

How to Pray

(Formerly *Biblical Principles of Prayer*)

This is a self-study course designed to help you discover for yourself, from the Bible, some important basic truths concerning prayer.

how to study the lesson

1. Try to find a quiet spot free from distractions and noise.
2. Read each question carefully.
3. Look up the Scripture reference given after each question. Make sure you have found the correct Scripture passage. For example, sometimes you will find yourself looking up JOHN 1:1 instead of I JOHN 1:1.
4. Answer the question from the appropriate Bible passage. Write, in your own words, a phrase or sentence to answer the question. In questions that can be answered with a “yes” or “no” always give the reason for your answer . . . “Yes, because. . . .”
5. If possible, keep a dictionary handy in order to look up words you don’t understand.

6. Pray for God's help. You *need* God's help in order to understand what you study in the Bible. PSALM 119:18 would be an appropriate verse for you to take to God in prayer.

7. *Class teachers using this course for group study will find some helpful suggestions on page 47.*

how to take the self-check tests

Each lesson is concluded with a test designed to help you evaluate what you have learned.

1. Review the lesson carefully in the light of the self-check test questions.

2. If there are any questions in the self-check test you cannot answer, perhaps you have written into your lesson the wrong answer from your Bible. Go over your work carefully to make sure you have filled in the blanks correctly.

3. When you think you are ready to take the self-check test, do so without looking up the answers.

4. Check your answers to the self-check test carefully with the answer key given on page 48.

5. If you have any questions wrong, your answer key will tell you where to find the correct answer in your lesson. Go back and locate the right answers. Learn by your mistakes!

apply what you have learned to your own life

In this connection, read carefully JAMES 1:22-25. It is only as you apply your lessons to your own life that you will really grow in grace and increase in the knowledge of God.



Praying to a Person

Prayer is talking to God. It is not daydreaming, communing with nature, or thinking of an infinite but abstract power. It is simply talking to God. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ" (I JOHN 1:3).

How should we address the Holy Trinity in prayer?

1. To whom did the Lord Jesus Christ tell believers to direct their prayers?

MATTHEW 6:9; compare JOHN 17:1_____

2. What did Christ say about praying in His name?

JOHN 14:13, 14; 15:16_____

3. Through the Lord Jesus we have access to the Father by whom?

EPHESIANS 2:18_____

Why does the Christian have access to God in prayer?

4. On whose merits does the believer approach the Father?

a. HEBREWS 10:19_____

b. EPHESIANS 1:7;3:12_____

5. What is the first essential of approach to God?

HEBREWS 11:6_____

6. What is the risen Lord doing now for believers?

HEBREWS 7:25; compare JOHN 17_____

Normally we pray to the Father in the name of the Son in the power of the Holy Spirit. This seems to be the Scriptural pattern.

God encourages us to pray

7. Therefore, we should cast all our care upon Him, knowing

_____ (literally, “He is concerned about you”). I PETER 5:7

Many of our troubles are in God’s sight as the breaking of a toy would be to a child. Yet, as a loving Father, He . . . does not turn His child away. . . . He does not sit above the clouds, wrapped in selfishness because of His superiority, despising the littleness of His creatures who move below.

8. “In everything by prayer _____
_____.” PHILIPPIANS 4:6

9. “Let us . . . come boldly _____
_____.” HEBREWS 4:16

10. On what condition may we expect the answer to our prayers?

JOHN 15:7 _____

The right use of words in prayer

11. In what way will a correct attitude toward God affect our prayers?

ECCLESIASTES 5:2 _____

12. What are we told to bring to God in prayer?

HOSEA 14:2 _____

In prayer, it is a good practice to employ the language of Scripture itself as far as possible. Compare Jonah's prayer in chapter 2 of the book of Jonah with PSALMS 42:7; 31:22; 69:1; 3:8. After the angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she was to become the mother of the Son of God, during her visit with Elisabeth, she burst into a hymn of praise (LUKE 1:46-55). Her prayer of thanksgiving consists of ten verses in the New Testament record, but in these verses she quoted from memory twenty-three separate Old Testament Scripture passages. She brought to God His own words in prayer and praise.

Prayer is talking to God

Twelve Hebrew words and five Greek words are translated by the English word "prayer," but each of them has the meaning of definitely asking—primarily, of *talking to God*, as a child talks to his parent. Even though the prayer may not be audible, it takes the form of words in the mind.

13. Therefore, with David, each of us may say, "In the morning will I direct _____." PSALM 5:3

14. "Moses _____ the LORD his God." EXODUS 32:11

15. Stephen was "_____ upon God." ACTS 7:59

16. David wrote, "I _____ unto the LORD _____." PSALM 3:4

17. David wrote further, "Pour out _____ _____." PSALM 62:8

18. "Let us _____ with our _____ unto _____." LAMENTATIONS 3:41

Remember, then, that being in a "spiritual mood," attending devotional meetings and listening to the prayers of others are not necessarily forms of prayer.

Some reasons for praying to God

19. What is one certainty, so far as God is concerned?

MATTHEW 19:26; JOB 42:2_____

20. What is God's feeling toward all people on earth?

JOHN 3:16_____

21. In what wonderful way has God revealed His love toward human beings?

I JOHN 4:8-10; ROMANS 5:8_____

22. What did the Lord Jesus say about our need for prayer?

MATTHEW 26:41_____

Is there reality in prayer?

We recognize that mere human beings cannot comprehend God. But if we could know all about God, if we could know His greatness, He would not be God. We can comprehend one another; and we can know God, in some measure, even if we cannot fully comprehend Him. We may experience His love and know by His indwelling presence that He acts on our behalf when we seek to obey the conditions of answered prayer which He has made known.

23. What has always been true of those who have sincerely called upon the living God?

PSALM 145:18, 19; JAMES 4:8_____

Spiritual life begins and ends on earth in an atmosphere of prayer.

24. What was the first thing Saul of Tarsus did upon his conversion?

ACTS 9:6_____

25. What was the last thing Stephen did before he died?

ACTS 7:60_____

Precious prayer promises—look them up!

PHILIPPIANS 4:19	God's unlimited supply
EPHESIANS 3:20	God's unfailing ability
JEREMIAH 31:3	God's undying love
MARK 9:23	Wonderful possibilities
ISAIAH 65:24	Immediate relief
JOHN 16:24	Fullness of joy
PHILIPPIANS 4:6, 7	Perfect peace

Evidence that God does hear and answer prayer

Look up the following illustrations:

Hannah's prayer for a son	I SAMUEL 1:9-20
Samuel's prayer for Israel	I SAMUEL 7:5-12; 12:16-25
Elijah's prayer for God's cause	I KINGS 18:36-46
Hezekiah's prayer for healing	II KINGS 20:1-7
Daniel's prayer for the captive Hebrews	DANIEL 2:16-23; 9:3-23
Paul's prayers for prisoners and saints	ACTS 16:25, 26; EPHESIANS 1:15-23

How can God concern Himself with creatures so insignificant?

26. "When I consider _____
_____." PSALM 8:3, 4

Will not a king, burdened with the affairs of state, come to the aid of his own child when he hears his cry? Will the infinite God do less?

27. Our Bible reveals a God so *great* that He not only controls the planets but _____
_____. MATTHEW 10:29-31

The value of things does not consist in quantity or size. A diamond may be worth more than a quarry of stone. Let us not forget the place *man* has in God's creation. God is more interested on *souls* than He is in *stars*.

check-up time No. 1

You have just studied some important truths about praying to God. Review your study by re-reading the questions and your written answers. If you aren't sure of an answer, reread the Scripture portion given to see if you can find the answer. Then take this test to see how well you understand the important truths you have studied.

In the right-hand margin write "True" or "False" after each of the following statements.

1. Stephen prayed as he was being stoned. _____
2. Christ does not need to pray for us now, since He has finished His redemptive work. _____
3. The new birth is the only condition to answered prayer. _____
4. Each Person in the Trinity is referred to in connection with the believer's access to God. _____
5. Whoever believes that there is a God and tries to live a good life has access to Him in prayer. _____
6. The Lord Jesus told believers to pray to the Father in the name of the Son. _____
7. The Lord Jesus said, "Watch and pray, that your prayers may be answered." _____
8. God loves only those who love Him. _____
9. It was Job who said to God, "I know that thou canst do everything." _____
10. The first thing Saul of Tarus did after his conversion was to preach Christ in the synagogue at Damascus. _____

Turn to page 48 and check your answers.