

LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY



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One night he was in jail in Philippi but he was not complaining. He and his friend, Silas, were singing and praying to God. God sent a great earthquake and loosed the chains that fastened them to the prison wall. Still he did not try to escape. He told the jailer how to become a Christian. God set him free and at the same time gave him the opportunity to win an unsaved man to Christ.

QUESTIONS

1. Is prayer a new thing for Christians to do?
2. Name some people listed in the Old Testament who prayed.
3. Name some Christians in the New Testament who prayed.
4. Does the Bible command us to pray?

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ing that God had no power. Therefore, Elijah asked God to send fire from heaven in the presence of all the people. God answered his prayer and the people said: "The Lord, he is God." (Read 1 Kings 18:20-40).

JONAH: Jonah was sent by God to preach in Ninevah but he did not want to go and ran away. He travelled on a ship and when a storm came up, he was thrown into the water. A great fish swallowed him. When he remembered the Lord and prayed, God delivered him. Read Jonah 2:1-10.

BLIND BARTIMEUS: Bartimeus prayed that God would give sight to his blind eyes. Jesus said to him that he was healed. Then he followed Jesus.

PETER: Read Acts 12:4-5. Here we read that Peter was in prison but the people of the church prayed. Peter was miraculously delivered from the prison. Once, Peter was walking on the water to meet Jesus, he began to sink into the water but he called on Jesus to help him and he was saved.

PAUL: The Bible tells of many times when Paul was saved from death because of prayer.

had no water to drink, Moses cried unto God. God sent water from a rock. Read Exodus 17:6. When Miriam, the sister of Moses, had leprosy, Moses prayed for God to heal her. God heard his prayer and she was made completely well again.

HANNAH: Hannah loved God very much but God never allowed her to have a child. One day she fell on her knees in the temple and begged God for a son. She promised to give the child back to God to be used in the service of the Lord. When the child was born Hannah said: "This is the child I prayed for, Lord, and now I will keep my promise and give him back to you." Read 1 Samuel 1:3-28.

DAVID: David had many difficulties in his life. Every time he called on God he received help. Because of prayer, David was able to destroy the giant, Goliath, with a slingshot. When David prayed and asked for forgiveness for his sin of adultery and murder, God heard his prayer.

ELIJAH: Elijah called upon God often. Once, he called on God to restore life to a dead child. God heard his prayer and the child lived again. At another time, people were say-

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ed the wicked cities of Sodom.
Read Genesis 19:29.

ISAAC: Isaac was a very sad man because his wife bore him no children. Then he prayed and God heard his prayer, and his wife Rebecca, gave birth to twins. Read Genesis 25:21.

JACOB: When Jacob was a young man he tricked his brother, Esau. Jacob ran away because he thought his brother would kill him. Twenty years passed and Jacob wanted to return home. He prayed for God to protect him from Esau. God answered his prayer. Esau ran to meet Jacob and kissed him because he was glad to see him. Read Genesis 32:7-33:4.

JOSEPH: Joseph was in prison. He was an innocent man and he was suffering for something that he did not do. God heard his prayer. He was made a ruler over all the land of Egypt because of his faithfulness to God. Read Genesis 39:19-23 and Genesis 41:41-45.

MOSES: When Moses prayed, God divided the waters of the sea and the children of Israel walked through on dry ground. (Exodus 14:21). When the children of Israel were thirsty and

BIBLE PEOPLE WHO PRAYED

There are many commands to pray in the Bible. Jesus said: "Watch and pray that you may enter not into temptation." (Mark 14:38).

Paul commanded prayers of thanksgiving. "Rejoice always. Pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

Therefore, men prayed. Men could say, as David said: "I give myself to prayer." David made prayer the leading business of his life.

Men have recognized what an honour it is to pray to God. Think what an honour it would be if we could walk in the office or home of the President of Zambia at any time we desired! Our God is the King of Kings and he is always listening to the voice of his children.

ABRAHAM: Abraham believed in God and he called upon him. Because Abraham trusted God and prayed to him often, God delivered him when he destroy-

Prayer is a duty clearly taught in the Word of God. Commands to pray are often given. Jesus instructed his disciples how to pray. He told them to pray, knowing that they would receive answers to their prayers. God urges men to "call upon" him. Prayer offered in secret will be answered openly. Prayers that are offered in a family group will be heard in heaven. Prayers made in church will certainly reach the throne of God.

Do we need help in prayer?

The Bible says we do. Therefore, perhaps this little book will help us to have a better understanding of prayer. In order to understand more clearly what the Bible teaches about prayer, it will be necessary to read every scripture listed.

Without prayer the Christian life becomes cold and dead. With constant prayer, the Christian begins to look like our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. Only then can we be used for the glory of God and the salvation of our fellow men.

And that, surely, is the purpose of all true prayer.

to God and begs for mercies for us.

"Who is to condemn? Is it Christ Jesus, who died, yes who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us?" (Romans 8:34).

QUESTIONS

1. Why did Jesus go alone to pray?
2. Did Jesus ever pray in public? When?
3. When did Jesus pray for himself?
4. What did Jesus ask God to do for him as he prayed in Gethsemane?
5. How does Jesus pray for us today?

Was that prayer answered? Yes, in three ways. First, God's will was done and his loving plan for saving men from their sins was carried out. Second, God gave him strength to bear his sorrow. Third, God gave something better. His prayer was answered, for the Cross was changed to a crown, and death to eternal life.

Jesus is praying for us today.

Though Jesus is no longer in the flesh on the earth, he still prays for us.

"He is able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them." (Hebrews 7:25).

"For Christ has entered, not into a sanctuary made with hands, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf." (Hebrews 9:24).

Christ not only offered up his blood to God upon the cross as a full price to purchase pardon for believers, but he lives in heaven to present all our requests to God. We do not know how to plead our cause before God. But Jesus knows all about us and presents our case

CHAPTER 1

THE GOD TO WHOM WE PRAY

From the beginning of time, men have offered prayers to something or someone. Some have prayed to gods made by men's hands. Many people today bow down in prayer to images made of stone that can never hear their cry. Many have worshipped the sun, the moon and the stars. Others have worshipped animals or forces of nature such as rivers and mountains. These have no voice. They cannot speak. They cannot give comfort in times of trouble and sorrow. They cannot tell people how to live or give them any help at all. Read Psalms 106:19-20.

To whom does the Christian pray? We pray to God. In Genesis 1:1 we read: "In the beginning God." We know that from the very beginning of time the supreme God was present. He created the entire world. God himself created man! The Christian prays to the One, True, Creator God who made heaven and earth.

WHAT IS GOD LIKE?

1. God is Eternal.
To God a thousand years are as a day. God has always been present in the world and he will always continue to be pre-

sent. He is from "Everlasting to everlasting."

"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting thou art God." (Psalm 90:2).

2. God is Intelligent.

God created everything in heaven and in earth. No matter how small or how large the thing may be, God himself planned it. He planned the work that everything he created should do. No one but God could have planned such a beautiful world.

3. God is Holy.

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts." (Isaiah 6:3). Jesus taught that God is holy, and the only holy One.

4. God is loving, merciful, good.

"Let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God." (1 John 4:7-8). Jesus himself said that God is love. In Romans 8:38-39 we read: "For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth,

hour has come; glorify thy Son that the Son may glorify thee." (John 17:1). We should always pray that others may see Jesus in us.

Jesus prayed for his disciples.

Read John 17:6-19. Jesus prayed, "Holy Father, keep them in thy name, which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are one." (John 17:11). He prayed for the disciples to be kept away from the power of Satan. He prayed that they would all be together again in heaven.

Jesus prayed in Gethsemane.

Just before Jesus was to be crucified he took his disciples and went to a place called Gethsemane to pray. Jesus said: "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death." (Mark 14:34). He fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, this terrible time might pass from him. He prayed that if it were possible to save men from their sins and to carry out God's plan in some other way, that he might be spared the suffering and the death. Then he said to God, "Remove this cup from me, yet not what I will, but what thou wilt." (Mark 14:36).

"And taking the five loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples." (Mark 6:41).

Jesus prayed before eating.

"Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.'" (Matthew 26:26).

Jesus prayed for friends.

"I am praying for them; I am not praying for the world but for those whom thou hast given me, for they are thine." (John 17:9).

Jesus prayed for his enemies.

"And Jesus said: 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.'" (Luke 23:34).

Jesus prayed for himself.

"And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, 'My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.'" (Matthew 26:39).

Jesus prayed for God's glory.

"When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, 'Father, the

nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

5. God is just.

He does not punish us when we have done nothing wrong. Neither does he close his eyes when we have committed sin. He sees and knows all that we do and say and he judges every person fairly. "The Rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and right is he." (Deuteronomy 32:4).

6. God is omnipotent.

This means that God has unlimited power and authority. There is no one who is greater than God. There is nothing impossible for God. "For with God nothing will be impossible." (Luke 1:37).

7. God is omniscient.

This means that God knows everything. He knows everything that has happened in the past and he knows everything that will happen in the future. We cannot hide our thoughts or our actions from God.

"And before him no creature is hidden, but all are open and laid bare to the eyes of

him with whom we have to do." (Hebrews 4:13).

8. God is omnipresent.

This means that God is everywhere. There is no place a person can go to hide from God.

"Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend to heaven, thou art there! If I make my bed in Sheol, thou art there!" (Psalm 139:7-8).

WHAT DOES OUR GREAT AND
POWERFUL GOD TELL US AS
CHRISTIANS TO DO?

He tells us to pray! "Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things which you have not known." (Jeremiah 33:3).

"The Lord is near to all who call upon him, to all who call upon him in truth." (Psalm 145:18).

"And I tell you, ask, and it will be given you, seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you." (Luke 11:9).

Surely, when we think about God and about Christ in whose name we must pray, we will be encouraged to pray. Therefore, let us resolve to spend more

CHAPTER 7

JESUS' PRAYER EXAMPLE

Jesus was the Son of God and yet he spent much time in prayer, talking with his Father in heaven. "And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up into the hills by himself to pray." (Matthew 14:23).

"And in the morning, a great while before day, he rose and went out to a lonely place, and there he prayed." (Mark 1:35).

"In these days he went out into the hills to pray; and all night he continued in prayer to God." (Luke 6:12).

Christians can learn a great lesson by studying the prayer life of Jesus. In these verses, we see that Jesus went to a quiet place, alone, to talk with God about the work he would do as God's Son. Christians are God's children. How important it is for them to spend time alone, praying for God to direct their lives.

Jesus prayed in public.

Jesus often prayed in the presence of others. "He was praying in a certain place, and when he ceased, one of his disciples said to him, Lord, teach us to pray." (Luke 11:1).

Some put their business first. They spend all their time working so that they can have more and better things. They neglect God. They never do anything for God.

"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If any one loves the world, love for the Father is not in him." (1 John 2:15).

QUESTIONS

1. Name five things that will keep us from true prayer.
2. Should we expect God to help us even though we disobey him?
3. Does God allow us to keep a few sins and still please him?
4. How does quarreling in the home hinder our prayer?
5. What is an idol? What are some idols that keep people from prayer?

time in prayer. Let us pray without ceasing. We can pray in the morning, at noon and in the night and God will always hear our prayer. At all times and in all places we can call upon God. He heard the dying thief on the cross and he will surely hear us!

QUESTIONS

1. To whom is the Christian to pray?
2. What sort of person is the God to whom we pray?
3. Can we ever escape from the presence of God?
4. Can we hide our thoughts and actions from God? Why?
5. What do we mean when we say that God is eternal?

CHAPTER 2

WHAT IS PRAYER

It is true that people of all religions pray. For a long time, even from the beginning of time, men have been praying. They have prayed when they were all alone and no other person could hear. They have prayed when they were in a public place and everyone listening could hear. In times of war and peace men have prayed. In times of sorrow and joy, of famine and plenty, prayers have been made. People of all tongues, tribes and religions worship some being or spirit. They feel a need to make some sort of sacrifice, and so they pray to something or someone. However prayer has a special meaning for Christians.

Men have prayed short prayers, as Peter's three-word prayer. (Matthew 14:30). They have prayed long prayers like Solomon (2 Chronicles 6:12-42). Men have prayed at all times; in the morning, as David did; at midnight, as Silas did. They have prayed in sickness like Job and when they were dying like Jacob. Everyone, except Jesus, who has prayed would find it difficult to define prayer. We all find it dif-

when the offering is received you do not give anything. Yet you have some money hidden away in your house to use for your own pleasure the next time that you go to town. That is not true prayer. You are asking God to do something that you do not want to do yourself. God will not answer a prayer like that.

8. Idolatry.

What is an idol? An idol is anything that takes the place of God, anything that we love more than God. God alone should have first place in our lives. Everything and everyone must take second place to God.

Many men make an idol of their wives. A man cannot love his wife too much, but he can put her before God. If he tries to please his wife before he serves God, then she becomes his idol. She stands between the man and God, and God is not pleased.

Money is the idol of some people. To make money is their first and last thought.

Some put homes first. The home, no matter how fine should not take the place of God in our affection.

keeping ill against those who have wronged us.

7. Selfishness.

In James 4:3 we read: "You ask and do not receive because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions." Many prayers are selfish. We ask for things which are good but we want them only to make our own lives easier and happier. We think only of ourselves. When we pray for something for our own pleasures, we cannot expect God to answer. If we pray for something that is good and that will honour God, he will hear our prayer.

For example, a woman may pray for her husband to become a Christian. That is a good thing to ask. Perhaps she wants her husband to become a Christian so that he will no longer beat her. She is thinking of herself. She is not praying that God will save her husband and then use him as God sees best.

Here is another example. Perhaps the church is collecting money to give to a family that is hungry. You are asked to lead a prayer that God will help the church to receive enough money to give a good gift to them. You pray that God will send the money and

difficult to give a complete meaning for prayer.

Some people think of prayer as just asking God for something. Some people think of prayer as arguing with God to get what they want for themselves. Some people think of prayer as a first-aid kit for times of trouble. The only time they pray is when they want God to help them out of their difficulty. Some people think of prayers as begging God to do something for them that God does not want to do.

What is Prayer? We will give a few answers to this question.

1. PRAYER IS AN INVITATION TO GOD.

In prayer, we invite God into the midst of our needs. We ask him to use his power, in the way that he wants to use it, to help us. Prayer is like opening the door to the doctor and turning the sick one over to his care with a willingness to do what the doctor asks. Prayer is inviting God to come into our lives and direct us in his own way. It is not forcing God to do what we want done. Prayer is not begging God to help us in such a way that we will always appear important before our

friends. Prayer is just giving God permission to help us as his wisdom and love direct. This is what Jairus did. Read Mark 5:22-23.

In prayer, we invite God to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves, and to do for others what they cannot do for themselves. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and eat with him, and he with me." Revelation 3:20.

2. PRAYER IS WORK.

Wise Christians do not make prayer a substitute for work. Neither do we make work a substitute for prayer. God works in answer to prayer. It would be wrong for us to pray for a hungry man to find food if we are not willing to share our own food with him. It would be wrong for us to pray for a job if we never went out to look for work. It would be wrong for us to pray that a poor family find enough warm clothing for their children if we are not willing to help them ourselves. It would be wrong for us to pray for an unsaved person to become a Christian if we ourselves never tell him about Jesus Christ the Saviour.

"All these things my hand has made, and so all these things are mine, says the Lord. But this is the man to whom I will look, he that is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word." (Isaiah 66:2).

6. Unforgiveness.

The sins that other people have done against us seem very small in comparison with the terrible way we have treated God. There are people who would never get drunk, never lie, never steal, never commit adultery, yet they would be angry with their neighbour for some small thing he has done to them. How can they expect God to answer their prayer? Peter asked Jesus how many times he should forgive others and Jesus told him "seventy times seven". Jesus meant we should forgive as many times as we are asked to forgive.

"And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father also who is in Heaven may forgive you your trespasses." (Mark 11:25).

Prayer is answered when our sins are forgiven. God will not listen to us while we are

4. Marriage problems.

Satan is always happy when the husband and wife are quarreling because he knows it is impossible to pray. When a husband and wife marry, they promise to honour each other until their death. Many husbands and wives do not keep this promise.

"Likewise you wives, be submissive to your husbands, so that some, though they do not obey the word, may be won with out a word by the behaviour of their wives." (1 Peter 3:1).

"Likewise you husbands, live considerately with your wives, bestowing honour on the woman as the weaker sex, since you are joint heirs of the grace of life, in order that your prayers may not be hindered." (1 Peter 3:7).

5. Pride.

Christians cannot come into God's presence thinking themselves very important and expect God to hear and answer.

"There they cry out, but he does not answer, because of the pride of evil men. Surely God does not hear an empty cry." (Job 35:12-13).

We must pray and work! We must not pray for something and then just sit and wait for God to do all the work. We must pray and then use the strength that God has given us to help in answering our own prayers. "Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find." (Matthew 7:7).

3. PRAYER IS A BATTLE.

Satan hates prayer and he does all he can to keep us from praying. Satan fights to control the life of a Christian. In prayer, as in no other way, we come in contact with the power of Satan.

Satan does not worry when we try to do God's work without praying. He does not fear the Christian who attempts to preach or teach the Bible without spending time in prayer. Satan only laughs when church leaders have not prayed. When the Christian truly prays, Satan is defeated. Prayer is our best weapon in our battle against the power of the devil.

4. PRAYER IS TAKING TIME TO TALK TO GOD AND, HAVING TIME TO LISTEN TO GOD.

A Christian prays to God as a child would talk with his father. A Christian wants to

find out what God wants him to do.

In the Bible, we read that Abraham took time to talk with God and God spoke with Abraham. Moses talked with God about the children of Israel and God gave him instructions. Jesus talked to God and God talked to Jesus about many things. That is prayer.

God is always near. We can call on him at any time and in any place. We will never get to know how great God is if we only speak a few words to him once in a while. We rob ourselves of fellowship with God when we call on him quickly in times of trouble. What would you think if your own child ran to you quickly and asked for something very important but did not wait for you to answer? When we talk with God, we should remember that we are his children and honour him by waiting patiently for his reply. When Christians today need God's help, prayer is the way they make their needs known to God. Then they listen for his answer. Listening is part of praying for help in time of trouble.

we do wrong and expect him to ignore some others. "For whoever keeps the law but fails in some point has become guilty of all of it." (James 2:10).

"Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you so that he does not hear." (Isaiah 59:1-2).

3. Unbelief.

"And without faith it is impossible to please him. For whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him." (Hebrews 11:6).

"Therefore, I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you receive it, and you will." (Mark 11:24).

These words are plain. They teach that God is able to do far more than we think or ask. When we ask, we must ask in faith. If we do not believe in the power of God, we will receive nothing.

ceiving his power and blessings.
Here are some of his ways.

1. Disobedience to God.

God has always answered prayer for those who were his obedient servants. "and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him." (1 John 3:22).

If we are disobedient to God, we cannot pray. When we do not obey God, we do not honour him and he will not hear our prayers until we seek his forgiveness. If we do not want to obey, we will be powerless in prayer. "If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." (Isaiah 1:19-20).

2. By loving sin.

So long as we have any sin in our hearts, one sin or many sins, it will be like a wall separating us from God. God will not answer our prayer as long as there is even one small thing in our lives that does not honour him. God knows all about us. We cannot ask God to forgive some things that

5. PRAYER IS POWER.

The Bible gives many examples of answered prayer. Moses prayed and the children of Israel were delivered from their enemy. Daniel was more powerful than the king because he prayed. (Read Daniel 6:10-23). The three Hebrew children walked unharmed through a furnace of fire because they prayed. (Read Daniel 3:13-26). The power of prayer was shown when Paul and Silas prayed - and jail doors were opened. (Acts 16:25-34).

Prayer is the greatest power we have on earth. When we pray, we are immediately in the presence of the great and mighty God who controls the world.

6. PRAYER IS A TEACHER.

"Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 3:18). We cannot grow in grace without prayer. Education alone will not give us knowledge of God. We may study many books and attend many schools and never hear about God.

A Christian wants God to have his way. When he prays, "Thy will be done," a Christian wants God to show him the right way to act. As we pray, God

will teach us the things we should know in order to live an abundant Christian life.

We may be very rich or very poor. We may be very well educated or we may not be able to read a word. The wisdom that every person needs can only be given by God. He has promised to give us this wisdom if we will only ask. Read James 1:5.

7. PRAYER IS THE SPICE OF LIFE.

When we cook, we put salt into our food to make it taste better. When we put sugar in tea, we enjoy it more. Even in the Christian's life there are difficult days. Troubles come and we find it hard to be careful. Jesus has promised to give us strength when we are tired and rest when we are weary. Jesus knows our problems and our needs. He does not want us to worry. He is always ready to take away the burden and give us a song in our hearts.

Take time to pray. God will add the "salt" to your life.

The best definition of prayer is to be found in the prayer of Jesus. He prayed

CHAPTER 6

HINDRANCES TO PRAYER

As Christians we believe that God works when men pray. We believe all the great teachings from the Bible about prayer. We believe all the stories of men in the Bible who have done great and even impossible things because they prayed. "The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effect." (James 5:16).

We believe that what we need in our homes, what we need in our churches, what we need in our nation, is what God can do. We teach in our churches that the greatest need in the world today is praying Christians. When we hear a man say that prayer is the greatest power Christians have, we agree.

A great man of God once said: "I'd rather teach one man to pray than ten men to preach." Preaching does not give us power to do God's will, but prayer does.

When we think about the power of prayer and how little we use it, we can see how busy Satan is in keeping us from prayer. Satan uses many ways to keep us from praying to God and re-

3. Where can we get instructions for training our children?
4. Why should a Christian pray before he attempts to work for God?
5. Does God expect us to thank him for helping us? Why?

in private. He prayed in public. He prayed for himself and he prayed for others. Jesus himself felt the need to pray to his father in Heaven. Therefore, we too, need to seek comfort and guidance from our Father in Heaven.

QUESTIONS

1. Is the practise of prayer a new thing?
2. Do only Christians pray?
3. Name some people from the Bible who were helped when they prayed.
4. Who laughs when a Christian does not pray? Why?
5. What is prayer? Name five things listed in this chapter.

CHAPTER 3

WHY SHOULD A CHRISTIAN PRAY?

Many people think the reason for prayer is to ask for something we want. Someone has called these "give-me" prayers. God plans for prayer to help Christians in more ways than this.

First of all, every Christian needs to have fellowship with God. He needs to feel close to God as a child wants to be near his good father. A Christian wants to feel that God is near to understand and to help. Prayer makes this possible. God is our Heavenly Father, waiting to hear what his children want to say.

1. We should pray to show our thanks. Christians want to worship God. They want to tell him of their love. So our prayers to God should always begin with praise and thanksgiving. Everything that we have comes from God and we must not forget to thank him for his blessings. If anyone were to constantly come to us asking for help, and should never say "Thank you" for the help we give, we would soon get tired of helping him.

than we ask but he expects us to show our appreciation by saying "thank you".

"Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him, bless his name! For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures for ever." (Psalm 100: 4-5).

If we expect God to continue to hear our prayers and bless us then we must remember to continually thank **him** for all that he has already done for us.

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

Our whole life should be a life of prayer. We should walk in constant fellowship with God. We should walk so close to God that no matter where we are, or what we are doing, it would be easy for us to talk with Him.

"Pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

QUESTIONS

1. Why should we pray in the early morning?
2. Is there a time when we should pray all night?

PRAY WHEN YOU HAVE RECEIVED
GOD'S BLESSINGS

We remember to pray for the things that we really need but often we forget to thank God for all that he does for us. It is a temptation to say that we receive good things because we are so important. We should give God the praise and glory for everything we have and use. "I bid every one among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think." (Romans 12:3).

Do you remember the story of the ten men with leprosy whom Jesus healed? How many thanked Jesus for this great gift? Only one! Jesus said to this one who came to thank him: "Where are the others? Aren't they happy that they were healed?"

Do you remember the story of the rich man who had so much wealth that he was going to build more and bigger buildings in which to store his goods? He thought he was so important and he didn't admit that God had given all of these things to him. So God took away everything the man had - even his life. (Read Luke 12:16-21). God always gives us more

God must look down in sadness upon us when we forget to thank him for all his many blessings. When we take time to think about the goodness of God and how often he answers our prayers we know that there is nothing too hard for God. Our love and faith in God will grow as we praise God for everything.

2. We should pray when we need forgiveness. Christians do not plan to sin, but often they do. Christians do not want to say or do things to bring sorrow to others but often they do. God has promised to forgive our sins if we ask him. A Christian cannot serve God when he has sin in his life and only God has the power to forgive sin.

"And forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors." (Matthew 6:12). We must remember to forgive others who have wronged us before we ask God to forgive us. We cannot expect God to do for us what we will not do for others. "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you." (Matthew 6:14).

3. We should pray for help when we are tempted. Many times during the day, a Christian may

be tempted to do the wrong things. He needs God's help to do right. God can help him keep from doing wrong, if a Christian really wants God's help.

It is not always easy to do the things God would have us do. We need to pray for strength to obey God. Prayer will give us the courage to be honest and truthful in all that we do.

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." (Matthew 6:13). Satan will send many things in our way to try to keep us from following God. We need to pray that God will give us strength to say "no" to everything that is wrong.

4. A Christian should pray for daily needs. "Give us this day our daily bread." (Matthew 6:11). This example of prayer that Jesus gave his disciples is not for riches. It is a prayer that God will give us, day by day, what we need.

Christians believe that God is the Father and giver of all things. We believe God cares about our needs. He cares when we are hungry. He cares when we are in trouble. Since God is the Father and Christians

prayed before he was crucified on the cross and he prayed while he was dying. Christ prepared himself for everything that happened to him. We should do this. Every time we must make a decision about some matter, we should take time to pray and receive God's guidance. A Christian should never attempt to do anything without asking God to direct him.

In the daily decisions that must be made in the home, we should ask for God's guidance. God loves our children even more than we do and he will show us how to train them properly if we ask him.

We should never attempt to do anything in the Name of the Lord, or in service for the church, without taking plenty of time to pray. If a Christian tries to do anything by himself he will fail. God alone can give the power for his work. When we visit a person who is not a Christian we should first ask God to prepare their heart and also to give us the right words to say. Then our visit will be successful. God will never allow us to do his work in our own way. We must do God's work in God's way. Therefore, we must pray for his constant leadership.

in the presence of God, praying and taking time to listen and receive the blessing that God wants to give.

A Christian should never say, "I am going to spend the whole night in prayer", thinking that it will win the favour of God. That is not true prayer. Praying does not make us good. God knows all about us and when we are pretending to pray while our minds are on other matters, God is not pleased. If you have a troubled heart and truly talk to God, forgetting about the time, God hears and listens, even all night. If we are counting the hours and thinking only of ourselves and how good we are, we are not praying.

If we set apart the whole night to pray, there will be no hurry. There will be time for our own hearts to become quiet before God. A night of prayer should be put entirely under God's control. We should be ready to wait upon God for a short time or a long time, as he sees best.

PRAY BEFORE ALL IMPORTANT EVENTS IN OUR LIVES

Jesus prayed before choosing his twelve disciples. He prayed when he performed a miracle. He

are his children, asking for daily needs is an important part of every prayer.

We must not be selfish and ask for more than we need. God has not promised to make us rich or famous. He has promised to take care of all our needs if we put him first in our lives.

5. A Christian should pray for God's will to be done. A Christian wants God's way. That is why he prays for God's will to be done. God knows our needs and we should be willing for him to answer our prayers in the way that he wants to. God knows what is best and he will always do more for us than we expect.

"Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." (Matthew 6:10).

God does not force us to love him, but he allows us to choose how we will act. If we truly love God we will want to choose his way and not our own.

QUESTIONS

1. Name five things we should pray for.
2. Why should we pray for forgiveness?

3. Will a Christian be tempted?
What should he do to receive
strength to say "no"?
4. Should a Christian pray for
simple things like food and
clothing?
5. Why should we pray for God
to have his way in our
lives?

than at any other time. If a Christian is putting God first in his life he will want to spend the first part of every day alone with God. We need to pray for strength to face the temptations and the duties of each day. Prayer is the only weapon we have to fight the battles of each day. When we receive God's power at the beginning of each day, we can serve him better.

PRAY AT NIGHT

In Luke 6:12 we read: "In these days he went out into the hills to pray; and all night he continued in prayer to God." Here we see Jesus praying in the night. He spent the entire night in prayer. Why did he pray all night? We do not know. Perhaps his heart was troubled and he prayed to God until he had received the strength that was needed. Today, when we have a matter to discuss with a friend, we can sometimes talk only a few minutes and the matter is settled. At other times we need to talk a long time, perhaps all night, to come to an agreement. That is the way it is with God. When we take our requests to God, we might receive the answer we need very quickly. At other times we might need to spend a long time

CHAPTER 5

WHEN SHOULD WE PRAY?

It is true that a Christian can call on God at any time and in any place and God will hear. If we are to fully realize the power of prayer and enjoy God's rich blessings we must make time to pray unhurriedly. There are often emergencies when we are in great difficulty and we need God's help immediately. God understands this and he is ready and willing to help at the moment we call upon him. However, we must plan for special times each day when we can talk with God without interference.

PRAY IN THE MORNING

Jesus felt the need to be alone and to pray to his Father in Heaven. In Mark 1:35 we read: "And in the morning, a great while before day, he rose and went out to a lonely place and there he prayed." Jesus chose the early morning hour for prayer. Many of the greatest men of God have followed the Lord's example in this. In the morning hour the mind is fresh and at its best. More can be accomplished in prayer in the first hours of the day

CHAPTER 4

HOW TO PRAY

"Lord, teach us to pray." (Luke 11:1). We all know that people everywhere pray and that they feel a need to pray. Jesus himself taught that men should always pray and not be discouraged. Men should learn how to use the most important of all God's gifts.

Many believe that prayer is the greatest force in the world. Yet many do not know how to pray. Many believe that prayer is the only weapon that can be used to fight Satan; and yet they do not know how to use it. Many believe the greatest need in the world today is for praying Christians. They believe the only way that the world can be won to Christ is through prayer. Yet many do not know how to pray.

There is a difference between praying and saying a prayer. We read in Luke 18:11-12: "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank thee that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week,

I give tithes of all that I get.'" The Pharisee's words were not prayer.

People who pray to be heard by men are not really praying. People who speak many words so that others can hear how educated they are, are not really praying. They are only talking to the people and not to God.

The Bible gives us some guides to use as we pray.

1. PRAY WITHOUT HYPOCRISY.

Jesus said: "And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward." (Matthew 6:5).

Hypocrisy is play acting. Prayer is not acting a part before God. God knows everything that we do and even what we think. The person who looks beautiful on the outside but has evil in his heart is a hypocrite. "You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said: 'This people honours me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.'" (Matthew 15:7-8).

asked nothing in my name; ask and you will receive, that your joy may be full." (John 16:23-24).

What does it mean then to "pray in Jesus' name"? No one knows how to approach God in a worthy manner. Therefore, because we believe in Jesus Christ as our Saviour we trust him to present our prayer requests to God. Jesus Christ died for our sins. Therefore we no longer kill an animal and offer it in sacrifice as we pray to God. Because Christ died for us, we must live for him. As we make our prayers "in Jesus' name" we are asking God to answer in a way that will help us to live for Jesus.

QUESTIONS

1. Was the Pharisee really praying? Was he praying to God or talking to himself?
2. Does God always answer our prayers immediately?
3. How should we pray? Give 5 ways.
4. Will God hear our prayer if we are fighting with a brother?
5. What does the Bible tell us to do if our brother has something against us?

"And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses." (Mark 11:25-26).

"So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother and then come and offer your gifts." (Matthew 5:23-24).

Just because we are Christians does not mean that we never do wrong again. Each day a Christian needs to pray for forgiveness of sins he has done that day.

God will forgive us when we do wrong, if we ask him. First we must forgive anyone who has sinned against us. This means that until we have forgiven those who have wronged us, it is useless to ask God to forgive us our sins. As we forgive others, God forgives us.

7. PRAY IN JESUS' NAME

"Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it." (John 14:13).

"Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask anything of the Father he will give it to you in my name. Hitherto you have

In prayer, you are dealing with God. You cannot deceive God. You cannot pretend to be busy serving God while you are busy doing things for yourself.

2. PRAY PRIVATELY.

"But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you." (Matthew 6:6).

Go into a quiet room. Shut the door. Shut out everything and everybody except God and you. We need to be alone with God before we go into the public place for God.

Being alone in a room does not mean that we are praying. Sometimes we let things outside fill our minds. We must think only of talking to God, and nothing else, or it is not prayer.

Even if many people are listening, a prayer is between one person and God. If we pray to please others, we are not really praying.

3. PRAY IN FAITH.

"And without faith it is impossible to please him. For whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists

and that he rewards those who seek him." (Hebrews 11:6).

Many times, Jesus said to those whom he healed, "Go in peace; thy faith hath saved thee." Jesus, teaching us to have faith when we pray, said: "Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you receive it, and you will." (Mark 11:24).

4. PRAY FOR DEFINITE NEEDS

Jesus teaches us to pray for the very thing that we need. "And in praying do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. (Matthew 6:7-8).

In James 4:2 we read "You do not have, because you do not ask."

If we want sickness taken away, pray for that by name. If we want help with a problem, tell it to God and ask for help.

5. PRAY PATIENTLY.

When we pray, we must be willing for God to answer in His own time, and in His own way. God may keep us waiting for a time. In his wisdom he

may give an answer that is much better for us but which may not be what we had expected. God loves us and knows what is best for us. "Likewise the Spirit helped us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with signs too deep for words." (Romans 8:26).

Christ himself, prayed in the garden of Gethsemane, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." (Matthew 26:39). Christ wanted God's will to be done.

Christians should remember that when they pray they will receive either what they ask or something better in God's good time and way.

When we pray we should not ask God to do only what we want. We should give our requests to God and then trust him to give us an answer in the way that would honour him.

6. PRAY FORGIVINGLY.

We show our love for God by the way that we love others. We cannot come to God in true prayer if we have hatred in our heart for others.