

Steps to Christ

Bible Study Series



The Privilege of Prayer

12 - 16

(1) WHY IS CONTACT WITH GOD THROUGH PRAYER SO IMPORTANT?

Jeremiah 29:12

Related Texts: Jeremiah 31:9; Psalm 50:15; 102:17; Isaiah 65:24; Matthew 7:7, 8

Through nature and revelation, through His providence, and by the influence of His Spirit, God speaks to us. But these are not enough; we need also to pour out our hearts to Him. In order to have spiritual life and energy, we must have actual intercourse with our heavenly Father. Our minds may be drawn out toward Him; we may meditate upon His works, His mercies, His blessings; but this is not, in the fullest sense, communing with Him. In order to commune with God, we must have something to say to Him concerning our actual life.

Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. Not that it is necessary in order to make known to God what we are, but in order to enable us to receive Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him.

(2) WHAT HAS JESUS INVITED US TO DO AS WE COME TO HIM IN PRAYER?

1 Peter 5:7

Related Texts: Philippians 4:6, 7; Psalm 55:16-18; 34:5-8, 15-20; 62:8; Jeremiah 33:3; 2 Chronicles 7:14

When Jesus was upon the earth, He taught His disciples how to pray. He directed them to present their daily needs before God, and to cast all their care upon Him. And the assurance He gave them that their petitions should be heard, is assurance also to us.

(3) WHEN CHRIST DWELT ON EARTH, WHAT EXAMPLE DID HE GIVE REGARDING COMMUNION WITH THE FATHER IN PRAYER?

Mark 1:35

Related Texts: Mark 6:46; Matthew 6:6; 14:23; Luke 6:12; 1 Peter 2:21

Jesus Himself, while He dwelt among men, was often in prayer. Our Saviour identified Himself with our needs and weakness, in that He became a suppliant, a petitioner, seeking from His Father fresh supplies of strength, that He might come forth braced for duty and trial. He is our example in all things. He is a brother in our infirmities, “in all points tempted like as we are;” but as the sinless one His nature recoiled from evil; He endured struggles and torture of soul in a world of sin. His humanity made prayer a necessity and a privilege. He found comfort and joy in communion with His Father. And if the Saviour of men, the Son of God, felt the need of prayer, how much more should feeble, sinful mortals feel the necessity of fervent, constant prayer.

(4) HOW SHOULD WE COME TO GOD IN PRAYER?

Hebrews 4:16

Related Texts: Philippians 4:6, 7; Ephesians 2:18; 3:12; Isaiah 55:6; Matthew 7:7-11; 1 Peter 5:7

Our heavenly Father waits to bestow upon us the fullness of His blessing. It is our privilege to drink largely at the fountain of boundless love. What a wonder it is that we pray so little! God is ready and willing to hear the sincere prayer of the humblest of His children, and yet there is much manifest reluctance on our part to make known our wants to God. What can the angels of heaven think of poor helpless human beings, who are subject to temptation, when God’s heart of infinite love yearns toward them, ready to give them more than they can ask or think, and yet they pray so little and have so little faith? The angels love to bow before God; they love to be near Him. They regard communion with God as their highest joy; and yet the children of earth, who need so much the help that God only can give, seem satisfied to walk without the light of His Spirit, the companionship of His presence.

(5) WHAT ARE TWO KEYS TO OVERCOMING TEMPTATION?

Matthew 26:41

Related Texts: Luke 21:36; Mark 14:38; 13:37; Galatians 5:16; James 4:7, 8; 1:2-5; Romans 13:14; Matthew 7:7

The darkness of the evil one encloses those who neglect to pray. The whispered temptations of the enemy entice them to sin; and it is all because they do not make use of the privileges that God has given them in the divine appointment of prayer. Why should the sons and daughters of God be reluctant to pray, when prayer is the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven's storehouse, where are treasured the boundless resources of Omnipotence? Without unceasing prayer and diligent watching we are in danger of growing careless and of deviating from the right path. The adversary seeks continually to obstruct the way to the mercy seat, that we may not by earnest supplication and faith obtain grace and power to resist temptation.

(6) LIKE DAVID, WHAT MUST BE OUR SPIRITUAL CONDITION IN ORDER FOR GOD TO ANSWER OUR PRAYERS?

Psalms 63:1

Related Texts: Isaiah 44:3; 41:17; 48:21; John 4:10; 7:37-39; Revelation 21:6; 22:17

There are certain conditions upon which we may expect that God will hear and answer our prayers. One of the first of these is that we feel our need of help from Him. He has promised, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground." Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, who long after God, may be sure that they will be filled. The heart must be open to the Spirit's influence, or God's blessing cannot be received.

(7) WHAT THREE STEPS MUST WE TAKE TO RECEIVE ANSWERS TO OUR PRAYERS?

Luke 11:9

Related Texts: Jeremiah 33:3; Matthew 21:22; Psalm 50:15; 118:5; 91:14, 15; Isaiah 55:6

Our great need is itself an argument and pleads most eloquently in our behalf. But the Lord is to be sought unto to do these things for us. He says, “Ask, and it shall be given you.” And “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” Matthew 7:7; Romans 8:32.

(8) HOW DOES REBELLION AFFECT OUR PRAYERS?

Proverbs 28:9

Related Texts: Isaiah 1:15, 16; Zechariah 7:11-13; Proverbs 15:8-10; Psalm 66:18; 109:7

If we regard iniquity in our hearts, if we cling to any known sin, the Lord will not hear us; but the prayer of the penitent, contrite soul is always accepted. When all known wrongs are righted, we may believe that God will answer our petitions. Our own merit will never commend us to the favor of God; it is the worthiness of Jesus that will save us, His blood that will cleanse us; yet we have a work to do in complying with the conditions of acceptance.

(9) WHAT IS THE NEXT CRITICAL ELEMENT IN RECEIVING ANSWERS TO OUR PRAYERS?

Mark 11:24

Related Texts: James 1:6; Matthew 21:22; Mark 11:22-24; 1 Timothy 2:8

Another element of prevailing prayer is faith. “He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” Hebrews 11:6. Do we take Him at His word?

The assurance is broad and unlimited, and He is faithful who has promised. When we do not receive the very things we asked for, at the time we ask, we are still to believe that the Lord hears and that He will answer our prayers. We are so erring and short-sighted that we sometimes ask for things that would not be a blessing to us, and our heavenly Father in love answers our prayers by giving us that which will be for our highest good—that which we ourselves would desire if with vision divinely enlightened we could see all things as they really are. When our prayers seem not to be answered, we are to cling to the promise; for the time of answering will surely come, and we shall receive the blessing we need most. But to claim that prayer will always be answered in the very way and for the particular thing that we desire, is presumption. God is too wise to err, and too good to withhold any good thing from them that walk uprightly. Then do not fear to trust Him, even though you do not see the immediate answer to your prayers. Rely upon His sure promise, “Ask, and it shall be given you.”

(10) IF WE, IN HUMBLE AND TRUSTING FAITH, MAKE OUR NEEDS KNOWN TO GOD, WHAT GREAT PROMISE CAN WE CLAIM?

1 John 5:14, 15

Related Texts: Matthew 7:7-11; Ephesians 3:12-14; Hebrews 3:14; 10:35

If we take counsel with our doubts and fears, or try to solve everything that we cannot see clearly, before we have faith, perplexities will only increase and deepen. But if we come to God, feeling helpless and dependent, as we really are, and in humble, trusting faith make known our wants to Him whose knowledge is infinite, who sees everything in creation, and who governs everything by His will and word, He can and will attend to our cry, and will let light shine into our hearts. Through sincere prayer we are brought into connection with the mind of the Infinite. We may have no remarkable evidence at the time that the face of our Redeemer is bending over us in compassion and love, but this is even so. We may not feel His visible touch, but His hand is upon us in love and pitying tenderness.

(11) HOW IS OUR FORGIVENESS FROM GOD DETERMINED?

Matthew 6:14, 15

Related Texts: Matthew 6:12; 18:21-35; Luke 7:40-48; 11:4

When we come to ask mercy and blessing from God we should have a spirit of love and forgiveness in our own hearts. How can we pray, “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors,” and yet indulge an unforgiving spirit? If we expect our own prayers to be heard we must forgive others in the same manner and to the same extent as we hope to be forgiven.

(12) HOW OFTEN SHOULD OUR HEARTS BE IN UNION WITH GOD IN THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER?

Colossians 4:2

Related Texts: Colossians 4:12; Luke 21:36; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Psalm 55:17; 86:3; Ephesians 6:18

Perseverance in prayer has been made a condition of receiving. We must pray always if we would grow in faith and experience. We are to be “instant in prayer” Romans 12:12. Peter exhorts believers to be “sober, and watch unto prayer.” 1 Peter 4:7. Paul directs, “In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.” Philippians 4:6. “But ye, beloved,” says Jude, “praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God.” Jude 20, 21. Unceasing prayer is the unbroken union of the soul with God, so that life from God flows into our life; and from our life, purity and holiness flow back to God.

There is necessity for diligence in prayer; let nothing hinder you. Make every effort to keep open the communion between Jesus and your own soul. Seek every opportunity to go where prayer is wont to be made. Those who are really seeking for communion with God will be seen in the prayer meeting, faithful to do their duty and earnest and anxious to reap all the benefits they can gain. They will improve every opportunity of placing themselves where they can receive the rays of light from heaven.

I am thankful for the awesome privilege God has granted me that I may come at anytime to Him, through Christ, in prayer.

Please Circle: Yes Undecided

I realize that contact with the Lord in prayer is our life-line to heaven. It is my desire to live in constant connection with Him and experience His abiding peace through the gift of prayer.

Please Circle: Yes Undecided

I trust and believe that God hears and answers my prayers in His perfect timing and according to His perfect will.

Please Circle: Yes Undecided

I accept God's invitation to come "boldly before His throne of grace" in prayer so that I may obtain the help, grace, and the mercy I need in my daily walk with Him.

Please Circle: Yes Undecided

Study Notes - Prayer Requests - Answered Prayers

Download for Free at www.Bible-Lessons.org

Bible Study Format (C) Merlin Beerman. All rights reserved world-wide.

Text Adapted from "*Steps to Christ*" by E.G. White. Illustrations (C) Goodsalt - www.goodsalt.com

These free lessons are available in many languages and may be photocopied for sharing. They may in not be altered, sold, or translated in any circumstance without first receiving written permission from the Publisher and this copyright notice must remain in each successive copy.

This series and many others may be purchased in quantity, produced in a high quality, colorful study guide format at prices that compare with the cost of photocopying.

www.RevelationPublications.com or call 800-952-4457