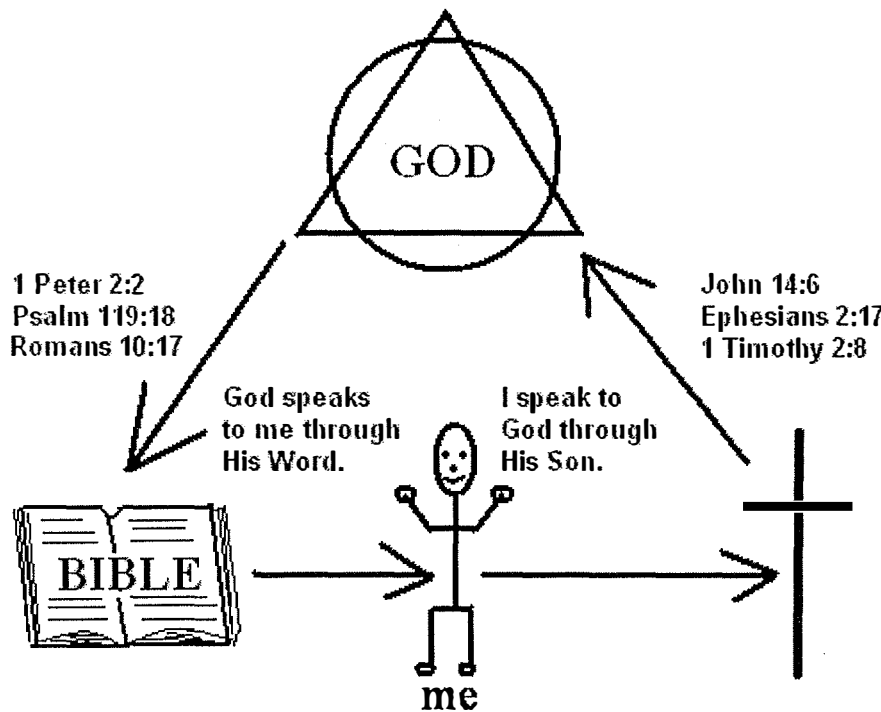


CHAPTER 5

Praying to My Heavenly Father

In the last chapter we saw the importance of reading God's Word. In this chapter we will see the importance of prayer. When I read His Word, God talks to me. When I pray, I am talking to God:



In the last chapter we took a look at six strong and faithful men: WHO, WHAT, WHERE, HOW, WHY and WHEN. Let us use these six men to help us to learn about prayer:

Who Can Pray?

There are some people whose prayers God does not hear. This does not mean that God is deaf. God hears everything and God sees everything! When the Bible says that God will not hear someone, it means that there is no relationship to God which demands His attention. The person has no real connection with God and thus no claim on God. The **sin** in that person's life needs to be taken care of before he can have a real and right relationship with God, and sin's remedy can only be found at the cross (2 Cor. 5:21). Those who come to God must be clean and pure (Psalm 24:3-4).

God does not hear the prayers of unbelievers or unsaved people. "But your _____ have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that He will _____ hear" (Isaiah 59:2) Compare John 9:31--"Now we know

that God _____ sinners." God in His goodness (Romans 2:4) sometimes chooses to answer the prayers of the unsaved but God does not have to answer since they have no saving relationship with Him.

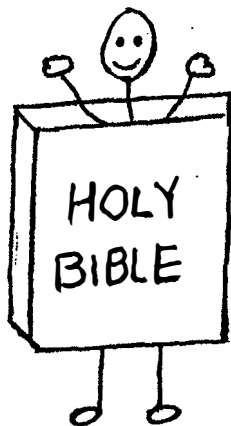
There is one prayer that the sinner can pray which God will hear: when the sinner "calls upon the name of the Lord" (Romans 10:13) and asks God to save him from his sins. In Luke 18:11-12 a sinful Pharisee prayed a prayer and in Luke 18:13 a sinful publican (tax collector) prayed a prayer. Which prayer did God hear?

_____ In Luke 23:39 a sinful criminal made a request. In Luke 23:42, another sinful criminal made a request. Which prayer did the Lord hear?

God does not hear the prayer of a believer if there is sin in his life: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will _____ me" (Psalm 66:18). There is one prayer, however, that the sinning believer can pray and God will hear. God hears the believer who confesses his sins and says, "Lord, I have sinned and done this _____ in thy sight" (compare Psalm 51:4). In Chapter 3 we studied CONFESSON OF SIN.

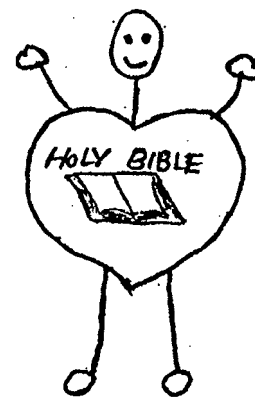
The believer who is right with God can expect to have his prayers heard: "If ye abide in me, and _____ abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto _____"(John 15:7). Compare 1 John 5:14-15--"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He _____, and if we know that He _____ us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him."

I'm at home in God and in God's Word and God's Word is at home in me:



**The believer abiding in
God's Word, being at
home in God's Word.**

**JOHN 8:31--"If ye
continue (abide) in My
Word."**



**God's Word abiding in
the believer's heart,
being at home in the
heart.**

**JOHN 15:7--"If ye abide
in Me and My Words
abide in you."**

The believer has an open invitation into God's presence. Suppose you want to talk to the President of the United States. You take a trip to Washington D.C. and you march right up to the gate of the White House. The guard at the gate asks, "What do you want?" You answer, "I want to come before the President and speak with him!" The guard replies, "See the President! Do you really expect to see the President? Who are you anyway?" You explain, "My name is _____ and I have some very important things to say to the President!"

Do you think the guard would let you in? Suppose, however, the President's son were to come to the White House. Do you think the guard would let him in? Would he be able to go right up to the President and talk with him?

The Bible says that we are "sons" or children of God (1 John 3:1 and John 1:12). We have the right to go directly to the PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSE, and speak to Him at any time! What a wonderful privilege prayer is! Are you taking advantage of this great privilege?

What To Pray?

Sometimes we think that prayer is nothing but ASKING GOD for things. ASKING is only one aspect of prayer. God wants us to ASK and to keep on ASKING (Matthew 7:7), but prayer is more than ASKING.

Prayer involves **CONFESSIO**N. Whenever I sin or disobey God, I need to come to God in prayer and confess that sin. Confession is an important part of prayer. In Psalm 51 and Psalm 32 we find prayers of confession.

Prayer involves **PRAISE**. Praise is telling God how great He is. As we think about God's love and mercy and power and holiness, we begin to realize how great God really is. God wants us to praise Him in prayer. Examples of praise can be found in Daniel 2:19-23, 1 Chronicles 29:10-13 and Psalm 103 (and in most of the Psalms).

Prayer involves **THANKSGIVING**. "In everything give _____" (1 Thessalonians 5:18 and see Ephesians 5:20). We remember to ask God for things, but sometimes we forget to thank God for answered prayers! We can even thank God when prayers are not answered (as we would want) because He knows what is best. Whenever we pray, we can ask ourselves, "What can I thank God for right now?"

Prayer involves **INTERCESSION** or praying for others. God wants us to pray "for all _____" (Ephesians 6:18) and "for all _____" (1 Timothy 2:1). Some of those we should pray for often are:

1. the believers in church
2. missionaries
3. our Pastor and S. S. teachers
4. school teachers
5. unsaved friends and loved ones

6. the President and other leaders
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Prayer involves **ASKING** (petition or making request). God wants believers to come to Him and pray for their own needs (Philippians 4:6). Often we do not have because we do not _____ (James 4:2).

Where To Pray?

The believer can pray **ANYWHERE!** You can pray wherever you are. You do not have to be in church to pray! We can talk to God wherever we are. Please MATCH:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. _____ in bed | A. "Lord, help me to use this money wisely." |
| 2. _____ in the car | B. "Lord, keep us from injury and help me to be a good sport and a good winner or loser." |
| 3. _____ in church | C. "Lord, thank You for this food. Use it to strengthen my body." |
| 4. _____ in the classroom | D. "Lord, watch over us as we travel." |
| 5. _____ at the table | E. "Lord, help me to learn all that I should." |
| 6. _____ on the playground or on the athletic field | F. "Lord, thank You for this day and watch over me through the night." |
| 7. _____ in a store | G. "Lord, thank You that I can worship You on this Lord's day. Help the Pastor as he gives the message." |

The important thing is not whether we stand, kneel or sit, but whether we have a right heart attitude before the Lord.

How To Pray

When you pray you are coming to the living God who is the best FRIEND a person could ever have. Talk to Him as you would talk to a friend. Be honest with God. Tell Him your problems (see Philippians 4:6). Tell Him your needs. "Pour out your _____ before Him" (Psalm 62:8).

The best way to learn how to pray is by praying! You do not have to use big words when praying to God and do not worry if it seems that others pray better than you. God is more concerned about our heart than about the fumbling words that may come out of our mouth.

Prayer time is not show time (Matthew 6:5-6). Prayer is between the believer and God, and others do not need to know about it! Don't say the same thing over and over again (Matthew 6:7). We don't talk to people that way, so why should we talk to God that way? Whenever possible it is good to close our eyes while praying. This helps us to concentrate and not be distracted by things that might be seen with the eyes.

Prayers in public should be short (as when we pray in Sunday School class or when we pray before meals), but private prayers can be longer.

Have you ever prayed to God as you read your Bible? Please MATCH:

- | | | |
|----------|--|---|
| 1. _____ | You learn something new as you read. | A. "Lord, I praise You for being so great!" |
| 2. _____ | You read something that you do not understand. | B. "Lord, help me to obey this." |
| 3. _____ | You read a promise. | C. "Lord, thank You for teaching me wonderful things from Your Word." |
| 4. _____ | You read a command. | D. "Lord, help me to believe Your Word." |
| 5. _____ | You learn something about God. | E. "Lord, keep me from doing this same thing." |
| 6. _____ | You read about some great sin. | F. "Lord, help me to understand Your Word because some of the things I read are difficult to understand." |

Why Pray?

What does God know before we ever ask Him (Matthew 6:8,32)?

_____ If God already knows our needs, why do we need to pray?

Prayer is not for God's benefit. We are not telling God something that He does not know. Also we are not trying to twist God's arm to force Him to do something that is not His will for us!

Prayer is for the believer's benefit. Prayer teaches me how helpless I am and how dependent I am on the Lord. How selfish and ungrateful we would be if God simply gave to us without our asking Him! The person who prays is saying, "Lord, You have what I need! I can't but You can! I'm weak but You are strong! I don't understand, but You do!" Prayer teaches us who the true

GIVER really is and it places us in an attitude to receive His blessings.

God has told us to pray. I have an invitation from the King of Kings. He tells me to C_____ (Hebrews 4:16) and to E_____ (Hebrews 10:19) and to D_____ (Hebrews 10:22). He commands me to A_____ and to S_____ and to K_____ (Matthew 7:7).

When To Pray?

The believer should pray A_____ (Luke 18:1) and W_____ (1 Thessalonians 5:17). This does not mean that we are to be on our knees 24 hours a day, but it does mean that we should always be aware of God and conscious of God and depending on God. We should always be ready to pray at any time. We might think of a person who has a "hacking cough." He is coughing "without ceasing!" He is not coughing every second, but the tendency to cough is always there (a tickle in his throat). He is always ready to cough, and not too much time goes by before he actually breaks out in a cough!

In Mark 1:35, when did the Lord Jesus pray (Mark 1:35)? _____ When did the Psalmist pray (Psalm 55:17)? _____ When did Daniel have special times of prayer (Daniel 6:10)? _____ Do you have special times of prayer?

Should I pray before meals (1 Tim. 4:4-5; Acts 27:35)? _____

There is no such thing as a healthy believer who is not a praying believer! As the children's song says,

**"Read your Bible, pray every day,
And you'll GROW, GROW, GROW!
Neglect your Bible, forget to pray,
And you'll SHRINK, SHRINK, SHRINK!"**

We mutter and sputter; we fume and we spurt.
We mumble and grumble; our feelings get hurt.
We can't understand things; our vision grows dim,
When all that we need is a MOMENT WITH HIM!