

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO PRAYER

40 Days of Prayer – Week 1 September 9, 2018

We were made for FELLOWSHIP and RELATIONSHIP with GOD.

FACT #1: We FEEL inadequate, even scared, when it comes to prayer.

Although we humans have a need to pray there is one thing I've learned, **WE'RE NOT VERY GOOD AT PRAYER**

Even the disciples who lived with Jesus asked for help

Luke 11:1-13

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." ² He said to them, "When you pray, say:

"Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. ³ Give us each day our daily bread. ⁴ Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation."

⁵ Then Jesus said to them, "Suppose you have a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; ⁶ a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him.' ⁷ And suppose the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.' ⁸ I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity he will surely get up and give you as much as you need.

⁹ "So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. ¹¹ "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? ¹² Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

Part of **Our frustrations with prayer are caused by our misconceptions**

1. Prayer is NOT a magic wand!

Not an **enchanted tool** you wave like Harry Potter to change your situation!

Not a **magic bottle** you rub & God comes out to fulfill every desire "Your wish is my command!" *God is not your Genie*

2. Prayer is NOT a fire extinguisher!

Break glass & **use only in an emergency**. "God if you get me out of this mess..!" Treated as a LAST RESORT

3. Prayer is not a tug of war with God!

You have wear God down until he give in & gives you.

Beg – *please, please, pretty please give me*

Bargain – God, if you do this for me, I'll do that for you

Bribe – make a sales pitch to God

4. Prayer is not a ritual to relieve guilt!

You really blew it- sinned- so you have pay for it by praying a lot

MT. 6:7^{scr} "When you pray DO NOT use meaningless repetition thinking that you will be heard for your many words."

4 FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS ABOUT PRAYER

1. GOD LOVES FOR ME TO TALK WITH HIM ABOUT ANYTHING

It doesn't have to be a "religious" topic! If YOU are interested in something- *God is too!*

Why is God interested in anything you're interested in?

1. He loves you! When you love someone...

3. He enjoys talking with his children!

1 JN. 5:14-15 “We can be confident in approaching God, knowing that he listens to us whenever we ask him for anything according to his will. And since we know that he hears us when we make our requests, then we can be sure that he will answer us.”

Babies are deeply loved even before they can talk, but parents long for the day they can have a conversation

1. God love YOU *deeply* even if you *can't* or *don't* talk to him. But he wants you to GROW UP...learn how to talk to him!
2. Learning to pray is like learning any other language. You listen & practice & get better...Words become sentences!
3. There is nothing off-limits in talking to God.

PRAYER IS: a conversation, not a ceremony NOT monologue, talk & listen. A relationship, not a ritual

2. GOD LISTENS TO PRAYERS THAT ARE SINCERE & SIMPLE

You don't have to use flowery words or fancy phrases.

It just has to *come from your heart*. *Authentic. Real. Honest, NOT what you think you ought to say*

MT. 6:5-8 “When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they've received their reward in full. Instead, when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep babbling on and on like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”

Don't use prayer to show off or impress. Be sincere. Keep it simple. *Adding words doesn't make it stronger*. Stay humble

HEBREWS 10:22 “Let us come near to God with a sincere heart and a sure faith”

3. GOD LIKES TO SHOW HIS GRACE BY ANSWERING PRAYER

With every answer, God shows he is a good, good Father...*even when the answer is NO or NOT YET!*

Does a loving parent give a child everything they ask for? No! For good reasons: Protection, Correction. Direction not spoil

Always 4 possible answers: Yes, No, Wait, & Are you kidding!

JER. 33:3 “Call to me and I will answer you. I will show you marvelous and wondrous things that you could never figure out on your own.”

Sometimes the answer is a **bigger perspective**. I now see...

MT.7:11 “If you, being imperfect and sinful parents know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him?” (NLT)

JAM.4:2 “You do not have, because you do not ask God.” (NIV)

4. GOD LONGS TO BE CLOSE TO ME!

If you're away from someone you love for a long time - can't wait to talk -- God is waiting for you to talk to him.

ISA. 30:18 “The Lord waits for you to come to him so he can show you his love and compassion.”

Some parents know the pain of child that *can't* talk to you or *won't*... God designed you for a relationship. He **made** you to **love** you. He **created** you for *his companionship*. He **chose** you to be his **child!**

One of the most amazing verses in Bible is **JOHN 15:15**, *Jesus said, “I don't call you servants...I call you my friends!”*

TAKEAWAY → HOW DO I GET CLOSER TO GOD? Desire it & Make time for it!

PS. 25:14 “Friendship with God is reserved for those who reverence him. With them, He shares the secrets of his covenant.”

JAM. 4:8 “Draw close to God, and God will draw close to you!” (NLT)