

LESSON 4

PRAYER

After a child is born, he begins to grow. He must have proper food. What a joy for those parents when he begins to walk. They look forward to that day when they hear their baby talk. The words "da da" and "ma ma" are sweet to the ears of a parent. So it is with the Christian. The Christian needs spiritual food, the Bible. He begins to walk with God. And it also delights the heart of God when His children talk to Him and call His name. This is what we call prayer. Talking to God as a child would talk to his father, for He is our Heavenly Father.

PRAYER IS A PRIVILEGE

As children of God, we can come to God as our Father and expect Him to hear our requests because the new Christian is a Child of God. As a member of God's family presenting our praise, thanksgiving and petitions to our heavenly Father.

Hebrews 4:14-16 tells us of this wonderful privilege. As born-again Christians, we can claim this promise.

"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Hebrews 4:14-16)

The song writer said

"What a friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and grief's to bear! What a privilege to carry Everything to God in prayer..."

PRAYER IS POWERFUL

James 5:26b says, "...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

This simply means that when we prayer as God wants us to, then our prayers affect the way things happen and the way God does things. God who knows all things, and what will happen before it happens, still desires us to pray that He can hear and answer of requests. All of us have things we should pray about. Prayer can do anything that God can do, and that is powerful. Probably the greatest power we have is prayer, so let's use it!!

Solomon prayed for wisdom and became the wisest man to live, or at least one of the wisest. Elijah prayed and fire fell from heaven at Mt. Carmel. Elijah prayed that it would not rain for 3 years and it didn't. Daniel prayed and God delivered him from a den of lions. The church prayed in Acts 12 that Peter would be delivered from jail and while the group was praying, Peter was delivered and came to the door of the house where they were assembled. Cornelius prayed that he might hear the Word and be saved, and God sent Peter to preach and tell him how to be saved. On and on you could go. The power of prayer!! George Muller, who operated a children's home prayed in several hundred thousand dollars over the years to supply the home.

Have you ever prayed for something and received it? If you are saved, you prayed that Christ might come into your heart and save you, AND HE DID !! But don't forget the small things God gives to you in answer to prayer.

HOW DO I GO ABOUT PRAYING AS I SHOULD?

Many people want to know HOW to pray. Don't feel bad if you are asking this same question. The disciples also had to come to Jesus and say, "Lord, teach us to pray"(Luke 11:1). Don't forget that praying is talking to God with a sincere heart. Most of us know how to talk!! Talk with God as you would a good friend, except results He is more than just a good friend, He is your Heavenly Father who has saved you from your sin. Approach God boldly, but also in a respectful way, realizing He is Holy and Righteous. But don't be afraid, for He loves you and wants to talk with you and you to talk with Him.

Take time every day to get alone with God and pray. This is a good time for your daily devotion in the Bible too. After studying, then you can pray to the Lord. Just be honest and tell God what is on your heart and how you feel and what you desire.

Some people have begun as a new Christian to follow a simple rule of praying. You don't have to follow this exact pattern, but it might help you to develop a good pattern for praying. Make sure it doesn't become mechanical, for God is REAL and your praying should be real.

ACTS: A = Adore and worship the Lord first in praying.

C = Confess any sin and disobedience in your life and ask forgiveness. (We will address this in a future lesson)

T = Thank the Lord for all He has done for you, not only in salvation, but for daily things.

S = Supplication, which means praying and asking for others and their needs and also for yourself and the needs you have.

PROBLEMS IN YOUR PRAYER LIFE

Don't get discouraged at times when you pray and there is no immediate answer. Many people get discouraged and stop praying. If you are in fellowship with God, you can be sure that God has heard your prayer. God answers prayer in one of three ways: Yes; No; and Later!

But many people have a problem with sin in their lives. A Christian's prayers will be hindered if he has unconfessed sin in his life. Psalm 66:18 says, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Note that in James 5:26, God says that "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (James 5:16) We should not expect God to answer our prayers if we are not living as we should. Being "righteous", means being "right". God will not bless our disobedience.

He does, however answer our prayer of confession of sin and seeks to restore us to fellowship. The problem with unconfessed sin in ones life is that it places a barrier between us and God. The barrier is not placed there by God, but by us when we sin.

God says confess your sins and ask for forgiveness and He will forgive. He has promised to forgive and cleanse you from your sin if you confess them (I John 1:9).

You can not overcome any sin that you refuse to confess. That is why confession is important. When we say that sin is sin we put it in its proper place. We openly admit it and that get is out where we by God's help can deal with it.

Let's consider a few more important things about prayer that will help eliminate problems in your prayer life.

1. You must ask God for things. James 4:2b says, "ye have not because you ask not."

2. You must pray in Jesus name. John 14:13 says, "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

This does not mean that saying the name of Jesus has any magical power in just saying the words. When we pray in Jesus's name it means we are praying according to His will. We could not use the name of Jesus or

involve Jesus in things that were not right. By praying in the name of Jesus we are recognizing that we are seeking God's will and are submitting to it.

3. You must pray according to God's will. 1 John 5:14 says, "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us." Always want what God wants. Never ask for anything that is sinful or against what the Bible teaches.

4. Stay close to God. John 15:7 says, "If ye abide (fellowship) in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

5. Don't ask for selfish reasons. James 4:3 says, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts."

DON'T FORGET TO PRAY EVERYDAY!

Write out and memorize John 15:7

QUESTIONS

1. What is prayer? _____.

2. What can we obtain and find at the throne of God? (Heb. 4:16)

Obtain _____ and find _____.

3. What does each letter stand for in the pattern of praying called ACTS?

A _____

C _____

T _____

S _____

4. What does 1 John 1:9 tell us about our sin?

5. Name some hindrances to prayer:

6. Will you seek to pray every single day? _____

WRITE DOWN ANY QUESTIONS YOU MIGHT HAVE FOR THE NEXT CLASS!

It is not necessary for you to send me your assignments that follow each lesson, but I would be happy to receive them and make helpful comments and answer any questions you might have. To send your assignments click here:

COPY AND PASTE THE QUESTIONS INTO THE BODY OF THE EMAIL