



## Lesson Five

# “Developing an Effective Prayer Life”

**Objective:** *To provide a Scriptural foundation of our privilege and responsibility to pray and God’s promise to hear and answer us.*

## I. What is prayer?

a. Prayer is \_\_\_\_\_ with God because of our relationship with Him.

Prayer is very simply put, talking with God. Since we have come to Jesus, we have entered into a relationship with Him. Every good relationship needs communication. Our relationship with God is no different. Prayer is not just us talking to God and giving Him our wish list or memorized prayers recited over and over hoping to get God’s attention by the merit of all our talking. It’s critical communication for life that goes both ways. Good communication and conversation goes both ways. God wants to talk with us and for us to hear His voice. Prayer takes many forms but an effective prayer is a heartfelt prayer, simply talking to God from our hearts.

b. \_\_\_\_\_ prayer releases tremendous power.

**James 5:16** AMP *The earnest (heartfelt, continued) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available [dynamic in its working].*

When we look at the life of Abraham (The first man of faith or “the father of faith” - Gen 12:1-5), we see communication that was initiated by God. God made Abraham a promise and then challenged him to embark upon a journey of faith with Him. (James 2:23 & Proverbs 18:24).

Abraham did not know where he was going, but he trusted God (his friend) and followed His instructions. We are exactly like Abraham in that we have responded to the promise from God for eternal life and have embarked upon a faith journey that we have no idea where it will lead but we are counting on God to lead us. (Gen 15:1-6 & 15:12-16 & Gen 22:1-19) As we see in the life of Abraham, communication was critical to His success on the journey. Prayer is critical to our relationship and success in life.

c. God chooses to \_\_\_\_\_ mankind in His will being accomplished in the earth.

## II. Does God hear me when I pray?

YES HE DOES! We can’t even fathom how much God loves each of us. He hears every word you say to Him. Psalm 139:4 tells us that He knows every word on our tongues that we haven’t even spoken yet. In fact, God is so intimately involved with us that He even knows the number of hairs on our heads. (Matthew 10:29-30)

a. God \_\_\_\_\_ hears us when we pray.

**John 11:41-42** NKJV "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. 42 **And I know that You always hear Me**, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me."

**Isa 59:1** NKJV Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear.

**Ps. 34:17-19** NKJV The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears, And delivers them out of all their troubles. The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, And saves such as have a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the LORD delivers him out of them all.

b. He requires that we seek Him with \_\_\_\_\_ and a sincere heart. (Luke 18:9-14)

**2 Chron 7:14-16** NKJV ...if My people who are called by My name will **humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways**, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

**Matt 6:6** NKJV But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

c. Knowing His Word gives us \_\_\_\_\_ and the ability to pray effectively.

**1 John 5:14-15** NKJV Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

**John 15:7-8** NKJV If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.

### III. Will God talk to me?

God definitely wants to talk to you! He loves us so much that we cannot even comprehend the depth of that love. Throughout Scripture we see that God talks to His people. (God is no respecter of persons Acts 10:34) So if God talked with others, He most definitely will talk with you!

**Acts 10:34-35** MSG Peter fairly exploded with his good news: "It's God's own truth, nothing could be plainer: God plays no favorites! 35 It makes no difference who you are or where you're from — if you want God and are ready to do as he says, the door is open.

(Jeremiah 18:2 - I will cause you – Pray: God, Cause me to hear Your voice, like You did Jeremiah and others)

**a. You will learn to \_\_\_\_\_ His voice.**

As you continue on in your relationship with Christ, just like with any relationship, you will begin to recognize His voice. The Bible describes His voice as a “**still small voice.**” (I Kings 19:11-12 – AMP: a sound of gentle stillness; MSG: gentle and quiet whisper)

**b. God wants you to hear His voice so He can \_\_\_\_\_ things to you that you do not know.**

**Jeremiah 33:3** NKJV *'Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.'*

### III. How do I pray?

The disciples asked Jesus this same question.

**Luke 11:1** NKJV *Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."*

Jesus began to teach the disciples how to pray.

**a. Don't make a \_\_\_\_\_ of your prayers.** (Matthew 6:5-7)

**Matt 6:5-6** MSG *"And when you come before God, don't turn that into a theatrical production either. All these people making a regular show out of their prayers, hoping for stardom! Do you think God sits in a box seat? 6 "Here's what I want you to do: Find a quiet, secluded place so you won't be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to sense his grace.*

**b. Don't \_\_\_\_\_ the same prayer over and over.** (Matthew 6:7-8)

**Matt 6:7-9** MSG *"The world is full of so-called prayer warriors who are prayer-ignorant. They're full of formulas and programs and advice, peddling techniques for getting what you want from God. 8 Don't fall for that nonsense. This is your Father you are dealing with, and he knows better than you what you need. 9 With a God like this loving you, you can pray very simply.*

Then Jesus taught them a very simple way to pray. Rather than recite this prayer over and over, we will use it as a model using the specific elements that Jesus did to make our own prayer agenda. (Matt 6:9-13)

**Matt 6:9-13** MSG *With a God like this loving you, you can pray very simply. Like this: Our Father in heaven, reveal who you are. 10 Set the world right; Do what's best — as above, so below. 11 Keep us alive with three square meals. 12 Keep us forgiven with you and forgiving others. 13 Keep us safe from ourselves and*

*the Devil. You're in charge! You can do anything you want! You're ablaze in beauty! Yes. Yes. Yes.*

**Element 1: Pray as a \_\_\_\_\_ of God.** – “Our Father, who is in Heaven.”

Most commonly you will hear Christians beginning prayer by saying, “Heavenly Father,” which is a simplified version of the above.

**Gal. 4:6-7** NKJV *And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.*

**a. Pray to the \_\_\_\_\_ in the name of Jesus.**

**John 16:23-24** NKJV *"And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. 24 Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.*

**Element 2: \_\_\_\_\_ Him for Who He is.** – “Hallowed be Your name.”

Praise glorifies Him. Who is He in your life? What do you know about him already? Our praise of Him reminds us of how big and awesome our God is! King David was an expert at praise and worship. Reading the Psalms helps us to know how to praise Him. It's a wonderful greeting to God to let Him know you appreciate Who He is in your life.

**Ps. 100:4-5** NKJV *Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting, And His truth endures to all generations.*

You could use this Psalm to turn into a praise by saying, “Father God, I come before you with my heart full of gratitude because you have been so good to me (**tell God of some specific ways He has been good to you**). I am grateful for Your mercy in my life! Father, thank You for saving me and allowing me to see Your truth and learn more about You every day! Show me Who You are! Reveal Yourself to me! I'm hungry to know you more!”

**Element 3: Pray for the \_\_\_\_\_ of God to prevail in the earth.** – “Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

The kingdom has come. It is on the earth but it is an invisible spiritual kingdom. God chooses to work in concert with man to accomplish His will in the earth through His Kingdom principles of speaking – binding and loosing – allowing or forbidding. He has given us the job of speaking forth His will. (Proverbs 18:21 & MSG)

**Matthew 16:18-19** AMP *on this rock [Greek, petra—a huge rock like Gibraltar] I will build My church, and the gates of Hades (the powers of the infernal region) shall not overpower it [or be strong to its detriment or hold out against it].<sup>19</sup> I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind (declare to be improper and unlawful) on earth must be what is already bound in heaven;*

and whatever you loose (declare lawful) on earth <sup>[7]</sup> must be what is already loosed in heaven.

**a. Pray the \_\_\_\_\_ of God as it is revealed in His word.**

**1 John 5:14-15** NKJV *Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.*

**Isa. 55:11** NKJV *So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.*

**Element 4: Pray for your \_\_\_\_\_.** – “Give us this day our daily bread.”

Rather than worry about what we need for our daily lives, pray and ask God to supply your need.

**Phil 4:6** NKJV *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.*

(Matthew 6:25-34) He says if we seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, all these things will be added to us. (Turn to Philippians 4:15-19)

**Phil 4:19** NKJV *And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

Paul said that God would provide their need because they had sought to give to help his ministry of preaching everywhere to grow. When we give to support the preaching of the Gospel – this is seeking first that the kingdom of God grows and grows, which is God’s greatest desire. (Romans 10:14-15)

**Element 5: Confess your sins and \_\_\_\_\_ others** – “And forgive us our debts and we forgive our debtors.”

When we mess up and we will, we run to God and confess our sin to Him. He is not mad at us and will not turn His back on us! He understands that we are tempted and tried by a spiritual enemy and our flesh can be weak at times. (Hebrews 4:15-16)

**MSG** *We don't have a priest who is out of touch with our reality. He's been through weakness and testing, experienced it all — all but the sin. 16 So let's walk right up to him and get what he is so ready to give. Take the mercy, accept the help.*

**1 John 1:7-10** NKJV *the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. 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. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.*

Nothing blocks the kingdom flow like unforgiveness. It puts a kink in our spiritual lifeline. We have to forgive others, if we want God to forgive us.

**Matt 6:14-15** NKJV *"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."*

Forgiveness can be tough. People can really hurt us.... Break our hearts, turn their backs on us, lie on us, cheat us, etc. We must forgive them. It's not the "you" in you that can accomplish this. It's the **Jesus** in you that can do all things! (Phil 4:13) He brings the power to forgive to us. We receive it by faith not our feelings.

Jesus goes even further than forgiving others, He asks us to pray for them and do good to them! (Matthew 5:43-48) Jesus did this hanging on the cross. As He hung there crucified, dying and bleeding, He said, "*Father forgive them for they know not what they do.*"

**Element 6: Pray for \_\_\_\_\_ over temptation and evil.** – "*Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.*"

Spiritual warfare is a part of our lives as Christians. We have a real enemy and his desire is to steal, kill and destroy our lives. The good news is that Jesus has made us more than conquerors and we can overcome every temptation and satanic attack.

**Rom 8:37** NKJV *Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.*

**1 Cor 10:13** NKJV *No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.*

So you could pray that Scripture like this, "Father, I am under attack in this area \_\_\_\_\_, I ask you for the grace to overcome every temptation to sin in this area. Help me and strengthen me and help me to see and take the way of escape that you are so faithful to provide. I'm trusting you to help me, in Jesus' name. Amen!"

**2 Peter 2:9** NKJV *then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations.*

**Element 7: \_\_\_\_\_ everything to God's power and ability.** – "*For Yours is the Kingdom, and the power and the glory forever, Amen.*"

This is the point where you leave it there with God. We are completely dependent upon Him to be God for us.

**1 Peter 5:6-7** NKJV *Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.*

**Eph. 3:20** NKJV *Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.*

**Luke 18:27** NKJV *But He said, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God."*

a. You've just prayed in \_\_\_\_\_, now just believe you receive.

**Mark 11:22-24** NKJV *So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God. 23 For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. 24 Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.*

#### IV. Follow Jesus' Prayer Life Examples

a. Pray prayers of \_\_\_\_\_.

Intercession is the act of interceding (intervening) between two parties. It is prayer to God on behalf of others. (Ezekiel 22:30) Jesus prayed for Peter.

**Luke 22:31-32** NKJV *"Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. 32 But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."*

b. Make time for \_\_\_\_\_ prayer with God.

Jesus often retreated to a private place to pray. We need these times of refreshing ourselves with God. Use this time for private worship, prayer and listening in His presence.

**Mark 1:35** NKJV *Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.*

**Mark 6:46** NKJV *And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray.*

**Luke 5:16** NKJV *So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.*

**Matt. 14:23** *And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray.*

c. \_\_\_\_\_ your prayer life

A simple way to keep your prayer life organized and exciting is to choose and commit to pray for a certain area each day. For example, On Mondays you could pray for the lost; Tuesday – Church; Wednesday – children and family; Thursday – Financial wisdom and favor; Friday – Breakthrough in areas of struggle; Saturday – Dreams, Visions and goals. Choose your own topics on certain days.