

Praying

From the time the first man and woman were placed in the garden, God was talking to them and they were talking to him. Even after their sin, God came walking and looking for man to talk with him.

Genesis 3:8–9

⁸ And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. ⁹ And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?

This conversation that Adam and Eve had with God illustrates the relationship that God wants with us. He wants to talk with us, and He wants us to talk with Him through prayer.

In this study, we are going to look at:

- 1) Why pray
- 2) How to pray
- 3) Examples of prayers

KEY VERSE: Ephesians 6:18 *‘Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;’*

CHAPTERS TO READ THIS WEEK: John 15-21

1. WHY PRAY?

a. Prayer is how we talk with God.

Prayer is the wonderful privilege that believers in God have to talk with their heavenly Father. Though we are commanded to pray and we should discipline ourselves to spend time in prayer, we should view prayer as a delight and a privilege more than a duty and a responsibility. What an amazing job to be able to talk with the great God of heaven and know that He hears us!

Luke 11:1–13

¹ And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. ² And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. ³ Give us day by day our daily bread. ⁴ And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. ⁵ And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; ⁶ For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? ⁷ 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. ⁸ I say unto you,

Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. ⁹ And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. ¹⁰ For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. ¹¹ If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? ¹² Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? ¹³ If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

Notice from the passage above:

- **Prayer is about talking to our heavenly Father (v.2).** When we believe on Jesus Christ for salvation, a new relationship is established with God through Jesus, which gives us access to God in prayer.

Romans 5:1–2

¹ Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: ² By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

- **When we pray to our heavenly Father, we are not talking to a reluctant friend but a generous and loving Father who wants to give us good gifts (v.5-13).** Jesus contrasted the man who yielded to his friend's untiring persistence ('importunity') with a generous and loving father. Even more than earthly fathers love their children, God our heavenly father loves us.

b. Prayer was a vital part of the lives of many people in the Bible.

JESUS

- Great multitudes came to hear Jesus, but He withdrew into the wilderness to pray (Luke 5:15-16).
- When Jesus' opponents grew very angry and began to plot against him, he went out into a mountain and prayed all night (Luke 6:11-12).
- Jesus spent time alone (with His disciples) praying (Luke 9:18).
- Eight days later, we read about more praying on a mountain (Luke 9:28-29).
- Jesus' disciples asked Him to teach them to pray while He was praying (Luke 11:1).
- Before He was betrayed and crucified, Jesus prayed earnestly in the garden (Luke 22:40-46).

THE EARLY CHURCH

- They were unified in prayer (Acts 1:14).
- They prayed for wisdom to appoint a new apostle to replace Judas (Acts 1:24).
- They prayed for boldness when they were threatened for preaching the gospel (Acts 4:31).
- They were determined to not let anything get in the way of prayer (Acts 6:4).

MANY OTHERS: Abraham, Moses, Hannah, Samuel, David, Solomon, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Hezekiah, Daniel, Nehemiah, Job, Jeremiah, Jonah

c. We are too weak to make it without prayer.

Mark 14:38–39

³⁸ Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak. ³⁹ And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words.

Men should always pray and not give up ('faint').

Luke 18:1

And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;

When Paul and Silas were at their lowest, they prayed and sang.

Acts 16:25

And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.

Nehemiah and the Israelites prayed when their enemies conspired against them.

Nehemiah 4:9

Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them.

d. We need God's guidance in and blessing on everything.

The early church prayed when they appointed a new apostle.

Acts 1:24

And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen,

They prayed when they appointed men to serve in the church.

Acts 6:6

Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.

They prayed when they sent out the first missionaries.

Acts 13:3

And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

They prayed when they appointed elders/pastors of the churches.

Acts 14:23

And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

e. Prayer works.

While Daniel was praying, the Lord answered him.

Daniel 9:19–20

¹⁹ O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name. ²⁰ And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God;

Jonah prayed and the Lord heard.

Jonah 2:1

Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly,

Jonah 2:10

And the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.

Prayer opens our eyes to what is true.

2 Kings 6:17

And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

Other examples of answered prayer: Acts 9:20; Gen 20:7; 20:17; Num 11:2; 1 Sam 1:27; 1 Kings 13:6

f. Prayer glorifies God.

God is a living, personal, and powerful God. When we pray we are expressing our faith that God is alive, that He hears, and that He has the power to intervene. When we do NOT pray, we are showing that we don't really believe in our own weakness or the mighty power of God.

See Isaiah 44:1-20 for an example of how God expect to be glorified by His people. To worship, pray, and glorify any other god is foolishness.

g. It's a sin not to pray.

Samuel said that he would not sin in ceasing to pray for them.

1 Samuel 12:23

Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way:

For us not to obey the clear command of God to pray is to sin against the Lord.

1 Timothy 2:1–2

¹ I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; ² For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

Ephesians 6:18

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

2. HOW TO PRAY?

a. Pray to God, not to impress others.

Matthew 6:5–6

⁵ And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. ⁶ But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

b. Pray from the heart, not with empty repetitions.

Matthew 6:7–8

⁷ But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. ⁸ Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

c. Pray based on your relationship to God through Jesus.

Matthew 6:9

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

The whole basis for our prayer is the fact that God is our Heavenly Father.

This is why Jesus later instructed us to pray in His name, because He is the one that gives us access to the Father.

John 16:23–24

²³ And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. ²⁴ Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

Hebrews 4:14–16

¹⁴ Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. ¹⁵ For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

d. Pray with worship and praise.

Matthew 6:9

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

Hallowed = to make holy, to sanctify, to set apart

Thy name = the name of God represents His entire being

The idea here that we come into God's presence with praise and adoration for who God is, what He has done, and what He means to us.

Psalm 100:4

Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, And into his courts with praise: Be thankful unto him, and bless his name.

e. Pray for God's will to be done.

Matthew 6:10

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

Thy kingdom come

God rules and reigns over all creation and has done so since the universe was created. This is God's universal kingdom.

1 Chronicles 29:11–12

¹¹ Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all.

¹² Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all.

God has also promised a kingdom that will come in the future. This is God's future rule over the earth through the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, when He will rule and reign for 1000 years.

Daniel 2:44

And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

See also Zech 14:4; 14:9; Rev 20:6.

The prayer for God's kingdom is a desire for God's promised kingdom to come in which He will rule and reign over the whole earth.

Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

In heaven, all do the will of God. It should be our desire and prayer that we who are here on earth would submit to the will of God.

This will be realised in the coming earthly kingdom of Christ, but it should be our desire to willingly submit to Him now.

When we pray, we should pray according to the will of God.

1 John 5:14–15

¹⁴ And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: ¹⁵ And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

f. Pray for daily needs.

Matthew 6:11

Give us this day our daily bread.

We should ask God for the needs that we have.

Asking is not the most important reason to pray, but we are told to ask as long as our motives are pure.

James 4:1–3

¹ From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? ² Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. ³ Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

g. Confess sin as you pray.

Matthew 6:12

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

Prayer is a time to ask for forgiveness of sin.

1 John 1:8–9

⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

h. Pray for protection from evil.

Matthew 6:13

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

We have an enemy Satan who would like to tempt us.

We need to pray for God's help to not be led into temptation and to be delivered from evil.

i. Praise and glorify God some more.

Matthew 6:13

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

This model prayer opens with praise and adoration of God, and it closes by acknowledging that the kingdom, the power and the glory all belong to God for ever.

We need to make sure that our prayers are not just focused on ourselves and our needs, but on praising and glorifying God.

3. EXAMPLES OF PRAYERS

a. Abraham (Genesis 18:23-33)

b. David (2 Samuel 7:18-29)

c. Solomon (1 Kings 3:5-15)

d. Hezekiah (2 Kings 19:14-19)

e. Paul (Ephesians 3:14-21)