

“Foundations” – Lesson #3

COMMUNICATING WITH GOD

God’s power can change circumstances and relationships. It can help us face life’s daily struggles. It can heal psychological and physical problems, remove marriage obstructions, meet financial needs – in fact, it can handle any level of difficulty, dilemma or discouragement.

Someone has said that when we work, we work; but when we pray, **God** works. His supernatural strength is available to praying people who are convinced to the core of their beings that he can make a difference. Skeptics may argue that answered prayers are only coincidences, but as an English archbishop once observed, “It’s amazing how many coincidences occur when one begins to pray.”



“The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.”
James 5:16

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What is God’s main vehicle of communication to us? The Bible.

What is our main vehicle of communication with Him? Prayer.

Prayer = Talking with God from our heart to His!

Five Levels of Communication

Level 5: Passing conversation. Lowest form of communication.
i.e. “Hi there, how you doing?” or “Nice morning?”

Level 4: Fact sharing. Fairly low level of communication.
i.e. “Where are you from?” or “What do you do?”

Level 3: Ideas/opinion sharing. A little more risk is involved.
i.e. “What about trying it this way? or “I believe that ...”

Level 2: Feelings sharing. Good communication is when we start sharing our feelings and learn how to be honest, vulnerable, open, and transparent with one another. Reaching this level of communication enables us to connect as human-beings.

Until we learn how to share our true feelings with God, we will probably have a very pedestrian relationship with Him. We might have a mental relationship with God, but no real emotional intimacy. Basically, until we learn how to be honest with God about our feelings, our relationship with Him remains superficial.

Remember, Prayer = Talking with God from our heart to His!

It takes:

1. Communication
2. Honesty
3. Trust
4. Time

I Peter 5:7 “Cast all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.”

Level 1: Open communication. Deep friendship. Mutual love, caring, respect and joy. Receptive, two-way conversation (times to speak and times to listen). Complete open honesty.

Philippians 4:4-7 “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

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I. PRINCIPLES OF PRAYER

A. What does the Holy Spirit do for us? (Romans 8:26-27)

1. Helps us know how to pray.

List the two things that the “Counselor” does in John 14:26:

Teaches all things

Reminds of everything

Where does the Holy Spirit reside (I Corinthians 3:16)?

In the Christian, in me

Because He lives in us we can say, “Holy Spirit, show me how to pray about... (whatever you may be struggling with).

2. Intercedes for us. He feels and empathizes with us.

The Holy Spirit intercedes for us when we don’t know:

a. What to pray.

b. How to pray

c. We need to pray.

B. God hears hearts more than words. (Romans 8:27).

God doesn’t want us to copy someone else and the way they pray. He wants us to be real with Him. Basically, He wants us to be ourselves.

What application does that have for our prayer life?

- What does Matthew 6:7 tell us about praying?

No meaningless repetition, lots of words do not impress God

- Prayer changes me on the inside. When I enter into true “real” honest communication with God, I see myself more clearly.

- The Bible changes my mind. Prayer changes my heart.

C. God’s listening is not tied to our posture.

The Bible records prayers where people: bow, kneel, fall on their face, lay down and stand. It doesn’t matter what position we are in when we pray. If we are honestly praying from our heart, God will always be listening. As God “searches” or connects to our heart, our prayers will always connect back to Him!

“The proper way for a man to pray,” said Deacon Lemual Keys, “and the only proper attitude is down upon his knees.”

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“No, I should say the way to pray,” said Rev. Dr. Wise, “is standing straight with outstretched arms and wrapped and upturned eyes.”

“Oh no, no, no!” said Elder Slow. “Such posture is too proud. A man should pray with eyes fast closed and head contritely bowed.”

“What seems to me is his hands should be austerely clasped in front with both thumbs pointing toward the ground,” said Rev. Dr. Blunt.

“Well last year, I fell in Hitchkens well head first, “ said Cirus Brown, “with both my heels a-stickin’ up and my head a-pointin’ down; And I made a prayer right then and there, the best prayer I ever said. The prayinest prayer I ever prayed, a-standin’ on my head!”

D. God will always answer. (Romans 8:28-29)

1. **No.** I’ve got something better. (Matthew 25:36-39)

Are there some things/times that are better for us than what we have been praying for? When and what are these things?

When God calls us to serve or give we must obey

Sometimes, God’s will is different than what we are asking for.

2. **Slow.** Not right now. Hold on. (John 11:2-6,14-15, 22-23)

3. **Grow.** Get right within.

Three things that hinder our prayer life:

a. Unconfessed sin. (Psalm 66:18, I John 1:9)

b. Impure motives. (James 4:3)

i.e. selfishness, materialism, greed, lust, etc.

c. Unforgiveness. (Matthew 6:14-15)

i.e. resentment, bitterness, hatred, and grudges

4. **Go.** Yes, I thought you would never ask. (John 16:24)

5. **Go.** Yes, and here’s more! (Ephesians 3:20)

God waits for us to ask so we will know that He is the one who answers prayer.

Are we praying for the things we should be? (Ephesians 1:15-19a)

Paul is praying about “inside” issues and “heart” knowledge.

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II. PLAN FOR PRAYER

(You do NOT have to follow this format every time you talk to God. This is a possible guideline to follow in your communications with God.)

A – ADORATION

Hebrews 13:15; Psalm 34:1-3; Psalm 100; Psalms 145 thru 150

Adoration is praising God for Who He is. Why do we need to do this?

1. It changes our attitude when we focus on the positive characteristics of God. It lifts our attitude!
2. It gets our eyes off of ourselves. When we focus on the greatness of God, our problems on earth don't seem as big.
3. He is God and deserves our praise!

What are some characteristics of God we can praise and adore?

Examples:

“Father, I praise You for Your LOVE and that You love me with an unconditional and eternal love.”

“Father, I praise You for Your GOODNESS, that everything that is good in my life comes from You.”

“Father, I praise You for Your HOLINESS, that You are perfect and can do no wrong.”

“Father, I praise You for Your TRUTH, that no matter what I believe or don't believe, You remain the same and are always absolute truth.”

C – CONFESSION

Isaiah 64:6; Romans 3:23; Isaiah 59:2; Acts 3:19; Psalm 51:10-12; Psalm 66:18 and I John 1:9

Confession is agreeing with God's assessment of Who we are.

Why do we need to confess sin?

1. It restores our fellowship with God. Sin severely strains our relationship with God and hinders our intimacy with Him.
2. To be honest with Him and with ourselves.
3. To thank Him for His forgiveness and ask for His wisdom and help in avoiding that sin in the future.

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How do we confess our sin?

1. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any sin in your life.
Psalm 139:23-24
2. Confess each sin individually and specifically to the Lord.
1 John 1:9

T – THANKSGIVING

Philippians 4:6-7; 1 Thessalonians 5:18

Thanksgiving is thanking God for What He has done. This helps us keep an attitude of gratitude and dependency!

Here are some areas you might want to express some thankfulness to God:

1. Spiritual blessings (forgiveness, eternal life, healing, etc.)
2. People in your life
3. Material blessings (house, shoes, job, etc.)
4. Physical blessings (health, eyes to see, etc.)
5. Answered prayers

S – SUPPLICATION

John 15:7, 16:24; Matthew 21:22; Luke 11:9-13; Hebrews 4:15-16

Supplication is asking God for What we need.

How should we pray?

1. Asking God to meet our needs (physical, emotional, mental, financial and spiritual).
2. Interceding for others.

Ezekiel 22:30-31

Pray for: the lost to be saved, the sick to be healed, the aged and infirm to be cared for, marriages to be strengthened and made whole, families to be strengthened and saved, financial difficulties to be handled, jobs to be made better or created, the church and its ministries to carry out the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20), Christians to grow (new and older), for the pastor and pastoral staff, outreach at home and abroad.

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III. PRACTICING PRAYER

A – Adoration: Praise God for who He is (Psalm 100)

C – Confession: Agree with God concerning sin (I John 1:9)

T – Thanksgiving: Thank Him for what He has done (I Thes. 5:18)

S – Supplication: Ask Him for your needs and intercede

(Philippians 4:6-7, Ezekiel 22:30-31)

Write out a prayer to God which includes the above four ingredients.