PRAYER *power*

GET ACTIVATED

Prayer Power

How it works and how to use it!

A *Get Activated* Book

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Making the Connection

God's idea of prayer is not a ritual, but loving and lively communication between the best of friends. But sad to say, most people think they can't talk to God like that. Some think they're not religious enough, not righteous enough, or not spiritual enough. Some think He's too big—too far above them. Some think He's too busy to be concerned about them and their problems, which they think must seem awfully petty to Him. Some feel unworthy, not good enough. Some feel guilty or ashamed about things they've done. Some are even afraid of Him. If only they understood how differently God sees it!

God wants to have a personal relationship with each of us, and He wants it to be the deepest, most meaningful, most fulfilling and rewarding, most natural part of our lives. Now that's not to say He wants to take away from the other relationships and activities that we enjoy and consider important. To the contrary—He wants to be a *part* of all that. He wants to make our day-to-day

living easier, He wants to give the things we experience greater meaning, and He wants to enjoy them with us. In a word, He wants to make our lives *better*. He wants to add a wonderful new dimension to all that we do—the dimension of His loving presence.

How do we establish such a relationship, especially when we feel small and unspiritual and unworthy? How do we make that connection? Simple: through His Son, Jesus!

None of us can really grasp how great and wonderful God our Father is, because He and His Spirit are greater than the whole universe. He's so beyond our comprehension that He had to send us someone who could show us His love, someone we could experience, someone who could bring God down to the level of our limited human understanding. So He sent His Son, Jesus.

Jesus lived for 33 years on earth in human form and experienced the joy and sorrows that we as humans experience.[1] Jesus has been here, so He can understand us and be the link between us and God.[2]

We can get personal with Jesus. He even told us to ask Him into our hearts: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me."[3] He's the one we can have direct, personal contact with. He is the one we can approach God through.

If you have prayed to receive Jesus as your Savior, you already have that connection. If not, you can make

1. John 1:1–3,14; Hebrews 4:15
2. 1 Timothy 2:5
3. Revelation 3:20

it right now by sincerely praying a simple prayer like the following:

Dear Jesus, I believe You are the Son of God. I now open the door of my heart and ask You to please come into my life and give me Your free gift of eternal life. Amen.

The story is told of a certain minister who was disturbed to see a shabbily dressed old man go into his church at noon every day and come out again after a few minutes. What could he be doing? He informed the caretaker and asked him to question the old man. After all, the place contained valuable furnishings.

"I go to pray," the old man said in reply to the caretaker's questioning.

"Come, come now," said the other, "you are never long enough in the church to pray."

"Well, you see," the old man went on, "I don't know how to pray a long prayer, but every day at twelve o'clock I just come and say, 'Jesus, it's Jim.' I wait a minute and then come away. Even though it's just a little prayer, I think He hears me."

When Jim was injured some time later and taken to the hospital, he had a wonderful influence on the ward. Grumbling patients became cheerful, and often the ward would ring with laughter.

"Well, Jim," said a nurse to him one day, "the men say you are responsible for this change in the ward. They say you are always happy."

"Aye, that I am. I can't help being happy. You see, it's my visitor. Every day he makes me happy."

"Your visitor?" The nurse was puzzled. She had noticed that Jim's chair was always empty during visiting hours, for he was a lonely man, with no relatives. "Your visitor? But when does he come?"

"Every day," Jim replied, with a light in his eye. "Yes, every day at twelve o'clock He comes and stands at the foot of my bed. I see Him and He smiles and says,

'Jim, it's Jesus.'"

Prayer opens a channel from our emptiness to God's fullness. It's the connecting link between human needs and divine resources.

You must learn to make personal contact with the power of God, to let Him do the work of bringing you joy, health, and happiness.
—D.B.B.

No man or woman accomplishes so much with so little expenditure of time as when he or she is praying.

Prayer is so simple.
It is like quietly opening a door
And slipping into the very presence of God,
There in the stillness
To listen for His voice.
Perhaps to petition
Or only to listen,
It matters not;
Just to be there,
In His presence,
Is prayer!

Prayer Is Communication

Like any deep and lasting friendship, your relationship with Jesus will be strengthened by frequent, honest, open communication. That's really what prayer is all about: communicating heart-to-heart with the Lord.

But just how do you communicate with the Lord? Believe it or not, it's quite simple.

To get started, try sitting down in a quiet spot and picture Jesus there next to you. Then talk to Him just like you would to a good friend. You can talk to Him aloud or in your mind. The exact words you say aren't what matter—just tell Him what's on your heart.

Actually, you can pray anywhere, at anytime. You don't have to be either sitting or standing. You don't have to be in a church, a religious building, or any special place. Prayer connects your heart with God's heart, regardless of your surroundings.

Many people associate prayer with asking God for things. But that's only a part of prayer. Of course He wants

you to tell Him your needs, but He also wants you to just spend time with Him telling Him about how things are going in your life. Tell the Lord that you love Him and how thankful you are for all the good things He sends your way. Tell Him all about your dreams and desires, problems and questions, and He will give you strength, inspiration, reassurance, and the answers you need.

Jesus is at your beck and call—just a prayer away—and He's *always* happy to lend an ear and a helping hand. He's interested in *you* and what you're going through, and He's happy to hear and answer your requests.

But there's more to prayer than that.

Jesus also wants to communicate with you, to talk to you. He wants to tell you words of love and encouragement, and He wants to help you with your problems. He has all the answers, if you will listen. You can learn to recognize His voice when He speaks to your spirit and puts thoughts in your mind.

Jesus will also speak to you through His written Word, the Bible, but to get the most out of it, pray and listen to Him as you read. Then He can reveal how what you're reading applies to you and today's world. He will often fill in gaps and provide added detail to the often rather general answers in His Word. But again, the key is *listening*.

Whether it's your turn to listen or your turn to talk, you can communicate with the Lord at the speed of thought! It's not like communicating by letter, where you write to someone via the postal system and then have to wait days or weeks to receive their reply.—Or even like sending email via the Internet, where you can get an answer back from the other side of the world in minutes.

Your prayers actually reach His ear before they leave your mouth,[1] and you can get *immediate* answers. He may not always be able to give you a *complete* answer or bring about the final result you desire right away, but at the least He will tell you that He's heard your prayer and He's working on it. That assurance alone can give you peace of mind and help problems that seem like mountains melt away. And as you later bring the matter again in prayer before Him, He will continue to work on your behalf and show you what you can do to help work His will in the matter and bring it to a good conclusion.[2]

1. Isaiah 65:24
2. For more on receiving God's specific answers to your questions, don't miss *Hearing from Heaven* in the *Get Activated* series.

How Prayer Benefits You

There are many benefits to spending time with the Lord and you really can't afford *not* to! He can help you solve every problem, answer your every question, heal all your heartaches, comfort you when you're sorrowful, give you joy, and bring you closer to heaven. The list is endless.

Prayer changes things! It's one means by which God gives His children what they need or want, as long as it's good for them and others. "Whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."[1]

You will be made stronger in spirit. Time spent in quiet reflection and listening builds inner strength that will get you through life's toughest times. "In the day when I cried out, You answered me, and made me bold with strength in my soul."[2]

You will find rest and renewal when your spirit is sagging and your mind is troubled. "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle

1. Matthew 21:22
2. Psalm 138:3

and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."[3]

You will have a more positive outlook on life, because you will be better able to see things through the eyes of faith. Once you have committed a matter to God in prayer, you can then have the assurance that He will take care of it in accordance with His will. That helps you fight against worry and view things more optimistically. "We know that all things work together for good to those who love God."[4] "We walk by faith, not by sight."[5]

You will find comfort in times of sadness and grief, reassurance when you're down and out, and courage to go on when you think you can't. Jesus will help you see your troubles in proper perspective, as He sees them, and give you peace of mind. "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds."[6] "In the multitude of my anxieties within me, Your comforts delight my soul."[7]

As you receive and apply the things the Lord shows you, you will become wiser. "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him."[8]

Jesus will guide you through the maze of life. He will help you know what to do when you face problems and tough decisions. He has promised to instruct you, establish your thoughts, and guide your steps. "In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths."[9] "Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it,' whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left."[10]

3. Matthew 11:28–30
4. Romans 8:28
5. 2 Corinthians 5:7
6. Psalm 147:3
7. Psalm 94:19
8. James 1:5
9. Proverbs 3:6
10. Isaiah 30:21

He will inspire you with good ideas. "Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know."[11] Jesus will prevent some problems from happening by warning you in advance, and give you solutions to others. "Whoever listens to Me will dwell safely, and will be secure, without fear of evil."[12]

You can be healed physically. "The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up."[13]

You can be forgiven for wrongdoing. "I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,' and You forgave the iniquity of my sin."[14]

You will gain insight into the natural world as well as the spiritual realm. "As it is written: 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.'"[15]

Prayer draws on the power of God, so you will be able to accomplish more, and do so more easily. "He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength. Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."[16]

You will have greater peace of mind. "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication,

11. Jeremiah 33:3
12. Proverbs 1:33
13. James 5:15
14. Psalm 32:5
15. 1 Corinthians 2:9–10
16. Isaiah 40:29,31

with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."[17]

You can claim God's supply of your material needs. "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened."[18]

Jesus will open to you the treasures of His Word if you will pray, as King David did: "Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law."[19]

You can get the Lord's help even when you don't know what to ask for. "The Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."[20]

17. Philippians 4:6–7
18. Matthew 7:7–8
19. Psalm 119:18
20. Romans 8:26

A few days after our seven-year-old son, Peter, prayed for a large-print Bible, I went to price one at a Christian bookstore that carries English Bibles. The cheapest one was way out of our price range. I explained Peter's prayer request to the shop owner, and asked if he might be able to give me a special discount on a large-print Bible, considering the circumstances and that we were volunteer missionaries. I had scarcely finished my question when the shopkeeper started into a story that at first seemed to have no connection.

Seven years earlier, a blind woman had been miraculously healed in answer to prayer. Out of gratitude to the Lord, she had given the shopkeeper $500 to hold in a sort of trust fund. Then she had instructed him that if anyone ever came to his shop and asked for a Bible, but was unable to pay for it, he was to "charge it to her account." With that, he pointed to the shelf and told me to pick the Bible I wanted.

We never met the woman who bought Peter his Bible, but what a lesson we learned from her: a truly thankful heart looks for a way to share its blessings with others.

—P.A., Japan

One day I visited a small, poor school to give an inspirational video presentation. When I arrived, they were in the middle of a power failure. I offered to pray for the problem to be found and fixed, and ten minutes later the power came on.

The children all came in for the video, but their video player was old and didn't work properly, no matter how much we tried to adjust it. We decided to ask all the students, teachers, and staff—Muslims, Hindus and Christians alike—to pray with us that Jesus would fix the machine. Immediately after praying, everything began to work properly. They were all thrilled! Not only were they able to see the videos, but they were amazed to see the Lord answer prayer in such a specific way. Afterwards, some of the staff said, "We want to know more about God and His power to work such miracles!"
—R.H., Pakistan

On wings of prayer our burdens take flight
And our load of care becomes bearably light
And our heavy hearts are lifted above
To be healed by the balm of God's wonderful love!
And the tears in our eyes are dried by the hands
Of a loving Father who understands
All of our problems, our fears and despair,
When we take them to Him on the wings of prayer.

An African Christian in a remote village moaned and tossed as his fever raged higher and higher. The missionary doctor who was helping to care for the boy did what he could to bring the fever down,

but what he really needed was an *ice pack*. He quickly dismissed the thought. The nearest ice was a difficult day's journey away.

"Cannot God send ice for my dear son?" the sick boy's mother asked. Then she reminded the missionary of what he had said in one of his sermons—that God delights in doing miracles for His children.

"That's true," said the missionary. "But ice?—Here?"

Paying no attention to his doubts, the mother asked again matter-of-factly, "Shall we not pray?"

And so they did. The missionary prayed a vague and general prayer, but then the boy's mother got right to the point: "Lord, if ice is necessary to my son's healing, You can send it. I *believe* it!"

No sooner had she ended her prayer than a hailstone the size of a walnut rolled into the hut. When the two looked out, they saw hailstones plummeting from the sky.

"God has answered in His own wonderful way!" the mother exclaimed.

The hailstorm was local, and did not damage the village's crops. The son recovered completely. News of the miracle spread to neighboring villages, and increased the faith of everyone who heard it.—And the missionary was reminded that God answers "impossible" prayers.

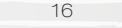
A couple whom we are friends with had been trying to have a child, without success. About a year ago, the wife asked us to pray for her. Two weeks later she was pregnant, and a few weeks after that she found out she was going to have twins!

Word got around, and other childless couples started asking us to pray for them. So far, four more couples are expecting babies—including a second set of twins!

—D.G., Thailand

A Persian fable says: One day
A wanderer found a lump of clay
So redolent of sweet perfume,
Its odors scented all the room.
"What are thou?" was his quick demand,
"Art thou some gem from Samarkand,
Or spikenard in this rude disguise,
Or other costly merchandise?"
"Nay: I am but a lump of clay."
"Then whence this wondrous perfume—say!"
"Friend, if the secret I disclose,
I have been dwelling with the rose."
Dear Lord, abide with us, that we
May draw our perfume fresh from Thee.

Man's greatest power lies in the power of prayer.



A Chinese Christian was once asked to give to a fund that would be spent on sacrifices to idols, as fire insurance on his house. He declined on the grounds that he trusted in the *living* God, not idols, to protect him from fire.

The same night that the sacrifices were offered, fire broke out in the street where the Chinese Christian's home was. Over 120 houses were burned down. As the flames were coming nearer and nearer to his house, his neighbors told him to save his furniture, but he refused. Instead, he prayed in a voice loud enough for all to hear, "Dear God—the one true God—prove Your existence and power by sparing my house from this fire."

Nearer and nearer the fire came, until only one house was left between his and the flames. Suddenly the wind changed direction, and his house was saved.

How Prayer Benefits Others

Your prayers can not only change things for yourself, but they can significantly improve the lives of others. It has been said that praying for others is not the *least* you can do for them, but the *most*. Your prayers move the heart and hand of God to take action on their behalf.

Through your prayers others can receive most of the same benefits that you receive when you pray for the same things for yourself—including comfort, protection, freedom from anxiety and fear, healing, material supply, and more.

Because you pray you are also in a better position to help others directly. The Lord often uses people as His agents on earth, so it could very well be that He wants to use you to help bring about the answers to your own prayers. The very fact you pray for others shows that you're concerned about their happiness and well-being, and this puts you in a position to better understand His loving plan for their lives and how you can help bring it to pass. When you pray for someone who is sick, for example, He

may show you how you can help stir their slumbering faith and then He might heal them as a testimony to them and others of His miracle-working power, and to cause their relationship with Him to blossom.

When you spend time with the Lord in prayer, He fills you with the fruits of the Spirit, which include love, joy, peace, longsuffering, temperance, faith, gentleness, meekness, and goodness.[1] As you receive more of His Spirit, others will see the Lord and His gifts reflected in your everyday life. "We all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord."[2]

1. Galatians 5:22–23 KJV
2. 2 Corinthians 3:18

Many years ago, a little backwoods town in the U.S. northeast seemed to have more than its share of problems—and problem *people*.

One night a few Christian friends were talking, when one of them said, "We may not be trained pastors or evangelists, but *something* must be done in this town. Let's form a prayer group. We can start by all praying for one person. Who shall it be?"

They picked one of the hardest men in town, a hopeless drunk, and all concentrated their prayers on him. He received Jesus as his Savior that same week, and became a changed man. Then they concentrated their prayers on another man, and he was also converted. Then they prayed for another and another, until within a year, hundreds of people had found Jesus. The town was transformed!

How lovely are the faces of
The ones who talk with God—
Lit with an inner sureness of
The path their feet have trod;

How gentle is the manner of
The one who walks with Him!
No strength can overcome him, and
No cloud his courage dim.

Keen are the hands and feet—ah, yes—
Of those who wait His will,
And clear as crystal mirrors are
The hearts His love can fill.

Some lives are drear from doubt and fear
While others merely plod;
But lovely faces mark all those
Who walk and talk with God.

One night in April 1912, a woman tossed and turned, unable to sleep. She was suddenly very worried about her husband who was then in mid-Atlantic, homeward bound on the *Titanic*. For several hours she prayed earnestly for him. At about five o'clock, a great peace came over her, and she finally fell asleep.

Meanwhile her husband, Colonel Gracie, was among the men who were trying frantically to launch the lifeboats from the great ship that had struck an iceberg and was sinking fast. He had given up all hope of being saved himself, and was doing his best to help the women and children. He wished that he could get a last message through to his wife, and cried from his heart, "Goodbye, my darling!"

As the ship plunged toward the ocean floor, he was sucked down in the giant whirlpool. Instinctively he began to swim under water, ice-

cold as it was, crying in his heart, *Goodbye, my darling, until we meet again!*

Suddenly he came to the surface and found himself near an overturned lifeboat. He and several others climbed aboard, and they were picked up the next morning by a rescue boat.

After Colonel Gracie made it home, he and his wife exchanged their stories and soon realized that she had been praying for him when he had been in the greatest danger. Not only that, but according to the time at home, he had been rescued at five in the morning—the exact time that the Lord had assured his wife he was going to be okay!

Intercession

Say not I do not understand the fierceness of your fight,
For I was with you many times in the darkness of your night.
Though you were many miles away and we were years apart,
I felt oft-times your agony, the pain within your heart.

Say not you fought the battle grim in darkness all alone,
For I was with you there in *prayer*, stood by you at the Throne.
With shield of faith and Spirit's sword, I answered at His Word,

And came to battle by your side when first your call I heard.

Say not, "'Tis fantasy that one should hear such distant cry."
For we are one in Him we love; His Spirit draws us nigh.
And oft He whispers to my heart the call to *quickly pray*.
So I have reached you there in prayer, though you are far away.
—Virginia Brandt Berg

We give to others in their need
No greater love and care,
Than when we give them to the Lord,
Surrounding them with prayer.

How Prayer Benefits the Lord

We stand to benefit so much through prayer that it sometimes seems like we have everything to gain and nothing to give—but that's not the way the Lord looks at it at all! It's true that we need Him for all these things, but the marvelous thing is that He also needs and wants and is in love with *us*. Time and again, the Bible refers to us as His bride,[1] and nothing could better describe the relationship He wants to have with us. So what does the Lord want and need from you?—Much the same things a husband needs from his wife.

He desires loving fellowship and heart-to-heart communication most of all. He wants to know that He has first place in your heart, and the way you show Him that is by spending time with Him in prayer and reading His Word.

1. Isaiah 54:5, 62:5; Hosea 2:19–20; Romans 7:4; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 19:7–8

He loves to hear you tell Him how wonderful He is and how much you love Him, how you adore Him. He loves for you to praise Him.

He wants to hear you tell Him how much you *need* Him. Just like a loving husband would, He lives to supply your every need and knows what you need even better than you do.[2] Still, He likes for you to bring your requests to Him, because that shows you are depending on Him. Even *He* needs to feel needed! And of course once He has supplied your need, He loves for you to thank Him, to show appreciation.

He needs your service. He wants to use you as one of His instruments to help accomplish His will "on earth as it is in heaven."[3] He especially needs you to point others to Him and spread His love by being an example of His loving ways to them. But in order to know *specifically* what He wants you to do and how to do it, you need to spend time with Him, receiving His directions.

2. Luke 12:32; Matthew 6:8
3. Matthew 6:10

I met God in the morning
When my day was at its best,
And His presence came like sunrise,
Like a glory in my breast.

All day long His presence lingered,
All day long He stayed with me,
And we sailed in perfect calmness
O'er a very troubled sea.

Other ships were blown and battered,
Other ships were sore distressed,
But the winds that seemed to drive them,
Brought to us a peace and rest.

Then I thought of other mornings,
With a keen remorse of mind,
When I, too, had loosed the moorings,
With His presence left behind.

So I think I know the secret,
Learned from many a troubled way:
You must seek Him in the morning,
If you want Him through the day!
—Ralph Spaulding Cushman

There are a lot of Christians who start playing with the gifts of God or the gifts of the Spirit, and neglect God Himself. Like a father coming home with gifts for his children: the kids grab the presents, forget to kiss their father and greet him, and sit down on the floor and start playing with the toys.

Or it's like the story about the little girl who each day took the time that she normally spent with her father to make him bedroom slippers for his birthday. God may appreciate the bedroom slippers you're making for Him, but He'd rather have you. And in fact, you'll probably make an awful mess of them if you neglect Him!
—D.B.B.

Making Time

It takes *time* to communicate. There's no way around it! Considering everything else you need to do, it will probably seem like a sacrifice at first to take a few minutes with the Lord before your day begins. It may also seem like an awkward and unwelcome interruption to stop other things later to talk with the Lord. It's a mistake, though, to look at time spent in prayer as time that could have been better used to get things done, because as busy as you may be, if you take time to pray, you'll be able to get a lot more done than you ever would otherwise. It's an investment, but once you start reaping the benefits, you'll wonder how you ever managed without it. Here are a few tips to help get you started:

Make a conscious effort. Like any new habit, this will take conscious effort over a period of time. You have to really work at it at first. It usually involves a lot of forgetting and some remembering, but in time you'll find you're remembering to pray more and more, and forgetting less.

Make it a priority. You always have time for the things you consider most important.

Set aside specific times for prayer in your daily routine. King David wrote in the Book of Psalms, "Evening and morning and at noon I will pray … and He shall hear my voice."[1] If you wait till everything else is taken care of, it will never happen. If you find that one time of day doesn't work well for you, try another.

Find a time and place where you can get quiet, and where you won't be distracted by other things going on around you.

Set attainable goals for yourself—perhaps five or ten minutes once a day to start, and then try to up it to twice a day or more. Prayers don't need to be long. When Jesus' disciples asked Him to teach them to pray, the model prayer He taught them—now known as the Lord's Prayer—was only sixty-six words.[2] It's not how *long* you pray that counts, but how much you *believe*, how earnest and sincere you are.

Take advantage of spare moments during the day for short pick-me-up prayers. You can do it during a coffee break, when stuck in traffic, while waiting for an appointment, while cooking, while taking a shower, while waiting for the baby to drift off to sleep, while walking the dog—almost any time, really. Just focus your thoughts on the Lord and let Him refresh you and give you strength and inspiration to carry on.[3]

1. Psalm 55:17
2. Matthew 6:9–13 KJV
3. 1 Thessalonians 5:17; 1 Chronicles 16:11; Luke 18:1; 21:36

Even after you get in the habit of praying while you're doing other things, you still need quiet times when you can give your full attention to the Lord and what He has to say to you.

If you miss your appointed times one day, don't give up! Try again the next day.

Robert G. LeTourneau, the man who invented and manufactured the world's first large earthmoving equipment, was also a dedicated Christian.

One evening he needed to design a piece of machinery that was supposed to be built the next day, but he was also expected at a prayer meeting that same evening. To postpone the building project would be costly, but he finally decided that the prayer meeting was even more important, and he went ahead to the meeting. How would he ever get the plan drawn by the next morning?

He returned home about ten o'clock. Up to that time he hadn't even been able to make a start on the plan, but he sat down at his drafting board and in about five minutes came up with a plan that was both innovative and doable. He had been inspired by God! What is more, the little piece of machinery he designed that night became a key component of many other machines Robert G. LeTourneau went on to invent.

It pays to pray!

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.

Start the day off right: hear from the Lord!

You ought to try a little prayer time every day, early in the morning before beginning your day's work, asking the Lord to help you, lead you, and guide you. When you first wake up, before you do anything, talk to God. Get your orders from Him for the day and you'll be amazed at how He'll solve a lot of your problems before the day even starts, simply by listening to what He has to say.

But if you go plunging into all your problems and troubles and your day's work without stopping to talk to the Lord and get your directions from Him, you'll be like a musician who decided to have his concert first, and tune his instrument afterwards. Begin the day with the Word of God and prayer, and get first of all in harmony with Him.

Don't ever think "It's too hard to pray," or "I haven't got time to pray." The busier your day, the more reason you have to pray and the longer you ought to pray. If you'll just spend a little more time praying, you will find that you'll spend a lot less time working to get things done later. If your day is hemmed with prayer, it is less likely to unravel. It's just that simple!
—D.B.B.

Take time to hear from God, and He'll take time to straighten out the problem.
—D.B.B.

Most Christians today seem to be more concerned in having God hear what they have to say than they are in hearing what God has to say. They're trying to put their program across on God and get Him to sign His name to their program. I heard someone say one time, "Are you willing, not to present your program to God for His signature, not even to be presented with God's program for your signature, but to sign a blank sheet of paper and let God fill it in without your even knowing what His program is going to be?"

You need to learn to listen to the Lord most of all. It's not up to the King to try to go chasing His subjects around screaming and hollering at them to try to get them to do what He wants. You come to Him with quietness and respect and you sincerely and in trembling present your petition, and you wait silently to get the answer. You have to fear, respect, and reverence the Lord, and treat Him like the King He is.
—D.B.B.

Getting quiet before the Lord shows you have faith that God is going to handle the situation, that He's going to take care of things. It shows you trust the Lord. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee."[4] If you're not trusting, you're going to be in confusion all the time. Like the little poem:

4. Isaiah 26:3 KJV

When we're trusting, we're not heard to fret.
When we're fretting, we're not trusting yet!

If you're in a big stew, confused and worrying and fretting and fuming, you're not trusting. You don't have the faith you ought to have. Trusting is a picture of complete rest, peace and quiet of mind, heart, and spirit. The body may have to continue working, but your attitude and spirit is calm.
—D.B.B.

I got up early one morning,
And rushed right into the day;
I had so much to accomplish,
I didn't have time to pray.

Troubles just tumbled about me,
And heavier came each task.
"Why doesn't God help me?" I wondered.
He answered, "You didn't ask."

I tried to come into God's presence;
I used all my keys at the lock.
God gently and lovingly chided,
"Why, child, you didn't knock."

I wanted to see joy and beauty,
But the day toiled on gray and bleak.
I wondered why God didn't show me.
He said, "You didn't seek."

I woke up early this morning,
And paused before entering the day.
I had so much to accomplish
That I *had* to take time to pray.

How to Get Results

There's no set pattern to follow or magic formula for prayer, but there are twelve steps you can take to help your prayers accomplish what you want them to:

1. Have a praiseful, thankful attitude

Praise pleases the Lord. It propels you into His presence. "Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful unto Him, and bless His name."[1] "With thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God."[2]

Before you begin to list all the things you would like God to do, take a minute to praise and thank Him for all He has *already* done. If you don't thank Him for the blessings He's already given you, He's not going to feel much like answering your prayers and giving you something else you want.

1. Psalm 100:4
2. Philippians 4:6

There will be times, of course, when you don't particularly *feel* like praising or thanking God—when you're feeling sick or in pain, or are down and discouraged, for example—but those are the times it's most important to stay positive and praise Him anyhow. There are always *some* things you can thank God for. Thank Him for all the *good* He has sent your way. Thank Him for all the trials and troubles you *don't* have. As you get your mind on those good things and put them into words, your praises will lift your spirit like nothing else can. With the Lord's help, you'll soon praise your way right out of your troubles and woes.

2. Start with a clean heart

Before you can have faith that the Lord will answer your prayers, you need to be sure that things are right between you and the Lord. "If our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. If our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight."[3]

If you feel unworthy of the Lord's blessing—if your heart condemns you—it usually means one of two things: either you feel guilty about something you've done wrong; or you *haven't* really done anything wrong, but the Devil is telling you that you have. The surest way to keep your prayers from being answered, of course, is to keep them from being prayed in the first place, so the Devil tries to convince you that you're too bad to approach the Lord or expect His help. This is why you can't base your prayers or

3. 1 John 3:20–22

your relationship with the Lord on how you *feel*. You have to sort the truth from the lie, and you do that by sincerely asking the Lord to help you to see things as He does.

If you have done wrong, all you need to do to set things straight is acknowledge your guilt, ask the Lord to forgive you, and pledge to try to rectify the matter or be reconciled with any others involved. Once you do that, the Lord is quick to forgive, and to hear and answer your other prayers.[4]

If feelings of guilt and unworthiness continue after the Lord has forgiven you, it's clearly the Devil who is making you feel that way. Don't listen to him, but rather "come boldly to the throne of grace, obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."[5] As you ignore and resist the Devil and his lies, they will fade. Launch out in prayer, and the Lord will lift the weights from off your heart.

3. Pray for God's will to be done

When you are doing your best to please the Lord, then it pleases Him to grant your heart's desires. "Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart."[6] Like a loving father, He is happy to give you what you need, and even what you want, as long as it is good for you and doesn't harm others.

Think first in terms of what will please the Lord and make Him happiest, and make *that* your prayer. When your will and His will are in agreement, then you can "ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you."[7]

4. Matthew 5:23–24; Psalm 103:8–12
5. Hebrews 4:16
6. Psalm 37:4
7. John 15:7

4. Put the needs of others ahead of your own

Prayer provides wonderful personal benefits to the Christian, but it's also a big responsibility. God expects us to pray not only for ourselves, but for others.

Your prayers can make a difference in the lives of others, even when they are hundreds or thousands of miles away. Your prayers reach out and rescue, they can comfort, they can love, they can heal, they can mend, they can bring joy and happiness, they can break down barriers, they can overcome any obstacle, they can tap in to God's infinite supply. Your prayers can move God's hand to work in the lives and hearts of others.

The Lord loves to answer unselfish prayers!—And when He sees you putting the needs of others ahead of your own, He just might shower you with even more personal blessings than you could ask for.

5. Be specific

Jesus wants us to be definite in our requests. He asks us, "What would you have Me do for you?"[8] Specific prayers get specific answers. Vague, aimless prayers usually indicate one of three things: Either you're not very concerned, or you don't really know what you want Him to do, or you don't have faith that He can do it. So be as clear and definite as you would if you were writing a check drawn on the Bank of Heaven. Fill it out for the exact amount you want, make it payable to yourself or someone else who needs it, date it, endorse it—and it's yours!

8. Matthew 20:32

God says to you, "Command Me!"

You're in God's hands, but in a way He's also in yours. "Concerning the work of My hands, you command Me."[9] You can command the Lord? Yes, if you're living in obedience to the Lord and are in His will, desiring only those things which please and glorify Him, you can command whatever you want. If you're doing the right thing, love Him, and have faith in His Word, He's already promised to answer prayer.

So much of what God does depends on your will and your action and what you want and how you pray! He has confined Himself and His operations to your faith and your requests. "You do not have, because you do not ask."[10] He's just waiting on you to command the situation.

Prayer moves the hand and heart of God. He enjoys using us, confining the majesty and the power of His omnipotence to the hands of frail men and women. So pray!

—D.B.B.

9. Isaiah 45:11

10. James 4:2

6. Be wholehearted

Sometimes you may wonder why you even need to pray, if God—who is all-knowing—already knows what you need. Why spend all this time asking, if He knows in advance what you're going to ask Him for? It's true that God knows what you need before you even ask Him,[11] but He still expects you to pray. It shows that you are depending on Him, that you need Him. It's a positive declaration of your faith that He can answer your prayers, and that pleases Him.

If you have a lazy attitude and think that the Lord will answer your prayers no matter how much or how little you put into them, or that He'll just do everything for you without you ever having to bother to ask, you will probably be disappointed with His answers—or with the way He *doesn't* answer. Isaiah, one of the prophets of the Old Testament, once rightly concluded that bad things were happening to Israel because the people weren't praying for God to intercede on their behalf: "There is no one who calls on Your name, who stirs himself up to take hold of You."[12]

God wants you to show concern and pray about things.—And in *serious* matters, He expects you to be serious about asking for His help. If you stir yourself, God will stir Himself. "You will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart."[13]

11. Matthew 6:8
12. Isaiah 64:7
13. Jeremiah 29:13

7. Exercise your faith

What is faith? It's taking God at His Word. It's believing that what He has promised, He will do. With faith, it doesn't matter whether reason or logic point in that direction; you just know it will be because God promised it so, whether your human mind can figure it all out or not.

The greater your faith in the Lord's ability to answer, the greater answers to prayer you will receive. These two contrasting examples demonstrate the point especially well: When two blind men besought Jesus to restore their sight, He asked them if they believed He was able to do so. When they answered yes, He told them that it would be done to them "according to their faith"—and He proceeded to heal them.[14] But another time we read that He didn't do many miracles in one town because of the people's unbelief.[15] So it's pretty clear that your measure of faith determines the measure of God's response.

How do you build your faith muscle? You nourish it with God's Word,[16] and exercise it daily through prayer. Forget to feed it, and it will wither away; don't exercise it, and it will become flabby.

8. Pray in the name of Jesus

Jesus tells us, "Whatever you ask in My name, that I will do."[17] He also tells us, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."[18] That second verse is talking primarily of salvation, but it's also true of prayer. When Jesus came to earth to die for our sins, He became our Mediator to God, the Father. The Bible tells us that "there is one God and one Mediator

14. Matthew 9:27–30
15. Matthew 13:58
16. Romans 10:17
17. John 14:13
18. John 14:6

between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus."[19] Direct your requests to Jesus, and you'll get wonderful answers to your prayers.

9. Claim God's Word

God has a storehouse of matchless treasures and infinite wealth, all that you could ever ask or need or imagine—and it's all been promised to you in His Word. As the Scriptures explain, there "have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature."[20] All you have to do is lay claim to them.

God's Word is like a contract that He has bound Himself to. The first step is to familiarize yourself with the terms of the contract. You do that by reading His Word. Then when you pray, He wants you to hold Him to those terms. When you remind Him of His promises, it shows you have faith in what He has said, and that you believe He is able and will do what you are asking.

Of course, the contract also has terms that *you* must fulfill. Many of God's promises come with conditions. "Whatever we ask we receive from Him, *because* we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight."[21] In order to claim His promised "whatever you ask," you must do your best to keep His commandments and please Him. When you keep your part of the bargain, you can boldly claim all that is rightfully yours according to His Word.

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19. 1 Timothy 2:5 (See also Hebrews 8:6.)
20. 2 Peter 1:4
21. 1 John 3:22

A baby illustrates faith

How do we receive the spiritual nourishment we need from the Lord? It's so simple: we just have to have the faith of a little baby!

When a baby is crying to be fed, he knows his mother wouldn't think of refusing him! God put it in that baby to know that if he calls, she will answer. He expects the answer and he gets it!—And if we, as children of our heavenly Father, ask for milk, He's surely not going to give us a serpent or something else![22]

And what is it that brings the milk out of the mother's breast? When the baby sucks, he creates a vacuum inside his mouth, which pulls the milk out. Prayer is creating a vacuum like that inside our hearts: "Lord, here is this empty space!—You fill it!"

When the baby is very tiny, his mother has to bring the nourishment to him and show him where it is. But as he gets older, he automatically knows where to find the milk and he can reach out for it himself.—And likewise, the more we practice receiving nourishment from God, the better we know where to find it. And as long as we keep sucking, we'll get more, because God has unlimited capacity to give.
—D.B.B.

22. Luke 11:10–13

For three or four weeks, our daughter Angela had complained that her eyes hurt. She was also having trouble focussing on the words when she read. We took her to two eye doctors, but both said her eyes were fine.

Over the next several weeks, however, the pain continued and it became increasingly hard for her to focus. We consulted a third doctor, and he suggested that we take her to a hospital for more extensive tests.

At the hospital, the diagnosis was not good. "Angela's problem could be a lesion on one of her eyes or brain," the ophthalmologist said. If that were the problem, she went on, it was probably too late for any treatment. While she gave Angela an optic nerve test to find out more, we prayed for the best.

When the test results were in, the doctor explained that Angela's problem was unusually acute. Angela's eyes could barely detect the brightest lights. The doctor suspected a brain tumor. This was an emergency!

That night, we prayed desperately for Angela's healing, and I read to her from God's Word about faith and healing. As she was unable to see any of the words in the Bible she loved, we felt Psalm 119:18 would be an appropriate verse to claim: "Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law." Then we took a stand of faith that the Lord had heard our prayers and would heal her.

Almost immediately she began to see the words, one by one. Soon she was reading the whole page. Her healing was miraculous and immediate!

—M.T., Taiwan

The story is told of an old woman who had lived alone near a remote village in the Highlands of Scotland, and who was so poor that her church had to pay her rent for her.

One day when her pastor brought the monthly rent, he said, "Mrs. McKintrick, why is it that your grown son does not support you? I understand he has a very good job in Australia, and that he is a good boy who loves you dearly. Is this not the case?"

"Oh yes," said the mother. "And he never forgets me. Every week he writes me the most loving letter."

Curious to know more about a son who could so love his mother and yet leave her without support, the pastor asked to see some of the letters.

Soon the woman returned with two packages. "These are his letters," she said, handing the pastor the first package, "and these are the pretty pictures he sends me with every letter. They fit nicely in the letter, and it shows he thinks about me."

"A picture in every letter?" The pastor was more curious than ever. "May I see them also?"

"Oh, surely," she answered. "Some are of a man's head, some of a man sitting on a horse, and some have the king's picture on them. See, this one here has the king of England.—Long live the king!"

"Long live your son!" said the astonished pastor. "Why, my dear friend, do you know that

you are a rich woman? This is money! You have wealth here! And to think of how you have suffered and done without, when right here in the house all the time you had riches that you thought were just pretty pictures."

The promises of God in His Word are not just pretty pictures, not just beautiful language. God's Word says, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises"[23]—and there are hundreds of them. Abundant supply! Limitless resources!

—Virginia Brandt Berg

23. 2 Peter 1:4

10. Refuse to doubt

It's the Devil's business to try to get you to doubt God's Word. If he is able to convince us that God's promises are empty and can't be relied on, then he has taken the *power* out of our prayers.

The Word tells us to "ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways."[24] Refuse to entertain any thoughts that contradict the Word.—They're the Devil's seeds of doubt.

11. Count it done

Every prayer that is in line with God's will and according to what God wants and knows is best for everyone involved, is answered—as far as God is concerned—before the prayer itself is even finished.[25] God's Word cannot fail, so whenever we meet His simple conditions outlined in His Word, such as those explained in this booklet, the answers to our prayers are automatically granted. He may not answer the way we expect Him to, or we may not *see* the answer right away, but God has set things in motion to be fulfilled in His time, providing it's His will. So once you have presented your request to the Lord, it's time to take what is known as the stand of faith. You must trust that the answer is on its way, and believe that if you've fulfilled your part of the bargain, He will come through for you, even if it sometimes takes a while. Count it done!

24. James 1:6–8

25. Matthew 6:8

12. Thank God for answering

If you really believe that God has heard and answered your prayer, you won't wait till you see the answer to thank Him for it; you'll thank Him by faith. It's just as important to end your prayers with praise and thanksgiving as it is to start them that way.

Are you on the spot?—Turn around and put God on the spot!

The Lord loves to precipitate a crisis! He sometimes lets things happen to make us pray and believe Him for the answer. He wants us to be specific and take a definite step of faith by making specific requests and expecting specific answers. Specific prayer puts both God and ourselves on the spot, but it is also a sign of our *faith*, which pleases God.

Some people are afraid to ask the Lord for definite answers to prayer, for fear they won't get them—and that might be a reflection on their spirituality, or even hurt God's reputation! "What if He doesn't answer prayer? What will people think of our faith and our God?" So they just generalize in order not to be pinned down, in case they don't get an answer.

But God *loves* to be put on the spot because He knows He'll never fail. He'll never fail as long as we meet the conditions, exercise our faith in prayer, and obey His Word. And when He answers, it will be a testimony to His Word and His faithfulness, as well as to our faith in expecting a specific answer. So tell Him exactly what you need or want done, and He won't fail!

—D.B.B.

Dr. Alexander Whyte of Edinburgh was famous for his pulpit prayers. He always found something to thank God for, even in bad times. One stormy morning a member of his congregation thought to himself, *The preacher will have nothing to thank God for on a wretched morning like this.*

But Whyte began his prayer "We thank Thee, O God, that it is not always like this."

Do What *You* Can Do

God expects you to do what *you* can do. That shows that you have faith—that you believe God is going to do what you *can't* do. This is often referred to as "taking a step of faith." The Gospels are full of examples:

Jesus told one man whose hand was withered, "Stretch out your hand." The man obviously couldn't move his hand, because it was withered. But as he put forth the effort, believing that Jesus would heal him, his hand "was restored as whole as the other."[1]

Jesus told another man who had been blind from birth to go wash his eyes in a certain pool. It probably seemed to those standing by like a silly thing to do. But the man believed and obeyed and received his sight.[2]

When ten lepers begged Jesus to have mercy on them and heal them, He told them to go show themselves to the priests. According to the custom of the Jews, after a leper had been healed, he was to present himself to the priest to verify his healing. The lepers hadn't been healed

1. Matthew 12:10–13

2. John 9:1–7

yet, but as they believed and obeyed, and went on their way to see the priest, they were healed.[3]

Before Jesus could raise Lazarus from the dead, the giant stone covering the entrance of the tomb had to be removed. This was something *others* could do. When the mourners gathered at Lazarus's tomb obeyed Jesus' request and rolled away the stone, they demonstrated that they believed Jesus was able to do the miracle of bringing Lazarus back to life—and He did. He could have used some supernatural power to roll the stone away, just like He supernaturally raised Lazarus from the dead, but He didn't. He wanted to see the onlookers put their faith into action.[4]

Those who demonstrate their faith by doing what *they* can do have their prayers answered and see miracles. Those who ask, receive. Jesus was happy to heal the sick, to raise the dead, to comfort those whose hearts were broken, but those who had the faith to *ask* were the ones who most often received the blessing. God may be wanting to do a miracle in your life and may be simply waiting for you to ask. He has purposely limited Himself to our prayers and faith. When we are full of faith and ask God to work on our behalf, we loose His hands to perform wonders.

If you're not sure what God expects you to do before He will answer *your* prayer, just ask Him. He'll either tell you directly, or He'll show you as you read His Word.

3. Luke 17:12–14

4. John 11:1–44

The pioneer missionary Hudson Taylor first went to China in 1853—a voyage that took over five months. Once, when passing very close to an island inhabited by cannibals, the ship was becalmed. Slowly it drifted toward the shore. The savages assembled on the beach, anticipating a feast.

"You're a man of God, Mr. Taylor. Pray for God to do something to save us!" the captain implored.

"I will pray," said Taylor, "provided you set your sails to catch the breeze."

"I can't do that," the captain protested. "I'd be the laughingstock of my crew if I unfurled the sails in a dead calm.

"Then I won't pray," Taylor said. "First prepare the sails."

It was done.

While Taylor was still praying in his cabin, there came a knock at the door. It was the captain again.

"Are you still praying for wind?" the captain asked.

"Yes."

"Well, you'd better stop," the captain said, "because we have more wind than we can manage."

And so they made it safely to their destination.

Proceed as if Possessing

After you have asked God for something, take action. *Act* on your faith. Put God on the spot by showing Him that you believe so strongly that He is going to answer, that you are going ahead as if He had *already* answered. The following story, told by Virginia Brandt Berg, illustrates this principle beautifully.

When I was the pastor of a church in Wagoner, Oklahoma, there was a girl named Etta, who wanted very much to go to college to prepare for Christian service. For two years she prayed for money to pay her tuition, and during the second year she got deeply in debt. The situation looked impossible.

She came to me in tears and much discouraged. I asked her if she knew that it was God's will for her to go, and she answered she was absolutely sure it was.

"Then I would certainly not wait any longer," I said. "You've been asking the Lord for the money for two years, but you have never shown by your actions that you really

expect Him to send it. If you really believed He was going to answer your prayer and give you the funds you need, what would you do?"

"I'd get my clothes ready, write the school that I was coming, and make all the other arrangements," Etta answered.

"Then that is exactly what I would do if I were you. Stand on His promise and make the necessary arrangements, just as you would if you had the money in your hand. Real faith would proceed as if it had already happened. If someone were to promise you the money, you would believe them, but God Himself has already promised in His Word to give you the desire of your heart,[1] and you don't believe Him."

"But Mrs. Berg," the dear girl answered, "I *do* believe Him! I'll prove it! I'm going home to pack my clothes and get ready. School opens in a very short time, and I'll have to hurry."

Etta never wavered from that moment on. She went straight ahead with her preparations, just as if she already had the funds. She was positive that the Bank of Heaven would open its windows at just the right time.[2]

The very day before she was supposed to leave, she phoned me to say that her clothing and other belongings were all ready to pack, but she had no suitcase. Over the phone we claimed the Scripture promise, "God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory."[3] Then I went about my work and forgot the incident.

About an hour later a friend phoned. She was cleaning house, she said, and had found a number of things she

1. Psalm 37:4
2. Malachi 3:10
3. Philippians 4:19

didn't need any longer and wanted to get rid of, including a large suitcase. She wondered if I could use it.

"You're filling an order from heaven," I said with a laugh, "only you have the wrong address. The Lord wants the suitcase sent to *Etta's* home."

The next night a number of us went to the train station to see Etta off to college. "Mrs. Berg," she whispered, "the money hasn't come yet, but I am not the least bit frightened. I absolutely know the Lord has heard my prayer, and I know that I *have* that which I desired of Him."[4]

There must have been a mistake somewhere, I thought. Some friends had told me they had taken a collection amongst themselves to help Etta, but ...

Just then I heard the train whistle in the distance, and far away I saw the glow of the headlight. Etta searched my face for a clue. What could I say?

Suddenly one of the people who had taken the collection came running up to us. "I was doing some work at the office, when I remembered the money the others had given me to give to Etta," he said. "And here is some more, a gift from my wife and me."

"And here is more," said another friend who had also just come.

"All aboard!" called the conductor. "All aboard!"

"All aboard God's promises!" I said to Etta. "It pays to believe, doesn't it?"

"It's wonderful," she answered, "simply wonderful, what faith can do."

4. 1 John 5:14–15

You are coming to a King,
Large petitions with you bring;
For His grace and power are such,
None can ever ask too much!

Prayer is the most powerful form of energy that one can generate. The influence of prayer on the human mind and body is as demonstrable as that of secreting glands. Its results can be measured in terms of increased buoyancy, greater intellectual vigor, moral stamina and a deeper understanding of human relationships.

Prayer is indispensable to the fullest development of personality. Only in prayer do we achieve that complete harmonious assembly of mind, body and spirit which gives the frail human need its unshakable strength. When we pray we link ourselves with the inexhaustible motive that spins the universe.

—Dr. Alexis Carrel

Ways to Pray

There are more ways to pray than you probably ever imagined. They can be long or short, silent or spoken or sung. Some prayers don't even need words.[1] They can be fun, off-the-cuff exchanges, or hallowed, formal veneration. They can be spontaneous, carefully planned, or written. Write them yourself, or take them from the Bible (many prayers can be found in the book of Psalms) or a devotional book. They can be for yourself or others. They can be prayed in private or with others. They can be simple acknowledgments of your need for the Lord's blessing as you go about your routine, or they can be earnest petitions for His guidance as you tackle the seemingly impossible. They can be happy, thankful praises, or impassioned prayers of repentance from a broken and contrite heart. They can be prayed on your knees or on the go. The ways to pray are as many and varied as your needs. Here is a look at just a few:

1. Romans 8:26

Praise prayers

Praise prayers benefit both parties. Not only does the Lord love praise, but praising Him for His goodness puts things in proper perspective for you as well. When you're weighed down with problems and cares, give them all to Jesus,[2] and then start counting your blessings. Thank Him for all He has already done for you, and praise and thank Him for the desired outcome, which is already yours by faith.

That's what King David in the Bible did. If you think you've got problems, consider *his!* Before he became king, his mentor, King Saul, became jealous of him and tried to kill him several times; after he became king, his own son usurped his throne and David had to depart in disgrace and scandal to another country—and that's not to mention his *foreign* enemies! On top of that, he was a horrible sinner and knew it! He seemed to have every reason to be discouraged and complain, but in his psalms he always took a positive approach—at least by the time he was finished. He praised God in spite of his troubles because he knew God would work it all out in the end, because He always had and because He promised to. Because of David's faith and praiseful attitude, God called him a man after His own heart.[3]

The best time to get in the praise-prayer habit is *before* you face major problems, of course. For example, instead of praying a "please, Lord" prayer for your children, you could pray: "Jesus, thank You for the wonderful children You have given me. Thank You for caring for them today. Thank You for keeping them safe, and for helping them to do well in their schoolwork. Thank You for the quality time we're going to spend together this evening. …"

2. 1 Peter 5:7

3. 1 Samuel 13:14

United prayer

Most prayer is private, and you can't get by without that. Private prayers have rewards all their own. There are other times, however, when it pays to pray with others. Jesus promises, "If two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."[4] In certain situations, there simply is more power in united prayer.

Having others pray with you when you're passing through a particularly tough time can also be a comfort and source of spiritual strength. Part of our responsibility as Christians is to support each other through our prayers, so avail yourselves of the prayers of others, and offer to pray with them as well when they need it.

Conversational prayer

When praying about a particular situation with others, try praying a "conversational prayer." Each person adds a sentence or two on a different aspect, or claims an appropriate Bible promise. You can either go in a circle, or each chime in as a new aspect comes to mind. It's like having a telephone party line or an Internet chat room conversation with the Lord: You hear what the others are praying, and He hears it all. This way the prayer request gets covered from many angles, and everyone has an opportunity to enter in. If each person keeps their contribution short and to the point—one or two sentences at the most—the prayer will be lively and keep everyone's full attention.

4. Matthew 18:19–20

There is great power in united prayer

Some people are a bit shy about praying with others and sometimes they probably think about what Jesus said, "When you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly."[5] Well, there is a time for that, but there is also a time to pray *together*!

Sometimes it's important that you make your request known, not only to the Lord but to others, so they can join with you in prayer, manifest their faith, and confess their dependence upon the Lord along with you. So never be ashamed to ask for prayer when you need it!

The Lord loves to give the answers, and He has to give the answers when He sees we're united in love and prayer and purpose and mind and heart and spirit. "If two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."[6] God's dynamics of the Spirit really operate amazingly! The Lord says that when one can only chase a thousand, two can put ten thousand to flight.[7]

—D.B.B.

5. Matthew 6:6
6. Matthew 18:19–20
7. Deuteronomy 32:30

No matter what else you're doing you can always be praying

You don't have to be down on your hands and knees to be praying. In fact, in everything you're doing you ought to be praying and looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith.[8]

Prayer is like breathing, just breathing the Holy Spirit all the time. Stay in constant communication with the Lord, constantly thinking about Him, and you will be anointed and spirit-led in everything you do. If you're praying about what you're doing and asking God for wisdom, He has promised to give it to you.

The Lord can save you a lot of work, a lot of trouble and a lot of time if you'll pray first before you start a job. Pray about it and ask the Lord to help you and lead you, even if it's just a few words— "Jesus, please help me!" You can pray in a split second and get the answer back quick, but if you don't take the time to pray, and you lean on your own understanding and your own wisdom, you're apt to make a sad mistake.

So "pray without ceasing!"[9] Ask the Lord about everything, every problem, every decision, and make sure you're doing what He wants you to do. "In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths!"[10]

—D.B.B.

8. Hebrews 12:2
9. 1 Thessalonians 5:17
10. Proverbs 3:6

Scripture prayer

Once you've told the Lord exactly what you would like Him to do, you may feel the need to keep praying, but it's unnecessary to repeat the same words over and over. That's the perfect time to *reinforce* your prayer by claiming Scripture promises.

God has made promises in His Word. When you pray, remind Him of those promises. This shows you have faith in Him to keep His Word. It's a positive declaration of your faith and your knowledge of the Word which pleases God.

If you are praying in a group, try taking turns reading selected Bible verses aloud in place of individual prayers. Or you could alternate short prayers and verses. Or one person can read appropriate verses from the Bible before or after your prayers. You may want to buy or make your own "promise box" (Bible promises on various topics which can be claimed in prayer) for this purpose. (You can also order *Key Bible Verses*, a booklet of choice verses from the Bible on a variety of subjects, arranged by topic.)[11]

Prayer in "tongues"

Speaking in tongues (the ability to speak one or more unlearned languages) is one of nine "gifts of the Spirit" which the apostle Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 12:8–10 and refers to again in the next chapter as "the tongues of men and of angels."[12] Sometimes these are earthly

11. Other books of topically arranged Scripture available from Aurora Production include the *Discovering Truth* series, together covering over 100 different subjects! For a short compilation of key Bible promises arranged topically, see the lists beginning on page 90 of this booklet.

12. 1 Corinthians 13:1

languages—tongues of men—but more often than not they are the heavenly languages of angels.

If you've been filled with the Holy Spirit but haven't yet received the gift of tongues and would like to, you can by simply asking Him for it. Then exercise it immediately. Just ask Him to clear your mind, and start praising the Lord out loud and nonstop. Let go of your thoughts and your tongue, and let the Holy Spirit take over and speak through you. It may sound like gibberish or baby talk to you, especially at first, but the Lord knows *exactly* what the Spirit is praying on your behalf.

Speaking in tongues is a wonderful way of praying and praising. It's mainly for your own benefit, for your encouragement, inspiration, and edification. It will thrill your own spirit.

Desperate prayer

Short, simple prayers throughout the day are good and needed, and the Lord hears them and answers accordingly. But when you are faced with a crisis or very important decision, you need *more* than that. All prayers should be sincere, of course, but not all prayers have the same level of intensity and fervency, because some situations are more serious than others. Sometimes you need to cry out to God in desperation, with your whole heart.

Desperate prayer that is full of faith can miraculously alter even the most difficult situations.

The Lord leaves a lot up to us and our concern and prayer

You'd be surprised how much God depends on our prayers, how concerned we are. When we're faced with a needy situation, He wants us to show concern and pray specifically about it. If we really believe, every prayer is heard and answered. But if we don't pray, it is *not* done. God can do anything, but He puts the responsibility of prayer on *us*.

The very intensity with which we pray and really mean it or desire it is reflected in the answer. The recipients of our prayers are not going to receive any more than we send. We have to visualize the people or situations we're praying for, and pray for them with that thought on our heart, asking the Lord specifically for what we want Him to do.

Prayers are answered with the same intensity as they originate. Like a beam of light focused on a mirror, it will bounce back with as much power as it began with. If we only pray with half a heart, we only get half an answer. But if we pray with our whole heart, we get a wholehearted, strong answer.

Are you exercising your prayer power? Heaven will reveal what good we have done—or could have done—through prayer.
—D.B.B.

A young country boy was keeping his sheep one Sunday morning. The bells were ringing for church, and the people from the village were flocking to attend, when the little fellow began to think that he, too, would like to pray to God. But what could he say? No one had ever taught him any prayer. So he knelt down and started to recite the alphabet—A, B, C, and so on to Z.

A man happening to pass on the other side of the hedge heard the boy's voice, and looking through the bushes, saw him kneeling with folded hands and closed eyes, repeating, "A, B, C … "

"What are you doing, young man?"

"Praying, sir."

"But what are you reciting the alphabet for?"

"Well, I didn't know any prayer, but I wanted God to take care of me and help me to care for the sheep. So I thought if I said all I knew, He would put it together and spell all I want."

"Bless your heart, son. God *will* hear and answer. When the heart speaks right, the lips can't say wrong."

Sometimes I do not even pray in words,
I take my heart in my two hands
And hold it up before the Lord;
I'm so glad He understands.

Sometimes I do not even pray in words,
My spirit bows before His feet,

And with His hand upon my head,
We hold communion, silent, sweet.

Sometimes I do not pray in words,
For I am tired and long for rest.
My heart finds all it wants and needs
Just resting on the Savior's breast.

Say to the Lord each morning, "Here I am, Jesus, my friend, my Savior, my teacher. I stand before another brand-new day. I know I'm not capable of anything on my own, so I ask You to fill me with Your love and strength for today. I can't muster it up on my own, but You've promised that if I'll only ask, You'll fill me to overflowing with Your love to give to others. So here I am now asking You to fill me to overflowing with love. Give me enough love so that I can pass on a bit of heaven to those whom I'm with today—my family and friends, or others I meet. As I give a little bit of love, a little bit of heaven, I'm giving a little bit of You, Jesus, and that's what I want: I want to give You. I want to reflect You. I want to share You and Your wonderful love with everyone."

If you ask in faith, He will do it. He'll answer your prayer and give you enough love and strength for each day, one day at a time.

When It Seems God Isn't Answering

Why do some prayers take longer to be answered than others, and why do some seem to go unanswered? There are a number of reasons. God *always* answers our prayers, but not always right away and not always in just the way we expect Him to. Sometimes He says "yes," sometimes He says "no," and sometimes He says "wait."

When it seems your prayers aren't being answered, ask yourself these questions:

Am I sure that what I'm praying for is what God also wants, that it's His will?

God doesn't answer some prayers the way we want or expect Him to because He knows that what we're praying for is not really good for us, or not good for others. The Bible warns us that if our heart isn't right, or our motives are selfish, the Lord may not give us what we ask for.[1]

1. James 4:3

God sometimes doesn't answer our prayers because He has something *better* for us. God knows best, and He gives the very best to those who leave the choices up to Him.

Have I done my part by obeying what the Lord has told me to do?

Faith and obedience come first, *then* God answers prayer. If you are doing your best to fulfill your part of the deal by doing what you can to help bring about the desired result, and if you're doing your best to do what's right and what will please Him—that is, loving Him and others—then you can be confident that He will answer your prayer.[2] But if you're not doing what you know is right, or aren't meeting the conditions He laid down in His Word or gave you directly, then you can't expect Him to give you what you ask for.[3]

Of course, He may also sometimes ask you to do something that's *not* what you were expecting or hoping to hear. When this happens, it's important to remind yourself that God is the one who is all-seeing and all-knowing, that He loves you and is concerned about you and your well-being, and that it's wise to do as He says. Doing what He tells you may at first seem difficult or costly, but in the long run you will always find out that He was right.

Is the Lord perhaps testing my faith?

Sometimes God wants to see how serious you are about getting the answer you desire. If you really believe that He is able to do what He has promised, you'll be persistent.[4]

2. John 15:7; 1 John 3:21–22
3. John 9:31; Psalm 66:18–20
4. Luke 11:5–10; 18:1–8; Romans 4:21; 12:12; 1 Peter 1:6–7

If you keep on by faith, even when it looks like God isn't answering your prayer, you will please God. He likes the kind of faith that refuses to quit, the kind that will continue on in spite of outward appearances. He likes those who keep believing it *will* be so, just because He *said* so.

A good example of this is Abraham in the Old Testament, who was over a hundred years old and still without a promised heir. God had promised that his wife Sarah would bear a son, but she was now ninety and long past childbearing age. But Abraham continued to believe God's promise despite the impossible odds, and sure enough, God came through. Sarah miraculously conceived and gave birth to a son, Isaac, who through his son Jacob became the forefather of the Hebrew people.

The Apostle Paul wrote of Abraham's stand of faith: "And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. And therefore it was accounted to him for righteousness."[5]

If you have real faith, you'll say, "I claimed God's promise and I'm going forward, even though I cannot see my way ahead at this moment!" You may not be able to see what's ahead, but you continue on. You know the Lord has heard your prayer, and that He will answer in His time. That's the kind of faith that pleases God and gets results!

5. Romans 4:19–22

Is the Lord perhaps trying to teach me patience or some other lesson?

It just seems to be part of human nature to reach out to God more when we need something from Him. He's happy to meet our needs, but He's also smart enough to take advantage of those times when He has our full attention to teach us lessons that will bring us closer to Him and make us better people. Patience seems to be one of His most frequent lessons, but He may also be trying to teach you to be more loving, more humble, more prayerful, or any one of the other lessons that make up life. If that's the case, when you have learned whatever He's trying to teach you, He will answer.

Is it the Lord's time, and are all the conditions right?

"To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven."[6] God has His times; you can't rush Him. Prayer is sometimes like planting a seed: It takes time for the seed to sprout, break ground, mature, and bear fruit—and some types of seeds take longer than others. Some flowers seem to spring up overnight, but trees take years before they bear fruit.

The conditions have to be right before God can answer. Complex situations sometimes take time. It's like a difficult mathematical problem: The more complicated the problem and the more factors involved, the more complex the solution and the more time it usually takes.

6. Ecclesiastes 3:1

Is His answer being affected by the decisions or actions of others?

The outcome of prayer depends on three principal factors: your will (what you want), God's will (what He wants), and the decisions and actions of others who are involved. Even when your will and God's will are in agreement, He may not be able to bring about the desired result because He has given *everyone* the majesty of choice. The decisions and actions of the others involved also help determine the outcome. You don't control it completely, they don't control it completely, and God has specifically limited Himself not to control it completely. If your prayers are not being answered because others are making what you feel are the wrong decisions, there's hope yet: pray for God to work in their hearts and help them to make the right ones.

However, regardless of what others do or don't do, or whether they make the right or wrong choices, the promises Jesus has put forth in the Bible still hold true. A wrong choice on the part of another cannot cancel out the validity and promise of God's Word. So even if you are faced with a situation where you feel your prayer cannot be answered because of someone's wrong choices, God will hear your prayer and answer in some way, even if you never see the answer in this life.

God takes the petition of your heart and lips, and in His wisdom, answers it in the way that He knows best, as well as according to the choices that others make. When you avail yourself of the power of prayer, you also must submit yourself to the realization that God's choice—however it may differ from your own—and the way in which He answers you is always best.

Unanswered yet?
Faith cannot be unanswered.
Her feet were firmly planted on the Rock;
Amid the wildest storms she stands undaunted,
Nor quails before the loudest thunder shock.
She knows Omnipotence has heard her prayer,
And cries, "It shall be done," sometime, somewhere.

Unanswered yet? Nay, do not say ungranted;
Perhaps your part is not yet wholly done.
The work began when your first prayer was uttered.
And God will finish what He has begun.
If you will keep the incense burning there,
His glory you shall see, sometime, somewhere.
—Robert Browning

Answered prayer
God answers prayer;
Sometimes when hearts are weak
He gives the very gifts believers seek.
But often faith must learn a deeper rest,
And trust God's silence
When He does not speak;
For, He whose name is Love
Will send the best.
Stars may burn out,
Nor mountain walls endure,
But God is true, His promises are sure
To those who seek.
—Myra Goodwin Plantz

I asked God for strength, that I might achieve;
I was made weak, that I might learn humbly to obey.
I asked for health, that I might do greater things;
I was given infirmity, that I might do better things.
I asked for riches, that I might be happy;
I was given poverty, that I might be wise.
I asked for power, that I might have the praise of men;
I was given weakness, that I might feel the need of God.
I asked for all things, that I might enjoy life;
I was given life, that I might enjoy all things.
I got nothing that I asked for, but everything I had hoped for.
Almost despite myself, my unspoken prayers were answered.
I am among all men most richly blessed.
—Attributed to an unknown Confederate soldier

Learning from the Answer Man

God promises, "Call unto Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know."[1] But His promise comes with one obvious, unspoken condition: You need to learn to hear and recognize His answers when He gives them. He can speak to you in several ways:

1. The written Word

Reading and reflecting on the Bible, God's already-recorded Word, is one way that God's children can hear from Him. The answers to most of the questions you will have in life have already been answered there. All you have to do is search them out! (If you are a new Christian or just beginning to read the Bible, read the four Gospels first, starting with the gospel of John. You'll also find the two books in the *Discovering Truth* series, available from

1. Jeremiah 33:3

Aurora Production, to be of great help in finding out what the Bible has to say on a wide variety of topics.)

You may think, "How could the Bible talk about the problems I face today? That Book is thousands of years old!" Well, if you will study God's Word with an open mind and an attitude of faith, you will find that it *will* speak directly to you. There are many passages in the Bible that contain answers and counsel to problems you may face today. Though the details of our modern living may not be found in the Bible, the courage, hope, strength, guidance, and truth that we need to overcome each hurdle in life most certainly are. The Bible tells us that the things written therein were written for *our* benefit. "Whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."[2]

The Bible is an inexhaustible source of wisdom and knowledge. King David wrote: "I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Your testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep Your precepts."[3] The Lord also promises, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go."[4] If you pray, the Lord will lead you to the passages that contain His instruction for you—sometimes instruction you don't even realize you need.

2. The voice of the Word

As you read the Word and become acquainted with it, there will be times when you will be thinking or praying about something, and you will be reminded of a verse from

2. Romans 15:4; also 1 Corinthians 10:11
3. Psalm 119:99–100
4. Psalm 32:8

the Bible that fits the situation perfectly and provides the insight or answer you need. This is what is known as the voice of His Word.

Near the end of His ministry on earth, Jesus told His disciples that after He was gone, God would send them the Holy Spirit to teach and guide them.[5] If you have been filled with the Holy Spirit, that promise is for you too. Perhaps He's already been speaking to you that way, and you just haven't realized it. (Everyone who receives Jesus as their Savior receives a measure of the Holy Spirit, but being filled to overflowing with the Holy Spirit—what the Bible calls the "baptism" of the Holy Spirit—is usually a separate experience. If you haven't been filled with the Holy Spirit, you can be. You do it the same way you received salvation, by praying for it. "If you … know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!")[6,7]

3. Prophecy and other types of direct revelation

Most people think of prophecy as the ability to predict the future, or as some mysterious power that only a few people down through the ages have possessed. But it's *more* than predicting the future, it's really not all that mysterious, and it's available to *all* Spirit-filled Christians—including you![8] It's the ability to receive messages *directly* from the Lord—spoken through your own mouth, or recorded by your own hand—and it's a gift of the Holy Spirit, which you can specifically pray for.

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5. John 14:26; 16:7,13–14
6. Luke 11:13
7. Please see *God's Gifts*, also in the *Get Activated* series, for more on how to receive the Holy Spirit and what the benefits are.
8. 1 Corinthians 12

If you would like the gift of prophecy but haven't received it or aren't sure if you've received it, why not stop now and pray for it? It's yours for the asking. "Whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them."[9]

Once you have the gift of prophecy, the Lord can give you words of love, reassurance, guidance, instruction, revelation, or whatever else you may need. He will give you tailor-made counsel and instruction for your personal situation.[10]

Whether or not you have the gift of prophecy, the Lord is also able to put thoughts in your mind or give you an impression that answers a question you may have, or sheds light on a situation you're involved in. He can also speak to you through dreams or give you visions. These are all forms of direct revelation.

God can whisper His thoughts to you or give you impressions at any time, but of course it's easiest for Him to do so when you're reading and reflecting on His Word or praying. When you get quiet and put other thoughts and the business of the day out of your mind, when you focus your thoughts on Jesus, you open a channel to receive *His* thoughts.

In one passage, the Bible refers to this as hearing the "still, small voice" of the Lord.[11] In another verse the Lord promises, "Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it,' whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left."[12]

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9. Mark 11:24
10. For a more complete explanation of prophecy and how it works, see *Hearing from Heaven*, another booklet in the *Get Activated* series.
11. 1 Kings 19:11–12
12. Isaiah 30:21

Receiving a message from the Lord doesn't need to take a long time. You don't have to be praying for an hour or two before He will speak to you. Even if you're in the middle of a project or activity, if you stop for a moment and direct your attention heavenward, you may hear Him whisper to you in your heart or mind.

Visions are pictures, either still or moving, seen in your mind's eye while you are awake (usually when your eyes are shut, but not always). Some people have had visions that seemed so real, so tangible, that they felt they actually saw them with their natural eyes.

Revelatory dreams from the Lord are usually vivid, and one awakes from them with a strong sense that the dream was significant and meaningful, unlike most dreams which seem to be nonsensical or of little importance. Since the meaning of a dream is often less clear than messages received from the Lord other ways, it's best to ask the Lord to confirm what you believe to be a revelatory dream, perhaps by giving you a prophecy or a Bible verse.

Turn Your Thoughts into Prayers

The more you get in the habit of praying, the more you will accomplish through prayer and the happier you'll be, because you will have learned the secret of staying in constant, close communication with your loving Savior and friend. The following article by Maria Fontaine explains this principle beautifully:

The Bible has a lot to say about our thoughts, and it makes an interesting study. For example, it says we can hardly count the Lord's thoughts toward us, and we're supposed to hate vain thoughts but love His Word.[1]

One of the best ways to put our thoughts to good use is to turn them into prayers. Think of all the things you do throughout the day, all the things you think about, all the thoughts that run through your head. Now consider your thoughts. Size them up, take stock, analyze, weigh them

1. Psalm 40:5; 119:113

up, and ask yourself what your thoughts are accomplishing. Where are they going? Are you transforming your thoughts into power that will bring about some good in the lives of others?

If you want to do more in prayer, consider your thoughts. Thoughts are real things. They can help or they can hinder. Are your thoughts helping to sustain a soul in need? Or are they silently turning a blind eye to the one who cries for help? Where are your thoughts running? Are they reaching out to answer a call? Are you tapping into heavenly thought power? Are you directing your thoughts to where they can do some good and really make a positive difference?

God wants us to learn to convert our thoughts into powerful prayer. Thoughts turned into prayers will materialize into God's blessings, God's intervention, God's protection, power and strength, and God's healing balm poured out on those for whom we care.

Thoughts turned into prayers will accomplish great feats, make the impossible possible, and change the course of history. On the other hand, thoughts left idle slip away into the gray mass of nowhere-land, into the cracks and crevices of complacency, where they will rot and ruin and go to waste.

Every time we think a thought, we can turn it into a mighty prayer—all the time, anywhere, even when we're all alone. When we're doing physical chores or routine duties, we can turn our thoughts into prayers throughout the day. We can capture our thoughts, beam them up to God, and see—and hear of—miracles coming to pass because of them.

For example, if you're at home cooking and your thoughts turn towards your kids at school, pray that they'll

have a good day. Or if while at work you start thinking about an upcoming difficult project, turn that thought into a prayer for the Lord's strength for the task. Or maybe you pass by an accident while driving home—pray for those who may be hurt, and for your own safety and that of your family.

All day long, no matter what else we're doing, we're thinking thoughts, but it's how we filter and direct them that can make a difference. What we decide to do with our thoughts and where we direct them is what counts. For as we learn to direct our thoughts in prayer, filtering them through the sieve of God's Word, sending them on to where they can genuinely accomplish something, we will be able to fulfill this mission of prayer.

In solitude with our thoughts, we can turn each one to a prayer and change the world. We can take the thoughts that come to us as a result of the input we see and receive all around us, and we can turn those thoughts into prayers.

Turning every thought into a prayer is a great privilege and a great gift—the privilege of tapping into heavenly thought power. Use it, and it will serve you well. It will make your life easier and bring about miracles. Thoughts can be a burden or a blessing. Turn them into good by turning them into prayer. Tap into heaven's thought power!

I cannot tell why there should come to me
A thought of someone miles and miles away,
In swift insistence on the memory,
Unless there be a need that I should pray.

Too hurried oft are we to spare a thought
For days together for some friend away:
Perhaps God does it for us, and we ought
To read His signal as a call to pray.

Perhaps just then, my friend has fiercer fight;
Some overwhelming sorrow or decay
Of courage, darkness, some lost sense of right,
And so, in case my friend needs prayer, I pray.

Friend, do the same for me, if I, unsought,
Intrude upon you on some crowded day.
Give me a moment's prayer in passing thought;
Be very sure I need it, therefore pray.
—E. Middleton

If I can do some good today,
If I can serve along life's way,
If I can something helpful say,
Lord, show me how.

If I can right a human wrong,
If I can help to make one strong,
If I can cheer with smile or song,
Lord, show me how.

If I can aid one in distress,
If I can make a burden less,
If I can spread more happiness,
Lord, show me how.
—Grenville Kleiser

Margaret, a busy executive, felt a tug on her heart every time she passed by a certain beggar. He'd been camped out just a block from her office for over a month. His name was Walter, she learned, and he was homeless. She would give him a few coins each time she saw him, but obviously he needed a whole lot more—and there were so many like him!

One night before going to bed, Margaret prayed, "Lord, I know I can't solve the world's problems, but show me what I can do for Walter and others in such dire circumstances to make their lives a little better."

The next day she came across an article in the newspaper about a shelter for the inner-city homeless that was about to open. They were looking for sponsors and volunteers.

Margaret excitedly called the number given in the article. She would like to help financially, she told the organizer who answered the phone, and also to put in some hours to help get the center up and running.

Margaret had a little less in her savings account after that, and less time for herself on weekends, but she kept telling herself that it was a good investment.

The payoff came a few weeks later when Walter proudly announced that he had found a job and was moving into an apartment across town. "Margaret, you made my life bearable when I was down and out. I can't thank you enough for all you've done," he told her.

She was *sure* then that God had answered her prayer.

The Bible is a book of prayers. Out of 667 recorded prayers, there are 454 recorded answers.

First-Step Prayer Promises

Here are a few promises from God's Word that you can use during your times of prayer and communion with God:

Receiving from God

Before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear.—Isaiah 65:24

You will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.—John 15:7

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.—Matthew 7:7

Whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.—Matthew 21:22.

Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.—John 16:24

Let your requests be made known to God.
—Philippians 4:6

If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.
—John 14:14

Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.—Psalm 37:4

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.—1 John 5:14–15

Hearing from God

Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.
—Jeremiah 33:3

He will be very gracious to you at the sound of your cry; when He hears it, He will answer you.—Isaiah 30:19

Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it,' whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left.—Isaiah 30:21

When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.—John 16:13

And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams.—Acts 2:17

In the day when I cried out, You answered me.
—Psalm 138:3

See also Genesis 24:63; Psalm 5:3; Psalm 42:8; 63:5–6; Proverbs 8:17; Daniel 6:10; Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12.

Acknowledgements

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