

he could not ask his father for help. He was not in fellowship with his Father, and he felt he could not ask for his help. If he had been at home, pleasing his father, he could have asked. His Father loved him and would have given him all that he needed. (Luke 15:11)

Are you a Christian far away from God? Do you pray only when you are in trouble?

Do what this son did. At last "he came to himself." Come back home to your Father. He is waiting to forgive you.

Before God, we take our rightful place as sons. We stand on His promises. We claim His authority as we bring our requests to Him.

"We can come to the Lord with perfect assurance and trust and get whatever we ask for, because we are obeying Him and doing the things that please Him." (1 John 3:21,22 NASB)

TO TALK ABOUT

1. Can we pray to the living God without using Jesus' name?
2. Do such prayers have power with God? Why would the Father hear prayers made in Jesus' name?

A MORNING PRAYER

Father in Heaven: I come to You in Jesus' name. My heart is full of praise to You. I lift up my hands to You. I know I am a sinner, but because Jesus died for me I can be Your son (daughter).

When I was far away, You called me. I was lost in sin, but You heard my cry and saved me. You care for me and love me. I am nothing without You. Thank You for being my Father in Heaven.

When Satan tempts me to sin, I will trust in You. I know Jesus won the fight over Satan. I stand in the victory Jesus won. His blood covers and protects me. He will keep me from the evil one.

Teach me Your words of truth. Your word is a light to my feet. Help me to read and study Your word. Teach me to walk in Your way.

Thank you that I can be filled with Your Spirit, every day. I am your servant. Please show me what You want me to do and continue Your holy work in my life. Change me to be like Jesus.

When my life is hard, please give me more of Your grace. Help me to reach out to others and share what I have with them.

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TALKING WITH GOD



A BIBLE STUDY on Prayer
Written in Easy English
Fred Morris

PRAYER IS TALKING WITH GOD

Once a man said to me, “You say that you talk with God when you pray? You have to be crazy.”

“Prayer is talking with God, and God has told us to pray to Him,” I answered.

“Can anyone pray to God?” he asked. “How do you know He hears you?”

These are good questions. God hears humble people when they pray to Him and He wants to answer. “Call upon Me and I will answer you . . .” God said. (Psalm 86:7)

When God promises something, He always does it. He said He would hear us when we pray and He promised to answer our prayers.

You don’t have to have a college degree to pray to God. You don’t have to prove anything. You don’t have to own a Bible or go to church on Sunday, but you have to know who you are talking to. You wouldn’t want to talk to someone you don’t even know.

God is Creator of heaven and earth. He is holy and just. Everything He does is right and good. (Acts 17:25) He made us and He knows all about us. He knows you – “the hairs of your head are all numbered,” God said. (Luke 12:7)

God knows what you need even before you ask Him. He loved you, even before you were born. He sent Jesus to die for your sins.

Now He calls you to come to Him and be saved. “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved.” (Acts 16:31)

When you tell God you are sorry for your sins, He will save you. He wants to be your friend, but He cannot while you live in sin. He loves you, but He hates sin. So, how can sinners pray to Him?

PRAY AND ASK GOD TO FORGIVE YOU

First, ask Him to forgive you. You will be born again into His family and He will give you the free gift of eternal life. Then you can come to Him anytime, anywhere and talk freely to Him about anything.

Praying to God can be just as natural as talking to a person. We can live without talking. We cannot live as a Christian without praying. Prayer is the heart and kernel of our lives. It is like breathing.

Without prayer our spiritual lives dry up and die. Christians are weak in their spirits because they do not give time to pray.

We can pray to God anytime, but other things get in the way. So we all need a daily, special time of prayer.

Prayer is the pipeline that brings us the power for living. Someone said, “Seven days of no prayer makes one weak.”

THE BLOOD OF JESUS PROTECTS US

The blood of Jesus protects us when we pray. Because Jesus died on the cross, we can come to God and ask Him to protect us from all evil. (Matthew 6:13) That is how Jesus taught us to pray.

We must stand under the blood of Jesus. Call for this protection every single day, and every time you pray. The blood of Jesus binds Satan. (Mark 3:27)

1. We come boldly because Christ’s shed blood opened the way. By the way of the cross is the only way we can come to God. (Hebrews 10:19) The Holy Spirit makes sure we know this.

2. The Holy Spirit sets our eyes (attention) on Christ the Son. Jesus becomes our focus. “Fix your eyes on Jesus . . .” (Hebrews 12:2)

3. The Holy Spirit is God in us. He is one Person with the Father. The Holy Spirit knows the Father’s will perfectly, and He always glorifies the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

4. The Holy Spirit is there to help us put words to our prayers. The Holy Spirit in us speaks for us.

Our fellowship is “with the Father and with the Son, and with the Holy Spirit.” (1 John 1:3 NASB) The trinity is in every prayer: We pray to the Father, in the name of the Son, and by the power of the Holy Spirit.

THE NAME OF JESUS IS OUR AUTHORITY

When Jesus spoke, men noticed His authority. They said, “Never man spoke like this man.” (John 7:46) Jesus gave His disciples the authority of His own name. (Matthew 28:19; Luke 9:1)

I have heard people pray in public places and not use the name of Jesus when they ended their prayer. They may just say “Amen” or nothing at all.

We must always use Jesus’ name as our authority. Our faith is in the power of Jesus’ name. His name “is above every other name.”

Use His name when you start to pray. Use His name at the end of your prayer. We pray “in the name of Jesus.” This is our only authority against Satan and his evil spirits.

Our hearts submit to God’s will as Jesus’ heart did. We pray in the nature of Jesus. “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 2:5)

Jesus was always in close touch with the Father. His authority came from the Father. It was given to Him. We, too, must live as a child that pleases our Father. Then we can claim His authority.

We “bear the name” of Jesus. We bear it like a medal of honour. It is not just that we use Christ’s name in our prayers; we bear His name. It is written upon us. (Daniel 9:19)

In a parable, Jesus told of a son who asked his father for his inheritance and then went away. This son lived a life of sin and lost all his money and friends, but

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND PRAYER

In all of life, the Holy Spirit is our powerful partner in prayer and action. God has given us His divine Spirit as our guide and companion. He is called “The Comforter” because He comes alongside us to help, instruct and comfort. He tells us what is God’s plan for us.

We do not know how this works, but we know He is there. We know He is helping us in our prayer. (Romans 8:26) He shares the Father’s will with us, and helps us understand what God wants us to do.

We learn to pray “in the power and strength of the Holy Spirit.” (Jude 20 The Living Bible)

At times, we feel so helpless, but the Holy Spirit knows our frail minds and bodies. He prays for us. He prays through us. He prays with us. He prays in us. He gives direction to our praying. He helps us in our weaknesses and he wakes us up to pray when we don’t feel like it. He gives us grace and strength. He helps us stand against the enemy who attacks from within and without,

Our hearts ache with heavy burdens. We have no words to tell God how badly we feel. The Holy Spirit makes our requests for us “with groans that words cannot express.” As we pray, our spirit is borne along by the Holy Spirit. His Spirit pays through our spirit.

The Holy Spirit needs a clean and quiet place to do His work. This has a lot to do with our praying. He must have a clean and orderly house:

1. A private place – “close your door” to everything and everybody around you. (Matthew 6:6) Shut out the world, the noise, and things that interrupt. This won’t be easy.

2. A quiet place and heart. We do not need to show our emotions to anyone. God sees our hearts and that is enough.

King Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and cried to God. (Isaiah 38:2-3) He did not want his servants to see his face.

There is nothing wrong with tears, but only God needs to see you cry to Him. There is nothing wrong with shouting and praising God with a loud voice, but we should consider others.

The Holy Spirit prays beyond our understanding. “For we don’t even know what we should pray for, nor how to pray . . .” (Romans 8:26,27 NASB)

TO TALK ABOUT

1. Can we pray without the Holy Spirit?
2. What does the Holy Spirit do when we pray?
3. Why would God let His people choose bad kings?
4. What does God see in your heart?

JESUS TALKED WITH HIS FATHER IN HEAVEN

We understand that prayer is talking with God. Jesus talked with his Father every day. If you are a Christian, God is your Father. You are His child . . . A son or daughter of God.

If our children do not learn to talk, we are troubled and sad. We take them to the doctor to find out why they do not talk to us. If our children do not talk to us, we cannot easily get to know them. And they are not able to share their feelings and needs with us. Talking is the cement that holds families together.

We must talk with God to get to know him. He wants to be our friend, and He wants us to share all our feelings and needs with Him. He wants us to talk about the things that hurt us deep inside.

God calls us to come to Him. We come to Him because He is our Father. Christians are “sons and daughters of God”. We are members of His family. (1 John 3:1)

We have an empty place inside that only God can fill. We are made that way. God created that hunger in our hearts. We need fellowship with our Father to fill that empty place. Nothing else can fill that need in my heart.

Of course, God knows all about us. He created us and He knows all our needs. He is our heavenly Father. He knows our joys and our hurts. But He waits for us to come to Him. “You have not called upon Me O Jacob,” He said with sorrow.

The best way to know a brother or sister is to talk to them. The best way to get to know another Christian is to pray together. The more we pray together, the better we will get to know each other.

Jesus prayed often. He talked with his Father every day. He wanted only to know and do God’s will. So every day Jesus asked God the Father, ‘What is your will for me today?’ (John 4:34)

Exercise: Find Bible verses that tell us that Jesus prayed.

FATHERS ARE SPECIAL

Fathers are special people. God is our Father in heaven. “He . . . gives all men life and breath and everything else.” (Acts 17:25)

When the Jews said to Jesus, “Abraham is our father.” He told them, “You have one Father, and He is in heaven.” (Matthew 23:9)

Many men have never had real fellowship with their human fathers. They cannot talk to their father, or even get close to share their thoughts with him.

If you are a Christian, God is your Father. The Bible says your spirit calls out to God, “Abba, Father.” (Romans 8:15)

Our Father in heaven speaks to us in many ways. He speaks to us in our prayer times and when we read His word. We fellowship together. We quietly wait for Him to speak. God’s Holy Spirit speaks to us and we hear His voice deep inside our hearts.

Jesus taught His disciples to pray when He said to them, “Pray in this way . . . Our Father in Heaven . . .” (Matthew 6:9) Then Jesus taught them the most wonderful prayer. They were to pray this prayer to their Father in Heaven. He would hear them and answer their prayer.

We can call God “our Father” because of the work Jesus did on the cross. We can come to our Father freely because our sins are forgiven in Jesus. (Ephesians 4:32)

God’s Father love is strong and real. We receive God’s love by faith. The Bible says His love is there for you. Because God loves us, He cares for us, His children. (John 3:16)

CHILDREN ASK THEIR FATHERS

God promises to give us everything we need, but He wants us to ask Him for ALL our needs. (Matthew 6:33) By doing this, we identify Him as our Father. We show that we belong to Him. We are His sons and daughters, but we can easily forget this.

When an earthly father had no food for his children, they still came to him every day and asked. Why? Because he was their father.

God has enough for everyone, and more to spare. He has promised, “Everything we need for life and godliness.” (2 Peter 1:3)

His heart is always full of love and grace toward us. He hears every cry, He sees every tear that falls from our eyes.

When we learn that we are sinners, we cry to Him and He saves us. By His Spirit we have new life. We are born again by His Spirit, and we grow up to be like Jesus Christ. (John 3:8)

Before we received Jesus as our Saviour we were prisoners in the prison house of sin. Now we are forgiven; we are free. (Galatians 3:23)

As Christians, God wants us to leave our old ways. We must turn away from sin and live holy lives. God said, “He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do . . .” (1 Peter 1:15)

TO TALK ABOUT

1. Who is God? And why would He want me to talk to Him?
2. Give three reasons why Christians need to talk to God.
3. How can we know that God hears us and answers our prayers?
4. Can we be holy if we want to be? How is this possible?

2. Our heart (motives) moves us to pray. Is your heart full of love toward God? This will make you want to talk to Him. We come to God and talk to Him because we love Him.

Prayer is the love-language of the heart. Love language includes listening. We must wait in prayer and listen for God to speak to us.

“My heart heard you say, ‘Come and talk with Me, O My people.’ And my heart responded, ‘Lord, I am coming.’ “ (Psalm 28:8 The Living Bible)

3. God calls us to come, but He commands us to pray. He said, “Pray without ceasing.” (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

Mary Slessor, missionary to Africa, said that her life was one long, daily record of answered prayer. She not only believed God answered prayer; she knew He did. Many times, He provided food exactly when needed – not a moment too soon – when she prayed.

Once a lion stood in Mary’s path as she walked through the forest. Mary stood still and prayed and the lion just walked away.

THE FIRSTFRUITS

In the Old Testament, God asked His people for the firstfruits. (*Firstfruits are the first gathering of the crops.*) God asks us to give Him the first and best part of our day or our time.

Come to Him in the morning. Hear his Spirit’s call in your heart, even before you are properly awake. David said, “I will awaken the dawn.” (Psalm 108:2)

Self-control is the fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:23) The Holy Spirit will wake you up to pray and help you start every day on your knees.

TO TALK ABOUT

1. Do you ever feel empty? What makes you pray? Do you have a list of things you pray for? Do you spend much time waiting on God?
2. How can we know what pleases God? (Micah 6:8)
3. What made Samuel, the prophet, pray? (1 Samuel 15:11) 4. What made King Hezekiah pray? (Isaiah 38:1-3) Find these verses in the Bible.

Without the help of God’s Spirit, we would pray some foolish prayers. The people of Israel did. And their children lived to be sorry.

In their haste to win over their enemies, they asked for a king. God was their leader, but they wanted to be “like the other nations.”

God gave them a king and he only made things worse for them. Their kings led them away from God and into the hands of their enemies. (1 Samuel 8:7; 1 Kings 12:4-11)

LIVING AND ASKING IN HIS WILL

“If we ask anything according to His will . . . ” (1 John 5:14)

Do children who come to ask their Father understand how great his resources are? Or his plans, or his love for them?

“I will do whatever you ask in My name . . . ” This means I will do ‘what will honour Me’, what is My nature and will to do.

We make many requests of God, and some that Jesus would not approve. If we come to God in the name and nature (spirit) of Jesus, we are heard and our prayers are answered.

“If two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by My Father in heaven.” (Matthew 18:19)

This Scripture is not well understood. It means two are to seek God on a matter until the Holy Spirit shows both of them that a certain thing is His will. Both agree on this before they ask in prayer.

Asking in faith covers all our prayers. God will grant the request of the person who “Asks and keeps on asking” in faith. Or, His silence will say, ‘It is not My will’.

PRAYER IS NOT NATURAL

Praying is not natural. Many Christians may not feel a need to pray, or to pray a lot.

We have talked about the empty place in our hearts, and how God can fill it as we pray to Him and have fellowship with Him, but that emptiness does not always make us pray.

The Holy Spirit in us makes us feel needy. We are all like buckets that leak. We need to be filled up with the Spirit every day. (Luke 11:13)

1. Our many needs make us pray, and the Holy Spirit in us prays for these needs. Some of us have big needs; some of us have smaller needs. They are all the same to God.

During World War II, I was at sea in a small boat. I was far from land and it was dark. As the waves washed into the boat, I feared it would sink and I would drown. I cried out, “Lord, save me!” That was a desperate prayer, I had a big need.

God brought my small boat to land. It rested on a sandbar. When morning came, I saw the beach and was able to wade through the water to land.

When we understand who God is, and that only He can help us, we cry out for His help. We should not wait until some terrible thing happens to us. We should make prayer our habit. Tell God all your hurts and needs. Your needs may be on the outside. You may need food or medicine. Or your needs may be on the inside. You may feel lonely or sad.

You may not know what you need, but God always knows our needs. Don’t fear that you won’t ask the right thing when you pray.

LEARNING TO TALK TOGETHER

Christians are free to talk to God, anytime, anywhere. And He wants to hear us talk to Him. He knows everything, but He still wants to hear His children pray to Him.

It may be hard for you to pray out loud or in a group. If it is, write out a prayer and read it. Remember you are talking to God, so do not think about those who may be near you.

When God created Adam he was alone. He was the only person in the beautiful garden in Eden. There God walked with him and talked to him. God came to where Adam was so that Adam could talk to Him. Adam knew God was there, and Adam knew God wanted to talk to him. They talked together in the cool evening. Is our fellowship with God any different?

Now God comes to us by His Spirit. We can talk to God and understand what God says. He has sent the Holy Spirit to live in our hearts. “This is how we know He lives in us: we know it by the Spirit He gave us.” (1 John 3:24)

God had work for Adam to do. Adam needed to talk to God. He needed to understand who God is. We need to understand who God is. We need to know Him in the same way that Adam did.

The Bible says: “The people who know their God shall be strong and do great things.” (Daniel 11:32 NASB)

Adam needed to know what pleased God and what God wanted him to do in Eden. We also need to know what is pleasing to God. (Philippians 1:10) God has a job for us to do, too. We are saved to serve God and others. “We are labourers together with God . . . ” (1 Corinthians 3:9 KJV)

We may know the general plan of what God wants, but what are the details for me?

TO TALK ABOUT

1. Do you have trouble praying? Do you practice praying?
2. Why do we need to pray every day?
3. How can you know what God wants you to do?
4. Do you want to do everything He tells you?

WHAT SHOULD CHRISTIANS BE DOING?

Are you are a Christian? Are you doing God’s work? Better still, is He doing His work through you? (Philippians 2:13)

Can you work with someone if you do not know what they are doing? No, you cannot. You would make bad mistakes. Can you work with God if you do not know what He is doing, or what He wants you to do? No, you cannot. You must know His plan for your life. And you must let His Spirit control and guide you to bring about that plan.

We need to talk to God in prayer:

- a) To know Him as a Person

- b) To know what pleases Him.
- c) To learn what He is doing in our world,
- d) To know what He wants us to do each day.

God has a special 'work' for each one of us to do. (Ephesians 2:10) He has given each one special ability to do this work. No one else can take your place in God's plan or do the things God wants you to do.

TO TALK ABOUT

1. Can we talk to God as Adam did?
2. How can we know God?
3. Why did Jesus pray?
4. What should Christians be doing? Write down four things.

PRAYER IS A RELATIONSHIP

Prayer has its roots in our relationship with God. In Christ, we are joined to God. Prayer grows in that oneness we have with Him.

We must talk to our wife or we will not know her, and she must talk back to us or we will not be happy. There is closeness in our talk because we are joined in marriage. We are husband and wife. We are joined in our spirits and God sees us as "one flesh." (Genesis 2:24)

When I talk, the other person must respond. If they do not talk back to me, there is no communication . . . no giving and receiving.

I have heard many men say, "I did not know my father very well. He hardly ever spoke to his children."

TALKING FEEDS OUR SPIRITS

We cannot have fellowship with others if we do not talk to them. If we do not pray to God, we do not grow in our spirits. Our spirits stay small, and weak and stunted. We become like a plant that does not get any light.

Prayer feeds God's life within us. Prayer builds that life up and makes it stronger. Faith in God grows by prayer. God wants us to know Him. He wants us to have a strong faith. It takes our whole life to do this, but what a blessed and joyful thing to pursue. We can know God as "our Father in heaven."

God calls us to come close to Him. "Draw near to God; He will draw near to you." (James 4:8 NASB)

Our Father loves us, and He wants us to be near Him. He wants us to speak to him, and He wants to talk to us. Talking goes both ways. We talk to God and He talks back to us.

One day Isaiah was in the Temple. (Isaiah 6:1) He was listening for God's voice. Then he heard God speaking. God was speaking of His plan for the people of Israel. Isaiah was part of God's plan. (Isaiah 6:6) Have you heard God speaking to you? Are you living in His plan?

4. Take a firm stand against the enemy. Satan will do everything he can to discourage you and stop you praying.

Remember what Paul said, "I use God's mighty weapons . . . to knock down the devil's strongholds." (2 Corinthians 10:4 TLB) Quote this verse as you pray. Claim the blood of Jesus and the armour of Ephesians 6 to protect you and "be alert".

Prayer: Holy Spirit strengthen me.

5. After you have prayed for others, speak out "in the fear of the Lord" what He says to you. "Woe is me if I do not preach the Gospel." (1 Corinthians 9:16 NASB)

The Holy Spirit may tell you to go to someone to put wrong things right, or to witness to your neighbours.

Prayer: Holy Spirit make me bold.

6. Wait on the Lord. (Psalm 37:7) Waiting on God is praying just as much as talking to God. We wait, we worship, we praise Him. Waiting on God is something not many people do today.

Do not move on to the next request until God shows you all He has for you. Be quiet and wait. Read His promises; this builds bold faith. When you want to pray, time is not important.

Prayer: Holy Spirit keep me still.

7. Praise Him for what He is doing now. Thank Him for the mighty works done by prayer and faith. "If you have faith, you can say to this mountain (anything that stands in the way of God's work), 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you." (Matthew 17:20)

Prayer: Holy Spirit worship through me.

8. When the Holy Spirit stops bringing prayer requests to your mind, stop asking. Then praise the Lord for what He has done. Thank Him for the answers He has given. "Everything comes from God alone. Everything lives by His power and everything is for His glory." (Romans 11:36 TLB)

Prayer: Holy Spirit rejoice in me.

TO TALK ABOUT

1. Draw a straight line. Put 'Faith' at one end and 'No faith' at the other. Your faith will be at some point on this line. No one has perfect faith. Why?
2. How can we increase our faith?

In Prayer we may:

- a) Confess our sins and weaknesses,
- b) Claim the authority and power of Jesus' name,
- c) Give thanks for all God is and all He has done,
- d) Intercede for others. (Isaiah 59:16)

To intercede or pray for others is hard work. That is why not many of God's people do it.

Only God can give you a burden to intercede for others. We cannot give anyone this burden. I cannot put a prayer burden on you, or on anyone else. Only the Holy Spirit can do this. If we were to wake our friends at 5 am to pray, they would only go back to sleep again.

Everyone in the world needs Jesus, and God will hear us when we pray for those who are lost in sin and darkness.

A prayer burden comes to our hearts when we draw close to God. His Spirit shows us His plan for this lost world. He has said: "He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9)

A PRAYER SOLDIER FOR GOD

What a wonderful thing prayer is:

- a) Talking to God for our own needs,
- b) Interceding for a lost world,
- c) Seeing God work in other people's lives,
- d) Making your own faith stronger.

God may call you to be a prayer soldier. Prayer is a ministry, a duty. Prayer is work. Prayer is like shutting yourself in your room to study for an exam. We must give ourselves to it.

Praying for God's work and God's people . . . praying for the lost is hard work and Satan does his best to stop us praying.

1. Have your Bible open and your heart open. I cherish David's prayer: "Teach me Your way, O Lord, and I will walk in Your truth. Give me an undivided heart, that I may fear Your name." (Psalm 86:11)

Prayer: Holy Spirit teach me.

2. Give the Holy Spirit time to show you sins and weaknesses in your own life. Distractions come, "And we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." (2 Corinthians 10:5) Every impure thought put to the cross and every action tested by God's word.

I have a mind that wanders. It is not easy to be quiet before God. I am often in a hurry. I pray like a machine, not from my heart. Prayer: Holy Spirit quieten me.

3. Agree with God that you cannot pray without the help and power of the Holy Spirit. "He will guide you into all truth." (John 16:13)

Ask Him who, and what, and how to intercede for a person. Or what God's will is in a matter? Prayer: Holy Spirit lead me.

LEARNING TO PRAY

In the matter of prayer, we are all in school. There are no experts. There are many books that tell us how to pray to our Father in heaven, but the Bible is the best Book of all. It is the only Book you really need to study.

Everyone starts to talk with just a few words. Then we learn more. God does not want to hear a lot of words. He wants to hear the deep needs of our hearts.

As we walk in step with the Holy Spirit, prayer becomes our life. Prayer is like breathing. Our Spirit-life feeds on God's word and prayer. Christians need to have a pray-every-day life. (Galatians 5:25)

- Do we need God's direction for our lives?
- Do we need God's strength for the day?
- Do we need to talk to God?
- Do we need him to talk to us?

His Spirit in us says, 'Yes, yes, we do!'

PRAY ALWAYS

"Men ought always to pray, and not to faint." (Luke 18:1 KJV) The more we need something, the more we pray. Do we pray when things go well for us? We should, but it is easy to forget.

We pray or we get lost in our own ways. Mans' ways are not God's ways. That is why God says, "Pray without stopping." (2 Thessalonians 5:17) Keep on doing it. Never stop. Do it with energy not your own. "And pray in the Holy Spirit". (Jude 20)

ASK, SEEK, KNOCK

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you." (Matthew 7:7)

ASK is a wonderful word, especially so when God invites you to ask. Think of an egg that has been boiled until it is hard. Ask is like the shell on the outside. We must take the shell off to get the egg. When we ask we take the shell off. Inside are our daily needs; everything. God knows what we need every day, and we ask freely for them.

SEEK to find the white of the egg. This part is not so large. It might be a deeper need; a loved one. Seek to find the greatest treasures. Seek his Presence. Pray to Him all through the day. Be diligent in seeking God – in his Word; on your knees. (Hebrews 11:6)

KNOCK to find the yoke of the egg. It is deep inside. At first you cannot see it. Keep knocking in prayer to find God's will. Do not stop because you do not see anything happen. Doors may open slowly. They may be narrow and hard to find. Hearts are turned away from God by sin.

Satan tries to stop us praying, and he wants God's answers delayed. Knock and keep on knocking. God answers to our knocking, even in the silence. (Luke 13:16)

JESUS, THE PERFECT SON

Jesus, the perfect Son of God, talked often to His Father. He prayed about everything He did. We can be like Jesus in our prayer life. Jesus prayed:

- At His Baptism (Luke 3:21,22)
- When He was busy (Mark 1:35)
- Before great things happened (John 11:41,42)
- After they happened (Luke 9:18)
- Before tragedy (Mark 14:32)
- In the middle of tragedy (Mark 15:34)
- Early in the morning (Mark 1:35)
- In the evening (Matthew 14:23)

TO TALK ABOUT

1. When the Jews said they had Abraham as their father, what did Jesus say? (Matthew 23:9)
2. Can we pray like Jesus did?
3. How can we know we are sons of God? (1 John 3:24)

A SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE

We must give our lives over to God. Then will know what He wants us to do. Our prayers will be answered because they will be in tune with His wishes.

In preparing to pray, John Rice gives these points:

- a) Give up your own will and accept God's will. If God wants to do one thing through you, and you want to do another, ask God to make you willing to do his will.
- b) Read the Bible to hear God speak to you, to know His will. Faith comes by hearing His word. (Romans 10:17)
- c) Commit yourself to the leading of His Holy Spirit in your life. Depend on Him being there for you.

God sees into every heart. He knows our motives. (1 Samuel 16:7). If your heart is sick with sin, you cannot fix it by praying more. You must repent, confess, and receive God's forgiveness.

"Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account." (Hebrews 4:13)

KNOW WHAT YOU ARE ASKING

When you pray, tell God what you need in a few words. Don't hide your need in a lot of words. And don't tell God how to do what you are asking. He knows how to supply what you need.

"God, please give Tom a job" is enough if Tom needs a job. When Tom

writes a letter and says, "I have a job now," you can thank God with Tom for answered prayer. You can praise Him together.

Set prayer goals. When you do not see the answer right away, don't say God is not answering. God answers every prayer.

I often pray, "Lord please help my weak faith by giving me a word of promise; a Scripture I can stand on. A promise often gives the extra faith and assurance I need to keep on praying. A promise is God's Word. You can stand on the Word of God. You can ask God for a promise and then put both your feet on it. When you pray, you can remind God of His promise.

God's promises are to hold on to, to rejoice over, to bless you. When you are desperate, you will need your own word from God. We might ask God for a sign. Gideon asked for a sign and God gave him the sign he asked for. (Judges 6:37-40)

Asking	Thanking
Confessing	

Find a balance in your praying. We can pray to God by singing praises, too. Paul and Silas were beaten and thrown into prison. They feet and hands were chained to the wall. In that dark, cold inner cell of the prison they sang hymns and praised God.

When an earthquake broke the jail open, the Roman jailor would have killed himself because he thought all his prisoners had escaped. "Do yourself no harm," Paul shouted to him.

When he looked at Paul and Silas their faces shone. Their hearts were full of praise and thanks to God.

A discouraged missionary, whose work was not going well happened to see a sign hanging on a wall. The sign read, "Try Thanksgiving." He realized he had not thanked God for 'all things'. (Romans 8:28) As he gave thanks, his discouragement left him and he began to see good things happen in his work.

TO TALK ABOUT

1. God is concerned and knows all about the matter: True? False? . . .
2. He does not need our help with a problem: True? False?
3. God answers every prayer: True? False?

INTERCEDE FOR OTHERS

To intercede means to act between two parties to settle a matter. We intercede when we come to God with another person's needs. We pray for the other person to God and they receive His blessing because we asked Him.

That is what the priest did in the Old Testament. He went into the Tabernacle to confess the sins of the people. He received God's blessing for the nation. Then he came out to give the blessings of Yahweh to the people. Christians are "priests unto God." (1 Peter 2:5)