

YOUTH BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Lesson 7: Prayer and Your Problems

God has given us many beautiful promises that if we will take the time to pray to Him, He will take the time to answer those prayers. In the Bible, there are many stories of wonderful answers to prayer, but not all wonderful answers to prayer are found just in Bible times. If you look in our bookstore <http://www.Harvestimebooks.com> for “The Hand that Intervenes’ and ‘Missions and Miracles’ they are full of true stories of how God answers prayer in amazing ways.

During the days of the civil war in the United States, many people wanted to get in to see President Lincoln. In order to have a few minutes with the president, a person had to have very important business. To get in required a pass, but passes were only given to those who had problems considered important enough, or who were important people in the government. There was one exception to this rule, however. The president had a small son, Tadd. You know, it really didn’t matter how full the waiting room was with important people, waiting to see the president, or how busy the president might be, when Tadd wanted to see his father, he was able to get past all the guards, and all the waiting people, without that necessary pass. The difference was that the president was his father.

Well, you and I have a Father who is vastly more important and busy than the President of the United States, or the head of any other state. Though He controls the whole universe, directing in all that takes place, we can always get in for an immediate visit, and He is never so busy He won’t listen and answer. In fact, He has given us a most beautiful promise in Psalm 91:15. “He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him.”

In this world we find that appeals, petitions, and entreaties can be used to move others to grant our requests, but prayer moves heaven. Isn’t that an exciting thought? There, are, however, some very important conditions to answered prayer.

Conditions to Receiving Answers to Prayer

1. What is the basic condition to having our prayers answered?

Hebrews 11:6. We must believe that He _____. We must diligently _____ Him.

“Without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.”

Note: God is willing to do great things for us, and the reason we don’t see more answers to our prayers is we lack faith. Many times, if God answered our

prayers, it would come as a great surprise to us. When, however, we go to God in earnest prayer, and in faith, answers will come. Faith is not just 'making yourself believe'; faith must always be based on the Word of God. Faith really means believing that God means what He says, that He is real, and that He keeps His word.

2. What does the Lord promise to those who come to Him in prayer? Psalm 102:17. He will regard our _____.

"He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer."

3. What has God done for us to show us how much He is interested in our needs? Romans 8:32. He spared not His own _____.

"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"

Note: We usually value something according to how much it costs us. If we can get it for a few pennies, or even a very few dollars, in most cases, it isn't terribly important. If, on the other hand, something cost us a great deal of money, we are very careful to protect and take care of the object, whatever it may be. There aren't very many things, though, that we would consider valuable enough that we would give our life for them, but that's just how important we are to God. He paid for us when He gave Jesus to die on the cross for us.

4. For what did Elijah pray? James 5:17. That it might not _____.

"Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months."

Note: This was a time of terribly apostasy in Israel. The people had turned from worshipping the God of heaven from whom all blessings come, to worshipping Baal, the sun god. They taught that it was Baal that sent the rain and made things grow. Elijah wanted them to know it was not. In answer to Elijah's prayer, God withdrew the blessing of rain. In a very short time, the rich and beautiful country began to look like a desert.

5. In answer to Elijah's prayer, what did God do? 1 Kings 18:36-38. The _____ of the _____ fell.

"And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that Thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at Thy word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that Thou art the LORD God, and that Thou hast turned their heart back again. Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench."

Note: The priests of Baal had prayed and danced and shouted and cut themselves all day trying to get Baal to send down fire, but nothing happened. Elijah prepared his altar, being careful to do it as God had instructed, then he quietly prayed a simple prayer and God answered with fire.

6. For whose benefit are all these stories written down? 1 Corinthians 10:11. We who live at the _____ of the _____.

“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”

The story is told of the head of a tribe in what used to be the Congo in Africa. The chief had heard from some other natives, who had heard it from some other natives, who, in turn, had heard the story from other natives, that there was a “Chief” of heaven and earth.

One day, the chief’s son became very ill. This chief walked many miles to try and find a mission station to see if they could help him. It was a difficult task to find a mission, but Chief Mayala finally did, and after describing his son’s illness, he was given some medicine.

Returning home, the chief gave the medicine to the boy, but it failed to help him. Some of his people begged him to take his son to the witch doctor, but the chief refused.

Still the son grew worse and worse. Finally the people went to the medicine man and asked him to come help the child, but the father refused to let him in the house because, even though he had heard only bits and pieces of truth that there is a God in heaven, he said, “I believe in the power of the Chief of chiefs, God.”

The people had all gathered around the chief’s house and in derision, they called out: “We would like to see this power of God.”

Without being boastful, Mayala replied, “You shall see it.”

Going into the house and closing the grass door behind him, Mayala fell on his knees on the dirt floor, and began to pray to the Chief of heaven and earth. All alone in his hut, Mayala begged for this God, about whom he had heard, to show His power; not just for the sake of his dying child, but to prove that He really existed.

While the chief prayed, the boy fell asleep where he lay outside the hut. Everyone knew what this meant, for they had seen others who were sick do this just before they died, while the witch doctor tried all his tricks to make them well. The chief heard the people talking and he prayed even more earnestly with God for the boy’s life.

The people were amazed at what they saw. The child was dying and the father refused to let the medicine man come near him. More than this, the father was inside the hut all alone.

A strange calmness came over Mayala. It was as if there were nothing to be afraid of any longer. He got up from his knees and went out to see his son.

As the chief went out, the people became silent. Before Mayala could touch his son, the boy opened his eyes, turned to his father and spoke, as if he had just awakened from a night's sleep.

The people were shocked and amazed. Turning to them, the chief announced, "There's the power of God that I promised you. That's the power of the God of heaven and earth. And all of you shall soon know more about Him as I am going to bring back someone to teach us all about the Chief of chiefs."

7. Do we always know what to pray for? Romans 8:26. We know _____ what we should _____ for.

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

Note: Not everything we ask God for will be answered just as we hope. Even though we may have faith, God knows better than we do what is best for us. When we ask for something that God knows it is not best for us He will answer our prayer, but it may be in a different way than we expected.

One time Elijah was very discouraged. In his discouragement, he asked God to let him die. This time, instead of answering Elijah's prayer to let him die, God sent an angel twice to prepare food and water for Elijah. Then later, God talked to Elijah, taught him special lessons and sent him back to work. A short time later, Elijah was taken to heaven in a flaming chariot. Just think how different things might have been, if God had answered Elijah's prayer as he asked.

If the answer to our prayer does not come just when we expected it, and in just the way we asked for it, we are not to distrust God. God knows the end from the beginning. He knows all about each one of us, and He loves us too much to give us anything that is not for our best. For this reason, when we pray, we must trust God to answer in the best way, and at the very best time. We should include in our prayers, "Thy will be done."

8. What is said about the prayer of a righteous man? James 5:16. It availeth _____. This means it does a lot.

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

Note: If we do God's will, if we live according to the truth He has given us, and we ask what is according to the will of God, He will answer our prayer.

9. What should be our attitude when we pray? Psalm 95:6. We should _____.

“O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our Maker.”

Note: Jesus, our Example, “kneeled down, and prayed.” Luke 22:41. Of the disciples it is recorded that they, too, “kneeled down, and prayed.” See Acts 9:40; 20:36; 21:5. Daniel, a man beloved and greatly honored by God, “kneeled down on his knees three times a day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God.” Both in public and private worship, it is our privilege to bow on our knees before God when we come to Him in prayer.

10. What did Paul tell the believers in Thessalonica about praying? 1 Thessalonians 5:17 Pray _____ ceasing.

“Pray without ceasing.”

Note: Wherever we are, whatever duties we may be taking care of, our hearts are to be lifted up to God in prayer. We don’t need to always wait until we can kneel down to pray. Though the Christian cannot at all times, and under all circumstances, kneel down to pray, he can keep his thoughts turned to God. There is never a time or place when it is wrong to seek God in prayer.

11. What is one thing we must do if we expect the Lord to answer our prayers? Psalm 37:5. _____ also in Him.

“Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.”

12. How must we ask for the things we want? 1 John 5:14. According to His _____.

“And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us.”

Note: We must want God’s will to be done. This is a matter of faith. Even Jesus, in His prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, asked that His prayer be answered according to His Father’s will. See Luke 22:42. If we expect God to hear us, we must have confidence that He loves us, and that He will answer us in the way that is best.

13. What can prevent God from answering our prayers? Proverbs 28:9. Not _____ the _____.

“He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.”

Note: ‘Hearing’ in the Bible means more than listening with our ears—it means obeying. Those who receive answers to their prayers, are those who walk in the light of God’s commandments. If we do His will, if we walk in the truth, then we may have confidence He will hear and answer us. How strange it would be for us to ask Him to care for our wishes and desires when we pay no attention to His will and His authority.

14. What is another condition to answered prayer? Philippians 4:6. Colossians 4:2. Pray with _____.

“Be careful [worried] for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”

“Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;”

Note: If the loving-kindness of God called forth more thankfulness and praise from us, we would have far more power in prayer. When we consider His goodness to us, we will find that He will consider our wants.

15. If we want God to hear our prayers for forgiveness, what must we be willing to do for others? Mark 11:25, 26. We should _____ them.

“And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.”

16. When we pray, to whom are we to pray? Matthew 6:9. Our _____ in heaven.

“After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name.”

17. In whose name are we to ask? John 15:16. In _____ name.

“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, [Jesus] He may give it you.”

18. What does James tell us our God is like? James 5:11. He is _____ and of _____ mercy.

“Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.”

Note: Because God is so merciful and loving, we may know that He will hear, and answer, our prayers. When Jesus was upon the earth, He taught His disciples how to pray. He told them to ask their Father in heaven for all that they needed. He told them that their prayers would be heard, and this promise is for us too.

Problems in prayer:

What if there is something I know I should do or stop doing but I feel unwilling to—is there no hope for me? There is an answer, we can tell the Lord we have this problem and then tell Him we are “willing to be made willing”, then the Holy Spirit will work in our hearts and minds and the chains that Satan has around us will be broken and we will be able to obey.

What if I can't believe very much, does this mean God won't help me? No, we can pray the prayer of the father of the sick boy in the Bible: "And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." Mark 9:24. Jesus will help us.

We can and should pray any time we feel the need to, but there are a few special times we should always pray:

1st thing in the morning, as soon as we wake we should pray and give our hearts to Jesus and ask Him to have complete charge of our lives. We can do this even before we get up and have our morning worship prayer.

Before we eat we should thank the Lord for our food and ask Him to bless it. For this prayer to be answered we need to eat only foods that are good for us. God can't bless junk.

Before we travel we should pray for God's guidance and protection.

Before we study our Bibles or lessons.

Before we write any test or exam we can ask God to help us remember what we have studied and have wisdom to answer right.

Whenever we get a chance to witness for Jesus we need to ask for His wisdom to know what He wants you to say. You don't need to kneel or bow to do this, just dart up a prayer in your mind for the Holy Spirit to help you.

Anytime we feel afraid or tempted we can call quickly for help.

Before we go to bed we should think over our day and ask for forgiveness for where we see we have failed to be like Jesus or have sinned and ask for God's grace that we will not do that sin again. We need to ask for the very sin we did, not just 'forgive my sins'; and we have to be willing to stop doing that sin for it to be forgiven.