures, loved ones, friendships, desires for recognition, money, your own plans?

3. Mark 16:15 - *"And He said unto them, Go you into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."*

- a. Have you failed to seek the lost for Christ?
- b. Have you failed to teach Christ to others?
- c. Are you teaching others by the example of how you are living your life?

4. John 13:35 - *"By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one to another."*

- a. Are you secretly pleased over the misfortunes of another?
- b. Are you secretly annoyed over the accomplishments or advancements of another?
- c. Are you guilty of any contention or strife?
- d. Do you quarrel, argue, or engage in heated discussions?

5. Acts 20:35 - <i>"It is more blessed to give than to receive."</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Have you robbed God by withholding His due of time, talents, or money? b. Have you given less of your income than you should for God's work? c. Have you failed to support mission work either in prayer or financially?
6. I Corinthians 4:2 - <i>"Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Are you dependable, punctual, and faithful in the Lord's work with your responsibilities? b. Are your emotions stirred for things of the Lord but you do nothing about it?
7. I Corinthians 6:19,20 - <i>"What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which you have of God, and you are not your own? For you are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Are you in any way careless with your body? b. Do you fail to care for your body as the temple of the Holy Spirit? c. Are you guilty of intemperance in eating? d. Do you have any habits which are defiling to the body?
8. Ephesians 3:20 - <i>"Now unto Him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us."</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Are you SELF-CONSCIOUS rather than CHRIST-CONSCIOUS? b. Do feelings of inferiority keep you from attempting things you should be doing for God?
9. I Corinthians 10:31 - <i>"Whether you eat, or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God."</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Do you take the credit for anything good you do, rather than give all the glory to God? b. Do you talk of what you have done rather than what Christ has done? c. Are your statements mostly about "I"? d. Are your feelings easily hurt? e. Have you pretended to be something you are not?
10. Ephesians 4:28 - <i>"Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth."</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Do you underpay? b. Do you do very little in your work? (Do others have to pull your weight?) c. Have you been careless in the payment of your debts? d. Do you waste time for yourself and for others?
11. Ephesians 4:31 - <i>"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice."</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Do you complain? b. Do you find fault? c. Do you have a critical attitude toward any person or any thing? d. Are you irritable or cranky? e. Do you ever carry hidden anger? f. Do you get angry? g. Do you become impatient with others? h. Are you ever harsh or unkind?
12. Ephesians 5:16 - <i>"Redeeming the time, because the days are evil."</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Do you listen to ungodly radio or TV programs? b. Do you read unworthy magazines? c. Do you partake in worldly amusements? d. Do you find it necessary to seek satisfaction from any questionable source? e. Are you doing things that show that you are not satisfied with the Lord Jesus Christ?

<p>13. Ephesians 5:20 – <i>“Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”</i></p> <p>a. Have you neglected to thank God for all things, bad and good? b. Have you virtually called God a liar by doubting His Word? c. Do you worry? Are you fearful? d. Is your spiritual temperature based on feelings instead of on the facts of God’s Word?</p>
<p>14. Philippians 1:21 – <i>“For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”</i></p> <p>a. Are you bogged down with the cares of this life? b. Is your conversation on “things” rather than the Lord and His Word? c. Does anything mean more to you than living for and pleasing Christ?</p>
<p>15. Philippians 2:14 – <i>“Do all things without murmurings and disputings.”</i></p> <p>a. Do you ever by word or deed seek to hurt someone? b. Do you gossip? c. Do you speak unkindly concerning people when they are not present? d. Do you harbor prejudice because someone is different than you, or because they do not see everything exactly like you?</p>
<p>16. Philippians 4:4 – <i>“Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.”</i></p> <p>a. Have you neglected to seek to be pleasing to God in all things? b. Do you carry any bitterness toward God? Are you angry or disappointed with Him? c. Have you complained against God in any way? Grumbled because of circumstances? d. Have you been dissatisfied with His provision for you? e. Do you have any reservations in obeying His perfect will?</p>
<p>17. Colossians 3:9 – <i>“Lie not one to another, seeing that you have put off the old man with his deeds.”</i></p> <p>a. Do you engage in empty and unprofitable conversation? b. Do you ever lie, fib, deceive, or withhold the whole truth of a matter? c. Do you ever exaggerate to make yourself look good? d. Do you cheat (on taxes, expense reports, etc.)? e. Do you steal (from your employer, or from God)? f. Have you forgotten to return anything you borrowed?</p>
<p>18. II Timothy 2:22 – <i>“Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”</i></p> <p>a. Do you have any personal habits that are not pure? b. Do you allow impure thoughts about the opposite sex to stay in your mind? c. Do you read that which is impure or suggests unholy things? d. Do you indulge in any unclean entertainment? e. Are you guilty of the lustful look? Lustful thoughts? Lustful fantasies? f. Do you flirt with your co-workers, spouse’s friends, neighbors, etc.?</p>
<p>19. Hebrews 10:25 – <i>“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as you see the day approaching.”</i></p> <p>a. Do you deliberately stay away from some worship services? b. Are you irregular in attendance at services? c. Do you neglect to attend and participate in meetings for prayer? d. Have you neglected/slighted daily or private prayer? e. Have you neglected thanksgiving at meals? f. Have you neglected family devotions?</p>
<p>20. Hebrews 13:7 – <i>“Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.”</i></p>

- a. Do you hesitate to submit to leaders in the church or elsewhere?
- b. Do you rebel at requests given to you to help in the work of the gospel?
- c. Do you have a stubborn streak, or an unteachable spirit?

21. James 1:27 – *“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”*

- a. Have you allowed yourself to become “spotted” by the world?
- b. Is your manner of dress pleasing to God?
- c. Do you spend beyond what is pleasing to God on anything?
- d. Do you neglect to pray about things that you buy?

22. James 4:6 – *“But He giveth more grace. Wherefore He saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.”*

- a. Do you feel that you are not as bad as others?
- b. Are you stubborn?
- c. Do you insist on having your own way?
- d. Do you insist on your own “rights”?

23. James 3:11 – *“Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?”*

- a. Have you dishonored God and hindered His work by criticizing His servants?
- b. Have you failed to pray regularly for the elders?
- c. Do you find it hard to be corrected?
- d. Is there a rebellion toward one who wants to restore you?
- e. Are you concerned about what people will think more than what will be pleasing to God?



The Power of Prayer

Lesson 3

Prayer is an EXTREMELY POWERFUL tool and blessing that God has given to His children and we should use it frequently. Prayer avails much (**James 5:16**) and is heard and answered by God (**I John 5:14,15**). God is our loving Father who is not only willing, but is also anxious to grant the petitions and supply the needs of His children (**Matthew 7:7-11**).

“Those who have left the deepest impression on this sin-cursed earth have been men and women of prayer. You will find that prayer has been the mighty power that has moved not only God, but man. Abraham was a man of prayer, and angels came down from heaven to converse with him. Jacob’s prayer was answered in the wonderful interview at Peniel, that resulted in his having such a mighty blessing, and in softening the heart of his brother Esau; the child Samuel was given in answer to Hannah’s prayer; Elijah’s prayer closed up the heavens for three years and six month, and he prayed again and the heavens gave rain” (D.L. Moody).

Examples of the power of prayer

- **Forgiveness from God**
 - The erring Christian is told to repent and pray (**Acts 8:22**)
 - Christians can find forgiveness through Christ’s blood (**I John 1:7-10**)
 - God is able to forgive us of our debts (**Matthew 6:12**)
- **Peace from God**
 - Prayer is the solution to anxiety (**Philippians 4:6**)
 - Christians will find their hearts and minds guarded by the peace of God (**Philippians 4:7**)
- **Strength from God**
 - Paul prayed that the Ephesians might be strengthened in the inner man (**Ephesians 3:14-16,20**)
 - When we need to be strong, we should likewise pray for strength from God
- **Opportunity from God**
 - God provided Paul the opportunity to teach others (**I Corinthians 3:5**)

The Hour of Prayer

Lord, what a change within us one short hour
Spent in Thy presence will prevail to make!
What heavy burdens from our bosoms take;
What parched grounds refresh as with a shower.

We kneel—and all around us seems to lower;
We rise—and all, the distant and the near,
Stands forth in sunny outline brave and clear;
We kneel: how weak!—we rise: how full of power!

Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong,
Or others—that we are not always strong?
That we are ever overborne with care;
That we should ever weak or heartless be,
Anxious or troubled, while with us in prayer,
And joy, and strength, and courage, are with Thee?

R. Trench

- Paul knew that God had opened the doors for these opportunities (**I Corinthians 16:9; II Corinthians 2:12**)
- Paul continued to pray that God would grant him opportunities to teach (**Colossians 4:3**)
- **Boldness from God**
 - The apostles prayed to God when they needed boldness, and He delivered (**Acts 4:23-31**)
 - Paul prayed on his own behalf when he needed boldness (**Ephesians 6:19,20**)
- **Wisdom from God**
 - The Christian is promised wisdom through prayer (**James 1:5-8**)
 - Wisdom is not knowledge, but insight that makes the best use of the knowledge one has
- **Healing from God**
 - Those who are physically sick should ask the elders to pray for them (**James 5:14,15**)
 - Those who have sinned and need spiritual healing should confess and we should pray for one another (**James 5:16**)
- **Tranquility from God**
 - God has ultimate control over the nations (**Daniel 4:17; Romans 13:1-7**)
 - We should pray for rulers so they may lead a tranquil & peaceful life (**I Timothy 2:1-4**)
- **Help from God**
 - God will help us in time of temptation (**I Corinthians 10:13**)
- **Blessings from God**
 - God provides us with our physical necessities (**Matthew 6:11,33**)
 - All good things come from God (**Psalms 84:11; James 1:17**)

Although prayer is VERY powerful, there are some powers that prayer does NOT have

- **Prayer does not have the power to save the alien sinner apart from obedience**
 - Saul was saved by faith and obedience, not by prayer alone (**Acts 9:9-12; 22:12-16**)
 - Cornelius was saved by faith and obedience, not by prayer alone (**Acts 10:1-6,33-35; 11:13,14**)
 - Salvation requires faith and obedience and cannot be gained simply by prayer (**Mark 16:15,16; Acts 2:38; Matthew 7:21; Hebrews 5:8,9**)
- **Prayer does not have the power to work miracles today**
 - There was a time that prayer had the power to work miracles (**Matthew 17:14-21; I Corinthians 14:13-15**)
 - Miracles ceased when the New Testament was completed (**I Corinthians 13:8-10; James 1:25**)
- **Prayers of those who will not do the Lord's will are powerless prayers**
 - Pray for daily bread, then work for it (**Matthew 6:11; II Thessalonians 3:10-12**)
 - We should pray for the needy and then help them according to our abilities and opportunities (**Proverbs 21:13; James 2:15-17; I John 3:17**)
 - We should pray for the lost and then work to help save them (**Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15,16**)

The Power of Prayer – QUESTIONS

1. Define “power.”
2. Explain how *“the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much”* (**James 5:16**).
3. What does it mean to ask *“according to His will”* in **I John 5:14**?
4. What is the result of a prayer of true repentance? (*Give scriptures*)
5. Why should we *“be careful [anxious] for nothing”* (**Philippians 4:6,7**)? (*Give scriptures*)
6. Explain **Ephesians 3:20** in regards to prayer.
7. What is the importance for us to pray for boldness in the Lord today like Jesus’ disciples did in **Acts 4:23-31**? (*Give scriptures*)
8. What power does prayer have over the physically sick? The spiritually sick? (*Give scriptures*)
9. Does prayer have any role in salvation? Prove your answer with scriptures.
10. Is it contradictory for Jesus to instruct us to pray for our daily bread (**Matthew 6:11**), then instruct us to work for our food (**II Thessalonians 3:10-12**)? Explain. (*Give scriptures*)



Why Did Jesus Pray?

Lesson 4

One way that we can learn to pray is by looking at the prayer life of Jesus. He prayed to His Father for everything. He prayed often. Every great crisis in His life was preceded by prayer.

But, why did Jesus pray, since, after all, He is God the Son? Just as we are commanded to pray, Jesus the Man communicated with His Father, Whom He left to come to earth to minister and establish His kingdom, taking on the form of a servant, giving up His heavenly home (**Philippians 2:5-11**). He was dependent upon God and submitted to His Father: *“I can of Mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and My judgment is just; because I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me”* (**John 5:30**).

Lessons from Jesus’ prayer life

- **Jesus prayed for others**
 - He prayed for the little children that were brought to Him (**Matthew 19:13**)
 - He prayed for God’s children (**John 17:9**)
- **Jesus prayed with others**
 - He *“took Peter, John and James [with Him] and went up into a mountain to pray”* (**Luke 9:28**) on the Mountain of Transfiguration
- **Jesus prayed alone**
 - *“And He withdrew Himself into the wilderness, and prayed”* (**Luke 5:16**)
- **Jesus prayed to teach His disciples how to pray**
 - He prayed the model prayer, often referred to as The Lord’s Prayer, to teach His disciples how to pray (**Matthew 6:9-13**)
- **Jesus prayed so that others would believe**
 - When He raised Lazarus from the grave, He prayed to God so that the people witnessing Lazarus’s resurrection would believe: *“Father, I thank Thee that Thou*

“So [Jesus] Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.”

Luke 5:16, NKJV

hast heard Me. And I knew that Thou hearest Me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me” (John 11:38-44)

- **Jesus prayed various length prayers based on the situation**
 - His model prayer was short and direct (**Matthew 6:9-13**)
 - He prayed all night prior to selecting His twelve apostles (**Luke 6:12**)
- **Jesus prayed heartfelt**
 - His prayers were heartfelt and genuine as He prayed for Himself, His disciples, and all believers (**John 17**)
- **Jesus prayed regularly**
 - *“So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed” (Luke 5:16, NKJV)*
- **Jesus taught persistence in prayer**
 - In the parable of the persistent widow in **Luke 18:1-8**, He taught that we should be persistent in our prayers, *“that men ought always to pray, and not to faint” (Luke 18:1)*
- **Jesus knew that not all His prayers would be answered as expected**
 - As He prayed in Gethsemane before He would be betrayed and crucified, He prayed, *“O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me,”* but He was willing to accept God’s answer as He continued, *“nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt” (Matthew 26:36-44)*
- **Other times Jesus prayed:**
 - He prayed at His baptism and *“the heaven was opened, And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased” (Luke 3:21,22)*
 - He prayed on the Mount of Transfiguration and *“as He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistening” (Luke 9:28-36)*

**PRAY LIKE
JESUS**

Jesus prayed to God the Father because it was an appropriate, natural, and essential part of His ministry here on earth. His prayers set an example for us to be closer and more intimate with our Heavenly Father through prayer! Let us all PRAY LIKE JESUS!

Why Did Jesus Pray? – QUESTIONS

1. List all of the qualities of Jesus found in **Philippians 2:8-11**:
2. Although Jesus was Deity here on earth, explain what He meant when He said, *“I can of Mine own self do nothing”* (**John 5:30**).
3. Should we pray FOR others as Jesus did? (*Give scriptures*)
4. What is the benefit of praying WITH others as Jesus did? (*Give scriptures*)
5. In **John 11:42**, Jesus stated: *“And I knew that Thou [God] hearest Me always.”* What do we learn about Jesus’ character from Him making this statement?
6. What lesson can we learn from Jesus praying all night prior to selecting the twelve apostles (**Luke 6:12,13**)?
7. Why did Jesus pray for God to *“glorify Thy Son”* in **John 17:1-5**?
8. List the things Jesus prayed for on behalf of believers in **John 17:20-26**:
9. What is the importance of praying persistently? (*Give scriptures*)
10. Why did Jesus pray, *“O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me”* (**Matthew 26:39**)?



Pray with Humility

Lesson 5

We as humans are weak and unable to direct our own lives (**Jeremiah 10:23**), therefore we need God's providential care (**Philippians 4:18,19**). Jesus, when He taught about the vine and the branches, emphasized man's inability to live fruitfully and victoriously without reliance on divine strength and care (**John 15:1-8**). We must do so with humility. Henry Blackaby once said, "There are two ways to attain high esteem. One is the world's method: Take every opportunity to promote yourself before others, seize occasions for recognition and manipulate your way into the center of attention. The other way is God's way: Humble yourself. Rather than striving for recognition and influential positions, seek to put others first. Cultivate humility, for it does not come naturally. One of the many paradoxes of the Christian life is that when God sees your genuine humility, He exalts you."

Live your life with humility

- Humility is a virtue valued by the Lord (**Isaiah 57:15; 66:1,2**)
- God is near and saves those with contrite spirits (**Psalms 34:18**)
- God gives grace to the humble (**Proverbs 3:34**)
- *"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:3-5)*

Cultivate humility in your prayers

- Parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector (**Luke 18:9-14**)
- Mary humbly and selflessly anointed Jesus' feet with very costly ointment of spikenard (**John 12:1-11**)
- Humility leads to exaltation by God (**Luke 18:14; James 4:10**)
- We must be reverent (**Matthew 6:9; Psalm 111:9**)
- We must be sincere (**Matthew 6:5,6**)
- If we "ask amiss," praying to God with pride for our lusts and desires, we will not receive what we asked for (**James 4:3**)

"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up."

James 4:10

During His Sermon on the Mount, Christ warned His listeners not to pray proudly like the hypocrites or the Gentiles (**Matthew 6:5-8**). The hypocrites offered prayers from their lips only, not from their hearts (**Matthew 15:7-9**). They prayed simply to be seen of men – they often prayed at a set time and place each day, and they sought to be public when they prayed in order to display piety and have others think they were religious (**Luke 18:10-14**). Similarly, the Gentiles thought they could weary their gods by repeating their petitions over and over, which would be insulting to the Lord because He knows all our needs without us ever speaking.

When we consider the need for humility when we approach God in prayer, one might ask in what position should we physically be to properly and humbly speak with the Lord? The scriptures give us examples of the following positions for offering prayers:

- Falling upon one's face (**Numbers 16:22; I Chronicles 21:16,17; Matthew 26:39**)
- Standing (**I Kings 8:22,23; Mark 11:25; Luke 18:13**)
- Lifting up hands (**Psalm 28:2; Lamentations 2:19; I Timothy 2:8**)
- Lifting up eyes (**John 17:1**)
- Kneeling (**Psalm 95:6; Luke 22:41; Acts 20:36; 21:5**)

“...be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you.”

I Peter 5:5b-7

Although we must live our lives humbly and humbly offer up our prayers to the Lord, we can **boldly** approach the “*throne of grace*” in prayer in order to “*obtain mercy and find grace in time of need*” (**Hebrews 4:14-16**). Jabez is a prime example of one who boldly approached the Lord, saying, “*Oh that Thou wouldst bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that Thine hand might be with me, and that Thou wouldst keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me!*” (**I Chronicles 4:9,10**). We see that “*God granted him that which he requested.*”

“That which brings the praying soul near to God is humility of heart. That which gives wings to prayer is lowliness of mind. Pride, self-esteem, and self-praise effectually shut the door of prayer. He who would come to God must approach the Lord with self hidden from his eyes. Humility is a rare Christian grace of great price in the courts of heaven, entering into and being an inseparable condition of effectual praying. It gives access to God when other qualities fail. Its full portrait is found only in the Lord Jesus. Our prayers must be set low before they can ever rise high” (*E.M. Bounds*).

Pray with Humility – QUESTIONS

1. Define “humility.”
2. Explain **Jeremiah 10:23**.
3. What lesson of humility do we learn from Jesus teaching about the vine and the branches (**John 15:1-8**)?
4. What does it mean to be “*poor and of a contrite heart*” (**Isaiah 66:2**)?
5. How does prayer relate to **Philippians 2:3-5**?
6. Compare and contrast the prayers of the Pharisee and the tax collector (**Luke 18:9-14**). What lessons do we learn from this parable?
7. Explain **James 4:10**.
8. Where should we go to offer the most humble of prayers (**Matthew 6:5,6**)?
9. What is the result of prayers not offered with humility? (*Give scriptures*)
10. List some Biblical examples of those who prayed with humility. (*Give scriptures*)



Pray with Faith

Lesson 6

To have the proper prayer life, we must be righteous (**I Peter 3:12**), or sincerely seeking to be righteous (**Psalms 51**). To be righteous, we must do or practice righteousness (**I John 3:7**), which involves keeping God's commandments (**Psalms 119:171; I John 3:22; John 15:7**). If we are guilty of not hearing and doing the will of God, our prayers will not be heard (**Proverbs 28:9; Psalm 66:18**). *"The prayer of the upright is [God's] delight"* (**Proverbs 15:8**). When the sick are instructed to call upon the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord, we are told *"the prayer of faith shall save the sick"* (**James 5:14,15**).

We must approach the throne of God in prayer with an obedient spirit, submitting to the will of God (**I John 5:14; Matthew 26:39**). We must *"pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands"* (**I Timothy 2:8**), confessing our sins (**I John 1:8-2:2**). If we approach God without a forgiving (**Matthew 6:14,15**) or willing (**I John 5:14**) spirit, our prayer will not be acceptable to the Lord.

When we go to God in prayer, we must have great faith, believing that God is able to do whatever we ask (**Mark 11:24**). When the two blind men came to Jesus to be healed in **Matthew 9:27-30**, Jesus asked, *"Believe ye that I am able to do this?"* When they said, "Yes," Jesus touched their eyes, saying, **"According to your faith be it unto you"** and their sight was restored. Just like these blind men, we must have faith in God's power!

Prayer requires faith:

- *"Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. And all things, whatever you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."* (**Matthew 21:21,22**)
- Without faith, prayer will not be answered. We must have no doubt that God is willing and able to

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in FAITH, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord."

James 1:5-7

answer prayers. We must have faith, trust, and confidence in God (**James 1:5-8**).

- We must not be guilty of asking *“amiss,”* without faith (**James 4:3**)
- When Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, He prayed with faith that *“all things are possible unto Thee [God, the Father]”* (**Mark 14:36**)

Faith must be rooted in the Lord

- We must have faith that God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him, that He is all powerful (**Hebrews 11:6**)
- Faith comes from hearing God’s Word (**Romans 10:17**)
- God is our Father and we are His children (**Matthew 11:25; Luke 11:2**)
 - God is interested in the welfare of His children (**Matthew 10:29-31**)
 - God loves and cherishes His children (**I John 3:1**)
 - God desires to meet the needs of His children (**Matthew 6:25-33**)

The *“effective fervent prayer of a righteous man”* (James 5:16):

- *“avails much”* (KJV)
- *“can accomplish much”* (NASB)
- *“has great power”* (ESV)
- *“is powerful and effective”* (NIV)

Elijah is a prime example of the *“effective fervent prayer of a righteous man.”* In **I Kings 17 & 18**, the people had turned to idolatry and were worshiping Baal. *“Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months”* (**James 5:17**). Elijah went before the evil King Ahab and declared that the God he serves was in control and that He would cause a drought. Just as God had promised and Elijah had prayed in faith, the land was dry and it began to rain again in the third year (**I Kings 18:1**).

**“The effectual
fervent prayer of
a righteous man
availeth much.”**

James 5:16

Although we must pray with faith and confidence that God is able to answer our prayers, we must put our whole trust in Him because He knows what is best for us. We must realize that God is in control—He is our driver and doesn’t need help from any “backseat drivers.” His will be done, not ours: *“Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that”* (**James 4:13-15**). Turn your cares and worries over to God because He is in control, praying with faith, coming *“boldly unto the throne of grace”* (**Hebrews 4:16**).

Pray with Faith – QUESTIONS

1. Define “faith.”
2. How does faith impact our prayers? (*Give scriptures*)
3. How does the lack of faith impact our prayers? (*Give scriptures*)
4. How is faith defined in **I Timothy 2:8**?
5. According to **Mark 11:24** and **Matthew 21:21**, how much faith should we have when we go to God in prayer?
6. What role did faith have in the healing of the two blind men (**Matthew 9:27-30**)?
7. Did Jesus have faith in God and His power? (*Give scriptures*)
8. How does one gain faith (**Romans 10:17**)? Explain.
9. List all the benefits God promises to His faithful children in **Matthew 6:25-33**:
10. List some Biblical examples of those who prayed with faith. (*Give scriptures*)



The Model Prayer

Lesson 7

In **Luke 11:1**, one of Jesus' disciples asked Him, "*Lord, teach us to pray*" because they wanted to pray like Jesus did. After teaching His disciples how NOT to pray (**Matthew 6:5-8**), Jesus proceeded to teach them how TO pray in **Luke 11:2-4** and **Matthew 6:9-13**, offering them a model prayer, a guide for their learning, often referred to as "The Lord's Prayer." Just like His disciples, we can learn from this model prayer how to pray effectively and acceptably before God.

"Our Father which are in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen."

Matthew 6:9-13

It is important to note from **Matthew 6:9** that Jesus started teaching the disciples by stating, "*After this manner [kind, sort] therefore pray ye,*" meaning that the following prayer would be a model, or an example, not a prayer He intended for them to repeat verbatim. The use of this model prayer is limited today by two changes since Christ spoke this prayer:

- We can no longer say, "*Thy kingdom come,*" as Christ's kingdom is already in existence (**Colossians 1:13; Revelation 1:9**)
- With the establishment of Christ's kingdom, all power and authority has been given to Him (**Matthew 28:18**) and prayer is to be offered in His name (**Colossians 3:17; John 16:24**)

Elements of the Model Prayer

- **Address** – "*Our Father which art in heaven*"
 - Establishes God's authority as our Father, us being His children (**Galatians 3:26,27; John 3:3-6**). Prayer is an exclusive blessing of the child of God (**Ephesians 1:3**).
 - Jesus taught in **John 16:23b** that we must pray to God, stating, "*Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you.*"
- **Praise and reverence** – "*Hallowed by Thy name.*"
- **Supplication, or petition, on behalf of the kingdom** – "*Thy kingdom come.*"

- **Petition for God’s obedience, His will be done, not ours** – *“Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”*
- **Petition for physical needs** – *“Give us this day our daily bread.”*
- **Petition for our spiritual needs, forgiveness** – *“And forgive us our debts...”*
- **Petition for spiritual needs of others** – *“...as we forgive our debtors.”*
- **Petition for guidance and help in our struggle against sin and Satan, deliverance from temptation** – *“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil”*
- **Recognition of God’s power—praise to God** – *“For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever.”*
- **“Amen.”** – “so be it”

Lessons we can learn from the Model Prayer

- **Well-conceived structure of four parts**
 - Address (**Matthew 6:9**)
 - Series of petitions pertaining to God (**Matthew 6:10**)
 - Series of petitions to those offering the prayer (**Matthew 6:11-13a**)
 - Closing (**Matthew 6:13b**)
- **Prayer can be brief, yet have a broad scope**
 - This prayer contains a mere 65 words
 - Brief, yet comprehensive
 - Addresses wide range of human needs as well as the relationship between God and man
- **Prayer can be simple**
 - This prayer is not too sophisticated, but rather can be easily understood by everyone (**Matthew 11:25**)
 - This simplicity does not make the prayer shallow
 - This prayer gives great insight into the relationship of man to God
- **Prayer should be direct**
 - Each petition is a distinct, and direct request
 - God will meet all of our needs (**Philippians 4:19**)
 - Requests should be made to God with the same frankness and directness with which a child makes his wants known to his parents (**Mark 10:15; Philippians 4:6,7**)
- **Prayer should be orderly**
 - Honoring God should be our first priority when we pray to God
 - Before we address our personal needs, Jesus taught that God’s name should be hallowed and that it is His will that is done on earth, not ours
 - We must learn to prefer and accept God’s will over our own and seek after the things He demands of us (**Matthew 6:33; 16:24**)
- **Prayer involves the spirit, not just words**
 - The power of this prayer does not depend solely or in great proportion upon the words used – it also depends upon the spirit in which it is offered (**John 4:24**)
 - The spirit which makes prayer effective is that of childlike confidence and trust (**Hebrews 11:6; Mark 10:15**)
 - Christ’s spirit of loving confidence must be portrayed in our prayers

The Model Prayer – *QUESTIONS*

1. What is the significance of the disciples asking Jesus to teach them to pray (**Luke 11:1**)?
2. List various reasons why this model prayer was merely a pattern, and not a prayer to be recited verbatim. (*Give scriptures*)
3. List other names of honor used to address God throughout the Bible. (*Give scriptures*)
4. What is the result of our blessed privilege to pray to the Father through the name of Jesus (**John 16:23,24**)?
5. Why should we pray that God's will be done, not our will be done? (*Give scriptures*)
6. Prove with scriptures that God will provide us our daily bread.
7. Besides forgiveness, list other spiritual needs we should petition the Lord for. (*Give scriptures*)
8. List Biblical examples of God's awesome power. (*Give scriptures*)
9. How must we acceptably offer our worship and prayers to the Lord (**John 4:24**)? Explain.
10. According to **Hebrews 11:6**, what else is required for our service to the Lord to be acceptable?



Pray without Ceasing

Lesson 8

When Paul commanded the Thessalonians to “*pray without ceasing*” in **I Thessalonians 5:17**, he was not demanding that they spend every moment of every day, 24/7, in prayer. It is not humanly possible to be actively engaged in an activity all 86,400 seconds of each day of one’s life. Even Christ ate, drank, slept, and worked. “*Pray without ceasing*” rather means that we should have a prayerful attitude and spend much time in prayer with our Lord. This attitude of prayer will acknowledge that we are in constant fellowship and communication with the Lord—we should walk with a constant attitude of thanksgiving and gratitude. We must be cognizant that God is with us at all times and He is just a prayer away—God should be #1 on our speed dial list. **Luke 18:1** encourages us “*always to pray, and not to faint,*” not allowing our faith to waver.

When our thoughts turn to worry, fear, discouragement, and anger, we should consciously and quickly turn our thoughts into prayer. As we go through the day, prayer should be our first response to every fearful situation and every anxious thought. A lack of prayer will cause us to depend on ourselves instead of depending on God and His grace. Unceasing prayer is, in essence, continual dependence upon and communion with God.

Just as God commands us to “*pray without ceasing,*” a medical doctor could equally tell us to “*drink water without ceasing.*” If we attempted to drink water 24/7, we would waterlog our body, resulting in death. Instead, we should drink water often throughout the day to maintain a healthy body. If we were to quit drinking water completely, or just greatly limit the amount of water we consume, our body would become dehydrated and would suffer, and if not remedied, would cause physical death. Prayer is essential to our spiritual life even more than water is essential to our physical body—if we quit praying completely, or just greatly limit our prayers, if not remedied, we will suffer spiritual death.

“... men
ought
always to
pray, and
not to faint.”

Luke 18:1

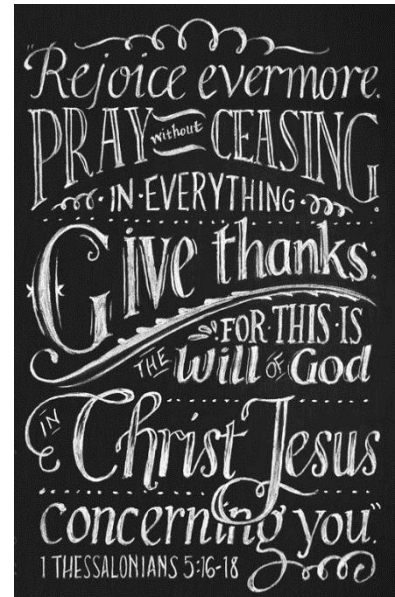
Paul encouraged Christians to be persistent in their prayers

- Prayer is a weapon to use when fighting spiritual battles (**Ephesians 6:18**)
- “*continuing steadfastly in prayer*” (**Romans 12:12**)

- “...praying always with all prayer and supplication...” (Ephesians 6:18)
- “Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving” (Colossians 4:2)
- “Pray without ceasing” (I Thessalonians 5:17)

Examples of persistent praying

- Jesus was persistent in praying in the Garden of Gethsemane prior to His death (Matthew 26:36-47; Luke 22:41-44; Hebrews 5:7)
- Paul persistently prayed about his thorn in the flesh (II Corinthians 12:7-10; 11:30-33)
- Parable of the persistent friend (Luke 11:5-10)
- Parable of the persistent widow (Luke 18:1-8)
- Church in Jerusalem continued steadfastly in prayer (Acts 2:42)
- When Peter was imprisoned, constant prayer was offered on his behalf (Acts 12:5-17)
- Epaphras labored fervently in prayer for his brethren at Colossae (Colossians 4:12,13)
- Widows were assumed to be devoted to prayer (I Timothy 5:5)



Pray without ceasing for:

- Strength to endure whatever we must face
- Grace and mercy to help in time of need. We can't make it through this life without God's grace and mercy. "If grace is the river, prayer is the riverbed through which it flows. If grace is the water of life, prayer is the pipeline through which it comes. If grace is the content, prayer is the

container from which it is poured. That being true, we cannot separate grace and prayer. To speak of one is to speak of the other for we cannot know grace apart from prayer" (Jack R. Taylor).

- “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Galatians 6:9)

KEEP PRAYING – DON'T ASK JUST ONCE!!! Don't throw your hands in the air and give up, saying, "What's the use?" "Pray BIG!" (Wilson Adams). Jesus says, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matthew 7:7,8). In other words, keep on asking—continue seeking God in prayer—keep on knocking until God's answer comes in His time.

“Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.”

Colossians 4:2

Pray without Ceasing – QUESTIONS

1. Define “cease.”
2. Define “persistence.”
3. Explain the phrase “*men ought always to pray, and not to faint*” (**Luke 18:1**).
4. According to **Colossians 4:2**, what should be ever-present in our prayers?
5. List the physical characteristics of Jesus resulting from His earnest prayer prior to His betrayal and crucifixion (**Luke 22:41-44**).
6. Was it wrong for Paul to pray three times for his “*thorn in the flesh*” to depart from him (**II Corinthians 12:7-10**)? Why, or why not? (*Give scriptures*)
7. What lessons can we learn from the parable of the persistent friend in **Luke 11:5-10**?
8. How did God answer the constant prayers of the church on behalf of Peter when he was imprisoned (**Acts 12:5-17**)?
9. What did Epaphras’s great love and zeal for the brethren at Colossae cause him to do (**Colossians 4:12,13**)?
10. Continued supplications and prayer are the result of what godly characteristic (**I Timothy 5:5**)?



What is Jesus & the Holy Spirit's Role in Prayer?

Lesson 9

The apostle Paul reiterated many times that our prayers are to be directed to God the Father. In **Colossians 1:3**, he stated, “We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...” “For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (**Ephesians 3:14**). And in **Ephesians 5:20** he writes, “Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Although our prayers are to be directed to God, we cannot do so without Jesus. Jesus is the only way by which we can gain access to God (**John 14:6**), including the only way we can come before the throne of God in prayer (**Revelation 8:3,4**). He is our High Priest who intercedes for us (**Hebrews 8:1,2; 7:24,25; John 14:13**), He is our Mediator (**I Timothy 2:5**), and is our Advocate (**I John 2:1,2**), therefore, all prayers must go through Him.

Pray in the name of, or by the authority of, Jesus

- Jesus Himself taught His disciples to pray in His name (**John 14:13,14**)
- “...Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you” (**John 16:23**)
- “For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father” (**Ephesians 2:18**)
- Paul commanded the Christians at Ephesus to pray in Jesus’ name (**Ephesians 5:20**)
- “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him” (**Colossians 3:17**)
- “First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world” (**Romans 1:8**)

“For through Him [Christ] we both have access by one [Holy] Spirit to [God] the Father.”

Ephesians 2:18

Jesus’ role in prayer

- **Mediator between God and man:** “For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (**I Timothy 2:5**)

- **Our Advocate:** *“And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous: And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:1,2)*
- **Our High Priest:** *“For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as[we are, yet] without sin” (Hebrews 4:14,15)*
- **Our Intercessor:** *“But this Man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:24,25; 4:14-16; 8:1,2; John 14:13)*

Just as Jesus has a vital role in our prayers, the Holy Spirit of God also plays an important role in the prayer life of God’s children. “True prayer,” wrote Samuel M. Zwemer “is God the Holy Spirit talking to God the Father in the name of God the Son, and the believer’s heart is the prayer-room.” God never intended that we should be left to pray on our own, so He gave the Holy Spirit to instruct, inspire, and illumine our hearts and minds. Unaided by Him, we would likely pray for things not only contrary to God’s will, but harmful to ourselves.

Holy Spirit’s role in prayer

- Holy Spirit *“bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God” (Romans 8:16,17; Galatians 4:6,7)*, therefore we have the privilege to approach the Father in prayer
- We should pray *“always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit” (Ephesians 6:18)*, *“praying in the Holy Ghost” (Jude 20)*
- Paul prayed that God would strengthen the saints at Ephesus *“with might by His Spirit...that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love” (Ephesians 3:16,17)*
- Holy Spirit grants us access to God (**Ephesians 2:18**)
- Holy Spirit helps us to wait patiently: *“But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.” (Romans 8:23-26)*
- Holy Spirit helps us when we are weak and don’t know what to pray for: *“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought” (Romans 8:26)*
- He intercedes on our behalf according to the will of God (**Romans 8:26,27**)
- He is our Comforter, even when we pray (**John 14:15-18**)

*“For there is one God,
and one Mediator
between God and men,
the man Christ Jesus.”*

I Timothy 2:5

Because Jesus is our Mediator, our Advocate, our High Priest, and our Intercessor, we can have boldness and confidence through Him (**Ephesians 3:12**) to come to the throne of grace in time of need (**Hebrews 4:16**) with the help of the Holy Spirit interceding on our behalf, helping our weaknesses when we don’t know what we should be praying for.

What is Jesus & the Holy Spirit's Role in Prayer? – *QUESTIONS*

1. List various scriptures proving that our prayers should be directed to God the Father.
2. Define “intercessor.” Explain how Jesus is our Intercessor. (*Give scriptures*)
3. Define “mediator.” Explain how Jesus is our Mediator. (*Give scriptures*)
4. Define “advocate.” Explain how Jesus is our Advocate. (*Give scriptures*)
5. What comfort can we glean from the fact that Jesus our High Priest was “*in all points tempted*” like we are (**Hebrews 4:14,15**)?
6. Explain **Romans 8:16**.
7. According to **Ephesians 2:18**, what is the Holy Spirit's role in prayer?
8. What do we learn about the Holy Spirit's role in prayer in **Romans 8:26,27**? Explain.
9. Define “comforter.” Explain how the Holy Spirit is our Comforter. (*Give scriptures*)
10. How do we gain boldness and confidence to approach God in prayer (**Ephesians 3:11,12**)?



When Should I Pray?

Lesson 10

Many Christians have set times they pray each day: when they wake up, before each meal, and before bed. Don't forget about emergencies—those pop up at random times! There is no set prayer schedule that the Lord binds on us. We simply should *"Pray without ceasing"* (**I Thessalonians 5:17**), meaning we should maintain a prayerful attitude and pray often. E.M. Bounds wisely stated, "The habit of praying is a good habit, and should be early and strongly formed; but to pray by habit merely is to destroy the life of prayer and allow it to degenerate into a hollow and sham-producing form. Habit may form the bank for the river of prayer, but there must be a strong, deep, pure current, crystal and life-giving, flowing between these two banks."

Prayer is the way we connect daily with our heavenly Father. Our goal here on this earth should be to be good at prayer, VERY good at prayer. Nothing else will make as big a difference in our lives as prayer. We should always be on the lookout for reasons to praise and thank God. We should be leaning upon Him every moment for wisdom and direction. How often do you pray? How can you make prayer a much higher priority in your life starting today?

In this lesson, we are going to explore some various options of when to pray to help each of us have a much stronger and effective prayer life:

"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; *CONTINUING INSTANT IN PRAYER*; Distributing to the necessity of the saints; given to hospitality."

Romans 12:10-13

Scheduled prayers

- Having set times to pray can help one develop a habit of prayer
- David, whom God described as *"a man after My own heart,"* prayed every *"evening, and morning, and at noon"* (**Psalm 55:17**). In **Psalm 119:164**, he stated, *"Seven times a day do I praise Thee because of Thy righteous judgments."*
- Daniel, whom the angel of God described as *"O man greatly beloved,"* *"...kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God"* (**Daniel 6:10**)

- It would certainly do us well to imitate David and Daniel and schedule prayer times at least three times each and every day

Spontaneous prayers

- Prayers certainly don't have to be limited to certain times of the day
- Jesus spent all night in prayer before selecting His apostles (**Luke 6:12,13**)
- Paul and Silas prayed when faced with trying circumstances (**Acts 16:25**)
- Nehemiah prayed silently on the spur of the moment (**Nehemiah 2:4,5**)
- The Israelites prayed to God in the heat of battle (**I Chronicles 5:20**)
- Pray whenever you need to – it is your freedom and privilege to pray whenever you want – pray whenever, wherever, and however the occasion calls for it
- In **Philippians 4:6,7**, Paul says the believer should never be anxious about anything, but instead should pray. If there is a need or a concern, then there should be a prayer, regardless of what time of day it is or where you are—every burden, every stressor, and every source of anxiety should prompt us to pray.



Develop a weekly prayer strategy, for example:

- Monday – Family
 - Pray for immediate and extended family members
 - Pray for both their physical and spiritual well-being
- Tuesday – Church
 - Pray for members in your local congregation
 - Pray for Christians and congregations throughout the world
- Wednesday – Community
 - Pray for your neighbors
 - Pray for community leaders
- Thursday – Nation
 - Pray for elected officials
 - Pray for efforts to bring peace and righteousness
- Friday – World
 - Pray for world peace

- Pray for nations that prohibit the Gospel
- Saturday – The Afflicted
 - Pray for the sick
 - Pray for the poor, homeless, and jobless
 - Pray for widows, single mothers, and fatherless children
 - Pray for those in prison

Develop a simple, daily prayer strategy, for example:

- Morning – Family
- Noon – Church
- Evening – Community

The beauty of prayer is that each Christian has control over his/her own prayer life. You have the choice to pray whenever you want, wherever you want, and however long you want. It takes effort and persistence to form habits that we eventually grow accustomed to. Many Christians will sacrifice prayer time and Bible study time to be sure to get their much-desired workout in, but we must be cautious: *“For bodily exercise profiteth little: but **godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come**” (I Timothy 4:8)*. Be sure to devote much time and effort exercising and building up your prayer and Bible study muscles!

As our mind is always freshest after we first awake in the morning, here are some suggestions for establishing an effective morning prayer ritual:

- Establish in your heart and mind the priority of the personal prayer time – don’t give God whatever time you have leftover, but rather MAKE TIME for God!
- Designate a specific time and specific place to pray to God
- Begin to protect your sleep time with a view to the early-morning prayer time – go to bed earlier so you can awake earlier and start your day with God
- When you get up, shower and get dressed for the day prior to your prayer time – this will give you time to wake up, anticipate prayer, and focus
- Take your prayer equipment with you to your place of prayer – Bible (read prayers uttered throughout God’s Word), prayer notebook, notepad, etc.
- Begin your actual time of prayer with thanksgiving and praise
- Form a daily or weekly prayer schedule and write it in your prayer notebook
- A checklist of prayer armor will help – list the pieces of the Christian armor in **Ephesians 6** piece-by-piece
- There may be certain prayers that you want to write down to have for later reference
- During your private prayer time, pray aloud when possible – *“Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry ALOUD: and He shall hear my voice” (Psalm 55:17)*.

When Should I Pray? – QUESTIONS

1. What lesson can we learn from the example of Jesus praying all night prior to selecting the twelve apostles (**Luke 6:12,13**)?
2. What lessons can we learn from Paul and Silas praying and singing praises to God while imprisoned (**Acts 16:23-34**)?
3. List things we should pray about on behalf of our families. (*Give scriptures*)
4. List things we should pray about on behalf of the Lord's church. (*Give scriptures*)
5. List things we should pray about on behalf of our community. (*Give scriptures*)
6. List things we should pray about on behalf of our nation. (*Give scriptures*)
7. List things we should pray about on behalf of this world. (*Give scriptures*)
8. List things we should pray about on behalf of the afflicted. (*Give scriptures*)
9. How does **I Timothy 4:8** relate to prayer?
10. What is the role of prayer when combined with the Christian armor (**Ephesians 6**)?



Create a personal prayer schedule below to help your prayer life. List who and/or what you want to pray for each day.

Personal Prayer Schedule

Sunday Morning	Sunday Afternoon	Sunday Night
Monday Morning	Monday Afternoon	Monday Night
Tuesday Morning	Tuesday Afternoon	Tuesday Night
Wednesday Morning	Wednesday Afternoon	Wednesday Night
Thursday Morning	Thursday Afternoon	Thursday Night
Friday Morning	Friday Afternoon	Friday Night
Saturday Morning	Saturday Afternoon	Saturday Night



What Should I Pray For?

Lesson 11

Sometimes as Christians we struggle to know what to pray for, but, fortunately, God's Word identifies several things for which we should pray. We can look at the example of the early Christians to see what they prayed for, guiding us how to pray and what to pray for today.

Examples of things we should pray for

- **Faith and obedience**
 - Paul prayed that he might rejoin the brethren at Thessalonica to *"perfect that which is lacking in your faith"* (**I Thessalonians 3:10**)
 - Pray that love may abound and that we may be obedient until Christ returns (**Philippians 1:9-11**)
 - Paul prayed that the church at Colossae would grow spiritually (**Colossians 1:9-14**)
 - The man whose son had a dumb spirit asked Jesus, *"help Thou mine unbelief"* (**Mark 9:17-27**)
- **Strength in the Lord**
 - Paul prayed that the Ephesians be strengthened, that *"Christ may dwell in [their] hearts by faith," "rooted and grounded in love,"* and *"that [they] might be filled with all the fullness of God"* (**Ephesians 3:14-19**), that they have wisdom and knowledge of Christ (**Ephesians 1:15-23**)
 - Jesus prayed that Peter's faith would not fail and that the brethren would be strengthened (**Luke 22:31,32**)
- **Forgiveness of sins**
 - If the Christian, with Jesus as his Advocate (**I John 2:1**), confesses his sins to Him, God is faithful and just to forgive him and to cleanse him from all unrighteousness (**I John 1:9**)

"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God."

Ephesians 3:14-19

- In teaching His disciples how to pray, Jesus taught them to ask for forgiveness of sins (**Matthew 6:12; Luke 11:4**)
- Peter told Simon the sorcerer to pray for forgiveness of his sin of attempting to purchase the gift of God with money (**Acts 8:22**)
- **Wisdom**
 - The child of God who lacks wisdom can request it from God via prayer (**James 1:5**)
 - Praying for wisdom is not a substitute for studying God's Word (**II Timothy 2:15**)
 - When one prays for wisdom, God will grant him the opportunity to gain it
- **Protection from temptation**
 - *"And lead us not into temptation"* (**Matthew 6:13**)
 - Jesus told His disciples to *"watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak"* (**Matthew 26:41; Mark 14:38**)
 - *"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man"* (**Luke 21:36**)
 - God has promised a *"way of escape"* in time of temptation (**I Corinthians 10:13**)
- **Deliverance from evil**
 - Jesus taught His disciples to pray to be delivered from evil (**Matthew 6:13**)
 - God knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations (**II Peter 2:9**)
 - Prayer can cast out evil (**Mark 9:17-29**)
- **Unity**
 - Jesus prayed for unity among believers: *"That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me"* (**John 17:20,21**)
- **Effective working of God's word**
 - We should pray for an abundant harvest (**Luke 10:2**)
 - Pray for laborers going out into the harvest (**Matthew 9:37,38**)
 - Pray that unbelievers will be saved (**Romans 10:1**)
 - Strive together in prayers that our service will be accepted and profitable for the saints (**Romans 15:30-32**)
 - Paul prayed that he might have boldness in preaching the Word (**Ephesians 6:18-20; Acts 4:29**)
 - Pray for the free course of God's Word throughout all the world (**II Thessalonians 3:1,2**)
- **Help with problems encountered in daily life**
 - Those who are suffering are to pray (**James 5:13**)
 - The church at Jerusalem prayed for Peter while he was in prison (**Acts 12:5**)
 - Those affected by the destruction of Jerusalem were told to pray that their flight might not be in the winter or on the Sabbath (**Matthew 24:20**)
- **Daily necessities of life**
 - Jesus instructed His disciples to pray for their *"daily bread"* (**Matthew 6:11; Luke 11:3**)
 - God knows that His children have physical needs (**Matthew 6:25-34**), therefore, He realizes they should ask for them
 - Call upon the elders to pray over the sick and anoint them with oil because the prayers of faith will save the sick (**James 5:14,15**)

What Should I Pray For? – QUESTIONS

1. List the things Paul prayed for on behalf of the Philippian brethren in **Philippians 1:9-11**.
2. List the things Paul prayed for on behalf of the Colossian brethren in **Colossians 1:9-14**.
3. List the things Paul prayed for on behalf of the Ephesian brethren in **Ephesians 1:15-23**.
4. Does prayer have an integral role in God's forgiving a person's sins? Why, or why not? (*Give scriptures*)
5. Does praying for wisdom replace one's need to study God's Word? Why, or why not? (*Give scriptures*)
6. According to **Matthew 26:41** and **Luke 21:36**, how serious is the need to pray "*that ye enter not into temptation*"? Explain.
7. Why is it so important that we pray for unity among brethren? (*Give scriptures*)
8. Explain Paul, Silas, and Timothy's prayer request in **II Thessalonians 3:1**.
9. What is the best solution for anyone who is afflicted (**James 5:13**)? Explain.
10. As we pray for our daily necessities, for what all does Christ instruct us not to worry (**Matthew 6:25-34**)?



Who Should I Pray For?

Lesson 12

Sometimes as Christians, we struggle to know who to pray for, but fortunately God's Word identifies several people for whom we should pray. We can look at the example of the early Christians to see who they prayed for, guiding us who to pray for today.

Examples of people we should pray for

- **Yourself**
 - Pray for your physical, daily needs (**Matthew 6:11**)
 - Pray for personal growth to be more Christ-like and more devoted to God (**Colossians 1:9-12**)
 - Paul set an example that one can pray for his own sicknesses and infirmities (**II Corinthians 12:7-10**)
 - *"Remember me, O LORD, with the favour that Thou bearest unto Thy people: O visit me with Thy salvation; That I may see the good of Thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of Thy nation, that I may glory with Thine inheritance"* (**Psalm 106:4,5**)
- **Those who preach**
 - Pray for those who spread God's Word, teaching nonbelievers (**Ephesians 6:18-20**)
 - Jesus prayed, *"The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest"* (**Matthew 9:37,38**)
- **Those who are spiritually sick**
 - Pray for those who are lost in sin (**Romans 10:1**)
 - *"Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another, that ye may be healed"* (**James 5:16**)

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made FOR ALL MEN; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto

- **Those who are physically sick**
 - Those who are suffering are to pray (**James 5:13**)
 - Elders are to pray for the sick (**James 5:14,15**)
 - Pray for spiritual strength and peace of mind for those who are physically sick (**James 5:16**)
- **Our brethren**
 - Pray for God’s people, including all the saints throughout the world, with supplication (**Ephesians 6:18**)
 - Pray for love and unity to prevail within the church (**John 13:35; 17:20,21**)
 - *“O continue Thy lovingkindness unto them that know Thee; and Thy righteousness to the upright in heart”* (**Psalms 36:10**)
 - Pray for the spiritual growth of each member (**Philippians 1:9-11**)
 - Pray for the gospel to have free course (**II Thessalonians 3:1**)
- **Family**
 - Pray for your spouse, your children, your parents, your siblings, etc.
 - Pray for their nurture and growth in the teaching of the Lord (**Ephesians 6:4**)
 - David prayed that his son Solomon would have a perfect heart to keep God’s commandments (**I Chronicles 29:19**)
- **Enemies**
 - We should pray for our enemies, including those who spitefully use us and persecute us (**Matthew 5:44**)
 - Jesus, when He was being crucified, prayed the following concerning those crucifying Him: *“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do”* (**Luke 23:34**)
 - Just before he died from being stoned, Stephen prayed to the Lord for those stoning him: *“Lord, lay not this sin to their charge”* (**Acts 7:60**)
- **Poor and oppressed**
 - Pray for the homeless, fatherless, and unborn children (**Proverbs 29:7**)
 - *“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction”* (**James 1:27**)
 - Pray for those in other nations oppressed by their own government or outside influences
- **Government and our nation**
 - Pray for national repentance and consciousness of who God is (**Psalms 33:12; Proverbs 14:34**)
 - Pray for civil leaders and all those in positions of authority *“that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty”* (**I Timothy 2:1,2**)
 - Those that *“walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities”* (**II Peter 2:10**)
 - *“Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king”* (**I Peter 2:17**)
 - Pray for peace to prevail (**Jeremiah 29:7**)

Who Should I Pray For? – QUESTIONS

1. List Biblical examples of those who prayed for themselves. For what did they pray? (*Give scriptures*)
2. For what should we pray on behalf of those who preach the Gospel? (*Give scriptures*)
3. For what should we pray on behalf of those who are spiritually sick? (*Give scriptures*)
4. For what should we pray on behalf of those who are physically sick? (*Give scriptures*)
5. What is the importance that we pray that “*brotherly love continue*” (**Hebrews 13:1**)? (*Give scriptures*)
6. For what should we pray on behalf of our spouse? Our children? (*Give scriptures*)
7. Is it a command, or merely a suggestion, for us to pray for our enemies and those who persecute us (**Matthew 5:44**)? Explain.
8. For what should we pray on behalf of the poor and oppressed? (*Give scriptures*)
9. For what should we pray on behalf of our government leaders? Our nation? (*Give scriptures*)
10. List any additional person, or group of people, not already listed for whom we should pray. (*Give scriptures*)



Does God Hear My Prayers?

Lesson 13

The ears of God are always open to the prayers of the righteous (**I Peter 3:12; John 9:31**). As one draws near to God, God draws near to him (**James 4:8**). Prayer involves two parties – God and His child. Neither party is passive, but rather every movement of one offering proper prayer is met by an eager movement on God’s part toward that one (**Psalms 65:2**).

One of the most common questions about prayer is, “Does God hear the prayers of sinners?” The usual answer is quickly, “No!,” but what about the case of Cornelius (**Acts 10:1-4**)? If God never hears the prayers of sinners, then how can His children who have sinned ever receive forgiveness through prayer as instructed in **I John 1:9**? Why did Peter tell Simon the sorcerer to “pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you” when he was “bound by iniquity” (**Acts 8:22,23**)?

In the context of **John 9:31**, the man who was born blind, having been healed by Jesus, stated, while making his defense before the Jews, “Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him.” This statement is supported by the following scriptures:

- **Proverbs 15:29** – “The LORD is far from the wicked, but He heareth the prayer of the righteous.”
- **Proverbs 28:9** – “He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.”
- **Psalms 66:18** – “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.”
- **I Peter 3:12** – “For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.”
- **Isaiah 59:1,2** – God will not hear the prayer of one who claims to belong to Him if that one persists in sinning – “But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear.”
- Pharaoh said, “Intreat the LORD, that He may take away the frogs from me, and from my people” (**Exodus 8:8**) when Egypt was being punished with

“For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.”

I Peter 3:12

the plagues, but his prayer was without faith and penitence. “A prayer without penitence is a prayer without acceptance” (Moody).

- When a child of God truly repents, he may always turn to God in prayer with the full assurance that God will hear him, but as long as he continues to sin impenitently, he has no hope that God will hear him.

With this in thought, let's explore whose prayers God DOES hear, and whose prayers He DOES NOT hear!

God DOES hear the prayers of:

- **Sinners seeking truth and righteousness**
 - Cornelius was a good man, but still in need of salvation (**Acts 10:1,2; 11:14**)
 - His prayers and alms had been noticed by God (**Acts 10:4,31**)
 - God heard Cornelius's prayer and answered it, not by granting the things the non-Christian has no right to request, but by providing what he truly needed – God saw to it that Cornelius had the opportunity to hear and obey the gospel, thereby gaining access to God's throne of grace through Jesus Christ (**Acts 11:13,14**)
 - Cornelius was not saved by prayer
 - He needed to hear “words” by which he would be saved (**Acts 11:14**)
 - He heard the gospel of Christ, which is God's power to salvation to everyone that believes (**Romans 1:16**)
 - Saul of Tarsus was also still in his sins despite the fact that he prayed (**Acts 9:11; 22:16**)
 - God heard the prayer of a sinner like Cornelius
 - He was hungering and thirsting for righteousness (**Matthew 5:6**)
 - He was asking, seeking, knocking (**Matthew 7:7,8**)
 - He was provided an opportunity to hear and obey the gospel
 - For a sinner seeking truth and righteousness, such prayers will be heard
 - “Another unusual instance of prayer is in the case of Cornelius, ‘a centurion of the band called the Italian band.’ He is described as ‘a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always’ (**Acts 10:1,2**). Truly, he was an unusual character. In response to the prayer of this man, who was neither a Christian nor a Jew, God sent an angel to instruct him what to do. He must send to Joppa for a man named Peter, ‘who shall speak unto thee words, whereby thou shalt be saved, thou and all thy house’ (**Acts 11:14**). The answer to his prayers was in bringing him in contact with one who could tell him what to do to be saved; this was his primary need. Today if God hears the prayer of an individual like Cornelius, it will be to bring him providentially together with one who can teach him the word and the way of salvation. God saves the unsaved person through obedience to the gospel, not in some mysterious manner in direct answer to prayer. The unsaved person does not have the full right and privilege of prayer that the Christian has; this is the blessing of the saved.” (Homer Hailey, *Prayer and Providence*, p. 12).

- **A Christian with Jesus as his/her High Priest**
 - Jesus is our merciful and faithful High Priest, able to help His brethren (**Hebrews 2:17,18**)
 - Jesus makes it possible for us to approach God's throne boldly (**Hebrews 4:14-16**)
 - Jesus is able to save us because He lives to intercede (**Hebrews 7:25**), making intercession for us at the right hand of God (**Romans 8:34**)
 - Jesus is our Advocate and Mediator (**I John 2:1; I Timothy 2:5**)
- **The righteous (I Peter 3:12)**

God DOES NOT hear the prayers of:

- **Those who will not heed His Word**
 - Those who turn their ears from the law, their prayers are an abomination (**Proverbs 28:9**)
 - Those who will not endure sound doctrine (**II Timothy 4:3,4**)
 - If we will not listen to God, why should He listen to us?
- **Those whose sins separate them from God**
 - Sin can separate one from God so that He will not hear (**Isaiah 59:1,2**)
 - Those who do not seek God's forgiveness are separated from Him (**Romans 6:23**)
 - If we reject God's forgiveness of sins, can we expect Him to listen to us?
- **Those who fail to treat others justly**
 - Those who fail to consider the poor (**Psalms 41:1-3**)
 - Those who fail to forgive others and fail to make things right with those they have offended (**Matthew 6:14,15; 5:23,24; 18:21-35**) – "If I am not willing to forgive those who may have committed some single offence against me, what a mean, contemptible thing it would be for me to ask God to forgive the ten thousand sins of which I have been guilty" (Moody).
 - Those who fail to treat their spouse properly (**Malachi 2:13,14; I Peter 3:7**)
 - If we will not treat others justly, how can we hope to receive God's mercy?
- **Those who pray without faith**
 - Without faith, it is impossible to please God (**Hebrews 11:6**)
 - Asking with doubt in our hearts ensures failure (**James 1:5-8**)
 - If we doubt God's existence and ability to provide, why should He answer us?

Does God Hear My Prayers? – QUESTIONS

1. According to **John 9:31**, whose prayers does God hear, and whose does He not?
2. Explain **Psalm 65:2**.
3. Why did Peter tell Simon the sorcerer to “*pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you*” when he was “*bound by iniquity*” and God doesn’t hear the prayers of sinners (**Acts 8:22,23**)?
4. Why did God hear the prayers of Cornelius? (*Give scriptures*)
5. How did God answer Cornelius’s prayers (**Acts 11:13,14**)?
6. Can prayer alone save someone from his/her sins? (*Give scriptures*)
7. How does Jesus help our prayers be heard by God (**Hebrews 4:14-16; 7:25**)?
8. How does God feel about the prayers offered by those who will not listen to His law (**Proverbs 28:9**)? Explain.
9. If we have an issue with a brother, what must we do before God will hear our prayers (**Matthew 5:23,24; 18:15**)?
10. According to **Hebrews 11:6**, what is required of us for God to hear our prayers? Explain.



Are All Prayers Answered?

Lesson 14

If God heard the prayers of His children and did not respond to them, how wasteful and futile would their prayers be (**Hebrews 11:6**)? Many ask the question: “Are all prayers answered?” The simple answer is “Yes,” but only if they are “proper” prayers (**I John 5:13-15**). God DOES NOT answer our prayers if we ask without faith (**James 1:5-8**): *“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him **ask in faith, nothing wavering**. For **he that wavereth** is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For **let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.**”*

It is a natural part of our relationship with God to pray for things. We should be totally comfortable to go to God with our needs, concerns, and whatever issues are going on in our lives. We must be convinced that God wants us to rely totally upon Him. *“And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us”* (**I John 5:14**). Sometimes the circumstances, such as someone suffering with a terminal illness or ongoing wars in foreign lands, seem like they are out of control, but they aren’t. When our whole world seems to be falling apart, God can keep us together. *“Be careful [anxious] for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus”* (**Philippians 4:6,7**). We must trust God and *“walk by faith, not by sight”* (**II Corinthians 5:7**).

Keep in mind that prayer is not our way of getting God to do what we want. Our prayers should be focused on things that honor and glorify God and reflect what the Bible clearly reveals God’s will to be. If we pray for something that dishonors God, or is not His will for us, He is unlikely to give us what we ask for. God’s wisdom far exceeds our own, and we must trust that His answers to our prayers are the best possible solutions.

God answers prayers in different ways. We must always have the attitude of Jesus when He prayed to His Father in the Garden of Gethsemane: *“Nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt”* (**Matthew 26:39**). God is in total control and we *“ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that”* (**James 4:15**). God’s control is proven because, at times, He:

- Withholds the answer (**Matthew 26:39-44; Job 30:20**)
- Delays the answer (**Luke 18:7**)
- Exceeds the request (**Acts 12:5-11; Ephesians 3:20**)
- Does not grant what is requested – after all, He knows what is best for us (**Matthew 26:39; II Corinthians 12:7-9**)

God DOES answer our prayers if we are doing His will and ask “according to His will” (1 John 3:22; 5:14)

- **Psalm 118:5; 138:3** – God often grants the petitions we ask of Him
- **Matthew 6:33; Proverbs 3:5-10** – God especially grants our petitions when we put Him first in our lives
- **John 4:34** – Our will should be to do God’s will

God sometimes answers our prayers with “Yes, but not yet”

- **Ecclesiastes 3:1,11** – God may grant our request, but in time and according to His purpose
- **Luke 18:7** – We may think God is saying, “No,” when He is actually saying “Yes, but wait”
- **Hebrews 6:10-12** – We need to have patience
- **Luke 11:8-10** – We need to be persistently praying

God sometimes answers our prayers differently than we expected

- **Isaiah 55:8,9** – Remember, God’s thoughts and methods may be much different than ours, and His answers to our prayers may be different than what we had hoped
- **Romans 8:26** – We don’t always know what to pray for as we ought
- **Ephesians 3:20** – God works beyond what we can imagine and comprehend

God sometimes answers our prayers with “No”

- **Isaiah 55:8,9** – Remember, God’s thoughts and methods may be much different than ours, and He may answer our prayers with “No”
- **James 4:3** – Prayers more concerned with our will than God’s will are turned down—we must not “ask amiss”
- **Hebrews 12:5-11** – We must trust that God, who knows what is best, would do so only if granting our request might not be for our good
- **II Corinthians 12:7-10** – When God says “No,” He will provide the grace and mercy for us to do without—Paul prayed for his thorn in the flesh, but he had to endure this thorn
- **Matthew 26:36-46; Hebrews 5:5-10** – Although Christ prayed for the cup to pass from Him, He still had to drink the cup of suffering by dying on the cross

We as Christians must accept the way the Lord answers our prayers, whether or not He answered them in the way that WE thought best. We are mistaken when we assume we know God’s will because a certain thing makes sense to us. We assume that there is only one right answer to a specific prayer, assuming certainly that would be God’s will—this is where it gets tough. We live within the limits of time and limits of knowledge. We have only limited information about a situation and the implications of future action on that situation. God’s understanding is unlimited! How an event plays out in the course of life or history is only something He knows, and He may have purposes far beyond what we could even imagine. So, we must accept the fact that God is not going to do something simply because WE determine that it must be HIS will.

Are All Prayers Answered? – QUESTIONS

1. What requirement does God demand before He will listen to and answer our prayers (**I John 5:13-15**; **James 5:13-15**)?
2. Is it wrong to pray to God repeatedly if He doesn't answer right away? (*Give scriptures*)
3. What do we learn about God's ability to answer prayers in **Ephesians 3:20**?
4. How did God answer Paul's prayers about the thorn in his flesh (**II Corinthians 12:7-10**)? How did Paul react to the answer?
5. List all the items in **Proverbs 3:5-10** required to be blessed by God with answered prayers.
6. What Christian virtue is key when we are waiting for God to answer our prayers (**Hebrews 6:10-12**)? Explain.
7. Does God always answer our prayers in the way we thought He would (**Isaiah 55:8,9**)? Explain.
8. According to **Romans 8:26**, why does God sometimes answer our prayers differently than we expected?
9. What does it mean to "ask amiss" (**James 4:3**)?
10. Is God punishing us when He answers our prayers with, "No"? (*Give scriptures*)



Pray with Thanksgiving

Lesson 15

There are two words often overlooked in Paul's lesson about prayer in **Philippians 4:6,7**: *"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."* These two often overlooked words are **WITH THANKSGIVING!**

Ephesians 5:20, **Colossians 4:2**, and **I Thessalonians 5:17,18** all teach us the importance of being thankful in our prayers. The Christian should be *"abounding in thanksgiving"* (**Colossians 2:6,7**). The Psalmist in **Psalms 116:17-19** offers a great example reminding us how we should offer praise and thanksgiving to God: *"I will offer to Thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD. I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all His people, In the courts of the LORD's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD."*

We should not only be thankful for our material blessings (**I Timothy 4:3,4**; **Acts 27:33-36**), but also our spiritual blessings, including salvation, the church, the Word, strength to overcome trials and temptations, and victory over death, just to name a few.

Commands to pray with thanksgiving

- *"giving thanks always for all things unto God"* (**Ephesians 5:20**)
- Continue in prayer with thanksgiving (**Colossians 4:2**)
- *"pray without ceasing, in everything giving thanks"* (**I Thessalonians 5:17,18**)
- *"in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God"* (**Philippians 4:6**)
- *"By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name."* (**Hebrews 13:15**)

When we approach God to ask for new blessings, we should never forget to give Him thanks for blessings He has already granted us. We should not be guilty of returning generic thanksgiving to God when we went to Him with specific petitions. Be thorough and specific when you offer thanks to God—count your many blessings, naming them one by one!

WHAT IF...
you WOKE UP
TODAY
WITH only THE
THINGS you
thanked GOD
for YESTERDAY?

God is deeply grieved by the thankless and ungrateful attitude that so many of us are guilty of possessing. When Jesus healed the ten lepers and only one came back to thank Him, Jesus wondered, *“Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. And [Jesus] said to him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole”* (Luke 17:17-19). God’s children should always have an attitude of gratitude (Psalm 100:4; Colossians 3:15). We must beware because a lack of gratitude is an indication of apostasy: *“...when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened”* (Romans 1:21; II Timothy 3:2).

Examples of prayers of thanksgiving

- Daniel 6:10 – Daniel thanked God three times each day
- II Chronicles 5:11-14 – Solomon offered praise and thanksgiving to God upon the dedication of the temple
- Matthew 11:25; 26:26-29; John 6:11; 11:41,42 – Jesus offered many prayers of thanksgiving
- Paul offered prayers of thanksgiving in most all of his epistles, and we can learn great lessons of thankfulness in each

Returning thanks for blessings already received increases our faith and enables us to approach God with new boldness and new assurance. We often have so little faith when we pray because we take so little time to meditate upon and thank God for blessings we’ve already received. As we meditate upon the answers to prayers already granted, our faith waxes bolder and bolder and we begin to realize that there is nothing too hard for the Lord. If we reflect upon the love that God has shown toward us on one hand, and upon the other hand we reflect upon how little thought, strength, and time we put into thanksgiving to God, we may well humble ourselves before God and confess our sin.

COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

*“When upon life’s billows you are tempest-tossed, When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings, name them one by one, And it will surprise you what the Lord has done.*

Chorus: Count your blessings, name them one by one, Count your blessings, see what God has done!
Count your blessings, name them one by one, Count your many blessings, see what God has done. [*And it will surprise you what the Lord has done.*]

*Are you ever burdened with a load of care? Does the cross seem heavy you are called to bear?
Count your many blessings, every doubt will fly, And you will keep singing as the days go by.*

*When you look at others with their lands and gold, Think that Christ has promised you His wealth untold;
Count your many blessings—money cannot buy [*wealth can never buy*], Your reward in heaven, nor your home on high.*

*So, amid the conflict whether great or small, Do not be discouraged, God is over all;
Count your many blessings, angels will attend, Help and comfort give you to your journey’s end.”*

Johnson Oatman, Jr., 1897

Pray with Thanksgiving – QUESTIONS

1. Define “thanksgiving.”
2. How is thanksgiving defined in **Hebrews 13:15**?
3. What is the relationship between rejoicing, praying, and giving thanks (**I Thessalonians 5:16-18**)?
4. Is **Ephesians 5:20** a command, or a suggestion? Explain.
5. Explain **Colossians 4:2**.
6. Why should we abound with thanksgiving according to **Colossians 2:6,7**?
7. List some of the things Paul was thankful for in the epistles he wrote. (*Give scriptures*)
8. What lesson (which we should apply daily) can we learn from Paul’s example in **Acts 27:33-36** and Jesus’ example in **John 6:11**?
9. In addition to those listed in this lesson, list some Biblical examples of prayers of thanksgiving. (*Give scriptures*)
10. List some things for which we should offer prayers of thanksgiving. (*Give scriptures*)



Prayers of Supplication & Intercession

Lesson 16

All of our requests should be known to God (**Philippians 4:6; Ephesians 6:17,18**). **I Timothy 2:1,2** tells us we should make supplications and intercession for all men: *“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.”*

Supplication (*Deesis*): primarily, a wanting, a need...a seeking, an asking, entreating, entreaty to God

Intercession (*Enteuxis*): a petition; that for which an interview is held...a technical term for approaching a king, and so for approaching God in intercession

SUPPLICATIONS

Supplications, or petitions, include pleas for one’s needs (**I John 5:14,15**), including pleas for forgiveness (**I John 1:9-2:2**). A prayer of supplication is generally a request for the person praying. Supplication isn’t necessarily a form of prayer, but rather an attitude and state of our heart that accompanies prayer—a passionate, yet humble, zeal and hunger fuels the prayer of supplication. Jesus explained prayers of supplication in **Luke 11:9-13**: *“And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?”*

“And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us: And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him.”

I John 5:14,15

Examples of prayers of supplication:

- Hannah offered prayers of supplication, asking God for a son (**I Samuel 1:9-13**)
- After King Darius signed the decree not to offer petitions to God, Daniel continued to pray three times a day, giving thanks and making supplication before God (**Daniel 6:9-11**)
- Elijah offered prayers of supplication to stop raining on the earth for three and a half years, then prayed again for it to rain on the earth (**James 5:17,18**)
- Solomon made supplication at the dedication of the temple, petitioning God to hear his cry and prayer for the temple (**I Kings 8:28,29**)
- Widows are known for their supplications night and day (**I Timothy 5:5**)
- Stephen made supplications when he was being stoned (**Acts 7:59,60**)
- Jesus made supplications as He was crucified (**Luke 23:34**)
- Simon the sorcerer asked prayers of forgiveness (**Acts 8:14-24**)
- Jesus commanded His disciples to pray with supplications for their daily bread (**Matthew 6:11**)
- David offered many prayers of supplication:
 - David asked God to *“have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer”* (**Psalm 4:1**)
 - *“Lead me, O LORD, in Thy righteousness because of mine enemies; make Thy way straight before my face.”* (**Psalm 5:8**)
 - *“Have mercy upon me, O LORD; for I am weak: O LORD, heal me; for my bones are vexed.”* (**Psalm 6:2**)
 - *“Return, O LORD, deliver my soul: oh save me for Thy mercies’ sake.”* (**Psalm 6:4**)
 - *“O LORD, my God, in Thee do I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me.”* (**Psalm 7:1**)
 - David’s prayer acknowledging his sin and a plea for forgiveness (v. 1-4) (**Psalm 51**)

Prayers of supplication are dependent upon the Christian first putting on the Christian armor (**Ephesians 6:13-17**). At the conclusion of the description of the armor, in **verse 18**, Paul continues, *“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.”* But, why? So *“that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places”* (**verses 11,12**).

When we offer up prayers of supplication, we often don’t know exactly what to pray for, so the Holy Spirit intercedes and offers prayers of intercession on our behalf, interpreting our supplications, helping us with our requests. **Romans 8:26** tells us, *“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”*

INTERCESSION

To intercede means to plead on behalf of another person, praying earnestly for others. Not only does the Holy Spirit intercede to help us pray what we need to ask God for, but we can also intercede, asking prayers of petition for others. Intercession involves various degrees of supplication and requires

persistence (**Luke 11:5-8**). Prayers of intercession require us *“always to pray, and not to faint”* (**Luke 18:1**).

Examples of prayers of intercession:

- Abraham interceded and petitioned God to save the righteous in Sodom (**Genesis 18:22-33**)
- Elijah prayed seven times, petitioning God, before the rain that God had promised came (**I Kings 18:41-46**)
- Elisha interceded for the Shunamite woman’s son who had died (**II Kings 4:32-36**)
- King Jehoshaphat petitioned God to save Judah from the Moabites and the Ammonites (**II Chronicles 20:1-30**)
- The early church interceded and petitioned God on Peter’s behalf while he was imprisoned (**Acts 12:1-18**)

When it comes to prayers of supplication and intercession, we must remember the words of Jesus in **Luke 11:9,10**: *“And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.”* These prayers should draw us closer to God and take the weight off our shoulders. They are requests that come from a heart crying out to God and can even lead to fasting, as we see the example of Nehemiah in **Nehemiah 1:1-6** as he *“sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven,”* confessing his sins along with the sins of the children of Israel. We will explore fasting along with prayer in the next lesson.

“Peter therefore was kept in prison: but PRAYER WAS MADE WITHOUT CEASING of the church unto God for him....And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent His angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.”

Acts 12:5,11

Prayers of Supplication & Intercession – *QUESTIONS*

1. Define “supplication.”
2. Define “intercession.”
3. Compare and contrast prayers of supplication and prayers of intercession.
4. Explain **Philippians 4:6**.
5. For whom should we offer prayers of supplication and intercession (**I Timothy 2:1-6**)? Why?
6. List some items/requests/situations for which we should offer prayers of supplication. (*Give scriptures*)
7. What invaluable lesson can we learn from Daniel’s example of offering prayers of supplication (**Daniel 6:9-11**)?
8. Describe David’s words of penitence as he offered prayers of supplication for his forgiveness (**Psalm 51:1-4**).
9. List some items/requests/situations for which we should offer intercessory prayers. (*Give scriptures*)
10. What characteristic often accompanies prayers of intercession (**Luke 11:5-8; 18:1**)? Explain.



Prayer & Fasting

Lesson 17

Fasting is defined as voluntarily going without food in order to focus on prayer and fellowship with God. Fasting and prayer often go hand in hand, but this is not always the case. You can pray without fasting, and fast without prayer. It is when these two activities are combined and dedicated to God's glory that they reach their full effectiveness. Having a dedicated time of prayer and fasting is not a way of manipulating God into doing what you desire, but rather simply forcing yourself to focus and rely on God for the strength, provision, and wisdom you need.

Biblical fasting is defined as "the voluntary abstinence from food"; "not to eat"; "no food." Food is a requirement for our physical body to gain its necessary nutrition. It is interesting to note that in the beginning of time on this earth, food from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil was the enticement Satan used to cause Adam and Eve to sin in the Garden of Eden.

The purpose of fasting is not merely to abstain from food, but rather to help take our eyes off the things of this world and focus our thoughts on God. It is a means of bringing the flesh into submission to the Lord so He can strengthen us, making us stronger to stand against the temptations of the flesh. Fasting is linked with serious seasons of prayer and can produce great spiritual results. It humbles the soul (**Psalm 35:13**) and chastens, or afflicts, the soul (**Psalm 69:10**).

The Old Law REQUIRED fasting on just one occasion: the Day of Atonement (**Leviticus 16:29-31**), which was the tenth day of the month Tisri. It was known as "the fasting day" (**Jeremiah 36:6**) and "the fast" (**Acts 27:9**). We find many examples of fasting throughout the Bible dealing with situations of need and dependence, helplessness in the face of actual or anticipated calamity, mourning, repentance, deep spiritual need, intercessory prayer:

- **Old Testament**
 - Moses fasted 40 days and night while receiving the law on Mt. Sinai (**Exodus 34:28**)
 - King Jehoshaphat called for a fast in all Israel when they were about to be attacked by the Moabites and Ammonites (**II Chronicles 20:3**)

"And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by PRAYER and FASTING."

Matthew 17:20,21

- Men of Ninevah fasted and put on sackcloth following Jonah’s preaching (**Jonah 3:5**)
- David fasted when he learned that Saul and Jonathan had been killed (**II Samuel 1:12**)
- David fasted upon the sickness and death of his son (**II Samuel 12:16-18**)
- Nehemiah prayed and fasted when he learned that Jerusalem was still in ruins (**Nehemiah 1:4**)
- Esther urged Mordecai and the Jews to fast for her as she planned to appear before her husband the king (**Esther 4:16**)
- King Darius fasted all night after putting Daniel in the lions’ den (**Daniel 6:18**)
- Daniel prayed and fasted when he petitioned the Lord (**Daniel 9:3,4**)
- **New Testament**
 - Anna, a widow and prophetess, fasted and prayed in the temple “night and day” (**Luke 2:36-38**)
 - Jesus fasted 40 days and nights before He was tempted by Satan (**Matthew 4:1-11**)
 - Church at Antioch fasted before sending Paul and Barnabas off on their first missionary journey (**Acts 13:2,3**)
 - Paul and Barnabas prayed and fasted before appointing elders in the churches (**Acts 14:23**)
 - Jesus implied that His disciples would fast following His death (**Mark 2:18-22; Luke 5:33-35**)

Nowhere in the Scriptures is there any indication that the Lord is more likely to answer prayers if they are accompanied by fasting, but rather fasting along with prayer seems to indicate the sincerity of the people praying and the critical nature of the situations in which they find themselves. Although He does not directly command us to fast today, Jesus instructed His disciples how to fast when they do: *“Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly”* (**Matthew 6:16-18**). Isaiah also proclaimed that the outward showing of fasting and praying, without the proper attitude of the heart, was futile—we must fast and pray with true repentance and humility (**Isaiah 58:5-9**).

In **Matthew 9:14-17**, Jesus explains that His disciples should only fast when the occasion properly calls for it. There will be occasions when prayer joined with fasting might be necessary: *“And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting”* (**Matthew 17:20,21**).

It is a personal choice when a child of God fasts along with prayer. The need for fasting may arise:

- If you are faced with a difficult temptation
- When seeking God’s forgiveness

- When you or a loved one is faced with a serious illness
- When you are about to make a very important decision
- In times of war or at the threat of it
- When seeking God's protection
- When selecting and appointing elders

Practical suggestions for fasting

- Be very serious when you fast
 - Fast only for a very serious occasion
 - Fast when you desperately need God's help
- If you have never fasted before,
 - Start slow, fasting only for brief periods of time
 - End slow, gradually breaking your fast with fresh fruits and vegetables in limited quantities
 - When you suffer hunger pains, feed your appetite with prayer, not food
- Fast when you have time to spend in deep prayer
 - Remember the purpose for fasting
 - Humble yourself in the sight of God
 - Seek God's answer to prayer for some important plea

Prayer & Fasting – QUESTIONS

1. Define “fasting.”
2. What is the significance that Satan used food to entice Adam and Eve to sin in the Garden? (*Give scriptures*)
3. According to the scriptures, what is the purpose of fasting?
4. Is fasting bound upon Christians today? Why, or why not? (*Give scriptures*)
5. After studying examples of Biblical fasting in both the Old and New Testaments, list the various reasons God’s people fasted. Could we benefit today from fasting for these same reasons?
6. What type of prayer accompanied Daniel’s fast in **Daniel 9:3-15**? For what did he pray?
7. What restriction did Jesus put on fasting in **Mark 2:18-22**? Explain.
8. What is the significance of Jesus fasting prior to being tempted by Satan (**Matthew 4:1-11**)? What lesson can we learn from this?
9. List the instructions Christ gave His disciples concerning fasting in **Matthew 6:16-18**.
10. According to **Isaiah 58:5-9**, what must accompany fasting and praying?



Prayers of Praise & Worship

Lesson 18

Prayer is a way for us to offer praise and adoration to the Lord. It is a way of us eulogizing and praising God (**Acts 2:47; Matthew 6:9**). We learn from the Psalmist, David, how we should continually offer praise to God: *“I will bless the LORD at all times: His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt HIS name together”* (**Psalms 34:1-3**). Many times we have an agenda when we approach God in prayer, asking Him according to our will and agenda, not His. Praise and adoration fixes our faith on God’s wisdom, His goodness, and His Power. As praise for God increases, the more submissive we are to His will.

But what makes prayer and praise worship? “Since worship is an expression of love for and devotion to God, prayer which recognizes Him; which appeals to His love, mercy, grace, and power; and which shows a reliance on Him and the need to communicate with Him; is surely worship. It exalts God as the object of our praise, the recipient of our love, and the source of all blessings. In turn, God displays His providential care and love for His children by hearing and answering their prayers (**I John 5:14,15; Matthew 7:7-11**)” (Gene Taylor, *Worshiping the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness*, p. 48)

Offering prayers of praise and worship is not merely a suggestion to do occasionally, but rather a command to do continually. **Hebrews 13:15** tells us, *“By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name.”* David instructed God’s people on how to praise and worship Him: *“Give unto the LORD the glory due unto His name: bring an offering, and come before Him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness”* (**I Chronicles 16:29**). Praise should be the daily pursuit of every child of God. It makes an enormous difference in our relationship with God: it sets the tone for praying (**Psalms 100:4**), builds faith (**Matthew 21:22; James 5:15**), and increases our intimacy with God (**Psalms 4:3**).

We must praise and worship God with reverence, much like Moses did at the burning bush. God told him to take his shoes off his feet because the place where he stood was holy ground. *“Let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire”* (**Hebrews 12:28,29**). Humility is required to properly offer praise to God: *“...be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time”* (**I Peter 5:5,6**). We also must *“confess our*

“O LORD our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth! who hast set Thy glory above the heavens.”

Psalm 8:1

sins” and be cleansed “from all unrighteousness” (I John 1:9) before acceptably offering praise.

What better way to learn how to offer prayers of praise and worship than gleaning knowledge from Biblical examples:

Early prayers of praise and worship

- **Exodus 15:1,2** – *“I will sing unto the LORD, for He hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea. The LORD is my strength and son, and He is become my salvation: He is my God, and I will prepare Him an habitation; my father’s God, and I will exalt Him.”*
- **Deuteronomy 3:24** – Moses praised God for His greatness and His mighty hand
- **Daniel 6:26** – God is the living God and endures forever. His kingdom will not be destroyed and His dominion will be forever
- **Job 37:22-24** – Job praised God as awesome majesty, the Almighty, being excellent in power, in judgment, and abundant justice
- **Job 42:1,2** – Job praised God because He can do everything
- **I Samuel 2:1,2** – Hannah praised God because *“no one is holy like the LORD, for there is none besides You, nor is there any rock like our God”*

David and the Psalms of praise

- David is the most prolific author of praise in the Bible. Many of the 70+ psalms that are attributed to him can be categorized both as songs and as prayers, and these public expressions certainly mirror the deep and constant personal contact that David had with his Creator
- **Psalm 5:7** – *“But as for me, I will come into Thy house in the multitude of Thy mercy: and in Thy fear will I worship toward Thy holy temple.”*
- **Psalm 8:1-9**
 - *“O LORD our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth! who hast set Thy glory above the heavens.”*
 - *“Thou mightiest still the enemy and the avenger”*
 - God crowned Jesus with glory and honor
- **Psalm 18:1-3** – *“I will love Thee, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in Whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.”*
- **Psalm 31:23** – God preserves the faithful
- **Psalm 57:9-11** – *“I will praise Thee, O Lord, among the people: I will sing unto Thee among the nations. For Thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and Thy truth unto the clouds. Be Thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: let Thy glory be above all the earth.”*
- **Psalm 63:3-8** – God’s lovingkindness is better than life. He was David’s help.
- **Psalm 116:1** – The Lord hears our voice and supplications

Prayers of praise and worship in the prophets

- **Isaiah 25:1** – God has *“done many wonderful things,”* His *“counsels of old are faithfulness and truth”*
- **Daniel 2:20-23** – Wisdom and might are God’s, He changes the times and seasons, He removes kings and raises up kings, gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding, light dwells in Him
- **Jonah 2:7-9** – *“Salvation is of the LORD”*

New Testament prayers of praise and worship

- **Luke 1:46-55** – God regarded the lowly state of His maidservant, Mary. He is mighty and done great things; holy is His name. His mercy is on those who fear Him. He has filled the hungry with good things. He has helped His servant Israel.
- **Luke 2:13,14** – *“And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”*
- **Acts 4:24-31** – After Peter and John had been released from prison, the disciples offered praise to God *“Which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is.”*
- **Ephesians 1:15-19** – God is the Father of glory and His power toward believers is exceeding great
- **Ephesians 3:14-21** – When Paul prayed for the Ephesians, he praised God
- **Revelation 4:9-11** – *“And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to Him that sat on the throne, Who liveth for ever and ever, The four and twenty elders fall down before Him that sat on the throne, and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created.”*
- **Revelation 15:3,4** – *“And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest.”*

“By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name.”

Hebrews 13:15

Prayers of Praise & Worship – QUESTIONS

1. Define “praise.”
2. Define “worship.”
3. How is praise defined in **Hebrews 13:15**?
4. What lessons do we learn about praising God in **Psalm 34:1-3**?
5. According to **Psalm 100**, why should we offer praise and worship to God?
6. With what attitude should we offer our praise and worship (**Hebrews 12:28,29**)? Why?
7. Categorize the examples of *“Early prayers of praise and worship”* from the lesson text. *(We can use these categories to help us when offering prayers of praise and worship to the Lord)*
8. Categorize the examples of *“David and the Psalms of praise”* from the lesson text.
9. Categorize the examples of *“Prayers of praise and worship in the prophets”* from the lesson text.
10. Categorize the examples of *“New Testament prayers of praise and worship”* from the lesson text.



Prayers of Confession

Lesson 19

We are all sinners and fall short of God's glory (**Romans 3:23**)—*"...him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin"* (**James 4:17**). Every time we transgress God's law, we are sinning (**I John 3:4**) and in danger of eternal death (**Romans 6:23**), but God doesn't want anyone to perish, but rather that everyone will come to repentance (**II Peter 3:9**). Fortunately we enjoy cleansing of sin by the blood of Jesus (**I John 1:7**): *"But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."*

When we go to God in prayer, we must confess our sins (**I John 1:8-2:2**): *"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."* **Proverbs 28:13** tells us, *"He that covereth his sin shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."* We should offer prayers of thanksgiving for God's goodness and mercy as all our sins were taken away on the cross.

Please take the time to read **Psalms 139**. In this beautiful prayer, David admits that God has searched him and completely knows him and concludes with the following: *"Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting"* (**verses 23,24**).

Although God searches our heart and knows our sins, we are to *"Humble [ourselves] therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt [us] in due time"* (**I Peter 5:6**) for *"God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble"* (**James 4:6**). We must humbly confess our sins to the Lord: *"Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death"* (**II Corinthians 7:9,10**).

Examples of prayers of confession of sins

- Daniel confessed his sins and those of his people (**Daniel 9:3-22**)
 - *"We have sinned"*
 - *"We have committed iniquity"*
 - *"We have done wickedly"*
 - *"We have rebelled against Thee"*

- *“We have departed from Thy precepts”*
- *“We have not hearkened unto Thy servants”*
- *“Nor our princes, nor all the people of the land”*
- David confessed his sins (**II Samuel 24:10; Psalm 32; 51**)
- Ezra *“prayed, and when he had confessed, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God”* (**Ezra 10:1-11**)
- Nehemiah prayed to the Lord, confessing that he and his father’s house had sinned (**Nehemiah 1:5-7**)
- Isaiah confessed, *“Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips!”* (**Isaiah 6:5**)
- Simon Peter confessed that he was a sinful man (**Luke 5:1-11**)
- Parable of the Pharisee and the publican (**Luke 18:10-14**)

Lessons from David’s prayer of confession in Psalm 51 after committing adultery with Bathsheba

- **David appealed to God’s mercy and love (Psalm 51:1,2)**
 - He made a plea for forgiveness based upon God’s lovingkindness and the multitude of His tender mercies
 - We on our own are not worthy of pardon, but only in the goodness and grace of God
 - We must appeal to God’s mercy and grace to seek cleansing from our sins
- **We must acknowledge our sins to God (Psalm 51:3,4)**
 - David knew he had sinned against Bathsheba, Uriah, and his own wife, but he admitted that He had sinned against God—*“Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in your sight”*—admitting that God was just and blameless to judge him
 - We must confess our sins to receive God’s grace (**I John 1:9**)
 - Don’t fault God, His Word, or the messenger when our sins are exposed and condemned
- **David understood where he was and where God wanted Him (Psalm 51:5,6)**
 - Until forgiven, we remain deep in sin
 - David knew that God wanted to provide more than just forgiveness, He wanted David’s total restoration, wisdom, and faithful service
- **David prayed for renewal and restoration (Psalm 51:7-12)**
 - He prayed for forgiveness, joy, gladness, a new heart, and renewal of a steadfast spirit
 - As we confess our sins and pray for forgiveness, we should pray for total restoration of the *“joy of salvation”* (**Acts 8:35-39**)
- **David resolved to offer grateful service (Psalm 51:13-17)**
 - He resolved to teach sinners & praise God for His righteousness in deliverance from sin
 - A broken spirit and contrite heart is true repentance, which leads to zealous service (**II Corinthians 7:9-11**)
 - As we confess our past sins, we need to look ahead at our future service to God
- **David prayed for God’s purposes (Psalm 51:18,19)**
 - He prayed that God would fulfill His purpose for Zion and that he would please God
 - As we confess our sins, we should promise to fulfill God’s desires and offer pleasing service to Him

Prayers of Confession – QUESTIONS

1. Define “confession.”
2. What is the Biblical definition of “sin”? (*Give scriptures*)
3. How serious is sin? What does it result in? (*Give scriptures*)
4. What lessons do we learn about sin and the importance of confessing our sins in **I John 1:8-2:2**?
5. What is the relationship between humility and confession of sins? (*Give scriptures*)
6. List the lessons we can learn from Daniel’s prayer of confession in **Daniel 9:3-22**.
7. According to David in **Psalms 32**, what all are the results of one confessing his/her sins?
8. What did the publican in the parable of the Pharisee and the publican pray for when confessing his sins (**Luke 18:9-14**)? What is the significance of this in our lives? (*Give scriptures*)
9. What key action is required in a sinner’s life as he/she confesses his/her sins? (*Give scriptures*)
10. What benefit is there for us to apply **Psalms 139:23,24** to our prayer life today?



Private Prayers

Lesson 20

Prayer is an act of communication between man and God and should be an essential part of our daily activities. *“And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, [Jesus] went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed” (Mark 1:35).* Jesus took personal, private prayers very seriously as it was important for Him to pray to His Father before attending to the needs of the people. Unfortunately some of us may be guilty of only praying when gathered in the worship assembly or in a group of other Christians—if we are guilty of such, we do not realize the importance of personal prayers.

One might ask the question: “Must I verbalize private prayers?” The simple answer is, “No,” because God knows our hearts (**Hebrews 4:13; Acts 15:8**). Hannah (**I Samuel 1:12-17**) is a prime example as even though she had not verbalized her prayer, she:

- *“Poured out her soul before the Lord”* (v. 15)
- *“only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard* (v. 13)
- Had *“spoken”* (v. 16)
- Had asked petition of God (v. 17)

PRAYING ALONE

Jesus encouraged the practice of praying alone, in secret: *“And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou has shut thy door, pray to the Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly” (Matthew 6:5,6).* This will help us focus on our private prayers – we should consider creating a prayer “War Room” of our own in an empty closet in our house, a secret chamber (**Matthew 24:26**). Jack R. Taylor offers advice on creating your very own secret chamber in which to pray: “Your prayer life will suffer until you mark a place where life’s greatest business will be carried on. There are three brief suggestions inherent in this command, in **Matthew 6:6**, *‘When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou has shut the door, pray...’*

- First, there is to be a **set place**. Prayer is to be continuous and the place is to be singularly designated.
- Second, it is to be a **secluded place**. Such is the suggestion of the word used here. This is important. The one who prays should not be hindered by lack of privacy. Isolation should be stated among the valid laws of personal prayer.

- Third, it is to be a **shut place**. ‘*When thou hast shut your door...*’ is an important consideration in prayer. A shut door is a sign of apartness, aloneness, exclusion, and seclusion. There is something comforting about being ‘shut in’ with the Lord.”

Why is private prayer so important?:

- It forms a close union and fellowship with our heavenly Father (**Revelation 3:20**). It is just you and God – we see a prime example when Jesus sent the multitudes away and went up into a mountain alone to pray to His Father (**Matthew 14:23**).
- It gives us an opportunity to share all aspects of our lives with God by drawing near Him, and He will draw near to you (**James 4:8**).
- It gives us the chance to express our gratitude for the things God provides for us – “*O give thanks unto the LORD; for He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever*” (**I Chronicles 16:34**).
- It allows us to confess our sins and to ask for help in overcoming sin – “*I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin*” (**Psalms 32:5**).
- It is a way to acknowledge who is really in control of our lives – “*Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is Thine; Thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and Thou art exalted as head above all*” (**I Chronicles 29:11**).
- It cultivates our spiritual nature through regular exercise. “Prayer is the spiritual gymnasium in which we exercise and practice godliness” (V.L. Crawford).
- “...Prayer is educative. The man who prays grows; and the muscles of the soul swell from this whipcord to iron bands” (Frederick B. Meyer). The opposite is also true: “Seven days without prayer makes one weak” (Allan E. Bartlette).
- It is a true test of your sincerity and devotion
 - You aren’t praying to please men because they can’t see you
 - You aren’t trying to falsely impress God because He will see right through you if you do
- Private prayer will be rewarded “openly” (**Matthew 6:6**) – the answers to our prayers will be seen by others.

PRAYING WITH OTHERS

Jesus also encouraged the practice of praying with others (**Matthew 18:19,20**). The requests of two or three are answered by our Father in heaven because Jesus, Who intercedes for us, is in our midst (**Romans 8:34**). Early Christians often prayed together in times of trouble (**Acts 4:23,24; 12:5,12; 16:25**) and in times of departure (**Acts 20:36-38; 21:5**). Praying with others creates a sweetness of fellowship and a sense of strength in numbers.

Private prayer is something we should all want to do every day. Imagine not speaking to a loved one or a close friend on a regular basis—how long would the relationship last? Daily prayer with God is daily fellowship with our heavenly Father, so don’t let that relationship die!

Private Prayers – *QUESTIONS*

1. What was the advantage of Jesus rising early in the morning to go out and pray alone (**Mark 1:35**)?
2. How do **Hebrews 4:13** and **Acts 15:8** prove that it is not necessary to always verbalize our prayers?
3. List some practical applications concerning prayer that we can learn from Hannah in **I Samuel 1:12-17**?
4. How does Jesus instruct us **NOT TO** pray in **Matthew 6:5-8**? What is the result of doing so?
5. How does Jesus instruct us **TO** pray in **Matthew 6:5-8**? What is the result of doing so?
6. How can we relate **Revelation 3:20** to our personal prayer life?
7. Apply **James 4:7-10** to your prayer life and list the included commands to help you pray more effectively.
8. Make a list of the personal advantages you find in spending much time alone with God in prayer.
9. What can we learn from the examples of early Christians praying together? (*Give scriptures*)
10. Make a list of the personal advantages you find in spending time praying with a few other Christians.



Public Prayers in Worship

Lesson 21

The majority of our study on prayer thus far has focused on our personal prayers, but now we are going to look at public prayers offered to God during a worship service. Many of the commands and principles we have learned thus far apply to public prayers as well, but we must be mindful that the prayer is being offered on behalf of the entire congregation, therefore it should be focused on the needs, desires, and thanksgivings of the church, not those of the individual offering the prayer. We must also be mindful that there are specific types of prayers that are appropriate at particular times of the worship service, but not appropriate at another time. An opening prayer would not be appropriate when commemorating the Lord's death by partaking of the Lord's Supper, and vice versa.

When it comes to public prayer, the Lord is specific at who should utter the pray. In Paul's first letter to Timothy, he states, *"But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence"* (**I Timothy 2:12**). Just as a woman is not to teach in the worship service, she should not lead a prayer—only faithful Christian men have the authority to do so. **John 9:31** states, *"God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshiper of God, and doeth His will, him He heareth."* He must be a righteous man: *"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much"* (**James 5:16**). A congregation needs a man to pray who believes in prayer and asks in faith, not wavering (**James 1:6; Matthew 21:22**). It is important that he offers a prayer desiring the will of God, not his own, to be done (**Matthew 26:39**).

What Should a Public Prayer Consist Of?

- **Opening**—addressed to God
- **Body**
 - Adoration and praise (**Matthew 6:9; Acts 2:47; Hebrews 13:15,16**)
 - Supplication for needs (**Acts 1:14; Philippians 4:6; I Timothy 2:1; 5:5; Ephesians 3:20; Colossians 1:9; James 1:5,6; 5:14-16**) —Remember that we are ASKING God for these petitions, NOT DEMANDING them
 - Intercession on behalf of others (**Romans 8:26,27,34; Hebrews 7:25; I Timothy 2:1**)
 - All Christians (**Ephesians 6:18**)
 - Spiritual leaders and those preaching the Word (**Romans 15:30; I Thessalonians 5:25**)
 - Physically sick (**James 5:13-16**)
 - Spiritually sick (**Romans 10:1**)
 - Government leaders (**I Timothy 2:1,2**)
 - Enemies (**Matthew 5:43-45**)

- Thanksgiving for blessings received (**II Corinthians 4:15; 9:11,12; Philippians 4:6; Colossians 2:7; 4:2; I Timothy 2:1**)
- Confession of our sins and shortcomings (**I John 1:9**)
- **Closing**—“in the name of Jesus Christ” (**Colossians 3:17; John 14:13,14; 16:23-27**)
 - Jesus is the One Mediator between God and men (**I Timothy 2:5**)
 - Jesus is our Intercessor (**Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25**)
 - Jesus is our Advocate (**I John 2:1,2**)
 - Jesus is our High Priest (**Hebrews 4:14-16**)
- **“Amen”**—so be it! (**Matthew 6:13**)

Things we should pray for in public prayers

Daily bread	Deacons	Strength
Clothing	Preacher	Humility
Shelter	Bible class teachers	Spiritual growth
Enemies	Government leaders	Understanding
The sick (spiritual & physical)	World peace	Deliverance from sin
Protection	Those spreading Gospel in foreign lands	Deliverance from temptation
Forgiveness	Opportunity to teach others	Natural disasters (tornado, flooding, fires, etc.)
The church	Bereaved	
Elders		

Practical tips for those men leading public prayers

- Speak loudly and clearly
 - Don't mumble
 - Step forward to the microphone so everyone can hear the prayer
 - Sometimes the only way the audience knows that the prayer is finished is by the rustling sound made as people gradually catch on that the prayer has ended
 - The audience cannot “Amen” a prayer in agreement if they can't hear it!
- Use inflection—monotone is boring and monotonous
- Avoid vain repetitions and trite, overused words and expressions—this is more obvious sometimes to the listeners than the speaker and can be very distracting—*“But when you pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking”* (**Matthew 6:7**).
- Be sincere and natural—don't make it a show—don't be guilty of praying just to be seen and heard of men like the Pharisee in the parable of the Pharisee and tax collector (**Luke 18:9-14**)
- Make notes if you have to to prevent forgetting something
- Don't preach a sermon—God knows the scriptures because they are His inspired Word, He wrote them!
- The prayer should not be too long – scribes and Pharisees *“for a pretence make long prayer: therefore [they] shall receive the greater damnation”* (**Matthew 23:14**).
 - Most adults have an attention span of 3-5 minutes, children have a much smaller attention span—be mindful of the audience
 - We don't have to pray for EVERYTHING each time we lead a prayer

Sample Opening Prayer

Address God

Confess sins and ask for forgiveness

Spiritual thanksgiving

- a. Sacrifice of Jesus
- b. The Word—Gospel—Thy Will
- c. Church—Fellowship—Brothers and sisters
- d. Opportunity of salvation
- e. Faith, trust, and confidence in God

Material thanksgiving

- a. Comfort and convenience of the church's meeting house
- b. Health and strength
- c. Family
- d. Food, clothing, and shelter
- e. Employment

Spiritual requests

- a. Sick
- b. Bereaved
- c. Elders, deacons, preacher, teachers
- d. Unity and growth of church
- e. Courage to overcome temptations
- f. Appetite for Word
- g. Our service to God will be acceptable
 1. Song service
 2. Lord's Supper
 3. Offering
 4. Sermon

Material requests

- a. Wisdom
- b. To make proper decisions
- c. Health to serve
- d. Continue to bless us

"In Jesus' name"

"Amen."

Sample Lord's Table Prayer

Address God

Thanksgiving

- a. God's love
- b. Sacrifice of Jesus
- c. For these emblems as a remembrance

Requests

- a. Help in controlling our minds to partake in an acceptable way
- b. For God's blessings upon us

"In Jesus' name"

"Amen."

Sample Prayer Before Bible Class

Address God

Thanksgiving

- a. Ability to assemble
- b. Opportunity to study God's Word
- c. For teachers and students

Requests

- a. Wisdom for teachers
- b. Understanding for students
- c. Growth of us all

"In Jesus' name"

"Amen."

Sample Closing Prayer

Address God

Thanksgiving

- a. Opportunity to worship
- b. The Gospel message we heard
- c. Opportunity to fellowship with one another

Requests

- a. Spiritual strength and courage
- b. Overcome temptations
- c. Continuation of God's blessings
- d. Divine protection
- e. Keep us safe as we depart

"In Jesus' name"

"Amen."

Public Prayers in Worship – *QUESTIONS*

1. Compare and contrast private prayers and public prayers offered during a worship service.
2. List the qualifications for the person leading a public prayer during worship. (*Give scriptures*)
3. Why is it such a serious responsibility to lead a public prayer?
4. What is the importance of including praise and adoration to God in a public prayer (**Hebrews 13:15,16**)?
5. Describe the importance of unity among the brethren during a public prayer (**Acts 1:14**).
6. What advice does Paul give concerning the content of our prayers in **I Timothy 2:1,2**?
7. What is the importance for offering public prayers of intercession for the following:
 - a. The brethren—members of the congregation?
 - b. Spiritual leaders and those preaching the Word?
 - c. Spiritually sick?
 - d. Physically sick?
 - e. Government leaders?
 - f. Enemies?
8. For what should we offer thanks during a public prayer? (*Give scriptures*)
9. What warnings do the person leading a public prayer learn in **Matthew 6:7** and **23:14**?
10. Define “amen.” What is its significance in a public prayer during worship?



Prayer & Anointing

Lesson 22

In **James 5:14,15**, we find a very controversial passage of scripture among brethren—a scripture that some totally ignore because they don't understand it, or it sounds totally foreign to them: *"Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up."*

Many questions arise from this passage:

- Is this sickness physical or spiritual?
- Is the anointing oil medicinal or symbolic?
- Is the healing through providential means or miraculous?
- Is the healing physical or spiritual?

It is most commonly believed that this sickness is physical. **Verse 15** continues, *"...and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."* Note the phrasing, *"IF he have committed sins"*—the conditional *"IF"* makes it clear that the illness may or may not be accompanied by sin, which, if true, would mean the illness is not spiritual, but rather physical. The physically sick are still among us today. Paul was instructed to *"ordain elders in every city"* (**Titus 1:5**), and the church today is shepherded by elders, so the question arises, *"Should elders, then, in connection with their prayers, be anointing the sick with oil today?"*

This reference to *"anointing with oil"* is extremely abbreviated. Nothing is specifically stated in the context as to how to execute this practice, or how much oil he was to use, or what kind of oil he was to use. Although we are not told specifics on its administration, there are two possible explanations for this practice:

- This passage refers to **miraculous healing**
 - Elders were called because they possessed the gift of healing
 - Anointing with oil was symbolic, representing the influences of the Holy Spirit (**Mark 6:13**)
 - The healing was miraculous
- This passage refers to **providential healing**
 - Elders were called because they were likely the most righteous in a congregation (**James 5:16**)
 - Anointing with oil was medicinal, as was commonly practiced in those days (**Luke 10:34**)
 - The healing was providential

From these two explanations, providential healing seems the most likely explanation. Miraculous healing would assume that the elders in every church possessed the gift of healing, but that is not likely as we have no record of such in the New Testament, and the qualifications of elders (**I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9**) do not require this miraculous gift of healing. Elders in the church today cannot possess this miraculous gift as we learn that the days of miracles are over because *“when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away”* (**I Corinthians 13:8-10**). The context of **James 5:14,15** and its following verses (**17,18**) provide an example of God providentially answering Elijah’s prayer for rain to stop on the earth for three and a half years, then he prayed again for the rain to resume (**I Kings 18:41-45**). God answered Elijah’s prayers providentially, working through natural means.

If you are suffering from physical sickness and desire to be saved from your sickness, **YOU must call for the elders of the church (James 5:14)**—don’t wait for them to voluntarily call on you. Calling on the elders (who are righteous men), have them *“pray over you”* and anoint you *“with oil in the name of the Lord.”* It takes great faith on the part of the sick, trusting in the Lord’s power to heal. If it is God’s will, *“the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up”* (**James 5:15**) – this is proof that *“the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much”* (**James 5:16**).

But what about the oil? What is it?

- Some believe that the “anointing” referred to by James was simply a refreshing, encouraging act of friendship, much like when Mary anointed Jesus’ feet (**John 12:3; Luke 7:46**).
- The use of oil could also have been a symbolic act. In Bible times, the practice of anointing with oil was frequently representative of God’s approval (**I Samuel 10:1; Psalm 89:20**). Many Bible scholars are fairly confident, therefore, that the application of oil in **James 5:14** was a symbolic act invoked in conjunction with miraculous healing. In **Mark 6:13** we read: *“And they [the Lord’s apostles who had miraculous gifts] cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.”* This may be the key verse that sheds light on **James 5:14**.
- Many others believe that the oil of **James 5:14** was merely a medicinal item which, together with prayer, would be providentially effective in the healing process. Oil is profitable for some ailments, thus the reason it was used in ancient times (**Isaiah 1:6; Luke 10:34**), but it would not be useful for all sicknesses. Moreover, it would appear rather unusual that elders would be called for the administration of physical healing techniques when there were good doctors available in Biblical times (**Colossians 4:14**). The same is true today—why would one call the elders to pray and anoint him/her with oil instead of seeking professional medical attention readily available to us? To do so would be putting your faith and trust in the Lord, believing in God’s wondrous powers of healing. Jeremiah trusted in God’s power when he prayed, *“Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for Thou art my praise”* (**Jeremiah 17:14**).

Although this verse remains controversial and many feel it is no longer relevant, for anyone who is sick, this is not a command, but rather an option to petition God for His help in physically healing you. Never underestimate the power of prayer, even when combined with anointing oil administered by elders.

Prayer & Anointing – QUESTIONS

1. Define “anointing.”
2. Research the practice/method of anointing in Bible times. Prepare to discuss in class.
3. Who must initiate prayer and anointing by the elders (**James 5:14,15**)? What is the significance of the requestor?
4. What is the significance of the “elders” doing the praying and anointing (**James 5:14-16**)?
5. Compare and contrast the healing methods of the elders and the Good Samaritan (**James 5:14-16; Luke 10:30-37**).
6. Is the anointing in **James 5** the same act as the woman with the alabaster box (**Luke 7:36-50**) or Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus (**John 12:1-8**) anointing Jesus’ feet? Why, or why not?
7. Does God have the power to heal the sick regardless of whether the sick calls on the elders, seeks professional medical attention, or forgoes all pursuits of healing? (*Give scriptures*)
8. Explain **I Corinthians 13:8-10** in regards to miracles. Do they exist today?



Lessons from the Prayers of Paul

Lesson 23

Before turning to the Lord, Saul of Tarsus zealously persecuted the Lord's church: "As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison" (**Acts 8:3**). He "persecuted the church of God, and wasted it" (**Galatians 1:13**). God appeared to him via a light from heaven on the road to Damascus, he was converted, changed his name to Paul, and became a faithful servant of the Lord. He wrote the majority of the epistles of the New Testament (13 epistles, or 14 if including Hebrews, which is thought to be written by Paul), and within the pages of his writings are some of the most prolific prayers written in the scripture. We can learn great lessons from these prayers offered on behalf of the recipients of his epistles. Seven times Paul speaks of believers following him: "Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me" (**I Corinthians 4:16**); "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (**I Corinthians 11:1; Philipians 3:17; 4:9; I Thessalonians 1:6; II Thessalonians 3:7-9**).

As we read through Paul's prayers, we glean several beneficial habits of his that we should apply to our prayer life today:

- Without ceasing, he made mention of the brethren, praying intercessory prayers on their behalf (**Romans 1:9,11; Ephesians 1:6; 6:18-20; Philipians 1:3,4,8,9; Colossians 1:3,9; I Thessalonians 1:2; 3:9,10; II Thessalonians 1:3,11; II Timothy 1:3; Philemon 4**)
- Prayed his heart's desire (**Romans 10:1**)
- Prayed persistently, praying "always" on behalf of the brethren (**I Corinthians 1:4**)
- Prayed and fasted (**II Corinthians 6:4-6**)
- Bowed his knees and prayed (**Ephesians 3:14-16**)
- Requested the brethren to pray for him (**II Corinthians 1:10,11; Ephesians 6:18-20; Philipians 1:19; Colossians 4:2-4; I Thessalonians 5:25; Philemon 22**)

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God"

Ephesians 3:17-19

Paul prayed for:

- **Godly living**
 - Do no be evil, but rather do what is right and honest (**II Corinthians 13:7**)

- He wished for the Corinthians' perfection (**II Corinthians 13:9**)
- Love may abound in knowledge, approve things that are excellent, be sincere and without offence, and be filled with fruits of righteousness (**Philippians 1:9-11**)
- Be filled with knowledge of God's will, walk worthy in the Lord, please Him in all ways (**Colossians 1:9,10**)
- Increase and abound in love for one another, be unblameable in holiness before God (**I Thessalonians 3:12,13**)
- Keep your body blameless (**I Thessalonians 5:23**)
- Be counted worthy of God's calling (**II Thessalonians 1:3,11,12**)
- Prayer for comfort and stability (**II Thessalonians 2:13,16,17**)
- **Increased knowledge:**
 - Of the Lord (**Ephesians 1:17; Colossians 1:9,10**)
 - Of His will (**Philippians 1:9,10; Colossians 1:9**)
 - Of His love (**Ephesians 3:17-19**)
 - Of the hope of His calling (**Ephesians 1:18**)
 - Of the riches we have (**Ephesians 1:18; Philemon 1:6**)
 - Of His power (**Ephesians 1:18,19**)
- **More love**
 - In real knowledge and discernment (**Philippians 1:9**)
 - In love for one another (**I Thessalonians 3:12**)
 - In the love of God and steadfastness of Christ (**II Thessalonians 3:5**)
- **Strengthening**
 - Strengthen Ephesians with power through Holy Spirit (**Ephesians 3:16,17**)
 - Strengthen Colossians with all power so they may have great endurance and patience (**Colossians 1:10,11**)
 - Be blameless and holy in God's presence (**I Thessalonians 3:13**)
 - May God comfort and strengthen hearts in every good work and word (**II Thessalonians 2:16**)
- **Christians to be in one accord**
 - *"Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"* (**Romans 15:5,6**)
- **Salvation of Israel**
 - *"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God of Israel is, that they might be saved"* (**Romans 10:1**)
- **Christ to dwell in our hearts through faith (Ephesians 3:14-17)**
- **More hope**
 - *"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost"* (**Romans 15:13**)
- **Fullness of God**
 - *"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and*

depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God” (Ephesians 3:17-19)

- **Opportunities to minister**

- Come to Rome to impart spiritual gifts (**Romans 1:9-11**)
- Deliver Paul from the disobedient in Judea so his service in Jerusalem would be acceptable (**Romans 15:30,31**)
- Utterance may be given for the opening of Paul’s mouth so he could preach with boldness (**Ephesians 6:19**)
- Worthy of the Lord, bearing fruit in every good work (**Colossians 1:10**)
- Supply what is lacking in the faith of the Thessalonians (**I Thessalonians 3:10**)
- Count Thessalonians worthy of God’s calling, fulfilling every good purpose by faith (**II Thessalonians 1:11**)
- God’s word may spread rapidly and be glorified (**II Thessalonians 3:1**)
- Have a powerful understanding of every good thing in Christ (**Philemon 1:6**)

- **Personal request**

- Removal of his thorn in the flesh (**II Corinthians 12:7-10**)

- **Grace and peace**

- *“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (I Corinthians 1:3; II Corinthians 1:2; II Corinthians 13:14; Galatians 1:3; 6:18; Ephesians 1:2; 6:23,24; Philippians 1:2; 4:23; Colossians 1:2; I Thessalonians 1:1; 5:28; II Thessalonians 1:2; I Timothy 1:2; 6:21; II Timothy 1:2; Titus 1:4; Philemon 1:3)*
- *“Now the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all” (II Thessalonians 3:16)*

Lessons from the Prayers of Paul – *QUESTIONS*

1. What is the significance of studying the prayers of PAUL? Why “*be ye followers of [Paul]*”?
2. What lesson can we learn from the frequency and fervency of Paul’s prayers?
3. What was Paul’s heart’s desire and prayer for the Lord’s church (**Romans 10:1**)?
4. For what was Paul thankful in **II Thessalonians 1:3**? May this be our same prayer of thanksgiving today!
5. What should we pray for today, just as Paul prayed for the Philippian brethren in **Philippians 1:9-11**? Why?
6. What should we pray for today, just as Paul prayed for the Colossian brethren in **Colossians 1:9-12**?
7. List some of the suffering Paul endured for the cause of Christ (**II Corinthians 6:1-13**). How did this suffering impact his spiritual life?
8. What did Paul request Christians to pray for on his behalf (**Ephesians 6:19,20; Colossians 4:2-4; Philippians 1:19-26; Philemon 22**)? What lesson do we learn from him making these requests?
9. For what two blessings in Christ did Paul pray for the saints in the beginning (and the end) of the majority of his epistles? Define each.
 - a.
 - b.
10. List any other significant prayers of Paul not included in the lesson text that you’d like to discuss in class.



How Should I Pray?

Lesson 24

As this in-depth study on prayer draws to a close and we reflect on the fact that we've learned: what prayer is, what we should pray for, who we should pray for, when we should pray, the power of prayer, the various types of prayers, and much more, we have one final question to explore. That question is: "How should I pray?"

The scriptures offer many answers to this question:

- **As a child asks his father**
 - *"If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him"* (Luke 11:11,13)
 - Approach prayer with a childlike confidence, asking as simply and trustfully as a child asking a parent for bread
- **Trusting in God's omnipotence**
 - *"For with God nothing shall be impossible"* (Luke 1:37)
 - Prayer is not only wishing and asking, but believing and accepting because God is all-powerful
- **Having confidence before God**
 - *"Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight"* (1 John 3:21,22)
 - What we ask, we receive, because we keep and do!
- **Pray in secret**
 - *"But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly"* (Matthew 6:6)
 - *"And when [Jesus] had sent the multitudes away, He went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, He was there alone"* (Matthew 14:23)
 - Spending time alone with God is invaluable
- **Ask definite petitions**
 - Jesus said, *"What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?"* (Luke 18:41)

"Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession...Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

Hebrews 4:14,16

- Don't ask God for generic requests and petitions, but rather be very specific. Offer your petitions one-by-one
- **Take time**
 - *"I give myself unto prayer" (Psalm 109:4)*
 - *"Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few" (Ecclesiastes 5:2)*
 - Don't rush your prayers—take your time and savor the time spent with the Lord
- **Trust God's faithfulness**
 - *"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for He is faithful that promised)" (Hebrews 10:23)*
 - *"Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered a child when she was past age, because she judged Him faithful Who had promised" (Hebrews 11:11)*
 - We must pray with assurance that God is faithful to keep His promises
- **Pray with your whole heart**
 - *"Grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel" (Psalm 20:4)*
 - *"I cried with my whole heart; hear me, O LORD: I will keep Thy statutes" (Psalm 119:145)*
 - God listens to every petition with His whole heart—we should ask with our whole heart
- **Pray with faith, doubting nothing**
 - *"Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith" (Mark 11:22,23)*
 - We must approach God in prayer with faith and confidence that He has the power to move a mountain and cast it into the sea
- **Don't limit God**
 - *"Is any thing too hard for the LORD?" (Genesis 18:14)*
 - *"Ah Lord GOD! Behold, Thou hast made the heaven and the earth by Thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for Thee...Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for Me?" (Jeremiah 32:17,27)*
 - Don't limit God by limiting what you ask of Him because you think you know what He can and can't do
- **Pray boldly**
 - *"Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession...Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:14,16)*
 - Approach God in prayer boldly, confidently, with great assurance that all things are possible with Him
- **Pray with understanding**
 - *"What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also" (I Corinthians 14:15)*
 - Pray from the heart so that anyone that might hear your prayer will understand it

- **Confidently expect an answer**
 - *“Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not” (Jeremiah 33:3)*
 - Be confident in your request that God is able to fulfill the request, and expect God to answer your prayer
- **Pray with intercession of the Holy Spirit**
 - *“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” (Romans 8:26)*
 - Realize that the Holy Spirit will help you pray for things you don’t realize you need to pray for—He will intercede on your behalf
- **Pray often, not fainting**
 - *“...men ought always to pray, and not to faint” (Luke 18:1)*
 - We should pray frequently and maintain a continual prayerful attitude. Do not become faint or weary in your prayers.
- **Pray continually**
 - *“Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day” (I Timothy 5:5)*
 - *“God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you” (I Samuel 12:23)*
 - We should put our faith and complete trust in God and pray to Him continually
- **Labor fervently in prayer**
 - *“Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God” (Colossians 4:12)*
 - We should never slack off in our prayers, but rather be busy at work praying to the Lord
- **Draw near to God**
 - *“Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you” (James 4:8)*
 - You’ll never be as close to God while you’re here on this earth than when you are conversing with Him in prayer
- **Abide in Christ**
 - *“If ye abide in Me, and My Words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you” (John 15:7)*
 - If we faithfully abide in Christ and His Word, God will hear and answer our prayers
- **Watch and pray**
 - *“Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving” (Colossians 4:2)*
 - Watch for favorable opportunities and watch that your mind is in a proper frame of mind when you pray—never neglect the opportunity to pray and be thankful for the opportunity to pray
- **Strive in prayer**
 - *“Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me” (Romans 15:30)*
 - We need to strive together and never allow Satan to hinder us from praying

How Should I Pray? – QUESTIONS

1. Define “omnipotence.” What should be the impact of God’s omnipotence on our prayer life?
2. What is the importance for us to be very specific in our prayer requests (**Luke 18:41**)?
3. Explain **Ecclesiastes 5:2** in regards to our prayer life.
4. What does it mean to pray with your “*whole heart*” (**Psalm 119:145; Jeremiah 29:13**)?
5. Describe the degree of faith God requires when we approach Him in prayer (**Mark 11:22,23**).
6. “*Is any thing too hard for the LORD*” (**Genesis 18:14**)? (*Give scriptures*)
7. Should we be confident in expecting God to answer our prayers? How does that confidence, or lack of confidence, affect our prayer life? (*Give scriptures*)
8. How should the prayer habits of Epaphras affect our prayer life (**Colossians 4:12**)?
9. According to **James 4:8**, how does prayer impact our relationship with God?
10. Explain **Hebrews 4:16**: “*Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*”

