



SPEAK

LESSON ONE: WHAT IS PRAYER? - LUKE 11:1-13

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Speak, Lord. Your servant is listening.
1 Samuel 3:9

Some of us have been taught to pray, while for many of us prayer is something that is new and unfamiliar. Some of us have been taught to pray by a friend, family member, or member of the clergy at the church we attended in our childhood. We may have been taught to memorize a prayer before bedtime or before enjoying a meal. Some may have been taught to pray using beads or other forms of counters, while others may have been instructed to pray kneeling, standing, speaking out loud or speaking to the Lord in silence, bowing your head, or lifting your eyes and hands up to heaven. Whatever the method you were taught to use, did you know prayer is commanded of us as believers in Jesus? Therefore, if we are commanded to pray, what is it anyway? Is there a special formula we need to follow? Are there specific words we need to say? Is it supposed to look and sound a certain way for God to hear us?

Nelson's Illustrated Bible's Dictionary defines the word pray as to communicate with God. The next question that comes to mind is how can we communicate with God? We pray. Were you aware that God desires to be in a relationship with you? Did you know the Maker of the universe wants to fellowship with you every day? Knowing that, how would you begin and maintain a relationship with the One True God and sustain it with fellowship? Pray! Psalm 145:18 proclaims, "The Lord is near to all who call on Him, to all who call on Him in truth." And 1 Thessalonians 5:17 commands us to pray without ceasing.

Jesus modeled a way for us to pray in Luke 11:1-13. Firstly, He taught us to keep God's name hallowed which means to keep it holy or set apart for sacred use. That is how we are to act when we enter God's Throne Room. When we pray, we are to be humble, reverent, and respectful. Secondly, we are to thank Him for our daily blessings, this could be our faith, our family, our job, our health, our church, our pets, our homes, or anything He has blessed us with. Next, we should confess our sins to Him during this auspicious time. Realize that He knows what we have done that offends Him, there is no way to hide it from Him. We should not approach Him with a cavalier attitude because we have offended Him greatly with our sin. Our sin is so offensive to Him that He had to send His Son, Jesus, to pay our sin debt with His life. When we confess our sins to Him, we are saying that we agree we have offended Him by breaking the Ten Commandments. Are you aware that He is waiting for you with open arms of forgiveness just like the parable of the prodigal son found in Luke 15:11-32? We have all acted like and have been the prodigal son at one time or another in our lifetime. Instead of downplaying or excusing our sin, confess and repent of it so that the Father can cleanse you with hyssop and make you whiter than snow. Lastly, we are called to forgive others who have hurt us just as we have been forgiven for hurting God. Jesus is noticeably clear about the importance of this in many passages of Scripture. If you run a search about forgiving others in Scripture in your search bar, you will notice there are many scripture passages that point to the importance of forgiving others, but why? Does it mean that God does not take the offense seriously? No, it does not. Does it mean the person who hurt you deeply gets away with it 'scot-free?' No, it does not. Does it mean when I

forgive someone of a serious wrong that they committed against me that I am essentially saying it was okay to hurt me? No, it does not.

Forgiveness is defined as being the act of excusing or pardoning others despite the sins they have committed. In essence, we are to forgive others with the same measure of forgiveness that God forgives us, a full measure. In other words, when we forgive someone, we are saying we will not seek revenge against them but will leave them to face God's justice.

How can we enter a relationship with God and enjoy fellowship with Him? Open your Bible and be in the Word daily. Choose a time for your daily Quiet Time that works for you and be consistent. This intentional act will change your life. Think of it as your date or conference time with the Almighty and keep it. Some people I know enjoy reading the Word, journaling what they have learned and writing their prayer out and listening to praise and worship music during this time. You could also list Praises, Prayer Requests, Confessions, and end your time writing out a prayer. Some people ask about the confessions part because of their concern another will read their journal. However, you could mark an asterisk next to the words *private or *God knows because the only One you need to confess to is our Heavenly Father.

YOUR TURN: Begin or renew your vow to have a daily Quiet Time with the Lord. If you are not sure where to begin reading your Bible, I suggest Psalms because it is a wonderful starting point. Use the model Jesus gives us to pray in Luke 11:1-13 and talk to Him about what is on your heart and mind.

Psalms 4:1

Psalms 55:17

Psalms 88:13

Proverbs 3:5-6

Isaiah 55:6

Matthew 6:6

Romans 8:26

Ephesians 6:18

Philippians 4:6