

Come Alive

with Jesus



Lesson 4

You'll Learn to Talk

Prayer

Baby's first word is always an important event in a family. Often it gets recorded in "The Baby Book" and it's sure to be talked about to everyone. A proud father boasts: "Her first word was Da-da, isn't that neat!" Or a mother exclaims, "We've been trying to get him to talk for weeks and he finally did it this morning! He said, Ma-ma!"

You're a new baby in the family of God and His family is even more interested in your first words. The heavenly Father is thrilled when you begin talking with Him. Prayer is what we usually call this communication. But it ought to be as natural as "the opening of the heart to God as to a friend." Steps to Christ, p 93.

But many people feel apprehensive and nervous about prayer. They wonder what to say and how to say it. They don't realize that God is just waiting to hear His children talk to Him.

What does God say He will do when we pray to Him? **Jeremiah 29:12-13** (KJV 818; NIV 558; NKJV 760)

God says He will listen to us!

What is God like? **Psalm 103:13-14** (KJV 660; NIV 428; NKJV 576)

God is like a compassionate father who knows our limitations and weaknesses, yet loves us and wants to communicate with us. Knowing this about Him, makes it easier to talk to Him in prayer.

But if you've never prayed before, you may wonder what to talk about.

WHAT CAN YOU PRAY ABOUT?

As you read about prayer in the Bible, you discover there is much you can talk about with God.

When you talk to God, you can:

- Praise Him; **Daniel 2:23** (KJV 922; NIV 626; NKJV 856)
- Thank Him; **Daniel 2:23; Ephesians 5:20** (KJV 1219; NIV 829; NKJV 1127)
- Confess your sins to Him; **Psalm 32:5; 51:3** (KJV 621, 632; NIV 396, 405; NKJV 530, 543)
- Ask for forgiveness and cleansing; **Psalm 32:5; 51:1-4,10** (KJV 621,632; NIV 396, 405; NKJV 530, 543)
- Ask for His will to be done; **Matthew 6:10** (KJV 996; NIV 685; NKJV 939)
- Ask for necessities of life; **Matthew 6:11**
- Ask for power to overcome temptation; **Matthew 6:13; 26:41** (KJV 1025; NIV 703; NKJV 964)
- As for wisdom; **James 1:5** (KJV 1255; NIV 854; NKJV 1158)
- Pray for your friends; **Job 42:10** (KJV 607; NIV 383; NKJV 513)
- Pray for your enemies; **Luke 23:33-34** (KJV 1094; NIV 748; NKJV 1022)

WHEN CAN YOU PRAY?

When should you pray? **Ephesians 6:18** (KJV 1220; NIV 830; NKJV 1128)

Some translations read "pray at all times," "pray - on all occasions." This doesn't mean Christians must literally pray every minute of the day and night, but rather that there is no time that it is inappropriate to pray.

When else should you pray? **Psalm 55:17** (KJV 634; NIV 407; NKJV 545)

You can pray anytime. Most Christians find it helpful to have a definite time each day for prayer. Often this is first in the morning. Devote 10 - 15 minutes each day to communion with God. You will be better equipped to cope with whatever happens that day.

WHERE CAN YOU PRAY?

Where should you pray? **1 Timothy 2:8** (KJV 1234; NIV 839; NKJV 1140)

Matthew 18:20 (KJV 1013; NIV 695; NKJV 953)

Matthew 6:6 (KJV 996; NIV 684; NKJV 939)

You can pray anywhere - in your car, in the kitchen, in a church, among crowds, or alone. But it is best to have a quiet time alone each day.

Pick a place where you can be undisturbed. One mother of preschoolers found that the only place where she could be undisturbed was in the bathtub! Another man pulled his car into a parking lot and prayed each day after work before going home. But plan a definite time in a definite place each day. And pray aloud, it helps you keep awake. Some folks find it helpful to keep a prayer journal, entering the date and items they wish to talk over with the Lord, then noting how and when answers come.

To whom should you direct your prayers?

Matthew 6:9 (KJV 996; NIV 684; NKJV 939)

UNANSWERED PRAYERS

Sometimes prayers are not answered the way we'd like. Why is this so? **James 4:3** (KJV 1257; NIV 855; NKJV 1160)

The New International Version of the Bible translates this text: "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind." **James 1:5-6** (KJV 1255; NIV 854; NKJV 1158)

What motives and attitudes should you have as you pray? **James 1:6** (KJV 1255; NIV 854; NKJV 1158)

1 John 3:22 (KJV 1268; NIV 863; NKJV 1170)

1 John 5:14-15 (KJV 1269; NIV 864; NKJV 1171)

Faith, obedience and submission to God's will are important attitudes in prayer. But maybe you don't feel you have these attitudes. Perhaps you're afraid to pray because you "don't have everything just right."

But what does God promise you? **Romans 8:26-27** (KJV 1176; NIV 800; NKJV 1091)

You don't need to worry. The Spirit will help you pray. Go ahead. Start talking to God. So what if you're a baby in Christ and your words may seem like baby talk! God is more delighted to hear your first words to Him than your parents were to hear you first speak to them.

Why not experiment? Devote ten minutes to prayer each day for six months and see what happens.

As long as you come to God with a sincere, willing and needing heart, what does He promise? **Psalms 102:17** (KJV 660; NIV 428; NKJV 575)
