

WALKING WITH *Jesus*

The Privilege of Prayer



A close-up photograph of two people's hands clasped together in a prayerful gesture. The person on the left wears a red and white plaid shirt with a white cuff featuring red polka dots. The person on the right wears a similar plaid shirt with a white cuff featuring red polka dots. They are both wearing blue jeans. The background is blurred, showing a light-colored floor.

A friend's prayers



“There is an old Roman story which tells how a Roman Emperor was enjoying a triumph. He had the privilege, which Rome gave to her great victors, of marching his troops through the streets of Rome with all his captured trophies and prisoners in his train. The Emperor was on the valedictory march with his troops. The streets were lined with cheering people. The tall legionaries lined the streets’ edge to keep the people in their place. At one point on the triumphal route, there was a platform where the empress and her family were sitting to watch the emperor go by in all the pride of his triumph. On the platform with his mother, there was the emperor’s youngest son.

As the emperor came near, the little boy jumped off the platform, burrowed through the crowd, dodged between the legs of a legionary and ran out on the road to meet his fathers’ chariot. The legionary stooped down and stopped him swing him up into his arms: “You cant do that boy” he said. “Don’t you now who is in that chariot?” That’s the emperor. You can’t run out to his chariot,” he said. The little boy laughed. “He may be your emperor,” he said, “but he’s my father.”

This is exactly the way we should feel towards God. The might and the majesty and the power are the might and the majesty and power of the one whom Jesus taught us to call Our Father.” (Daily Study Bible Series, *Matthew’s Gospel*, Vol. 1, p. 203.)

“Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. Not that this is necessary in order to make known to God what we are, but in order to enable us to receive Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him.” *Ellen G. White*

WHY PRAYER MATTERS

Q1

Why is prayer so important?



□ *Jeremiah 29:12*



□ *Jeremiah 31:9* □ *Psalms 50:15; 102:17*

□ *Isaiah 65:24* □ *Matthew 7:7, 8*

God speaks to us through the beauty of the natural world, through His words in the Bible, through His influence in our lives and by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer is how we speak to God; it is how we maintain personal contact with our heavenly Father. God invites us to pour our hearts out to Him and share with Him what is happening in our lives and how we are feeling. In this way, our minds are drawn out to Him as to a friend.

Prayer is opening our heart to God the way we would to a close friend—sharing our highs and lows and telling Him whatever is going on in our life—our everyday struggles, hopes and anxieties. The act of prayer does not bring God down to us; instead, it is how we are brought into the presence of God.



“If prayer stands as the place where God and human beings meet, then I must learn about prayer. Most of my struggles in the Christian life circle around the same two themes: why God doesn't act the way we want God to, and why I don't act the way God wants me to. Prayer is the precise point where those themes converge.”

Philip Yancey

HOW JESUS PRAYED

Q2

What does Jesus invite us to do when we pray to Him?



□ 1 Peter 5:6-7



□ Philippians 4:6, 7 □ Psalm 55:16–18; 34:5–8, 15–20; 62:8
□ Jeremiah 33:3 □ 2 Chronicles 7:14

During Jesus' ministry on earth, the disciples asked Him to teach them how to pray. He taught them to present their daily needs before God and to cast all their cares upon Him.

This, then, is how you should pray:

"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be Your name,
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors.
And do not lead us into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.
For Yours is the kingdom and the power
and the glory forever. Amen." (*Matthew 6:9–13*)

Q3 *During His time on earth, how did Jesus pray?*



☐ *Mark 1:35*



☐ *Mark 6:46* ☐ *Matthew 6:6; 14:23*

☐ *Luke 6:12; 1* ☐ *Peter 2:21*

In reading of Jesus' life, we see many examples of His prayer life. Jesus continually brought everything before God, relying on God to meet His needs, help Him to face temptation and to and give Him strength to glory God through His actions. This also serves as an example as to what a close relationship with God really looks like.

Jesus found strength and joy from the close communication with His Father. By daily seeking the renewing power of God, Jesus resisted sin, lived a perfect life and redeemed us from a sinful world.



"I do not believe that one can earnestly seek and find the priceless treasure of God's call without a devout prayer life. That is where God speaks. The purpose of prayer and of God's call in your life is not to make you number one in the world's eyes, but to make Him number one in your life. We must be willing to be outshone while shining for God. We hear very little about being smaller in our own self-estimate."

— *The Grand Weaver: How God Shapes Us Through the Events of Our Lives* (ed. Zondervan, 2009)

Jesus' humanity made prayer both a necessity and a privilege. If Jesus, the Son of God, felt the need and importance of prayer, how much more should we, sinful human beings, feel the need of fervent constant prayer?

Q4

What specific link did Jesus identify between prayer and temptation?



□ *Matthew 26:41*



□ *Luke 21:36* □ *Mark 14:38; 13:37* □ *Galatians 5:16*
□ *James 4:7, 8; 1:2–5* □ *Romans 13:14* □ *Matthew 7:7*



“Prayer is the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven's storehouse where are treasured the boundless resources of heaven.” *Ellen G. White*

Praying to an omnipotent God gives us a daily awareness not only of sin, but access to divine power to overcome sin. It is Satan's desire that we should become careless in prayer, causing us to deviate from God's plan. In short, prayerlessness makes it easier to be overcome by Satan's temptations and diverted from our close walk with God.



“The darkness of the evil one encloses those who neglect to pray. The whispered temptations of the enemy continues to entice people to sin; and it is all because they do not make use of the privilege that God has given to them in the divine appointment of prayer.” *Ellen G. White*

Satan knows well that when you pray, you access God’s grace and power that will enable you to resist the temptations Satan uses to drag you into sinful ways.

SEEKING GOD WITH A SINCERE SPIRIT

Q5

What should our attitude be as we seek God?



□ *Psalms 69:32*



□ *Isaiah 44:3; 41:17; 48:21* □ *Matthew 5:6*

□ *John 4:10; 7:37–39* □ *Revelation 21:6; 22:17*

God has promised that He will hear and answer our prayers if we come to Him with a humble heart. An essential aspect of praying sincerely, is to recognise our need that only God can provide. The heart must be open to the Holy Spirit’s influence, or God’s blessings will not be recognised nor received. God wants us to recognise and acknowledge our spiritual emptiness so that He, through the Holy Spirit, can fill us with His blessings and goodness.



PUT AWAY SIN

Q1

What impact does sin have on prayer?



☐ *Psalm 66:18* ☐ *Proverbs 28:9*



☐ *Isaiah 1:15, 16* ☐ *Zechariah 7:11–13*
☐ *Proverbs 15:8–10; 109:7*

God shares how we are to approach Him. If we cling to known sin and have not repented, or if we rebel, God will not hear our prayer. However, once we acknowledge our sin, He accepts our prayers.

We will never win the favour of God by our own goodness: it is only through the provision of God in sending His son Jesus to pay the penalty for our sins that we are saved. Once we accept Jesus as our atoning sacrifice, He acts as our mediator and reconciles us to a holy God (see Hebrews 9:11–15).

FAITH AND PRAYER

Q7

What role does faith have when we pray?



☐ *Mark 11:24*



☐ *James 1:6* ☐ *Matthew 21:22*
☐ *Mark 11:22–24* ☐ *Timothy 2:8*

Another element of prevailing prayer is faith. Faith plays a very crucial part in our prayer life. We need to have faith that God's Word is true and believe that He cares about our needs and will answer our prayers according to His will.

The assurance is broad and unlimited—God is faithful. If you do not receive exactly what you asked for, or if you feel like you have waited too long without answers, this doesn't mean that your prayers have not been heard or even answered. God will answer your prayers in accordance with what is best for you.



*Our
salvation
is found in
Jesus*





“Faith is expecting the word of God to do what it says, and then depending upon that word to do what it says.”

— *Ellen G. White*



We are so erring and short-sighted that we sometimes ask for things that would not be a blessing to us. God, in love, answers our prayers by giving us that which will be for our highest good (James 4:2, 3).

Don't be afraid to trust God always, even if you think the answer to your prayer might be a long time in coming. Keep your faith firmly in Him and trust in His promises.

Q8 *How are prayer and forgiveness connected?*



□ *Matthew 6:14, 15*



□ *Matthew 5:23–24; 6:12; 18:21–35* □ *Luke 7:40–48; 11:4*

When you ask God for His mercy and blessings, it is important that you do this with a spirit of love and forgiveness in your own heart. How can we ask God to forgive us if we are holding past resentments and hurts against people who have wronged us?

PRAYING WITHOUT CEASING

Q9 *How often should we pray?*



□ *1 Thessalonians 5:17*



□ *Colossians 4:2, 12* □ *Luke 21:36* □ *Psalms 55:17; 86:3*

We are encouraged to keep praying; it is not something we do just at church, nor as one moment in our day. Prayer can happen anytime. Through sincere prayer, we are brought close to the mind of God. We may not feel that He is near, but Jesus is bending over us in love and

sympathy. We may not feel His touch, but His hand is upon us in love and tender pity.

We need to prioritise prayer and connect with God daily. Look for opportunities in your day to pray. Don't wait until you need God's help to bring you to your knees. You can pray in any situation.

In all times, whether in joy or affliction, when the outlook seems dark and the future perplexing and you feel helpless and alone, draw near to God. Take every moment you can to spend time with God in prayer and receive His blessings.

"We need to have far less confidence in what man can do, and far more confidence in what God can do for every believing soul. He longs to have you reach after Him by faith. He longs to have you expect great things from Him." XXX



“Our forgiving love towards [others] is the evidence of God's forgiving love in us. It is a necessary condition of the prayer of faith.”

— *Andrew Murray*

REFLECTIONS

Thank you God for the opportunity to come to you at any time, through Jesus, in prayer.

| | |
|-----|-----------|
| YES | UNDECIDED |
|-----|-----------|

I believe that prayer is how I can connect with God. I want to live in a close relationship with Him and experience His peace through the gift of prayer.

| | |
|-----|-----------|
| YES | UNDECIDED |
|-----|-----------|

I trust that God hears me when I pray, and I believe He knows what is best for me and will answer my prayers according to His perfect will.

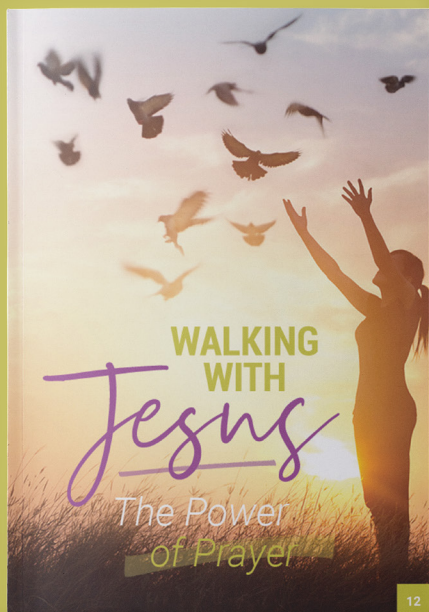
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| YES | UNDECIDED |
|-----|-----------|

I accept God’s invitation to come ‘boldly before His throne of grace’ in prayer, so that I can benefit from His grace and mercy in my daily walk with Him.

| | |
|-----|-----------|
| YES | UNDECIDED |
|-----|-----------|

*Prayer
brings us
into
God's
presence
- anytime,
anywhere.*





CONTINUE YOUR
JOURNEY IN PART 12 -

THE POWER OF PRAYER

Through prayer, God makes Himself accessible to us – and through Him, we can access immeasurable power and strength. Prayer connects and provides us with strength to comfort now matter what we are facing. It's also an opportunity to give thanks to God and continue to grow in our faith and understanding of Him.

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