

STEP BY STEP
Part Two in a Series of Eight



2. Prayer And The Christian

PRAYER

'caring for **PEOPLE** for **PEOPLE** matter to God' Romans 5:8

OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD DEPENDS ON PRAYER

INTRODUCTION

1 Thessalonians 5:17-19 'Pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit.'

One might say that prayer is one of the most sacred duties of the Christian. However, if the truth be told, it is one of the greatest privileges of the Christian. It is the Father's will and desire that His children should pray.

In the human family, parents would wish that there should be two-way communication with the children. Indeed, **how can proper guidance and care be exercised without it?**

It is also so in the divine family. When a person becomes a Christian, they are adopted into the family of God, and is natural for them to want to talk to our Father, and for Him to want to speak to us through the Word of God and also to listen to us.

WHY PRAY?

1. Because relationship depends upon communication.

We must view our Christianity as a personal relationship with God. Prayer **is not** some kind of incantation, a collection of words, learned by rote, which are chanted at regular or semi-regular intervals at God.

What kind of relationship would we have in the home if that all that took place there?

If, over the breakfast table, there was a set script that had to be followed and everyone said exactly the same things regardless of what was happening in our lives, we would think this very strange behaviour indeed. And we would know that the relationships couldn't possibly be right, or mature.

So also in our prayer lives. Please **read Matthew 6:5-15**. We note that Jesus teaches that prayer should not become some kind of performance for other men to witness and give us praise for. Nor is it something, which involves the vain chanting of words, which we do not really mean.

Isn't it a travesty that in this passage where Jesus is teaching us these valuable lessons about prayer and includes a model prayer of things about which to pray, that people have taken this model and turned it into a vain repetition.

There are many who would chant this thoughtlessly as a mere form of words, without considering what they are saying and sometimes without even understanding what they are saying. This is the very opposite of what Jesus was calling us to in this passage. Prayer is meaningful communication.

CHILDREN OF GOD

Romans 8:14-16 'For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.'

Galatians 4:4-7 'But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.'

We note that the message of the Gospel is that Christians have become the children of God. They have been adopted into His family and He has become their Father in Heaven.

Prayer is a reverent but loving conversation with our Father. He is not timing the conversation but He does want to hear from us. Just as human fathers crave a meaningful relationship with their children by which they grow into mature adulthood, so also does our Heavenly Father.

OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST

2. Because we need the help that He gives.

A second reason why Christians need to pray is that they need the help that only He can give. With human children, they need the help that their father can give them, food and shelter and sustenance, and guidance and wisdom and experience. So also in a spiritual sense, we need our Father.

Hebrews 4:14-16 'Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.'

We note that because those who are Christians and Jesus has become their great High Priest presenting His sacrifice before God in heaven, then Christians have confidence to enter into the presence of God.

Prayer should be reverent but it should also be presented with confidence because of our great High Priest. And as we come before God then we know that Christians shall receive mercy (**the forgiveness of sins**) and find grace to help in time of need (**strength and wisdom as we need it**).

Mercy is when God refuses to treat us as we deserve to be treated and Grace is when God treats us in a way that we have not merited or deserve.

When we all need forgiveness of sins daily, whom can we go to but God?

1 John 1:8-10 'If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.'

DEVELOPING OUR PRAYER LIFE

When a Christian needs strength to overcome sin and temptation, whom can we go to but God? Please read Ephesians 3:14-21

How can we ever truly appreciate the love of Christ and the sacrifice of Christ unless we see our need to be cleansed?

3. Pray What?

B. The second phrase may be slightly more difficult as it can be looked at in two ways.

I remember well my first attempts at prayer when I first became a Christian. I would kneel down by my bed right next to my alarm clock and pray to God. I noticed after a little time that my prayers seem to last only about three minutes. This made me wonder.

Is there something seriously wrong with me because that's all the time I can pray?

Prayer is something we develop in. It is something we learn. It is something we learn mainly by doing. We should recall that the disciples came to Jesus and asked Him to teach them to pray. So clearly, the apostles themselves needed to be taught how to pray.

Is it any wonder that we are not spiritually 'born' with some expertise in prayer?

Just as the baby needs to learn to walk, so also we need to learn how to walk spiritually. Prayer is part of that development. After some years as a Christian we find it is less difficult to find things to talk to God about.

MANY THINGS TO PRAY FOR

Also, we find that we don't measure prayer in minutes like that anyway. The Christian who walks with God finds that his whole life is punctuated by prayer.

Christians don't pray just once in the evening, or once in the morning but they find it is impossible to go through the day without talking to Him a hundred times, at the bus stop, in the train, at work, in the supermarket, washing the dishes, by the fireside, in the study, walking along the road.

Constantly there are things that Christians are immediately thankful for, instantaneously concerned about, unexpectedly in need of. It is just natural for Christians to turn to their Heavenly Father with those things.

Please read the following:

- a. Forgiveness of sins. [Matthew 6:12](#) and [Acts 8:22-24](#)
- b. Help in time of temptation. [Matthew 6:13](#) and [Matthew 26:40-41](#)
- c. For daily needs. [Matthew 6:11](#)
- d. For the sick. [James 5:14](#)
- e. For rulers. [1 Timothy 2:1-2](#)
- f. For enemies. [Matthew 5:44](#)
- g. For the church. [Philippians 1:9-11](#) and [Matthew 6:10](#) and [James 5:16](#)
- h. With thanksgiving. [Philippians 4:6-7](#) and [Colossians 2:6-7](#) and [Colossians 4:2-4](#)

PRAYING WITH FAITH

PRAY WITH!

The Bible teaches us that there are proper accessories to prayer.

Although God could accomplish my win with no difficulty, it would not be in harmony with His will to do so. Remember Solomon who prayed not for riches but for wisdom and God blessed him in all ways as a result.

- e. In a spirit of forgiveness. Please read [Matthew 6:15](#)

Jesus teaches Christians that if they pray to God for forgiveness they must be prepared to be forgiving ourselves. Harbouring a lack of forgiveness in our hearts will not only cripple our prayer lives but also be extremely harmful to us spiritually.

CONCLUSION:

Prayer is not an academic subject to be studied so much as a way of life to be practised.

EVALUATION SHEET

Please go ahead and fill in the evaluation sheet attached.

CONTACT DETAILS

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EVALUATION SHEET

Step by Step Lesson 2

(Please type or write your answers within the lines provided)

Name:

Home Address or Email address:

QUESTIONS:

(Please reply with your answers via e-mail or a separate sheet of paper.)

PARTICIPATE THIS WEEK IN THIS PRACTICAL EXERCISE:

Make a list of all the things that you ought to pray for this week. Include people who need our prayers such as the sick, the needy, the spiritually weak, the leaders of the church, the leaders of our country and other countries, all who preach and teach the Word of God, our neighbours, and all our loved ones. Think about all the things a Christian should thank God for. Be specific. **Write this down! Make a list!**

Consider your own spiritual needs, strength to overcome temptation, wisdom to understand the Word of God, courage to grasp opportunities to serve the Lord, forgiveness of sins. **Write it down!**

Now look at the list you have written. If it is very short, you need to think some more, and if you are having difficulty, ask a more experienced Christian to help you. Once you are happy with the list, make time this week every day to pray for the things on your list. This will get you started praying to God in a real way.

God wants to hear from you this week! Surely you are not going to disappoint such a Father.

SENDING YOUR ANSWERS

Once we have received your evaluation sheet we will send you the **next study** in the series.

Please return your completed evaluation sheet as an email attachment to info@the-scriptures.co.uk