



LESSON 4: YOU'LL LEARN TO TALK

PRAYER

Baby's first word is always an important event in a family. Often it gets recorded in "The Baby Book" and it's sure to be talked about to everyone. A proud father boasts: "Her first word was Da-da, isn't that neat!" Or a mother exclaims, "We've been trying to get him to talk for weeks and he finally did it this morning! He said, Ma-ma!"

You're a new baby in the family of God and His family is even more interested in your first words. The heavenly Father is thrilled when you begin talking with Him. Prayer is what we usually call this communication. But it ought to be as natural as "the opening of the heart to God as to a friend." Steps to Christ, p 93.

But many people feel apprehensive and nervous about prayer. They wonder what to say and how to say it. They don't realise that God is just waiting to hear His children talk to Him.

What does God say He will do when we pray to Him? Jeremiah 29:12-13

God says He will listen to us!

What is God like? Psalm 103:13-14

God is like a compassionate father who knows our limitations and weaknesses, yet loves us and wants to communicate with us. Knowing this about Him, makes it easier to talk to Him in prayer.

But if you've never prayed before, you may wonder what to talk about.

WHAT CAN YOU PRAY ABOUT?

As you read about prayer in the Bible, you discover there is much you can talk about with God. When you talk to God, you can:

- Praise Him (Daniel 2:23)
- Thank Him (Daniel 2:23; Ephesians 5:20)
- Confess your sins to Him (Psalm 32:5; 51:3)
- Ask for forgiveness and cleansing (Psalm 32:5; 51:1-4,10)
- Ask for His will to be done (Matthew 6:10)
- Ask for necessities of life (Matthew 6:11)
- Ask for power to overcome temptation (Matthew 6:13; 26:41)
- As for wisdom (James 1:5)
- Pray for your friends (Job 42:10)
- Pray for your enemies (Luke 23:33-34)

WHEN CAN YOU PRAY?

When should you pray? Ephesians 6:18

Some translations read “pray at all times,” “pray - on all occasions.” This doesn’t mean Christians must literally pray every minute of the day and night, but rather that there is no time that it is inappropriate to pray.

When else should you pray? Psalm 55:17

You can pray anytime. Most Christians find it helpful to have a definite time each day for prayer. Often this is first in the morning. Devote 10 - 15 minutes each day to communion with God. You will be better equipped to cope with whatever happens that day.

WHERE CAN YOU PRAY?

Where should you pray? 1 Timothy 2:8

Matthew 18:20

Matthew 6:6

You can pray anywhere - in your car, in the kitchen, in a church, among crowds, or alone. But it is best to have a quiet time alone each day.

Pick a place where you can be undisturbed. One mother of preschoolers found that the only place where she could be undisturbed was in the bathtub! Another man pulled his car into a parking lot and prayed each day after work before going home. But plan a definite time in a definite place each day. And pray aloud, it helps you keep awake.

Some folks find it helpful to keep a prayer journal, entering the date and items they wish to talk over with the Lord, then noting how and when answers come.

To whom should you direct your prayers? Matthew 6:9

UNANSWERED PRAYERS

Sometimes prayers are not answered the way we'd like. Why is this so? James 4:3

The New International Version of the Bible translates this text: "When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures."

What motives and attitudes should you have as you pray? James 1:6

1 John 3:22

1 John 5:14-15

Faith, obedience and submission to God's will are important attitudes in prayer. But maybe you don't feel you have these attitudes. Perhaps you're afraid to pray because you "don't have everything just right."

But what does God promise you? Romans 8:26-27

You don't need to worry. The Spirit will help you pray. Go ahead. Start talking to God. So what if you're a baby in Christ and your words may seem like baby talk! God is more delighted to hear your first words to Him than your parents were to hear you first speak to them.

Why not experiment? Devote ten minutes to prayer each day for six months and see what happens.

As long as you come to God with a sincere, willing and needing heart, what does He promise? Psalm 102:17

IN YOUR OWN WORDS

Use the space below to write down some things you could talk to God about. List some things you can thank Him about and also jot down some of your needs. Include names of people for whom you could pray. Now, you can use your notes to begin a daily prayer-time.

TO MEMORISE

Matthew 21:22
Jeremiah 29:13