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Talk to God!

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Talk to God!

Prayer is one of the most incredible privileges we have. We actually are invited to come directly into God's presence and talk with Him about whatever is on our hearts and minds. And He promises to listen and respond! Prayer is the means God uses to give you what He wants for you. God does not just respond to your prayers; He responds to you as a person.

People "pray" all the time these days! But who are they praying to and what are they praying about? When you are praying, God is listening ... and He will answer. Is it important to you? The dictionary actually defines prayer as, "An act of communion with God, or another object of worship, such as in devotion, confession, praise, or thanksgiving." Hmm ... does it seem to you that the people you know are "communing" with God? Are they praying with "devotion"? Prayer is when we take the time to talk with God! The God of the universe! The God who created you! The God who has all of the answers to all of life's questions!

Suppose you were having lunch with a friend one day and your cell phone rang.

You answer and an unfamiliar voice calls out your name.

You ask, "Who is this?"

The response? "I'm your heavenly Father. I'm calling to talk with you because you're my child ... and I haven't heard from you for a while!"

Q. What would your reaction would be? Would you feel special ... scared ... excited ... nervous ... convicted? What thoughts would you have?

Prayer for the Christian is really a conversation with God!

But the "conversation" can be a little tricky, because sometimes it feels like a one-way deal: Us talking and God listening. It takes a measure of sensitivity to hear God's responses back to us!

Q. What has been your experience of prayer at this point in your life?

God wants you to know Him so well that you will always feel like talking to Him ... even when you sin. Prayer is one of the most incredible privileges we have. We actually are invited to come directly into God's presence and talk with Him about

whatever is on our hearts. And He promises to listen!

Prayer is when we take the time to talk with God ... the God who has all of the answers to all of life's questions.

When you invited Jesus into your life, you began a relationship with God that is very personal and intimate. All relationships need good communication to be healthy. Jesus' death for you on the cross made it possible for you to talk directly with your Father in heaven. Your Father wants you to seek His guidance, comfort, peace, and intimate companionship at all times ... not just when you want things. He actually desires your companionship!

Dan DeHaan, in his book *The God You Can Know*, was hard at work in his office one day when his son opened the closed door, came in and sat down quietly. Dan asked, "What do you want?" The boy said "I didn't want anything, I just wanted to be with you." He didn't want money, he didn't want to go out that night, he didn't want help with his homework. No, he said, "I just wanted to be with you." Have you ever felt that way about God? We so often just barge into His presence, reel off our selfish list of wants and take off! God wants you to know Him so well that you will always feel like talking to Him ... even when you sin.

Q. What thoughts do you have about just being with God?

Prayer is a dialogue between two persons who love each other. It is a means God uses to give you what He wants for you. God does not just respond to your prayers; He responds to you as a person. W. B. Hunter, in his book, *The God Who Hears*, said, "Prayer is not a blank check which can be cashed for anything we have enough faith for... we must learn to want what we get!"

All relationships need good communication to be healthy. Your Father wants you to seek His guidance, comfort, peace, and intimate companionship at all times ... not just when you want things.

Why pray? The Bible is filled with reasons and promises regarding our conversation with God:

- **God wants us to pray.** "Be devoted to prayer." —Colossians 4:2
- **God is listening.** "Come to me in prayer." —Jeremiah 29:12
- **God answers our prayers.** "I will respond, I will hear." —Isaiah 65:24
- **God wants an intimate relationship with us.** "Draw near to God." —James 4:8

- **God wants to bless us.** “Your Father ... gives good gifts.” —Matthew 7:11
- **God wants to meet our needs.** “Receive mercy and find grace.” —Hebrews 4:16
- **God wants us to be protected.** “Stay awake and pray.” —Matthew 26:41
- **God wants to conform our perspectives, desires, and will to be like Jesus Christ.** “Clothe yourself with a heart of mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.” —Colossians 3:12
- **God’s kingdom is built through prayer.** “Above all, pursue his kingdom and righteousness.” —Matthew 6:33

Q. As you look at this list, which reason for prayer is most important to you today?

Prayer is sharing your heart with your heavenly Father, who desires a relationship with you.

Our relationship to God is as a child to a parent! The act of prayer is to have fellowship with our heavenly Father! Relating to God as your loving Father prevents legalism, fear, a critical spirit, or jealousy. An incorrect concept of God will bring forth an incorrect response to Him. It is important to see Him as He is! When you pray you have the incredible privilege of talking with the King of the Universe! You can actually know Him and have His guidance and protection made real to you. Our lack of influence and fruitfulness is primarily because we don’t really believe that God can and will act on our behalf!

Q. What motivates you to pray?

Q. What images of God do you have that keep you from praying?

Prayer is the natural result of meaningful time in the Scriptures where God reveals himself to us. It is there we learn that God wants us to think of Him as our Father. The term “Father” is applied to God 189 times in the Gospels (the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) alone! Prayer is one way God reveals His will to us, and where personal battles and battles for others are won.

“I, the LORD, do these things. I, the LORD, form the plan to bring them about. I am known as the LORD. I say to you, ‘Call on me in prayer and I will answer you. I will show you great and mysterious things which you still do not know about.’” —
Jeremiah 33:2-3

Q. What do these verses tell you about your part in talking with God?

Q. What kinds of things do you think God wants you to ask Him for?

James 4:2 tells us, “You do not have because you do not ask.”

Almighty God is our heavenly Father and He wants us to talk to Him. Prayer is not the end in itself, but the means used to know and develop intimate fellowship with God! The Holy Spirit helps us pray. Faith makes our prayers effective. God’s Word teaches us who God is and how to pray. Prayer is the means whereby God moves in the accomplishment of His mighty operations on the earth. We can’t fully understand this enormously important concept, but we can believe it.

The Bible records many specific, detailed examples of prayer making a difference in the real world. It is the major means of becoming a fruitful witness for Christ. Someone once said, “The divine order is first to talk to God about men, and then to talk to men about God.” When you are praying, God is listening ... and He will answer.

Take time to listen for God’s response—through His Word, through other people, through an idea or thought brought to mind by the Holy Spirit. Pay attention to God’s answers!

Application

Q. How can you begin to incorporate a conversation with God into your life every day?

Additional Study

Author and speaker Evelyn Christenson was known for her passion for prayer and the gospel of Jesus Christ. She wrote many books; two great books to add to your collection of spiritual helps would be *What Happens When Women Pray* and *What Happens When God Answers Prayer*.

Related Lessons from Series Two: Empowered by Christ

Pray with Confidence

We serve a great God! And that great God loves us unconditionally and wants what is best for us! God is your perfect heavenly Father and you can pray with confidence knowing that He is listening and will answer your prayers!

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Different Ways to Pray

We can pray in many ways! The important thing is to take time to be still with God. Enjoy His presence. Allow Him to speak quietly to you. Let the Holy Spirit fill you. Take time to be with Him every day.

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