

Con versa tion with God

The Power of Prevailing Prayer

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Conversation with God shares spiritual insights and provides a clear path for all people to experience a deeper relationship with God through prayer.

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If we want to pray as Jesus did, we must see God as Jesus saw him—as our loving heavenly Father.



I. Introduction

The gospel of Luke records a surprising interaction. Jesus had gone away to pray in a private place, but when he returned one of the disciples asked, “Lord, teach us to pray.” Isn’t it amazing who initiated this conversation? We know Jesus would have considered prayer an important topic for his disciples, but it wasn’t Christ who initiated the conversation.

Could it be that the Lord wanted the disciples to recognize the importance of prayer on their own?

Could it be that he was waiting for them to decide that they wanted to see the power of God demonstrated clearly and consistently in their own lives?

Jesus was ready and willing to teach on prayer, but only when his disciples were eager to learn (Luke 11:1–13). So it is with us; Jesus longs to make us a people of prayer.

When Jesus began instructing us how to pray, he did something that was critical for us to understand if we desire to communicate with God as he did. He opened with, “*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name*” (Matthew 6:9). If we want to pray as Jesus did, we must see God as Jesus saw him—as our loving heavenly Father. This is where the journey of loving the Lord begins. He is your heavenly Father.

“*Lord, teach us to pray*” (Luke 11:1). The disciples who lived and walked and were closest to Jesus apparently needed help with prayer. They needed instruction in this foundational principle for loving the Lord. It’s no wonder that you and I need the same. So where might we begin a lesson on prayer? Perhaps, we could benefit from seeing the face of Jesus, which will help us see the Father.

Set aside the next few moments to be still before the Lord. Focus your mind and heart on Jesus. Let this be a moment of personal communication between you and the Savior. Now imagine the face of Jesus as He sits



L-10 Practicing the presence of the Lord, yielding to the Spirit's work of Christlikeness

beside you. With a tender voice and an outstretched hand, he makes a personal invitation just to you: *"Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and acts on them, I will show you whom he is like"* (Luke 6:46–47). I am available to you. I am accessible. I am within your reach. Relating to me is your firm foundation (John 12:35, 8:12). I long for closeness and communication with you. Pure and simple, I love you."

LEARNING TO PRAY: AN ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS

Honor Jesus with the response of your heart. Talk to him with words like these:

Jesus, when I imagine hearing these words of invitation and how you long to give me a firm foundation for relating to you, my heart is moved with

because _____.

As an additional step in learning to love the Lord, imagine that you now join Jesus in praying to the Father. Picture yourself kneeling beside the Savior, and together you express your gratitude for the privilege of prayer. Jesus reminds us that He and the Father are one; He is the perfect expression of our heavenly Father (see John 17:21). If you can talk to Jesus, you can pray to God. Honor the Father with these words of reverence:

Heavenly Father, I am grateful to be able to talk to you. When I imagine being able to communicate to the almighty God, I feel _____
because _____.

II. Our Father has blessed you.

When we approach our heavenly Father, there must remain a certain "awe" in our communication with him. Our conversation with God is always sacred because God is sacred. Therefore, we approach God, remembering that it is by his grace and mercy that he has allowed us to interact with him, and it is through him we live, move, and have our being.

Next, Jesus begins teaching his disciples to pray by praising the Father. He starts by saying, *"This then is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name'"* (Matthew 6:9).

- First, we praise God for who he is. We praise him because he is our Father. What did it mean for Jesus to pray to his Father? He always approached God as Father. We should never approach God as Santa Claus or as if he is far away. We should approach God as our loving Father, who is worthy of praise, not because of what he has done, but simply because of who he is—the Creator of the universe.

I will praise him for who he is: "God, I praise you because you are merciful, good, loving, kind, and warm. You reach out to us in our brokenness, even in our pain, even when we are weak, even when we know nothing. You approach us in grace and love. Lord, I praise you for all your attributes, your greatness, and your power. You are tremendous. You are the Creator. You are all things! Who am I that you are mindful of me? I praise you because you are God. Your personality is so wonderful!"

We should approach God as our loving Father, who is worthy of praise, not because of what he has done, but simply because of who he is—the Creator of the universe.

- Second, I also approach him and praise him because of what he has done for me. As we desire to enter a time of tremendous prayer and interaction with God, as we hallow his name, we should learn to praise God for what he has done for us individually.

Recalling the blessings of God can fuel such a time of praise. Begin with THANKS FOR HIS FRIENDSHIP! *"I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you"* (John 15:15). Jesus desires a deep friendship with you. He desires to share with you, as his Spirit-empowered disciple, what he has learned from the Father. You have chosen to follow him, and he has chosen to share with you, reveal himself to you, and then communicate the gospel through you.

Pause for a moment to consider this wonderful privilege. The God of the universe wants to reveal himself to *you*. Because you are his disciple and his friend, Jesus wants to be vulnerable with you. How do you feel as you embrace the truth that Christ wants you to know the things that are on his heart? Respond to the Lord as his friend.



L-7 Entering often into Spirit-led praise and worship

Walking in the Light of God's People . . . Through Faithful Engagement in Fellowship (John 12:35, Matthew 5:14)

Make time to pray together with a mentor or small group. Share some moments of worship and praise for this kind of Jesus.

Lord Jesus, as I embrace the wonder of friendship with you, my heart responds with _____ . When I consider that you want to share your heart with me and be vulnerable with me, I am moved with feelings of _____ .

Jesus, because I am so grateful that you want this kind of friendship with me, I am motivated to _____ .

(For example, spend more time reading the Bible; listen as well as talk to you in prayer; regularly ask you to reveal yourself in me)

III. Our Father has blessed us as his people.

Another concept to consider in loving the Lord and hallowing the name of God as we pray is to praise him for what he's done for us, corporately, as the people of God. Paul, when writing to Titus, says:

At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone (Titus 3:3–8).

Don't just rejoice when God does something for you individually, but praise him for what he has done for others as well! Enter a time of praise for God's provision for your church family, your friends, and your community.

Often, the current Christian culture reduces Christianity to an individualist enterprise. However, serving Christ is not just an individual work. Christ uses others to mold us into his image and likeness. We need one another to fulfill God's will, and we need one another to grow. When I praise God for what he has done and is doing for others and not just for me, I am acknowledging that I am a part of God's mission in the world.



L-4 Rejoicing regularly in my identity as his beloved

Walking in the Light of God's Word . . . Through Frequent Experiences of Scripture (John 12:35; Psalm 119:105)

God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure (see Ephesians 1:5 NLT).

Pause for a few moments and slowly read the scripture verse above. Make it personal: "God decided in advance to adopt me into his own family, and it gave him great pleasure." Now imagine Jesus sitting beside you. He puts his arm around you and smiles with great pride as he explains, "Just think—the Father has chosen you to be a part of our family. As your heavenly Father, he wanted to provide for you, protect you, care for you, and guide you, so he sent me to bring you to himself. It gives him great pleasure to see you as part of his family."

Allow the Holy Spirit to reaffirm the truth of this relationship and confirm your adoption into the family of God. Now express your thanks for God's amazing gift:

Father, I am grateful you decided to adopt me into your family because . . .

I am amazed at what you went through to have me join your family, and I thank you for . . .