

Prayer, Conversations with
God

Prayer, Our Privilege

Lesson Thirteen

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Scriptures: Psalm 28; 30; 55: 16, 17, 22; Matthew 26:36-46; John 11:1-6; I Peter 5:6, 7;

Lesson Goal: To encourage the learner to understand the privilege of prayer.

Memory Verse: “Evening, morning and noon I cry out in distress, and He hears my voice.” Psalm 55:17

This is the last lesson in the series on prayer. We have discussed many things for which we pray. We have discussed how to pray. We have seen that the first step in right relationship with God is prayer. We have seen that praying is done in Jesus’ name and through the ministry of God’s Holy Spirit.

Does it not seem that this is the most wonderful privilege that one can imagine? Just think, God, the creator and sustainer of all that we know anything about invites us to come to Him with all our burdens.*

I Peter 5:6, 7 tells us that when we humble ourselves before God He lifts us up and when we cast our anxiety on Him, He will hear us as one who cares for us. Augustine or Hippo, one of the early church fathers, prayed, “What are you, my God? What are you, but the Lord God Himself? You are the highest, the most righteous and the most powerful being. You are the most merciful, and yet the most just. You are the most mysterious, and yet the most present.” He concluded his prayer, “What shall I say, O my God, my life, my holy joy? What can any man say when He speaks of you?”

And, it is not only in our distress, as suggested in our memory verse, nor when we are anxious, but at all times we can and should pray. Paul told the Philippians that he thanked God every time he remembered them. (Philippians 1:3) They were very special to Paul and when he was talking to God, he acknowledged that God-blessed relationship. We talk to God about the wonderful things as well as the difficult things.

We pray in all circumstances. Remember when Paul and Silas were in jail for preaching the Gospel? At “midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God...” (Acts 16:25) You don’t have to be in church, or happy, or sad, or good, or bad, or in any specific condition to pray. God welcomes you into His presence anytime, anyway.

We are to pray in faith, not doubt. James 1:5, 6 tells us, “If any of you lacks wisdom he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.” Our prayer privilege is just like that we have with family and friends. It is an exchange between those who love and trust each other.

Pray, Always:

To God
Through Jesus
By God’s Holy Spirit

In Thanksgiving
With Joy
For Others

For Forgiveness
For Salvation
To Confess

For Necessities
For Ability

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We are to pray, not matter what others are doing or what others think. In the account of the moments before and during Jesus' arrest, Jesus focused all that He was in prayer. At that crucial moment, His disciples fell asleep. He wanted them to pray with Him, but they let their physical exhaustion conquer their intent. Jesus continued in His conversation with God as we should do. The great petition of Jesus was that God's will be done, no matter what the cost. And it did cost Jesus His life.

Rejecting the wisdom of God, His Word and His will, is the cause of unanswered prayer. Proverbs 1:28 quotes God as saying, "They will call on Me but I will not answer; they will look for Me but will not find Me." He goes on to say that they didn't accept His advice and ignored His reprimand. God says in Isaiah 1:16b, 17, "Stop doing wrong, learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed, defend the cause of the fatherless, and plead the cause of the widow." These are good reasons for God to hear our prayer. God says if you are not that kind of person...Christ-like...He will hide His eyes and not see you.

Does God ever ignore our prayer? We have just discussed how He said that our prayers were not effective. However, what about the prayer of believers who are seeking the will of God? Are they ever ignored? We have an example of such a situation in John 11:1-6. Jesus was asked to come quickly to minister to His sick friend Lazarus. Jesus put off the trip until Lazarus died. He ultimately went, Lazarus was raised from the dead, and the sisters who had called Jesus in the first place, were happy again. So, why the delay? Jesus indicates that it had to do with calling attention to God and His Son Jesus. The answer to prayer is sometimes delayed. Be sure that God has the very best intentions when that happens.

God isn't interested in a lot of words. Jesus said, in the Sermon on the Mount, "And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him." (Matthew 6:7, 8) It is not necessary to memorize phrases, sound like someone else, or talk on and on when you pray. God's attention span is long, but there is no need in testing that.

Prayer is one of the greatest privileges of humanity. Pray always, pray humbly and pray believing.

*Underlined sentences in the Teacher's Guide appear in the Student Worksheet with blanks to be filled in by the student during the lesson. Words in the Student Worksheet may not appear exactly as printed in the Teacher's Guide.

Pray, like Jesus:

When Jesus was preaching the Sermon on the Mount, He said, "This, then is how you should pray: 'Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'" Matthew 6:9-13

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Student Worksheet

Prayer, Our Privilege

Memory Verse: “Evening, morning and noon I cry out in distress, and He hears my voice.” Psalm 55:17

- >God, the creator and sustainer of all that we know anything about _____ us to come to Him with all our _____.
- >We talk to God about the _____ things as well as the _____ things.
- >We pray in _____ circumstances.
- >We are to pray in _____, not _____.
- >God welcomes you into His presence _____, _____.
- >We are to pray, not matter what others are _____ or what others _____.
- >Rejecting the _____ of God, His Word and His will, is the cause of _____ prayer.
- >The answer to prayer is sometimes _____. Be sure that God has the very best _____ when that happens.
- >God isn’t interested in a lot of _____.
- >It is not necessary to memorize _____, sound like someone else, or talk on and on, when you _____.
- >Prayer is one of the greatest privileges of _____. Pray always, pray _____ and pray _____.

How to begin a Personal Relationship with God:

First, believe that there is a God.

Second, believe that Jesus, God’s Son, was sent to earth to die so that you can have a relationship with God.

Third, ask God to forgive your sins in Jesus’ name. Jesus’ death on the cross paid the price of every sin you commit.

Fourth, ask Jesus to be your Savior and the Lord of your life.

Fifth, believe that He has answered your prayer and be ready to live for him all the rest of your life.