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5. Prayer – Talking to Your Heavenly Father

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5. Prayer – Talking to Your Heavenly Father

Suppose you were having lunch with a friend one day, and your cell phone rang. You answer, and an unfamiliar, powerful voice calls out your name.

You ask, “Who is this?”

You are totally shocked when the answer comes back, “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.”

What do you think your reaction would be?

Would you feel special ... scared ... excited ... nervous ... convicted?

God wants you to know Him so well that you will always feel like talking to Him ... even when you sin and have broken fellowship with Him. Read about how loving and forgiving your Father’s heart is in the story of the “Prodigal Son” in Luke 15:11-32.

Prayer is vital to growing in our relationship with God. Prayer is one of the most incredible privileges you have as a believer ... to come directly into God’s presence and talk with Him about whatever is on your heart. And, He promises to listen!

Relationship ... Not Rules

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! (See Galatians 4:6.)

- THE HOLY SPIRIT helps you pray.
- FAITH makes your prayers effective.
- GOD’S WORD teaches you who God is and how to pray.

Ask Christ to make Himself more real to you.

“You haven’t done this before. Ask, using my name, and you will receive, and you will have abundant joy” (John 16:24).

Knowing Your Father

The first part of this study focuses on God’s character. Once you know who your Father is, it’s much easier to talk with Him.

Before you begin trying to grasp how totally amazing your Heavenly Father is ... you need to know that his greatness is far beyond human understanding. However, His Word does give us part of the picture!

Attributes of God

- God is Sovereign (In Charge)
- God is Eternal (Always Existed)
- God is Omniscient (All Knowing)
- God is Omnipresent (Everywhere)
- God is Omnipotent (All Powerful)
- God is Immutable (Unchanging)
- God is Holy (Righteous and Set Apart)
- God is Just (Absolutely Fair)
- God is Love (Unconditional Acceptance)
- God is Truth (Totally Trustworthy)

Think about each one of God’s characteristics listed below, and how each attribute affects your view of God ... and your relationship with Him.

God is Sovereign (In Charge)

God alone is Ruler of the universe. He has complete authority to do whatever pleases Him.

When you talk to your Father, approach Him with humility and respect for His absolute authority.

Q. Read Job 1:6-12. Throughout this conversation, who was in control at all times?

Q. Whom can you trust at all times?

Q. What does Romans 8:28 mean to you personally?

God is Eternal (Always Exists)

You live in a time dimension. God doesn't. God has always existed, and He always will exist. When you join God in heaven, you will live forever with Him. He gives you eternal life!

When you talk to your Father, think about the time ahead when you will be with Him forever and ever!

Q. What else has God told us is eternal? (Isaiah 40:8)

Q. How long will God rule? (Psalm 45:6)

God is Omniscient (All Knowing)

God knows everything in the past. He knows everything that is going on in the universe now. And He knows everything that is going to happen in the future.

Q. Read Psalm 139, and write down your thoughts

When you talk to your Father, think about the fact that He knows what you are going to say ... before you say it. He even knows what is going on deep in your heart. And, He knows what is best for you!

God is Omnipresent (Everywhere)

This universe is about thirty billion light years across ... and contains at least ten trillion stars (more than all the grains of sand on earth). Yet God is present on every star, and in every inch of space.

Q. Write down your thoughts on Psalm 139:7-8

When you talk to your Father, think about the fact that wherever you go ... He is already there. Even during your darkest time ... you can count on his being there.

God is Omnipotent (All Powerful)

Since God is all-powerful, nothing is difficult for Him. Even the enormous power to create the universe was just "finger-work" for Him (Psalm 8:3).

The prophet Jeremiah said: “O Sovereign Lord! You have made the heavens and earth by Your great power. Nothing is too hard for You!” (Jeremiah 32:17).

When you talk to your Father, humbly realize He can do anything. And, although He cares about every detail in your life, think about how small your problems are when compared with how awesome He is!

God is Immutable (Unchanging)

Since we are always changing our minds or moods...it is hard to imagine a God that is always the same, “yesterday, today ... and forever!” (Hebrews 13:8).

When you talk to your Father, think about the fact that because He never changes ... His love for you also never changes. It doesn't fluctuate with your emotions or deeds. It is also important to understand that because God never changes ... His Word will never change!

God is Holy (Righteous and Set Apart)

God has never thought an unrighteous thought ... and never will! He is absolutely pure and perfect in every way! (See Psalm 145:17.)

Sin is the exact opposite of God's nature ... and without Christ's death for you on the cross, you would be totally rejected from His presence. God's holiness is beyond explanation.

Q. Read Revelation 20:12-15, and write down your thoughts

When you talk to your Father, think about His holiness and righteousness ... and how Jesus has made it possible for you to come directly into His awesome presence.

God is Just (Perfectly Fair)

God is the Supreme Judge of the universe. He cannot make a mistake ... and is always totally fair. There is no “Court of Appeals” (See Jeremiah 9:24.) God cannot “look the other way” regarding your sin.

When you talk to your Father, think about the fact that He will always be fair by His perfect standard. You need to trust Him even when you think He has been unfair. (See Genesis 18:25.)

God is Love (Unconditional Acceptance)

God will never love you less ... and He cannot love you more! The Bible tells us that God doesn't just have love ... "He is love" (1 John 4:16).

The fact that your Father sent Jesus to suffer and die for you on the cross illustrates the depth of His love for you (1 John 3:1).

When you talk to your Father, think about the high price He paid for your salvation, even though you will never fully understand it or appreciate it.

Then thank Him!

God is Truth (Totally Trustworthy)

God cannot lie. Everything He says is true (Titus 1:2).

Q. Who claimed to be the truth in John 14:6?

Q. What does Jesus say is the truth in John 17:17?

When you talk to your Father, thank Him for the promises in the Bible. Review the promises ... one by one ... with Him. Tell Him you want to trust Him!

Read and pray David's prayer in 1 Chronicles 29:11-13.

Praying Boldly

Now that you begin to see how awe-inspiring your Heavenly Father is, you may be afraid to approach Him in prayer. God's Word tells you that as His child, you are always welcome in His presence. Go to Him ... boldly!

"So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive His mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it" (Hebrews 4:16).

Praying with Humility

Although God wants you to talk to Him at all times, it is important that you approach Him with a humble heart (1 Peter 5:5-6). God opposes human pride, and wants you to be totally dependent upon His resources.

Praying with Confidence

- **Pray According to God's Word**

Learn the following prayer principles and look up the Scripture reference that goes with each one and then ... pray expectantly!

- **Family Only**

God answers the prayers of His children. He also hears and answers prayers of non-Christians when they come to Christ in faith for the forgiveness of their sins (John 16:24).

- **Abiding Answers**

Jesus said that an abiding Christian can be confident in his prayers being heard ... and answered according to God's will.

Q. What does John 15:7 say?

Q. What does Psalm 66:18-20 say?

- **"Thy Will Be Done"**

Jesus modeled the attitude you should have when you come to your Father. You should desire His will above yours, even though it may be difficult to accept. (Read Mark 14:32-40)

"And 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, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him" (1 John 5:14).

Now that you know Him, you can be confident ... if you are abiding in Him ... that He will answer any prayer that is according to His perfect will.

- **God's Perfect Timing**

Don't give up on prayers that don't get answered right away. One of the signs of a Spirit-controlled Christian is "patience" (Galatians 5:22).

Countless Christians will tell you stories of God's faithfulness in answering prayers after many years of continual prayer.

• **Your Prayer Life**

You began your prayer life as a member of God's family when you invited Jesus into your life.

Q. How has it been going since?

Q. What is different about your prayers since you asked Jesus into your life?

• **Beginning Your Day**

If you want your relationship with Christ to grow, plan to meet Him every morning. Many Christians who are abiding in Christ begin their day with a "quiet time." You can start talking to God "before your feet hit the ground," as you get out of bed. Say something like this:

"Good morning Lord! Today, before I get going, I just want You to know I love You ... and want to live for You today!"

• **Claiming His Promises**

Take some of God's promises with you, and claim them for your day. Here's a great verse to get you started:

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek His will in all you do, and He will direct your paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Pray: "Lord, today, I am going to trust You to direct my paths, and I am going to seek Your will for my life in each situation."

• **Restoring Fellowship by Confession**

When you slip and fall, and feel like no one cares, run to your Lord's waiting arms. He will comfort you and dry your tears. (Read Romans 8:26-27.)

To restore fellowship with the Holy Spirit, simply tell Him that you have sinned, (name it), and choose to let Him control your life. He will then restore you to fellowship with Him (see 1 John 1:9).

• **Thank, Praise, and Adore Him**

God has done so much for you that it is important to take some time to thank Him, and think about His love and grace. Read the Psalms, and as you read the many praises...stop and make them your own. Think about God's greatness and His great

love for you ... and adore Him. (Begin with Psalms 95, 107, 145-150.)

- **Requests**

God wants you to bring Him your requests. In fact, He delights in your requests since it is an act of faith and obedience. Never quit asking Him for things that are biblical and within His will. He promises to answer those prayers ... in His time!

Suggestion: For the next 30 days, start a prayer list. Add to it each day.

Write down the following:

- Your personal growth in Christ
- Specific issues you are dealing with
- Needs of friends and family
- Non-Christians you desire to know Christ
- Other Christians you can help grow

If you are reading God's Word, and allowing the Holy Spirit to control your life...you will naturally talk with Him more.