

New Christian Growth Series

Topical Study:

How to Pray





Instructions:

1. Please fill in the blanks in these lessons and the review booklet, using a King James Version of the Bible.
2. When you are finished, keep this lesson book and **return the completed review booklet** by U.S. mail or e-mail to:

Plowman's Academy

575 US Highway 250 OR plowman@mapministry.org

Greenwich, OH 44837

3. When we receive your review booklet, we will grade it, send it back to you, and send the next course in this volume.
4. When you have completed all 12 books in this course, we will send you a certificate.

Plowman's Academy was started to provide the opportunity for teens and adults to study God's Word more deeply, imitate Jesus more closely, and be more sensitive and obedient to God's Holy Spirit—all through the means of correspondence (communication by letters or mail) courses. Jesus taught us that when we set out to follow Him, we ought to do so with no regrets, no second thoughts, and no turning back. We welcome you to join us as we aim to turn from sin, surrender to God, seek Him until He rains righteousness upon us, and then follow Him faithfully and fully forever. Let us look always to Jesus and live always for eternity, for Jesus Christ is our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

Thank you for joining us. An academy is a place of study or training in a specific subject or skill. At Plowman's Academy, the subject is Jesus. Put your hand to the plow and do not look back.



And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

~Luke 9:62

Giving Credit and Appreciation to Ray Witmer

Ray Witmer, author of this Bible study curriculum, has given us permission to use his studies taken from the Word of God.

We are very grateful and appreciate Brother Ray's heart for God and his willingness to let us use his resources to spread God's Word among this generation of people.

Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.

~Hosea 10:12

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INSTRUCTION SHEET FOR BIBLE LESSONS

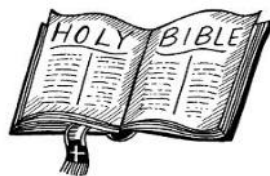
- A. The Bible verses used in this study are taken from the King James Version of the Bible, translated out of the original tongues with the former translation diligently compared and revised.
- B. Before doing each lesson, take time to ask God to open your understanding and show you the truth.
- C. For the best results, do only one lesson each day. Meditate on each day's lesson (there are four weeks of lessons per book).
- D. Keep in mind that these lessons are based on what the Bible says and not on man's opinion.
- E. These lessons are designed to help you to know the truth, to know the Lord in a personal way, and to trust what the Bible says and teaches you.
- F. Remember, it is not what you, I, or any preacher says, but what the Bible says.
- G. You must learn to stand on what the Bible says to "study to show yourself approved unto God, workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15)
- H. Who wrote the Bible? (2 Peter 1:21).
- I. All Scripture is inspired by God (2 Timothy 3:16).
- J. Regardless of what man says, the believer (Christian) has direct access to the throne of God and is responsible directly to God. This access is through Jesus Christ and Him only (1 Timothy 2:5).
- K. These studies are to help you have peace of mind (Isaiah 26:3-4).
- L. These studies will help you know if you are going to heaven or hell (Romans 10:13).
- M. These lessons will help you with assurance and security; these are not the same. The securing of the believer is God's work. It is a part of God's great work of salvation depending solely upon His infinite grace. Assurance is the believer's acceptance of the security provided for him in Christ. It is the result of the human soul resting in what God has promised in His Word to accomplish. This is why it is important to know what the Bible says (1 John 5:11-13).



**TAKE TIME TO READ BELOW
BEFORE DOING THIS LESSON**

Meditate on the Scriptures of This Lesson and
Ask Yourself These Questions:

1. What do these verses teach me about God and myself?
2. Is there an example here to follow or avoid?
3. Is there a command, a promise, or a warning that I need to apply?
4. What action do I need to take to align my life with this truth?



The Bible is the Word of God

LESSON 1

HOW TO PRAY GOD'S WAY

This week's Bible verse to memorize: Proverbs 15:29

The LORD is far from the wicked: but He heareth the prayer of the righteous.

Many people like to keep things simple; they like to just follow a few steps and then reach the preferred result. Prayer, however, cannot be reduced to a formula. It isn't some static activity where repeating certain words brings the desired result. It is ongoing communication with the Father, which involves listening, speaking, and acting on what you hear.

“And He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to _____, and not to faint; Saying, there was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came _____, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary” (Luke 18:1-3).

God has promised to answer His children's prayers, but He often waits before responding. He does so for many reasons:

1. Preparation. Sometimes God has to make you ready for what He wants to give you. You may have certain attitudes or behaviors that aren't right, and He will deal with them before He gives you His gift.

“Ye ask, and receive not, because _____, that ye may consume it upon your lusts” (James 4:3).

2. Spiritual Growth. The Lord may use delays to test your faith or to deepen your relationship with Him. When there is no response from Him, He wants you to keep seeking Him and conversing with Him.

“Be still, and know that I _____: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah” (Psalm 46:10-11).

3. Timing. God's timetable often will not match yours. He knows what He wants to accomplish in your spiritual life and relationship with Him. You can trust that the time between your request and His reply will be used well by Him.

“And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow _____, I will _____, lest by her continual coming she weary me” (Luke 18:4-5).

4. Believer's Prayer Life. God has included delays as part of the believer's prayer life. Sometimes He answers your first request, but many times it takes several petitions before He responds. In certain situations, you have to keep knocking (as the persevering widow did) before God gives His answer.

“And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night _____, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:6-8).

Jesus calls you to a lifestyle of “asking, seeking, and knocking” and a lifestyle undergirded by trust in God's promise to answer His children. How persistent are you?

Today's Bible reading is Luke chapter 18.

LESSON 2

LEARNING TO PRAY WITH CONFIDENCE

This week's Bible verse to memorize: Proverbs 15:29

The LORD is far from the wicked: but He heareth the prayer of the righteous.

Prayer is the Christian's most powerful God-given means for affecting change, yet we often feel unsure about our appeals to the Lord. The first basis for your confidence in prayer is the knowledge that you belong to God's family. When you receive Jesus as your Savior, God becomes your heavenly Father. Because of this, you can be absolutely sure that He will hear your prayers.

"But as many as received Him, to them gave He _____ to become the _____ of _____, even to them that _____ on His name" (John 1:12).

"But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast _____, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly" (Matthew 6:6).

A second reason for assurance comes when you know that you are praying according to God's will. This idea often seems perplexing, so let's look at it closely. You know certain things are never in God's plan, such as lies, cheating, and actions prompted by pride, malevolence, or rage.

"These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto Him: A _____ look, a _____ tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to _____, a false witness that speaketh _____, and he that soweth _____ among brethren" (Proverbs 6:16-19).

"But now ye also put off all these; _____, _____, _____, _____, filthy communication out of your mouth" (Colossians 3:8).

Insignificant matters like which colors you wear, and common sense decisions like wearing a seatbelt, are left to your discretion, but what about desires falling in neither category? To know God's will, your spirit must be submitted to God. In advance of His answer, you have to release your grip on the outcomes you want and be willing to say "yes" to His plan.

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. _____ the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

Study the Bible, where God's general will is revealed through commands and principles.

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for _____. For _____, for _____, for _____ in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all _____" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Believer, change your praying from being timid to being bold by aligning your prayers with God's will and remembering that He wants to say "yes" to His children.

Today's Bible reading is Matthew chapter 6.

LESSON 3

PRAYING WHEN IN NEED

This week's Bible verse to memorize: Proverbs 15:29

The LORD is far from the wicked: but He heareth the prayer of the righteous.

Life holds many stressful moments when you lack clarity on the way to proceed or help others. Through prayer, you can receive guidance; but how does it work? Prayer starts with your transition from what is happening in your world to communing with the Lord and thinking about Him.

“My brethren, count it all _____ when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh _____. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. If any of you lack _____, let him _____ of _____, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (James 1:2-5).

By taking your eyes off the circumstances and focusing instead on God, your mind will clear. Then, you will be prepared to receive His thoughts and to offer Christ-centered petitions back to Him.

“Be still, and know that I am God: I will be _____ among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The LORD of hosts is _____; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah” (Psalm 46:10-11).

In your prayers, you are to follow the pattern that Jesus taught His disciples and be specific about the distinct needs that you see. God wants not only to provide for you, but also to build up your belief in Him. Increased faith comes from seeing a direct correlation between your request and His answers. That is why it is best to avoid general, non-specific prayers; otherwise, how will you know if the Lord has responded?

“Give us this day our _____ . And forgive us our debts, as we _____ our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but _____ from evil: For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen” (Matthew 6:11-13).

A prayer list can give you a picture of God at work. With a record of your petitions and His replies, your faith in the power of prayer will grow. One request God promises to answer with a “yes” is the desire for wisdom. Whenever you need understanding, you are to ask God, and He will give it generously. He won't criticize you or turn you away for requesting it too frequently. He desires that you have the mind of Christ.

“But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him? but we have the _____ of _____” (1 Corinthians 2:15-16).

What a marvelous God we have, who wants us to come and ask!

For what do you need direction?

Today's Bible reading is James chapter 1.

LESSON 4

A WINNING COMBINATION IN PRAYER

This week's Bible verse to memorize: Proverbs 15:29

The LORD is far from the wicked: but He heareth the prayer of the righteous.

God invites His children to pray because He is delighted to provide for them, and He stands ready to do so; but God wants you to come in faith and ask Him to accomplish His divine plan in your circumstance.

“But let him ask in faith, _____ . 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. A double minded man is _____ in all his ways” (James 1:6-8).

Different types of hindrances can block the effectiveness of your prayers. One hindrance is not knowing God's will for your circumstances. He says “yes” only when your petition is in agreement with His purposes for your life. Even when the Bible does not specifically address your situation, it gives indications of God's will.

“For so is the will of God, that with _____ ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:” (1 Peter 2:15).

“For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from _____:” (1 Thessalonians 4:3).

“Pray without ceasing. In every thing _____: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” (1 Thessalonians 5:17-18).

Having low expectations that God will answer your prayer is another obstacle. As a believer, you are to ask confidently.

“In whom we have _____ and _____ with confidence by the _____ of Him. Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my _____ for you, which is your glory” (Ephesians 3:12-13).

A third problem is doubt. Uncertainty is like an intruder in your conversation with God; it short-circuits faith and the power of prayer. Doubt can be derived from listening to the wrong voices, embracing beliefs out of line with the Word, or looking at the difficulty instead of the Lord.

“That He would grant you, according to the riches of His _____, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by _____; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love...” (Ephesians 3:16-17).

If God delays His answer or responds in an unexpected way, skepticism can sneak into your thinking. To deal with doubt, you must learn God's ways. When you center your prayer on who He is, faith increases and doubt decreases. Disbelief will vanish as you discover His will and as you learn to shape your requests around it.

God is waiting for you to petition Him with prayers free of doubt and aligned with His will. List them here:

Today's Bible reading is 1 Thessalonians chapter 5.

LESSON 5

THE POWER OF JESUS' NAME

This week's Bible verse to memorize: Proverbs 15:29

The LORD is far from the wicked: but He heareth the prayer of the righteous.

Praying in Jesus' name states both your relationship with Christ and your right, through Him, to approach the Father directly; it also declares your authority to petition God. The glorified Christ now sits at the right hand of God, where He intercedes for you and serves as your High Priest. He has instructed you to come and ask for what you need. These words give you the authority to enter the throne room of grace at any time and speak personally with the Father. The Lord has granted everyone who has received Jesus Christ as Savior the right to use His name.

“Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make _____ for them. For such an high priest became us, who is _____, harmless, undefiled, _____ from _____, and made higher than the heavens...” (Hebrews 7:25-26).

Agreement with God's purposes is an important aspect of prayer. Based on your kinship with Jesus, you have access to the Father and can come with Christ's authority to make requests. But to use the Savior's name, you must agree with God's purposes. Praying in the name of Jesus means you are asking in agreement with His character and will.

“For there is one God, and one _____ between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave Himself a _____ for _____, to be testified in due time” (1 Timothy 2:5-6).

As a servant of God, you are to make it your priority to obey God and carry on His work. You are to accomplish the Father's will—not yours. By allowing His Word to abide in you and become part of your thinking and your standard for life, you will learn to pray in accordance with His plan.

“And whatsoever ye shall ask in _____, that will I do, that the Father may be _____ in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it” (John 14:13-14).

You can have assurance of an answer. “In Jesus' name” is a phrase of confidence. It is a confession of certainty that your prayers will be heard and answered. “In Jesus' name” are just three simple words, which powerfully move the Father's heart and hand. Prayer is a mighty prerogative of the children of God; use it well.

Please list and explain a prayer that God has answered for you:

Today's Bible reading is John chapter 14.

LESSON 6

A PATTERN FOR PRAYING

This week's Bible verse to memorize: Isaiah 65:24

And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

If your conversations with God consist of a checklist of needs and a catalog of feelings, then you have missed a key element of prayer. Expressing concerns is certainly appropriate, but the most important part of prayer is focusing on God Himself by loving and worshipping Him.

There are three things about the Father that you are to ponder in your prayers: His name, His kingdom, and His will.

“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 _____ of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, _____, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in _____; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly” (Matthew 6:5-6).

“Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name.” Jesus contrasted two types of prayer attitudes. Some people pray to be admired, while others talk to God in secret. The former have their reward in the praise of men, while the latter will be honored by God and will receive an answer. There is an important place for public supplication, but it will only be as effective as your private prayer life. Before others, you are to speak simply and to the point; in private, your words are to bring you humbly into God's presence.

“But when ye pray, use not _____, as the heathen do; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father _____ what things ye have _____ of, before ye ask Him. After this manner therefore pray ye: _____, which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name” (Matthew 6:7-9).

“Your kingdom come, Your will be done.” As a believer, you are declaring your faith in the kingdom of God, and you are asking that the rule of Christ be over your life. You are also promising to say yes to whatever the Lord requires of you. To pray without a willing spirit reduces the Lord's prayer to a ritual; don't let it become meaningless babble.

“Thy kingdom come, _____ in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our _____. And forgive us our debts, as we _____ our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but _____ from evil: For Thine is the kingdom, and the _____, and the _____, for ever. Amen” (Matthew 6:10-13).

From the Lord's point of view, your prayers represent a time of communion with Him.

How do you see your prayer life?

Today's Bible reading is Matthew chapter 6.

LESSON 7

THE LORD'S PATTERN FOR PRAYING

This week's Bible verse to memorize: Isaiah 65:24

And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

In the second half of the Lord's Prayer, Jesus addresses your need for daily provision, forgiveness, and protection. Notice that His words remain focused on the Father, who provides all three.

"Give us _____ our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into _____, but deliver us from evil: For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen" (Matthew 6:11-13).

"Give us this day our daily bread." It is God's will that you pray daily for him to supply what is needed. In doing so, you are acknowledging that He is the source of all your necessities, whether they be physical, material, emotional, or spiritual. You are declaring your trust in His sufficiency for each day. God already knows what you lack; in asking, you place yourself in a position of dependence, like a child to a father.

"For if ye _____ men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if _____ men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:14-15).

"Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." This part of the pattern for prayer is meant to ensure that everything is right between you and your Father and also between you and other people. Since unforgiveness toward others is sin, it creates tension between you and God. His will is for you to forgive others every single time. Otherwise, you are hypocritical, harboring enmity toward another person, but yet praying for your own forgiveness.

"But I say unto you, _____, bless them that curse you, _____ to them that hate you, and _____ them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the _____ of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matthew 5:44-45).

"Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Ask God to control your circumstances, so that you won't be faced with temptation too strong to resist. This is needed because the enemy and the world stand ready to lure us into unrighteousness by evil enticements.

"For the Lord God is a _____ and a _____: the LORD will give _____ and _____: no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly. O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man that _____ in _____" (Psalm 84:11-12).

Today's Bible reading is Psalm chapter 84.

LESSON 8

PRAYER CHANGES DOUBT TO TRUST

This week's Bible verse to memorize: Isaiah 65:24

And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

Moments of doubt occasionally come to every believer. Perhaps after you've prayed about a problem, the solution falls through. Maybe you feel that you have obeyed God, yet your situation worsens. Or maybe a criticism makes you question your ability to carry out His plan.

"The law of the LORD is _____, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is _____, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are _____, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is _____, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is _____, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are _____ and _____ altogether" (Psalm 19:7-9).

Fellowship with God. Believers are to live by faith, which is the only way to please God. Doubt short-circuits faith and causes insecurity.

"For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, the just shall live by _____" (Romans 1:17).

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must _____ that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently _____ Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

Prayer life. Your prayers become ineffective when you fail to trust God. The impossible becomes possible only for those who believe God and do not doubt.

"Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have _____, 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" (Matthew 21:21).

Kingdom service. God asks Christians to do God-sized tasks, but He does not leave you on your own to do them. He promises that the Holy Spirit will empower you to fulfill His plan. When you doubt, you fail to answer God's call.

"Let the _____ of my _____, and the _____ of my _____, be acceptable in Thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my Redeemer" (Psalm 19:14).

Blessings. Doubt produces discouragement, which crowds out your joy in the Lord and the peace Jesus gives.

"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your _____ be _____, neither let it be _____" (John 14:27).

When doubts surface, follow these simple steps: First, discover which part of your thinking is causing you not to trust God. Then, recall a time when He faithfully sustained you and brought you through a trial. Finally, identify a promise or attribute of God that points the way back to faith.

Today's Bible reading is Romans chapter 1.

LESSON 9

THE PLACE OF FASTING IN PRAYER

This week's Bible verse to memorize: Isaiah 65:24

And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

Jesus' words about fasting represent His invitation to a deeper experience with God. As you place your body's physical desires under the Spirit's control, you let go of your grip on the material in order to embrace the spiritual. In today's lesson, you will look at three reasons for fasting.

"But if ye _____ men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. 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" (Matthew 6:15-16).

1. Cleansing from Sin. When you let down your spiritual guard, you start thinking as the world does, protecting your rights instead of dying to self, or seeking to accumulate more rather than to sacrifice. Through these lapses, ungodly attitudes and habits can quietly take up residence in you, and you hardly notice; but God sees. They hinder your fellowship with Him, limit the effectiveness of your service, and erode your joy. Prayer combined with abstinence from food will give God your undivided attention to address sin. You, in turn, will find your sins grievous and will be eager to let them go.

"But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; That thou _____ to fast, but unto thy Father which is in _____: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly" (Matthew 6:17-18).

2. Guidance. God is willing to give you clear direction, but for some things, fasting as well as prayer is required. Through fasting, you gain a cleansed mind to hear what He is saying and a submitted spirit ready to accept His instructions.

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where _____, and _____ doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your _____ is, there will your _____ be also" (Matthew 6:19-21).

3. Protection. Through fasting, you gain insight into God's way and receive help to identify unhealthy or dangerous situations. As you submit to His authority and confess your need for protection, His Spirit will give you discernment to make wiser decisions and to avoid unnecessary pitfalls.

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you _____: Casting all your care upon Him; for He _____ for you" (1 Peter 5:6-7).

Abstaining from food, together with prayer, can bring heightened spiritual awareness and more intimate communion with the Lord. Aren't these the deepest desires of your heart?

Today's Bible reading is Matthew chapter 6.

LESSON 10

PRAYING TO YOUR SOVERIGN GOD

This week's Bible verse to memorize: Isaiah 65:24

And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

Prayer is the heartbeat of the believer's walk with God. But sometimes you may wonder what kind of influence prayer really has. You may ask the question, "If the Lord controls all things, why does He want me to pray?"

"These words spake Jesus, and _____ up His eyes to _____, and said, _____, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee: As Thou hast given him _____ over all flesh, that He should give _____ to as many as Thou hast given Him" (John 17:1-2).

God desires to involve His children in the work He is doing; through prayer, you can be part of His plans and purposes. Praying regularly also helps you maintain a sense of dependence on your Father and leads to a deepening intimacy with Him. Furthermore, God desires to bring you into agreement with His will. The more your plans line up with His, the more He is able to accomplish through your life. In addition, He knows that answered prayer will increase your faith.

"And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the _____, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent. I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have _____ the work which Thou gavest Me to do" (John 17:3-4).

Would God's plans fail if you chose not to pray? God is not subservient to us, so His plans are contingent only upon Himself. He works all things after the counsel of His will—not according to your prayers. However, He prompts you to communicate in order to include you in His eternal purposes.

"And now, O _____, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the _____ which I had with Thee before the world was. I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest me out of the world: Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me; and they have _____" (John 17:5-6).

Does my failure to pray affect my life or anyone else's? According to the Bible, some things that God has planned to give will be received only if you ask Him. For example, Jesus did not perform many miracles in His hometown because so few people had faith to ask.

"Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and _____ to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye _____. Ye ask, and _____, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (James 4:2-3).

Knowing that God was in perfect control of all things, Jesus still consistently went to the heavenly Father in prayer.

Will you seek to follow Jesus' example?

Today's Bible reading is John chapter 17.

LESSON 11

THE IMPACT OF PRAYER

This week's Bible verse to memorize: Isaiah 65:24

And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

God has complete authority over all people and events. He knows the hearts of men, how they will act, and what steps to take to accomplish His purposes. At the same time, He still calls you to pray.

“_____ in _____, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; Withal praying also for us, that God would _____ unto us a _____ of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:” (Colossians 4:2-3).

The Bible says you are to be devoted to prayer. In fact, communication with God is so vital that you are told to pray without ceasing.

“_____ without _____. In _____ give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” (1 Thessalonians 5:17-18).

Continuous listening, talking, and relating to your heavenly Father should characterize your life. The Bible explains why this is so important:

“The LORD is righteous in _____ His ways, and holy in all His works. The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in _____. He will fulfill the desire of them that fear Him: He also will _____ their _____, and will _____ them. The LORD preserveth all them that _____ Him: but all the wicked will He destroy” (Psalm 145:17-20).

Prayer changes you. As you seek God's face and spend time in His Word, you will be transformed. Your desires will be replaced by His, and your thinking will align more closely with His thoughts. As your understanding of His character grows, you will have a better idea of how to pray in accordance with His will.

“Confess your faults one to another, and _____ one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man _____” (James 5:16).

God answers prayer. God has promised to listen and respond to the prayers of His children. He assures you that He will act when your petitions are in Jesus' name — that is, matching His will and His timing.

“And _____ ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be _____ in the Son” (John 14:13).

Prayer invites God to act. Prayer doesn't alter any of God's divine purposes or plans, nor does it cause Him to change His mind. What He has decided will occur, and His decisions will be exactly the right ones to accomplish His will. Your prayers are powerful when, without reservation, you invite God to do His work in your life and in the lives of others.

Today's Bible reading is 1 Thessalonians chapter 5.

LESSON 12

PRAYING IN A CRISIS

This week's Bible verse to memorize: Isaiah 65:24

And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

The Bible says that “the effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” Effective—that is exactly what you should want your prayers to be, especially in a crisis. When you meet God’s requirements, you can be confident that He will release divine energy into the situation, and your prayers will produce results.

“Is any among you afflicted? let him _____ Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them _____ over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the _____ of _____ shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him” (James 5:13-15).

Requirement #1 – Fervent Prayer. Motivated by a deeply burdened heart, fervent prayers are filled with passion and a strong sense of personal helplessness. They also have a narrow focus on some specific difficulty about which you care deeply. The Bible calls this type of prayer “laboring earnestly.”

“Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring _____ for you in _____, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God” (Colossians 4:12).

Requirement #2 – Righteousness. Upon salvation, you become related to God as His child. You are permanently sealed with the Holy Spirit, and you are declared righteous forever because of your position in Jesus Christ. But the word “righteous” is also used to describe a believer’s conduct. This means that to be called a “righteous person,” you must be found in Christ and have an obedient lifestyle before God. If you willingly and knowingly engage in sin, then you are not living righteously, and your prayers will not be effective.

“And be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the _____, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the _____ which is of _____ by _____: That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death;” (Philippians 3:9-10).

When the Lord hears an impassioned prayer, He knows who is praying. If it is a righteous person whose life reflects God’s ways, the Bible promises that the Holy Spirit will begin His divine work. God responds with great power to the prayers of even one righteous person. That one person can be you!

Do you believe that God answers prayer? If so, please describe prayers that God has answered for you:

Today's Bible reading is Philippians chapter 3.

LESSON 13

SOLVING PROBLEMS THROUGH PRAYER

This week's Bible verse to memorize: 1 Peter 5:6-7

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.

When problems face you, you probably frequently try to figure out the solution yourself. If you can patch it up, glue it down, or tape it on, you attempt to do so. Other times, you'll call someone to ask for a solution, but are actually seeking sympathy and support to make yourself feel better. Sometimes, what you really need is for somebody to say, "Well, I appreciate you calling me, but have you talked to God about it? Have you prayed?"

"O give thanks unto the LORD; _____; make known His deeds among the people. Sing unto Him, _____ unto Him: talk ye of all His wondrous works. Glory ye in His holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that _____ the LORD. Seek the LORD, and His _____: seek His face evermore" (Psalm 105:1-4).

Solving problems should begin with seeking the Lord before there is a crisis. In times of peace, you will experience the joy and contentedness that comes from worshipping God, reading His Word, and communicating with Him. When you set your heart toward the Lord, your faith is strengthened, and you develop godly habits that sustain you through trials.

"Praise ye the LORD. O _____ undo the LORD; for He is good: for His mercy endureth for ever. Who can utter the _____ of the LORD? who can shew forth all His praise? Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that _____ at all times. Remember me, O LORD, with the _____ that Thou bearest unto Thy people: O visit me with Thy salvation;" (Psalm 106:1-4).

You will awaken each morning thinking about God and talking to Him. You will ask God throughout the day about His plans for you and will act accordingly. Prayer will become your customary response.

"Oh that men would _____ the _____ for His goodness, and for His _____ to the children of men! For He _____ the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with _____. Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron;" (Psalm 107:8-10).

Then, whenever you face any kind of problem, your first thought will be, "Father." In that one word, you acknowledge your relationship with Him, your awareness of His presence, and your dependence upon Him. God loves to hear His name on your lips, and He promises to respond to the prayer that follows.

What if you are presently in the midst of trouble but haven't been seeking Him consistently? Begin now by humbly confessing this to God. Receive His forgiveness, and pray to Him.

Today's Bible reading is Psalm chapter 107.

LESSON 14

THE PRIORITY OF PRAYER

This week's Bible verse to memorize: 1 Peter 5:6-7

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.

Have you ever felt like asking God why you should pray? Your world seems to be hanging by a thread. Emotionally, you feel empty. The future looks dim, and just when you think it cannot get any worse, it does. How could prayer help your situation? It is through prayer that you find hope and a solution for every problem you face.

“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 _____ of men. Verily I say unto you. They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, _____ to _____ which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall _____” (Matthew 6:5-6).

Prayer re-adjusts the focus of your heart and mind. In times of crisis, it is easy to focus on the darkness of the prevailing situation. Prayer causes you to look to a source of help that will never fail you. When you focus your mind on Christ and His ability, your heart will cease to be anxious; peace will reign.

Prayer gives you an opportunity to witness God's involvement in your life. His greatest desire is to build a personal relationship with each one of His children. As you worship Him through prayer, He draws near to you and offers you His assurance and acceptance.

Prayer helps you understand the love of God. Prayer is your direct line of communication to God. True prayer begins with confession of any sin and repentance.

“But when ye pray, _____, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father _____ what things ye have _____ of, before ye ask Him” (Matthew 6:7-8).

There may be times when you wonder, “Why pray? My world is crumbling all around me.” That is the time when you need to pray the most. Prayer is your greatest avenue of hope because it leads you straight into the throne room of God.

Please express your feeling on your prayer life:

What is it that you have been praying for, but have not received an answer for?

Today's Bible reading is Matthew chapter 6.

LESSON 15

A LIFESTYLE OF WAITING ON GOD

This week's Bible verse to memorize: 1 Peter 5:6-7

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.

Ever notice how some teenagers will ask a question, but will then rush out the door before you can respond? You can act the same way toward God when you do not wait on Him. In order to develop a lifestyle of waiting on the Lord, you need to have the following qualities:

1. Faith. You must be willing to trust God when a solution isn't obvious and you can't see a way through your struggle. Meditation on the Bible and applying it to life's trials will result in strengthened faith.

“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the _____ of _____” (Romans 10:17).

2. Humility. Recognizing that you can accomplish nothing apart from Jesus Christ, you should be willing to endure until God reveals His answer. His ways are always perfect; your cleverest plan will not be as adequate as His.

“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that _____ in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for _____ ye can do _____” (John 15:5).

3. Patience. Waiting is to be characterized by a calm demeanor and inner peace. These qualities come from believing that God is who He says He is and that He'll do exactly as He promised. With the Spirit's help, you can face stressful circumstances without complaining and can accept life's challenges without trying to manipulate your way out.

“_____ in the LORD, and do _____; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. _____ thyself also in the LORD: and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart. _____ thy way unto the LORD; _____ also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass” (Psalm 37:3-5).

4. Courage. It is human to want to be in control. You yearn to know what is going to happen and when it will happen. Courage is needed if you are to resist following your own schedule. Refusing to cave in to pressure from other people requires bravery as well. With the Holy Spirit's enablement, you can hold steady and wait on God.

“Teach me _____, O LORD, and _____ in a plain path, because of mine enemies. Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty. I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the _____ of the LORD in the land of the living. Wait on the LORD: be of _____, and He shall _____: wait, I say, on the LORD” (Psalm 27:11-14).

Wisdom and right action come through seeking God and His will. Won't you quiet your heart and mind and listen to what God has to say?

Today's Bible reading is Psalm chapter 27.

LESSON 16

THE REWARDS OF WAITING

This week's Bible verse to memorize: 1 Peter 5:6-7

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.

“Let’s get moving!” How many times have you thought this as you stand in lines, wait for appointments, or sit in traffic? The truth is, most of us dislike having our plans delayed. Perhaps that is why we struggle to wait on the Lord. We do not want to hear, “Stay where you are until you receive additional orders. Do not make a change without the Spirit’s approval. Continue as you are and keep waiting.” Yet, there are great rewards for not moving ahead of God.

“Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of His understanding. He giveth _____ to the _____; and to them that have no might He _____” (Isaiah 40:28-29).

Blessing #1 – You will discover God’s will and purpose. Your impatience can cause you to miss out on the best that God has planned and to take detours into situations you would rather have avoided. The goodness of the Lord will be poured out upon those who choose to be still before Him.

“The LORD is good unto them that _____, to the soul that _____ Him” (Lamentations 3:25).

Blessing #2 – You will acquire supernatural strength for the work. Frequently, the Lord asks you to serve in capacities beyond your natural ability. Through His Holy Spirit, He will provide the strength needed for the tasks that He assigns.

“Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall _____ their _____; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be _____; and they shall walk, and not _____” (Isaiah 40:30-31).

Blessing #3 – You will receive answers to prayer. By remaining where you are, you will be rewarded with a response from God and receive His direction and help.

“I waited patiently for the LORD; and He inclined unto me, and _____ my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a _____, and established my goings. And He hath put a new song in my mouth, even _____ unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD” (Psalm 40:1-3).

Blessing #4 – You will see God at work. The sovereign Lord, Creator of heaven and earth and giver and sustainer of life, will turn His efforts toward you for your gain and also for the benefit of others.

“For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside Thee, what He _____ for him that waiteth for Him” (Isaiah 64:4).

Ask the Holy Spirit to develop in you character that is willing to wait.

Today’s Bible reading is Isaiah chapter 40.

LESSON 17

DOES PRAYER INFLUENCE GOD?

This week's Bible verse to memorize: 1 Peter 5:6-7

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.

The believer's two most important spiritual disciplines are Bible study and prayer. It is impossible to grow continually in Christ without practicing both. Prayer is the primary means by which you talk to God, and it is also a way He grows you; it is through prayer that you petition the Lord and trust Him for the answer. You learn to listen to Him, and you learn to wait for His answer.

“For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a _____ and _____ spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones” (Isaiah 57:15).

Indeed, prayer is one of the best ways in which you can honor God. When you pray to your heavenly Father, you are acknowledging that He is God and that He truly is “the high and exalted One who lives forever, whose name is Holy.” God alone deserves glory, and you ascribe honor to Him when you “pray without ceasing”—that is, maintain a God-ward attitude throughout the day, asking Him to govern every detail of your life.

“See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is _____, both among yourselves, and to all men. Rejoice evermore. Pray without _____. In every thing _____: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all _____ of evil” (1 Thessalonians 5:15-22).

Today's passage says that our Father dwells both on a high and holy place and also with the contrite and lowly in spirit. This means that your motives and the condition of your heart are very important in prayer. Simply wanting to “get your way” is not the spirit of prayer that honors God. Furthermore, it does not produce prayers that God will answer.

“The LORD is _____ in all His ways, and _____ in all His works. The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that _____ in _____. He will fulfill the desire of them that fear Him: He also will hear their cry, and will save them” (Psalm 145:17-19).

The Lord longs for an intimate relationship with you. Time spent in communication is the best way to grow close to Him.

“The LORD preserveth all them that _____: but all the wicked will He destroy. My mouth shall speak the _____ of the LORD: and let all flesh _____ his _____ for ever and ever” (Psalm 145:20-21).

Do you believe that God hears your prayers? Please explain:

Today's Bible reading is Psalm chapter 145.

LESSON 18

ANSWERED PRAYER—OUR ASSURANCE

This week's Bible verse to memorize: 1 Peter 5:6-7

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.

You can be assured that God will answer your prayers in Jesus' name because of the following:

1. Your Association. After salvation, you have a new relationship with God through His Son, Jesus. Your association with Christ makes it possible for you to have intimacy with God the Father.

2. Access. You can come to God's throne of grace with boldness and confidence. The reason for this is that Jesus' death and resurrection blotted out your sin and cleared the way for you to have unhindered access to God the Father.

3. Authority. Because of the shed blood of Jesus, believers are co-heirs with Him, identified eternally with the Son. As such, you are delegated His authority and have the right to pray in Christ's name. Jesus, who sits at the right hand of the Father, gives you this privilege.

“And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with _____; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together” (Romans 8:17).

4. Agreement. To pray in Jesus' name, you not only must have His authority, but you must also be in agreement with Him. If you ask for something outside of God's will, you can be assured that it will not be granted.

“And in that day ye shall ask Me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall _____ the _____ in _____, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: _____, and ye shall _____, that your joy may be full” (John 16:23-24).

5. Request. Your requests must be in line with God's character and the content of His Word. Essentially, when you ask something in Jesus' name, you are saying that you believe that Jesus Himself would make the same petition if He were in your situation.

“At that day ye shall ask in _____: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: For the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have _____ that I came out from God” (John 16:26-27).

6. Assurance. Asking “in Jesus' name” means praying in confidence. Jesus meant it when He said He would give you what you ask as long as you are in association and agreement with Him.

“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give _____ to them that ask Him?” (Matthew 7:11)

Today's Bible reading is Matthew chapter 7.

LESSON 19

A LIFE-CHANGING PRAYER

This week's Bible verse to memorize: 1 Peter 5:6-7

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.

The prayer offered for the church in Colossae is a powerful model for any believer to follow in praying on behalf of others. This prayer will impact you, as well as those whom you lift up to the Father. The prayer asked that the church:

1. May be filled with the knowledge of God's will. One of the major steps of knowing God's will is knowing His Word, which provides guidance in every situation. You are asking God to make clear His perfect will for every decision. He numbers the hairs of your head, so He certainly has an interest in every single detail of your life.

“For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the _____ of _____ in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being _____ in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;” (Colossians 1:9-10).

2. May walk in a manner worthy of the Lord. The believer's judgment is when Christ will determine whether the weight of the believer's life was more eternal or more earthly and temporal. When you ask the Lord to help someone walk worthy of Him, you are asking Him to help make that person's life count for eternity.

“Strengthened with all might, according to His _____, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be _____ of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath _____ from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:” (Colossians 1:11-13).

3. May bear fruit in every good work. When Christ is the center of your life, your character should bear fruit unto His kingdom. Asking God for His Holy Spirit is an indication of a sincere desire to live for Him and to obey His Word.

“In whom we have _____ through _____, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:” (Colossians 1:14-15).

4. May be strengthened and sustained with the power of God. Christians are weakened anytime they attempt to do something in their own strength. Your most successful efforts come not by your own power, but by God's Holy Spirit. His supernatural strength and wisdom are necessary if you are to prevail in such a provocatively evil world. His peace and presence are required if you are to live victoriously regardless of circumstances.

“Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, this is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by My _____, saith the Lord of hosts” (Zechariah 4:6).

Give thanks for His salvation because He sent His Son to die for you. He gave you the gift of faith. He forgave you. He redeemed you. He reconciled you. He justified you. He is sanctifying you. He will glorify you.

Today's Bible reading is Colossians chapter 1.

LESSON 20

PRAY WITH PRAISE

This week's Bible verse to memorize: 1 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.

Think about a husband who doesn't communicate with his wife unless he wants her to do something for him. If the only time he interacts with her is when he has a need, then that woman is not being loved; she's being used.

"Make a _____ noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. Serve the LORD with _____: come before His presence with _____. Know ye that the LORD He is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the _____ of His pasture (Psalm 100:1-3).

Don't you often treat God the same way? You make prayer request after prayer request and yet fail to give Him admiration and praise. How frequently do you attempt to use the Lord to fill your selfish needs?

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the _____ of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light; Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained _____" (1 Peter 2:9-10).

The Bible says that you exist to praise God. Your worries and concerns are of great importance to Him, but He also wants you to come to Him with a worshipful heart, and not with an attitude of self-centeredness.

"Enter into His gates with _____, and into His courts with _____: be _____ unto Him, and bless His name. For the LORD is good; His mercy is _____; and His truth endureth to all generations" (Psalm 100:4-5).

You may ask, "What's the point of praise?" When you begin to extol the Lord, your focus shifts to Him. You'll begin to recall the ways in which He has impacted your life. As the Bible says, "Remember His wonders, which He has done."

"Seek the LORD, and His strength: seek His face evermore. _____ His _____ that He hath done; His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth" (Psalm 105:4-5).

Praising the Lord is one of the principal themes in Scripture. You are told to do so joyfully, all throughout the day and in the presence of others. God truly created us to praise Him.

"From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the LORD's name is to be _____" (Psalm 113:3).

"I will _____, O LORD, among the people: and I will _____ unto Thee among the nations" (Psalm 108:3).

Instead of approaching the Lord with a list of requests, simply praise Him for His faithfulness and righteousness. When your heart is full of praise, worries will dissipate, and you will trust God to provide for your needs in His own timing.

Today's Bible reading is Psalm chapter 111.

LESSON 21

WHY PRAY?

This week's Bible verse to memorize: 1 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.

In the Bible the Lord said, “Your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.” So why would God want you to talk to Him about all of your needs when He already knows what they are? The fact is, praying is not informing God; it is honoring Him as the source of your life.

“Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father _____ what things ye have _____ of, before ye ask Him” (Matthew 6:8).

God wants you to understand that He is an all-powerful Father who loves to involve His children in what He is doing. You are also called to pray because it is crucial for your spiritual growth. You can memorize endless scriptures, attend church, and be baptized, but if you neglect prayer, you are on the road to ultimate spiritual defeat.

“And He said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, _____ me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have _____ to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee” (Luke 11:5-7).

You simply cannot develop an intimate relationship with anyone unless you spend time sharing and listening, because that is a big part of learning who the other person is. God reveals Himself to the degree that you open your heart to Him, listen, and then act upon what He shows you.

“If ye shall _____ any thing _____, I will do it” (John 14:14).

Prayer is all about relationship. Jesus told His disciples, “If you shall ask anything in My name, I will do it.” That doesn't mean that adding, “in Jesus' name” onto any request obligates God to provide what you want! Jesus goes on to explain that He will do whatever you ask when you are abiding in His presence and are filled with His Spirit.

“If ye abide in Me, and _____ abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is My Father glorified, that ye _____ much _____; so shall ye be My disciples” (John 15:7-8).

Praying in His name means coming to Him under His authority, in submission to His will, and in total dependence upon Him. Allow this attitude to govern what you request of the Lord.

Explain how your relationship with God gives or doesn't give you assurance that your prayers will be answered:

Today's Bible reading is John chapter 15.

LESSON 22

AN AWESOME PRIVILEGE TO PRAY

This week's Bible verse to memorize: 1 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.

To pray and expect answers is truly a remarkable privilege, considering the holiness of God. In your desire to be blessed, you probably rarely give much thought to how holy God is, but it is important to Him that you understand this aspect. His character is so flawless that even a hint of sin is incompatible with His presence. Human beings, however, are inherently sinful, so in order for you to commune with God, He had to plan a way to atone for man's transgressions.

“For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the _____: not with wisdom of words, lest the _____ of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the _____ of _____” (1 Corinthians 1:17-18).

God's holiness requires a blood offering to wipe away sin (Leviticus 17:11). The Law He gave Moses contained a provision for cleansing the imperfect people: the priest would offer an animal sacrifice to cover the Israelites' sins (Leviticus 4:5). Later, the New Testament brought a new provision for cleansing imperfect people: the cross. God accepted a final shedding of blood as the one-time payment for all sin—past, present, and future. Jesus Christ's all-sufficient, atoning sacrifice paid your entire sin-debt so that you could enter into God's holy presence.

“And being found in fashion [appearance] as a man, He _____, and became obedient unto _____, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every _____ should _____, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every _____ should _____ that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the _____ of God the Father” (Philippians 2:8-11).

Christians sometimes underestimate the significance of being able to speak with the Lord. Prayer is your birthright; more precisely, it is your re-birthright as a child “born again” into the family of God.

“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be _____, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3).

Unbelievers may talk toward heaven, but the Bible offers no hope that God will listen or respond unless they receive Christ's sacrifice on their behalf. As believers, you are welcome to pray and draw close to the Father because the Son (Jesus) is your permanent high priest, eternally covering you in a veil of righteousness.

Have you been born again? If not, ask God to save you from what you deserve. Repent, and trust in Jesus alone for salvation. You can sincerely pray something like this:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Son of God and that you died for me. Forgive my sins. I ask you to be my Savior and to save my soul. Give me your gift of eternal life in heaven. Help me to turn from sin and to live for you. I pray in your name, and thank you for saving me. Amen.

Today's Bible reading is John chapter 3.

LESSON 23

THE EXPRESSION OF FAITH IN PRAYER

This week's Bible verse to memorize: 1 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.

It's safe to assume that at some point in your life you made a request of God, and then, as time passed without results, you wondered if He ever heard you at all. Do you remember thinking, "What happened, Lord? You said that if I asked in faith, You would do it. Didn't You hear me?"

"And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree _____ from the roots And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which Thou cursedst is withered away. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have _____ in _____" (Mark 11:20-22).

I believe one of the most common reasons we experience a crisis of faith is that our words and our attitude get out of line with each other. You may tell yourself that you are praying to God, seeking His will, and asking for His intervention, but what you are really doing is complaining to Him.

"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 _____ in his heart, but shall _____ that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, _____ that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark 11:23-24).

You may say, "Lord, I really messed this up," or "I don't deserve this." You might pray, "How did this happen?" Or perhaps, you even cry, "Why did You let this happen?" You moan about the situation, reveling in every ounce of anguish, and then tell God to fix it. Is this a prayer that honors God?

"And when ye stand praying, _____, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may _____ your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses" (Mark 11:25-26).

Jesus explains that if you ask for something, you should believe in your heart that it has already been granted. This level of faith is found not in your whines, but in your praises. God absolutely wants you to cry out to Him and to lay your petitions at His feet, but you must be careful to do so in a way that focuses on God's glory, and not your own.

Let me give you a challenge. Think about a time you brought a petition to the Lord, and it apparently went unanswered. What was the situation? How did you pray about it? What did you say to others about it? What did you do about it?

Today's Bible reading is Mark chapter 11.

LESSON 24

THE POWER IN PRAYER

This week's Bible verse to memorize: 1 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.

In previous lessons, you learned why prayer is an awesome privilege for believers. Today, you will study the power you have when you pray. An omnipotent God, for whom nothing is impossible, hears your petitions.

“Ask, and it shall be given you; _____, and ye shall _____; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that _____; and to him that knocketh it shall be _____” (Matthew 7:7-8).

You access the greatest force in the universe when you enter the presence of the Father. It is within His power to give you anything you ask, although He does not always choose to do so. The Lord answers, “No,” to some of your prayers because He can see the negative consequences of your wrong desires. He will give you anything you ask if He recognizes, in His perfect wisdom and love, that it is good for you.

“Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask _____, will he give him a _____? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give _____ unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?” (Matthew 7:9-11).

In today's passage, the Lord draws a comparison between earthly fathers and the heavenly Father. If a human father, who is flawed and limited, can offer good things to his children, then it stands to reason that the heavenly Father, who is all-powerful and all-knowing, will give awesome gifts to His children as well. It is an amazing experience to receive what you request, or sometimes something even better than you request, from a holy, omnipotent, and loving God.

What surprises many believers is that God's purpose for prayer is not to give extravagant gifts. The Father's goal is to build intimacy between Himself and His child in order to conform him or her to His likeness.

What are your goals when you pray?

Do you believe that God hears your prayers? Explain:

Today's Bible reading is Matthew chapter 7.

LESSON 25

THE WISDOM OF WAITING ON GOD

This week's Bible verse to memorize: 1 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.

Which words come to mind when you think of waiting: "Delay?" "Obstacle?" "Time wasted?" The Lord's perspective is very different. He says that those who wait on Him will be blessed.

"And therefore will the LORD wait, that He may be _____ unto you, and therefore will He be exalted, that He may have _____ upon you: for the LORD is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that _____ for Him" (Isaiah 30:18).

Pausing to hear from your Father is always the wisest action you can take. By doing this, you will:

1. Receive clear direction. As a believer, you are not to operate as the world does, determining your course by human reasoning or other examples. Your guidance is to come from God. He will instruct you in the way in which you should go.

"I will _____ and teach thee in the _____ which thou shalt go: I will _____ with Mine eye" (Psalm 32:8).

2. Keep in step with the timing of His plan. "Seize the moment" is our culture's philosophy, but "wait for the Lord" is the Christian's. One of the blessings of following God's timetable is that difficult people and situations can be endured with inner confidence and peace. You know you are where God wants you, and He has promised to take care of you.

"Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we _____? or, What shall we _____? or, Wherewithal shall we be _____? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) For your heavenly Father _____ ye _____ of all these things" (Matthew 6:31-32).

3. Acquire the necessary preparation. God knows just what training you need for both the joys and sorrows that await you. As you cooperate with Him, the time spent waiting will prove to be productive and beneficial.

"Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O LORD. LORD, _____ my voice: let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. If Thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O LORD, who shall stand? But there is _____ with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared. I _____ for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in _____ do I _____. My _____ for the LORD more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning" (Psalm 130:1-6).

4. Purify your motives and strengthen your faith. God will use waiting time to reveal sinful behavior and motivations by showing you your inner thoughts and helping you to develop new heart attitudes. Pauses give you the opportunity to deepen your trust and dependence on Him.

Today's Bible reading is Psalm chapter 130.

LESSON 26

THE PRICE OF PRAYERLESSNESS

This week's Bible verse to memorize: 1 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.

Have you ever considered the fact that each one of us pays a price when we allow our prayer lives to fall by the wayside? Of course, this is not a monetary or earthly price; instead, it is a spiritual price.

“Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou _____ in the _____, and verily thou shalt be _____. Delight thyself also in the LORD: and He shall give thee the _____ of thine _____. Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in Him; and _____ bring it to pass” (Psalm 37:3-5).

When you fail to make prayer a priority (essentially forfeiting your time alone with God), you will begin to feel emptiness in your life, accompanied by a strange sense of unrest and uneasiness. In contrast, when your prayer life is active, the weight of these burdens will be lifted from your shoulders by the mighty hand of the Almighty God.

“Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him: _____ thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. _____ from _____, and _____: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil” (Psalm 37:7-8).

With this in mind, why would anyone choose to cease praying? The sad truth is that many have become so accustomed to weariness and hardship that they feel lost or uncomfortable without it. Yet, if you continue to nurture this style of living, you will begin to rely upon yourself, making you vulnerable and at risk for disaster.

“Teach me Thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a _____, because of mine enemies. Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty. I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the _____ of the _____. Wait on the LORD: be of _____, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD” (Psalm 27:11-14).

The clear solution, then, to avoid these difficulties, is to place high priority upon your fellowship and communication with God. After all, you must be in contact with your heavenly Father in order to hear His voice and to understand and follow His will for your life. If you have allowed distance to come between you and your heavenly Father, confess this to Him today. When you renew your prayer life (the most important piece of your Christian walk) you will once again be able to experience God's blessings and His best for your life.

Do you feel that your prayer life could be described using the word “prayerlessness”? _____

Do you feel that you are getting your prayers answered? _____

Today's Bible reading is Psalm chapter 37.

LESSON 27

REVIEW (PART ONE)

This week's Bible verse to memorize: Romans 12:2

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind,
that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Multiple Choice

Read each question carefully, then mark the correct answer. There is only one correct answer to each question. The questions are based on Scripture and the lessons in this book.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Ye ask, and receive not, because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) You ask amissb) You do not have faithc) You don't love God <p>2. As many as received Jesus, to them He gave:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Power to sin no moreb) Power to become the sons of Godc) Power to love everyone <p>3. Resist the devil, and he will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Come again to youb) Go to someone elsec) Flee from you <p>4. Be still and know that I:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Will take care of youb) Am Godc) Am in heaven <p>5. For who hath known the mind of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) The Lordb) Satanc) Angels <p>6. Pray without:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Looking aroundb) Angerc) Ceasing | <p>7. The man Christ Jesus is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) A mediator between God and menb) Only a manc) Only God <p>8. When you pray you should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Bow your headb) Pray so that everyone hears youc) Enter into your closet (pray privately) <p>9. Do good to them that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Help youb) Hate youc) Pray for you <p>10. The just shall live:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) By faithb) By the works that they doc) By the success they gain <p>11. If you do not forgive men:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) They will leave you aloneb) Neither will your Father forgive youc) You can love them anyway <p>12. Blessed are those who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Pray in publicb) Wait upon the Lordc) Thank God for the good things He gives |
|---|---|

Today's Bible reading is James chapter 4.

LESSON 28

REVIEW (PART TWO)

This week's Bible verse to memorize: Romans 12:2

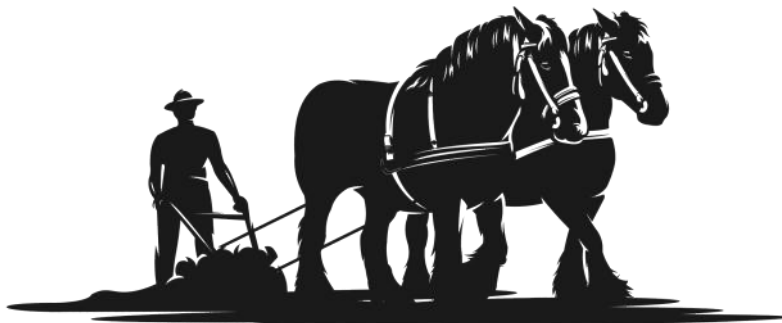
And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind,
that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

True or False

Read each statement below carefully, then enter "true" or "false" in the blank. The statements are based on Scripture and the lessons in this book.

1. You are to pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks. _____
2. You should keep your faults to yourself. _____
3. Whatever you ask in Jesus' name, He will do. _____
4. The prayer of faith shall save the sick. _____
5. Jesus said, "I am the vine, you are the tree." _____
6. Wait, I say, on the Lord. _____
7. Jesus gives power to the faint. _____
8. I waited patiently for the Lord, and He passed me by. _____
9. See that none render evil for evil unto any man. _____
10. The Lord preserves all them that love Him. _____
11. You have redemption through Jesus' blood. _____
12. For the Lord is good. _____
13. The Father knows what things you have need of only if you ask. _____
14. Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. _____
15. Blessed are they that wait for God. _____

Today's Bible reading is Psalm chapter 32.



PLOWMAN'S ACADEMY

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