

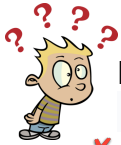
Prayer



Verses to memorize...

Philippians 4:6-7

⁶Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.
⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.



Have you struggled with prayer?

? Does prayer seem like an exercise in eloquent speech that you just don't possess?

✗ Prayer is not a mysterious practice reserved only for the religiously devout.

✓ Prayer is simply talking to with God

✓ Believers can pray from the heart...

...freely, spontaneously,

...and in their own words!



Prayer is your direct communication with God.

→ God speaks to us through His Word; and when you pray, you are speaking to God.



What is the purpose of prayer?



We pray to deepen our relationship with God

James 4:8

⁸ Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Hebrews 10:19-23

¹⁹ Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, ²¹ and since *we have* a great priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled *clean* from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

²³ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;

- ✓ Prayer is our way of communing with God.
- ✓ Just as friends and family members spend time talking with one another to deepen their relationships, so prayer deepens our relationship with God.
- ✓ God's desire is that we approach Him in prayer.
- ✓ We can have confidence to enter God's presence because of what Jesus Christ has done for us.



We also pray because we are commanded to

1st Thessalonians 5:16-18

¹⁶ Rejoice always; ¹⁷ pray without ceasing; ¹⁸ in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.



What does it mean to pray without ceasing?

Ephesians 6:18

¹⁸ With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,

"Greek writers used the adverb translated "without ceasing" to describe a hacking cough. Paul did not expect his readers to be in prayer every minute but to continue praying whenever possible." Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible



We pray to restore our relationship with God.

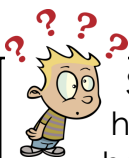
1 John 1:9

⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.



What does the word “confess” mean?

✓ “Confession” means to agree with God about our sinful actions or attitudes and to ask His forgiveness for them.



Some expositors teach that this verse cannot apply to Christians since God has already forgiven Christians and therefore we do not need to ask for what we already have. The fact that God has removed the penalty for our sins at conversion ([Ephesians 1:7](#)) does not remove the necessity of confessing our sins frequently ([Matthew 6:11–12](#)). Again, the issue is not acceptance by God but fellowship with God. Conversion (forensic) forgiveness makes us acceptable as members of God’s family. Continual (family) forgiveness enables us to experience intimate fellowship as sons within God’s family.



Describe David’s attitude in [Psalm 139:23-24](#)

[Psalm 139:23-24](#)

²³ Search me, O God, and know my heart;

Try me and know my anxious thoughts;

²⁴ And see if there be any hurtful way in me,

And lead me in the everlasting way.

David didn’t want to overlook any area of his life that might be displeasing to God. The Holy Spirit uses God’s Word to search our hearts. We must confess those actions and attitudes that are contrary to His Word, and to put off the sin in the future and determine to put on godly actions or attitudes to please God.



We pray to praise God

See [Psalm 100](#)



We pray for healing

[James 5:16](#)

¹⁶ Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.



We pray to intercede for someone else

[1 Timothy 2:1](#)

First of all, then, I urge that entreaties *and* prayers, petitions *and* thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men,

These are but a few of the many possible reasons that we should pray.

One way to remember **what we should be praying for** is with the helpful acrostic...

"A-C-T-S".

A-C-T-S

A = ADORATION

▮▮▮ I.e. = Praising God

Hebrews 13:15-16

¹⁵Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. ¹⁶And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

▮▮▮ Spending time in sincere praise of God's greatness will help put us in the proper spirit of humility

C = CONFESSION

▮▮▮ I.e. = Acknowledging our sins before God

▮▮▮ When we understand how sin can break the fellowship we have with God, we naturally desire its quick remission

1 John 1:9

⁹If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

T = THANKSGIVING

▮▮▮ An important part of prayer, even when we are making requests

Philippians 4:6

⁶Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

▮▮▮ The benefits of giving thanks are many:

1) Causes us to acknowledge God's existence, love, and care.

2) Reminds us of His goodness.

3) Helps to shift our focus from what we don't have to what we do have.

▮▮▮ God's people have every reason to be thankful

Colossians 1:12

¹²giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.

Colossians 2:7

⁷having been firmly rooted *and now* being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, *and* overflowing with gratitude.

Colossians 3:15

¹⁵Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.

Colossians 4:2

²Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with *an attitude of* thanksgiving

S = SUPPLICATION

▮▮▮ I.e. = Making requests of God

Philippians 4:6

⁶Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

1 Timothy 2:1

First of all, then, I urge that entreaties *and* prayers, petitions *and* thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men,



What is required of us to have an effective prayer life?

John 15:7

⁷If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

- ✓ A genuine relationship with the Lord
- ✓ Knowing God's Word and applying it to our lives.



What does it mean to “abide” in Christ:

1 John 4:13

¹³By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

John 15:4-5

⁴Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither *can* you unless you abide in Me. ⁵I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

1 John 3:22,24

²²and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.

²⁴The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

Colossians 3:1-3; 5-17

Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. ³For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

Ephesians 5:8-11; 15-17

⁸for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light ⁹(for the fruit of the Light *consists* in all goodness and righteousness and truth), ¹⁰trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; ¹⁵Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, ¹⁶making the most of your time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

“To abide in Christ is, on the one hand, to have no sin unjudged and unconfessed, no interest in anything He’s not involved in, no life which He cannot share. On the other hand, the none who abides takes all burdens to Him, and draws all wisdom, life and strength from Him. It is not unceasing consciousness of these things, and of Him, but that nothing is allowed in the life which separates from Him.” C.I. Scofield



To abide in Christ is...

- ✓ To have no unconfessed sin
- ✓ To yield one's life to God's will as found in the Scriptures.
- ✓ To take our burdens to Him
- ✓ To draw all wisdom and to trust in God for our strength
- ✓ Not an unceasing consciousness of these things, but it is rather to not allow anything (sin) to separate us from Him.



Believers who want to be more effective in their prayer life must be willing to learn how to pray **according to God's will**.

✓ Scripture assumes this process in much of its prayer teaching.

Psalm 119:11,14-15

¹¹ Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You.

¹⁴ I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, As much as in all riches.

¹⁵ I will meditate on Your precepts and I regard Your ways.

Psalm 37:4

"Delight yourself in the Lord; and he will give you the desires of your heart."

🕒 As the Believer "delights in the Lord"...

...over time

...the Believers desires will change

...and come in line with God's desires

🕒 You must become committed to: - Reading

- Memorizing

- Meditating on, and

- Obeying the written will of God



There are no short cuts, no seminars, no amazing prayer-power techniques, nor any "secrets" which bypass this reality.

1 John 5:14-15

¹⁴ This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that He hears us *in* whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.

James 4:2-3

² You lust and do not have; *so* you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; *so* you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. ³ You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend *it* on your pleasures.

★ Anyone observing a spoiled child understands that a truly loving Father is not likely to encourage disobedience in His children by answering prayer as if He felt, "My commandments aren't all that important anyway. It really doesn't matter whether you take Me seriously." God knows what is best. God may often say, "No," to requests that are selfishly motivated.



The path to answered prayer...

...is the way of obedience.



We have confidence in answered prayer because our confidence is in knowing Christ and trusting God's perfect will for our lives

James 1:6-7

⁶ But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord



A popular belief concerning answered prayer is that God answers our prayers if we do good deeds in a "this-for-that" arrangement. Essentially prayer is then a "mechanism" or a "system" that can be manipulated so that we can get what we want from God. In a way, this makes God a divine vending machine, into which we place a certain amount of obedience credits before "pushing the button" of prayer that obligates God to answers us according to what we want. This conception of prayer is both widespread and wrong.



No one can place God under obligation to do what we want.

In **Romans 11:35** Paul quotes Job and asks: **"Who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again?"**



Another way of looking at this is the clay cannot control the hand of the Potter who **"works all things according to the counsel of his will"** (Eph. 1:11)

1 John 5:14 takes us to the bottom line...

"If we ask anything according to his will, he hears us."



How do I pray?



Is there a correct posture for prayer?

There is no correct or certain posture for prayer. In the Bible people prayed on their knees, bowing, on their faces before God, and standing. You may pray with your eyes opened or closed, quietly or out loud, however you are most comfortable and least distracted.



Should I Use Eloquent Words?

Your prayers need not be wordy or impressive in speech.

Matthew 6:7

"And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words"



Prayer is not about phrasing everything perfectly, or using the correct formula in the exact right way.



Prayer is about communicating with God from our hearts, in an honest, loving relationship.



Sometimes we get too concerned about technique and forget that God knows our hearts and understands our human imperfections.



X God has not left it all up to you.

✓ Our Heavenly Father is gracious beyond measure!

✓ God knows what we need, even when we pray in error or ignorance of His will.

✓ God also has provided that we have intercession on our behalf through...

🔧 **Jesus** (1 Timothy 2:5; Romans 8:34; 1 John 2:1; Hebrews 7:25)

🔧 **The Holy Spirit** (Romans 8:26-27) &

🔧 **Other Believers...**

➡ Paul sought prayer on his behalf from all the Roman believers in **Romans 15:30**

➡ Paul also urged the Colossians to intercede for him in **Colossians 4:2-3**

➡ The church prayed for Peter's release from prison in **Acts 12:5**

➡ Paul exhorts the Ephesian believers to make intercessory prayer part of the Believers daily life in **Ephesians 6:16-18**



To Whom Do We Pray?

Matthew 6:6-9

⁶But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you.⁷“And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. ⁸So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.



⁹“Pray, then, in this way: ‘Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

We are to pray to the Father, through the Son, by the Spirit.



Christ is called the “**High Priest**” who intercedes for us (**Hebrews 4:15**) to the Father. Therefore, we enter into the Father's presence “in his name,” not our own – through the Son (**John 15:16**).



When should we pray?

✓ Having set times to pray can help us get into and stay in the habit of praying. For example, consider the practice of:

a. David, whom God described as “**a man after My own heart**”

- **1 Samuel 3:14**

b. Daniel, whom the angel of God described as “**O man greatly beloved**”

- **Daniel 10:19**

🎯 These great men of God made it a habit to pray at set times throughout the day; we would do well to imitate their example!

BUT...

Prayer should not be limited to “set times”...

✓ Special needs call for special times of praying

For example...

a. Jesus, prayed on important occasions - **Luke 6:12-13**

b. Paul, prayed in trying circumstances - **Acts 16:25**

c. Nehemiah - prayed on the spur of the moment - **Nehemiah 2:4-5**

d. Paul implores Believers to “Pray without ceasing” **1 Thessalonians 5:17**

Lesson #5

(Support your answers with proof texts)



What does it mean “to abide in Christ”, and how does this have bearing on our prayer life? _____



What is something that prayer does not accomplish?



To whom are we to direct our prayers too? Why?



Is it true that if you pray hard or long enough, God will change His mind and do what you want? Why or why not?



Who helps us in our prayers?



What are four things we should talk to the Lord about in our prayers?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____



When should we pray?
