

## ***Prayer – Conversation with your Father***

**Key Verse: 1 John 5:14,15** This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.

**Key Verse: James 5:16** Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

### **Introduction**

Prayer has to be one of the most central topics of Christianity. Just consider how many books have been written, how many messages delivered, how many seminars conducted on the subject of prayer. We have tried to formula-ize it, mechanize it, package it, and inevitably imitate it, without grasping the true essence of prayer. Prayer is a conversation between Father and child; two way communication (dialogue, not monologue) with Father; and the most basic definition being, “talking with God, your Father”.

How did you learn how to talk to your earthly father? By observation? By trial and error? By coaching from your mother or siblings? Maybe you never learned how to have that kind of relationship with your father and that’s been hindering you with the primary key to being successful in your journey with your heavenly Father. Fortunately, we can look into the Word to see how people communicated with Him, thereby understanding His will and His ways. We can see what prayers penetrated heaven and what prayers were miserably amiss.

Think about some of the things that characterize a parent/child relationship. Things like: openness, honesty, confidence and trust. God answers prayer because His children ask. Children don’t find it too difficult or complicated to talk to their parents (or embarrassed), at least not in healthy relationships. Never make prayer too complicated. The more complicated prayer is made, the more others will depend on you to learn how to do it.

Children also teach us the value of imagination. Imagination often opens the door to faith. But, ideas, pictures and words are of no avail unless they proceed from the Holy Spirit.

**Romans 8:26** In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

Secret, fervent, believing prayer forms the foundation of all personal godliness. You become like the one you are most around. What do they say about couples who’ve been together 30, 40, 50 years? Whose image would you like to be conformed to?

Real prayer is life creating and life changing. We are working with God to determine the outcome of events.

**1 Corinthians 3:9** For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, God’s building.

So...let's take a look into the two way conversation between you and your Father...

## Who Ya Talkin' To?

Remember true prayer is a two way conversation, and simply said, "talking with God, your Father". To converse you have to have access to the person. To have meaningful conversation, there must be an element of intimacy. There is a difference between access and intimacy, especially when talking about God. All believers have unrestricted access, few have intimacy. Let's talk about the element of intimacy first. Intimacy begins when you know who you are talking to. How do you talk to a stranger? A friend? Your spouse? Is there a difference in tone? in choice of words? expression? Who will be answered?

There is a story told about a young boy and a soldier approaching President Abraham Lincoln that shows us the power of both access and intimacy.

Let's take a look at the Trinity to understand who we are talking to. To reach Father is our ultimate goal, the target for every believer. Jesus gives us access to and always points us toward Father. Holy Spirit woos us to Father. So...who are we talking to?

**Matthew 6:9** Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name...'

**John 16:23** In that day you will not question Me about anything Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you.

We can tell how well you know somebody by the way you talk to them and talk about them. You define your relationship by the words you use.

### Languages of Prayer

- Slave – "Lord, Master, Almighty"
- Adoption – loving, but formal approach "Sir"
- Pharisee – "I am glad I am not like this person or that person..."
- Confusion & nervousness – "Oh Father..., Jesus..., Holy Spirit..."
- Child – "Father" "Dad"

**Romans 8:14-16** For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God.

The importance of praying in tongues is that there are so many things God wants done, but we don't know what they are. The wonderful benefit of praying in the spirit is that you can by-pass the mind (where all the feelings, doubt and reasoning arise that can throw your prayers off). There are no worries of prayers amiss, because Holy Spirit gives you utterance, He is praying (perfectly) through your spirit as you cooperate with Him. You are the one doing the praying, so God can legally answer that prayer and perform His plan in your life or others' based on the laws of authority that He has established to govern this world system.

**1 Corinthians 14:2** "For one who speaks in an [unknown] tongue speaks not to men but to God, for no one understands or catches his meaning, because in the [Holy] Spirit he utters secret truths and hidden things [not obvious to the

understanding]." **14** "For if I pray in an [unknown] tongue, my spirit [by the Holy Spirit within me] prays, but my mind is unproductive [it bears no fruit and helps nobody].

So, we pray/talk to our Father, in the Name of Jesus (meaning we have access because of what Jesus did for us), and the Holy Spirit will inspire us on what to say and how to say it.

## The Approach: Confidence is Key

**1 John 5:14,15** This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.

**Hebrews 4:16** Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

The word "boldly" used here means outspokenness; unreserved utterance; freedom of speech, with frankness, candor, **cheerful courage**; the opposite of cowardice, timidity or fear; divine enablement that comes to ordinary & unprofessional people exhibiting spiritual power & authority; is not a human quality but a result of being filled with the Holy Spirit (as is Acts 4:31).

Luke 11:5-10 "importunity" = shamelessness; boldness.

So, what's your approach? Let's remember what we've learned about knowing who you are talking to, about the dynamics of family relationships.

### Approaches

- Fatalistic View – whatever will be, will be
- The Pout/Whine – use guilt & manipulation
- Let's Make a Deal – I'll do this, if You do that
- Boxing Gloves – fight with God, one will come out with what we want
- Hammer & Crow bar – if you won't do it God, then I'll get it done

How can I confidently pray? Know His will. How can I know His will? Know Him! Know His Word!

**Daniel 11:32** "...but the people who know their God will display strength and take action."

**John 11:41-42** Then Jesus raised His eyes, and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. I knew that You always hear Me; but because of the people standing around I said it, so that they may believe that You sent Me."

There is a difference between confidence and arrogance. Consider the account of a ship captain who would not yield to make a course correction.

## Because I Said So!

*"It seems as though God is limited by our prayer. He can do nothing in the earth until we pray." John Wesley*

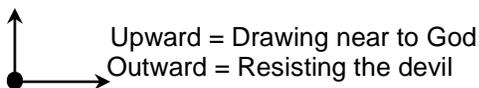
Children inherit a lot from their parents. Likewise, we have “inherited” the authority to “rule” on earth. In Genesis 1:26-28 we see that we were created in the image of God and we were commissioned to rule.

**Psalms 115:16** “The heavens are the heavens of the Lord, but the earth He has given to the sons of men.”

The flip-side: to walk in authority, you must be submitted to authority.

**James 4:7,8** Submit therefore to God Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

This always involves two movements:



Too many want to get involved in the good fight of faith without first submitting themselves to the spiritual discipline necessary to equip a warrior for battle. Danger: moving too far outward without moving far enough upward. Your effectiveness all goes back to the quality of your relationship with Father.

**Zechariah 4:6** “...Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,” says the LORD of hosts.”

Three Things to Move Up

- Submit to God = obey God unconditionally
- Draw near to God = personal prayer life; measures quality of our relationship
- Cleanse hands/purify heart = what you do / what you think or feel = holiness

**Hebrews 11:6** And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

## Seen and not heard...not in this Family

So...are we, as children, supposed to be seen and not heard? How does that family dynamic work? Jesus kept silent (at the strategic moment) so that we could speak. One voice was to become millions of voices.

**Isaiah 53:7** He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth.

**Matthew 26:63** But Jesus kept silent and the high priest said to Him, "I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God."

**Matthew 27:12-14** And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He did not answer. Then Pilate said to Him, "Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?" And He did not answer him with regard to even a single charge, so the governor was quite amazed.

**John 18:6** So when He said to them, "I am He," they drew back and fell to the ground.

**Matthew 26:53** "Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?"

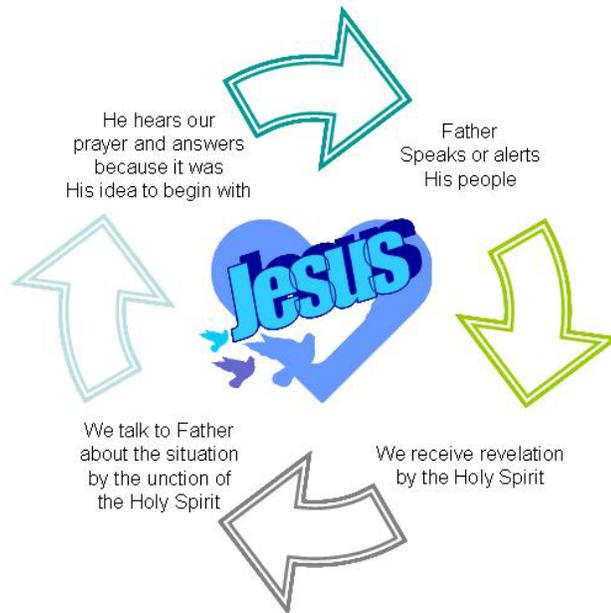
It all starts by listening to the Voice of God.

**John 12:49** For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak. (14:10 / 5:19, 20, 30)

Elijah heard the Lord speak to him that there would not be rain, yet he had to speak it out. After three and a half years, the Lord spoke again and Elijah had to go "birth it out" on top of Carmel. (1 Kings 17:1 / 18:1, 42-46 / James 5:17-18)

**Isaiah 55:11** So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.

**Jeremiah 1:12** Then the LORD said to me, "You have seen well, for I am watching over My word to perform it."



The radical turning point in the history of humanity began when Jesus proclaimed, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17). Jesus was introducing the Kingdom of God upon this earth and the battle was now on. Jesus was totally dependant on the power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish everything that He did (Luke 4:1, 14 / Acts 10:38). In Col 2:15 we see He disarmed the enemy.

This means the war itself is over and the winner and the loser have been determined. We are here to enforce the victory. Think about the Emancipation Proclamation - Lincoln Jan 1, 1863 – done legally, yet took time to implement. How do we enforce the victory? By being His voice here on the earth.

**Psalms 2:8** Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Your possession.

**Matthew 9:35-38** "...The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. "Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."

If He wants to send rain and laborers why does He tell us to ask? Prayer (talking with your Father) gives you revelation of the Word. In prayer, head knowledge becomes heart knowledge. God tells us what He wants to do through His Word, and then He asks us to ask Him. That's why we can be confident. We are the legal rulers of this world (Adam lost it, Jesus regained it) so we are the ones that must ask. Prayer should be God looking at us and seeing His Word reflecting back – why would he not answer that?

Consequences of not opening your mouth can be severe. Herod put to death James and was going after Peter. The church had been silent, but then...they rose up in prayer and Peter was rescued by an angel (Acts 12).

We can now open our mouths in confidence: Acts 21:27 => 22:30 / 2:14 Peter opened his mouth & 3000 saved / 8:32-35 Philip opened his mouth & the Eunuch was saved / 4:7, 10, 12, 13, 29-30 / 14:8-10 / Acts 16:14 – 18.

## Timing Is Everything (Kairos)

Those who take the time both to talk and to listen to God before launching their ventures will not only find themselves in the right place at the right time, but they will also know what to do when they get there.

Two of the terms used in the Bible that describe time are:

- **chronos** = time in general; time in which anything is done
- **kairos** = the strategic or “right time”; the opportune point of time at which something should be done; a window of opportunity; a well-timed attack in war; when someone is in danger or about to be attacked by Satan.

(Strategic = Important or essential in relation to a plan of action; Essential to the effective conduct of war; Highly important to an intended objective; Intended to destroy the military potential of an enemy)

**Luke 4:13** And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a **season** (until a more opportune time).

**Luke 8:13** They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in **time** of temptation (well-timed temptation) fall away.

Do we believe in “coincidental temptations” - wrong place at the wrong time? Or are there well-planned, well-timed temptations and attacks? If so, how do we combat them?

**Case 1:** Luke 22:31,32 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But **I have prayed** for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. Here Jesus interceded for Peter at his kairos time of temptation. He prayed that his faith not fail him after he denied Christ. Did it work? Yes

**Acts 3:19** Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times (kairos) of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.

**1 Peter 5:6** Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.

The good news...after a kairos attack comes a kairos refreshing and possibly a kairos promotion!

**Case 2:** Acts 12:1,2 Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. We saw how the church responded in that strategic moment of the newly formed Body – with prayer. And we saw how Father answered by sending an angel to the rescue!

In the time of renewal and success of the early church, satan launched orchestrated attacks or strategically-timed persecution. This is to discourage, distract, or in extreme cases, to destroy. It failed. Why? Just look at the early churches' prayer life.

**Ephesians 6:18** Praying always (kairos) with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.

“Praying always” seems like an impossible demand. It is not literal and does not mean at all times, it means at strategic times. We are at war and if we are alert He will warn us of the well-timed attacks of the enemy. When warned, we can create a boundary of protection by praying, ways of escape will be revealed.

A man had vivid reoccurring dream that his married daughter dying. He felt satan had a well-laid plan to take her life, but didn't know how. Because he didn't want to alarm her, he told his son-in-law and they began to pray. A month later, his daughter received a promotion at work and had to get an exam to get the new life insurance. The doctor questioned, “Lady, what have you been doing in your diet, you have no potassium, you should be dead.” She had been on a strange diet for several weeks, eating only one or two kinds of food and almost killed herself. But, the prayers of a father and husband at the kairos moment headed off the enemies plan.

**Luke 21:36** Watch (keep on the alert, stay awake, in the sense that a sentry would need to refrain from sleep) ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

**2 Corinthians 2:11** Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

It is Father's design that we be forewarned of and pray against satan's schemes and plans. We watch so that we won't be ignorant and therefore taken advantage of. What does that imply, “taken advantage of”? Answer: Had we known, we could have done something about it. Well...we do have a way of knowing.

**Luke 12:56** Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?

What? We can tell signs of weather but can't distinguish the “times” of the Lord.

**1 Chronicles 12:32** And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their commandment.

But wait, I thought all things were suppose to work together for the good!?!

**Romans 8:26-28** In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the

mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

If God tells us to be alert, that means we have a responsibility, again, it's not automatic. It also means that God wants to warn us, it is His will to warn us. If the attacks were going to be obvious, alertness would not be necessary. There are things He wants to do, but we still must ask for Him to be involved, "Father, please, come, be apart of this situation...".

- Elijah-rain James 5:9=>
- Daniel called for the time to be fulfilled Daniel 9:1=>
- Disciples in upper room Acts 2:1-4; 42, 43 (united prayer)
- Disciples call for God to stretch out His hand Acts 4:29-31
- Church prayed for Peter's deliverance after James was killed Acts 12

You can't change the seasons, but if you know what season it is, you can be prepared. It is God who changes the times and seasons.

**Daniel 2:21** And he changes the times and the seasons: he removes kings, and setteth up kings: he gives wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding.

**Ecclesiastes 3:1** To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.

**You** can't change the seasons. If winter is coming, it doesn't matter how much binding and loosing you do, it's still going to get cold, cuz' it's winter and that's winter's job. Don't try to exercise your "spirituality" and find yourself fighting against God Himself. Communism had a season. But, when its season was over, God snapped His fingers and the wall fell.

**Ephesians 5:15-17** See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

**Revelation 5:8** And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

**Revelation 8:3-5** And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the **prayers of all saints** upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the **prayers of the saints**, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with **fire** of the altar, and **cast it into the earth**: and there were **voices**, and **thunderings**, and **lightnings**, and an **earthquake**.

He mixes your prayer w/ His fire and throws it back to the earth where explosive force is released. There may be times that we ask God to move in a certain situation and it seems as though nothing happens, could it be that there was not enough prayer in our bowl? Are all bowls the same size? Are others contributing their prayers to that bowl? Is this a lack of faith issue or is this a timing issue?

Flip-side: Don't delay! Remember Daniel? There is a danger when you delay. It's like the seagull eating fish frozen in the ice of the river above Niagara Falls. It kept on delaying in flying as it neared the falls...

## Persistence Pays Off

Where you ever persistent in a making a request from one of your parents? Just remember our earthly models are not perfect. For instance, we never become persistent with Father just so we can get our way. We can not wear Him down or “lawyer up” on Him by debating to win our petition. *SD Gordon “The purpose of prayer is not to persuade or influence God, but to join forces with Him against the enemy.”*

But, there are powerful lessons to learn about persistence through two prayer encounters which took place in the lives of Elijah when praying for rain – 7 times (1 Kings 18:42-46) and Daniel praying for 21 days (Daniel 10).

Persistence is a choice: Two frogs fell into a can of cream...

**Galatians 6:9-10** And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

## My Brother’s Keeper?

Am I my brother’s keeper? Yes, that’s called intercession.

**1 John 5:16** If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask and God will for him give life to those who commit sin not leading to death There is a sin leading to death; I do not say that he should make request for this.

Intercession is coming to God on behalf of another; going between; standing in the gap; the act of pleading by one who in God’s sight has a right to do so in order to obtain mercy for one in need. You are contacting God so His life and power can flow into a situation.

**Ezekiel 22:30** “I searched for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand in the gap before Me for the land, so that I would not destroy it; but I found no one.” God is looking for a reason to preserve, not to destroy. He doesn’t want to judge us, but He has to if we don’t ask to be cleansed.

Father is always looking for a reason to preserve and rescue, not destroy. But...if no one is found, what can He do? Let’s invite Him in!

Begin praying for others by quieting your fleshly activity and just begin listening. Listening is 1st thing, 2nd thing and 3rd thing for successful intercession. You must hear, know, and obey the will of Father before praying into the lives of others.

Is it just “me”? Remember our lesson on Spirit, Soul & Body. The inner sense of compassion is one of the clearest indications from the Lord that this is a prayer project for you.

## Expanding the Family

Satan's Strategy:

- **Primary Objective** = prevent God from being glorified by keeping lost people from being saved.
- **Secondary Objective** = make human beings and human society as miserable as possible in this present live \*John 10:10 (it's a secondary objective because it's only temporal victory).

Satan deceives us into living below our God given rights and means. He does it by telling people lies about God and getting them to **talk against God** rather than **for God**.

### **Praying for the Lost:**

1. Know the promise/God's will (Psalm 2:8 / 2 Peter 3:9)
2. Pray they come to their senses (2 Timothy 2:23-26 / Luke 15 / 1 Corinthians 2:14)
3. Pray for the veil to be removed (2 Corinthians 4:3, 4)
4. Pray for their eyes to be opened (Acts 26:16-18 / Psalm 119:18)
5. Pray for the strongholds to come down (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)
6. Pray for the laborers to be released (Matthew 9:35-38)

## Hindrances

If there can be effectual prayers that means there can also be ineffectual prayers.

- Unforgiveness/Sin (Mark 11:22-26)
- Wrong Motives (James 4:2, 3) If unwilling to change, will abandon prayer; to ask rightly involves transformed passions; through prayer we are taught to see things from His point of view
- Relationship Problems (1 Peter 3:7)

## Conclusion:

When prayer (conversation with Father) slows down, spiritual progress slows down; anointing decreases and flesh increases.

**Matthew 26:41** "Watch and pray...The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak"

When was the last time you had a conversation with your Dad? Find out what's on His mind and then...talk it through.

## Scripture Prayers

Ephesians 1:15-23

Ephesians 3:13-21

Philippians 1:9-11

Colossians 1:9-29 (esp. 9-11)

2 Thessalonians 1:11, 12 / 3:1