

LESSON 46  
(1966, 1967)

AMBASSADOR COLLEGE  
BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

Reaping God's Blessing

About Our Cover ...

A reaper harvest golden wheat grown in God's earth. Because of faithful Abraham's TRUSTING OBEDIENCE to God, his descendants today have UNWITTINGLY reaped the great blessings of God! Now these blessings are DIMINISHING rapidly. God is beginning to PUNISH modern-day Israel -- and all the world -- for its mounting sins. Soon there will be widespread famine and starvation! This lesson shows how YOU can be delivered.

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TO PRAY EFFECTIVELY!

WHY don't more prayers get RESULTS? Has God "GONE way off somewhere"?

The fundamental reason why the prayers of most people are NOT being answered today is that they do not KNOW the TRUE God!

Most people think of God as a vague, far-off, indefinable something. They don't know that GOD IS THE ACTIVE, LAW-GIVING RULER of the universe!

They have forgotten that God REVEALS Himself in His Word, the Bible, and that He shows us the KIND of God He is. God reveals HOW we should OBEY Him, and what He has PROMISED to do for us if we call upon Him in sincere, BELIEVING prayer.

Believe and OBEY the Bible

CAN we really take GOD'S Word literally? Does God MEAN what He says?

Jesus certainly thought so! He said, "Thy word is TRUTH" (John 17:17). The Apostles constantly taught and acted as if God's Word were LITERALLY TRUE.

To get RESULTS from your prayers, you must BELIEVE IN THE GOD OF THE BIBLE. Believe His Word IS TRUTH. And be willing to ACT on God's Word and His commands.

The apostle Paul was inspired to write: "But 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" (Heb. 11:6). It takes FAITH TO know that we will receive what we ask for in prayer, but it also takes OBEDIENCE TO GOD TO PROVE that our faith is active and LIVING!

That is why the apostle John said: "Whatsoever we ASK, we receive of him BECAUSE WE KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS, and DO those things that are PLEASING IN HIS SIGHT" (I John 3:22).

Faith and actions -- OBEDIENCE -- go hand in hand. If we say we have faith in God and don't really ACT on it by OBEYING our Creator, our faith is WORTHLESS -- IT IS DEAD! (James 2:20.)

Abraham proved he was faithful -- that he had dynamic, ACTIVE LIVING FAITH -- by his unquestioning obedience to God (Heb. 11:8). And as we learned in Lesson 43, the faith OF Christ, which we so desperately need in order to obey God, is imparted by

the Holy Spirit which we receive after baptism! (You should definitely REVIEW this vital lesson in relation to these lessons on prayer!)

We need to thoroughly understand that the Bible is a WRITTEN CONTRACT between us and the Creator. What God has promised IN THE BIBLE, He WILL perform. God will UNFAILINGLY do His part when we beseech Him in prayer -- IF we FAITHFULLY PERFORM OURS!

#### Our Perfect Example

Jesus Christ set the PERFECT EXAMPLE in all things that we "should follow his steps" (I Peter 2:21). He lived a full and abundant life -- a life filled with LOVE and POWER from God. He knew how to keep in contact with, and draw upon the SUPREME POWER OF THE UNIVERSE!

Can you imagine Christ acting as if God had "gone way off somewhere"?

Yet that is the EXACT ATTITUDE displayed by so many "Christians" today. Most people do NOT completely rely on God to HEAL them when they are sick, to RESCUE them from disaster, and to BLESS them in material as well as spiritual things.

Do YOU?

The disciples saw that Christ, unlike most people, actually EXPECTED God to intervene and heal the sick, cast out demons, and even to quiet a storm on the sea when He prayed. They, too, wanted that kind of INTIMATE CONTACT WITH God.

By His fruits, they knew that Christ understood THE CORRECT WAY TO draw close to the Eternal God, and to call upon His power to help in every pressing situation.

That KEY, that CORRECT WAY TO call upon God's power, is something you and I should be UTILIZING EVERY DAY OF OUR LIVES! Its use will put new MEANING and POWER into our lives!

BUT this "key" has been INCORRECTLY employed by many people of many different religions. Remember that Christ is OUR EXAMPLE. He knew how to use this "key" perfectly. His way GETS RESULTS because He knew HOW TO PRAY EFFECTIVELY!

#### Christ Teaches HOW to Pray

1. Did Christ's disciples specifically ask Him to TEACH THEM HOW to pray? Luke 11:1. What did Jesus proceed to instruct them? Verses 2-4. Were His instructions what is commonly called today the "Lord's Prayer"? Where else do we find these same instructions? Mat. 6:9-13.

COMMENT: Christ's disciples asked Jesus the way to establish RIGHT CONTACT with God. Then Christ gave them a TYPE or PATTERN -- an OUTLINE or SKELETAL FRAMEWORK -- of a prayer that will GET RESULTS. A prayer around which to build our OWN prayers.

2. Did Jesus tell His disciples to repeat this example prayer OVER and OVER again, or were they to pray in a SIMILAR WAY -- "AFTER this manner"? Mat. 6:9. Didn't He just tell them NOT to REPEAT the same prayer every time? Verse 7.

COMMENT: Notice that Jesus Himself did not call this the "Lord's Prayer," as men have done, or in any manner encourage His disciples to MEMORIZE this particular prayer and repeat it over and over. He had just forbidden them to do that with other prayers.

Rather, Jesus said: "After this manner, therefore pray ye their prayers.

Jesus was not setting down the EXACT WORDS we should repeat

over and over -- but outlining the CORRECT APPROACH to God in prayer and the basic things for which we should pray. "Pray THUS," not "Pray THIS," was Jesus' plain instruction!

In that light, then, let us notice and analyze this PERFECT EXAMPLE, this INSPIRED APPROACH to prayer as revealed by Christ Himself.

To Whom Should We Pray?

It is interesting to notice first of all that there are SEVEN specific requests or petitions contained in Christ's prayer outline. Have you ever counted them? Therefore it is a COMPLETE PRAYER outline, including all the major points we should cover in a complete prayer.

1. How did Jesus begin His example prayer? Mat. 6:9. Are we to pray to the FATHER? John 16:23.

COMMENT: Jesus came to reveal the "Father" to mankind (John 1:18). And He ALWAYS addressed the FATHER in His prayers. He set us the EXAMPLE to follow! However, it would not be wrong to ALSO address Christ on occasion in our prayers.

Notice also that we must come to God as "OUR Father." By addressing Him as OUR Father, we acknowledge that there are THOUSANDS OF OTHERS throughout the world who have this same intimate and personal relationship with God -- for all true Christians are His "children" begotten of His Spirit.

We ought to feel a deep sense of personal LOVE and CLOSENESS to Him who gives us every good and perfect gift, who protects, provides for, and guides us as we YIELD to His will who INTERVENES SUPERNATURALLY if we cry out to Him for help.

This Father-son relationship is very PERSONAL. Such a private and intimate relationship is much closer and should be MORE REAL than the physical relationship we have with our own fathers, or sons of the flesh.

2. How is this close relationship stressed by the apostle Paul? Rom. 8:14-16.

COMMENT: The word "Abba" means FATHER, showing that the meaning of this intimate relationship of Father and son is DOUBLY EMPHASIZED, if we are truly the SPIRIT-BEGOTTEN sons of God!

3. WHERE does Jesus say the Father resides? Mat. 6:9.

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 PHOTO CAPTION: PRAYS FOR PEACE -- Oblivious to others around him, this British subject kneels for 10 minutes just opposite No. 10 Downing St. -- the official residence of the British Prime Minister. His one-man prayer crusade with rosary has been going on daily for four years -- yet there is no real peace in the world!  
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COMMENT: Christ said that our Father is in "HEAVEN." When we pray to "Our Father," we should always realize and recognize WHERE God is. He is in heaven from which the whole universe is governed by His Spirit of power!

When you address the Father in your own personal private prayers, realize that you have a PERSONAL audience with the Supreme Ruler of the universe! People value very highly a private audience with one of this world's rulers. Think how much greater is OUR PRIVILEGE of coming daily to the very throne room of the universe -- TO TALK with the Ruler over all!

It is in HEAVEN that God's throne, the heavenly temple and

the new Jerusalem are located. Seated at the right hand of the Father is Jesus Christ. Then there are the twenty-four elders seated on thrones round about them. And the Cherubim and Seraphim, the living creatures and multitudes of holy angels are also present! (See Revelation, chapters 1, 4 and 21.)

With such magnificence as this, we are still able, through the NAME OF JESUS CHRIST, to approach daily unto God the Father! Addressing our prayers to our Father in HEAVEN and realizing what this really means, should make us very humble and thankful for this great privilege. It should help us to ask ourselves as Paul did, "What is man, that thou art MINDFUL of him?" (Heb. 2:6.)

"Hallow" God's Name

Notice now the first and most important request of Christ's example prayer.

1. Are we also to "hallow" the Father's name when we pray to Him? Mat. 6:9, last four words. How do we "hallow" God's name?

COMMENT: As we begin our prayers, we should not only address and think of God as "our Father," but begin by PRAISING and VENERATING His name -- His office -- His character -- His beneficence.

God's name -- AND ALL THAT IT STANDS FOR -- is to be held in absolute reverence! Our deep RESPECT and AWE for our heavenly Father should be TOTAL! God's name will someday be OUR NAME if we overcome and are BORN OF GOD. THAT NAME CARRIES AUTHORITY TO RULE. It must always be respected!

We should also pray that ALL MEN might come TO HALLOW God's name. We ought to fervently pray that ALL PEOPLE will eventually come to hallow God's name, acknowledging Him as the Supreme Ruler of all the universe.

We should also pray that we personally might hallow God's name AS WE SHOULD -- that we would NOT act, speak or think in any way that would bring reproach on our Father, on Jesus Christ, or on His Church.

2. How did David -- a man after God's own heart -- address God in prayer? Ps. 18:1-2 and 104:33.

COMMENT: This attitude of PRAISE, worship and ADORATION is something that draws our attention to the TRUE God. It enlarges our own human faculties to appreciate and fully sense the great Being with whom we are in contact, and to whom we are praying as "our Father."

"Thy Kingdom Come"

1. What is the next request of Jesus' sample prayer? Mat. 6:10, first part.

COMMENT: This section of Jesus' prayer outline is perhaps the MOST OVERLOOKED and MISUNDERSTOOD OF ALL. For praying "thy Kingdom come" is asking that God's literal GOVERNMENT be set up on this earth through the return of Jesus Christ as "King of kings and Lord of lords!" (Rev. 19:16.)

2. But before that Kingdom can come, did Jesus say that the ADVANCE NEWS of its coming must be proclaimed as a WITNESS to all nations? Mat. 24:14.

COMMENT: Here is a wonderful opportunity to pray every day that the broadcasting and publishing of this really GOOD NEWS to the world would be sent in ever-increasing power and authority. Only after this news has covered the world sufficiently as a witness, CAN Christ return to set up God's kingdom.

Asking "Thy Kingdom come" as Jesus did is also praying and longing for the time when God's holy and righteous LAW -- as embodied in the Ten Commandments -- will be the actual standard for daily life everywhere. It is asking that God's CHARACTER -- His LAW and His LOVE -- be written in our hearts and minds here and now, in preparation for a part in the coming WORLD GOVERNMENT of God.

It is yearning and aching for the time when real PEACE will be restored -- when the desert will blossom forth as a rose. Then there will be no more starvation and want -- in the prophesied time of the "restitution of all things" (Acts 3:19-21).

"Thy Will Be Done"

Notice the latter part of Matthew 6:10. This section of your personal prayers will normally be the longest and most detailed. Here you should ask God to help you UNDERSTAND and SURRENDER to His will -- THE WILL OF YOUR VERY CREATOR! You should ask Him to help you STUDY and UNDERSTAND the Bible.

You should ask God for His divine help in bearing the "fruits" of the Holy Spirit: LOVE, JOY, PEACE, LONG-SUFFERING, GENTLENESS, GOODNESS, FAITH, MEEKNESS, TEMPERANCE or, better translated, SELF-CONTROL (Gal. 5:22-23). ASK Him for these spiritual attributes.

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 PHOTO CAPTION: THE BLESSINGS OF GOD -- "And all these blessings shall come upon you ... if you OBEY the voice of the Lord your God" Deut. 28:2, RSV.

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 PHOTO CAPTION: OVERFLOWING BLESSINGS -- "Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle ..." (Deut 28:4). God pours overflowing blessings upon those who TRUST and obey Him!

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 Also, ask for His help, inspiration and guidance in EXPRESSING His love, joy, warmth and affection to all your fellowmen. Ask Him to help you be long-suffering and gentle. Ask for MEEKNESS and HUMILITY and for the power of SELF-CONTROL over your temper, weaknesses and lusts!

Beseech God to help you YIELD your will to Him and to grow spiritually so that you may say with the apostle Paul: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but CHRIST LIVETH IN ME: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by THE FAITH OF (not merely faith IN) the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20).

Ask God for this LIVING FAITH of Jesus Christ to TRUST GOD TOTALLY -- TO KNOW that His way and His law is right -- and that He stands behind and BACKS UP His will, His laws and His promises to those who serve Him!

Through FERVENT PRAYER -- through this type of EARNEST MEDITATION, SURRENDER and STUDY of your Bible -- learn to literally WALK WITH GOD as did Enoch, Noah, Abraham and Christ.

When you pray "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, ..." UNDERSTAND the meaning of what you are asking, and DO YOUR PART that the tremendous MEANING of this request may become a reality in the future GOVERNMENT OF THIS EARTH, in the lives of all men everywhere, and in your own personal life, character and spiritual growth.

## Ask for Your Needs

1. What is the next petition of Jesus' prayer outline? Mat. 6:11. Can we ask this in confidence if we are seeking FIRST God's Kingdom and His righteousness? Mat. 6:33.

COMMENT: Although certainly not put first, this request is necessary -- and we can sincerely ask God to supply our DAILY needs as long as we are seeking first the SPIRITUAL things of God.

Jesus did not say that we are to ask for tomorrow's bread TODAY! God supplies us our needs oftentimes on a day-to-day basis, and not for a long time in the future (Luke 11:3). This ought to show us that we should not expect more than what is required for today. But if God does give us provisions for a longer time, we should be VERY THANKFUL and grateful.

2. Has God PROMISED TO supply WHATEVER we NEED? Phil. 4:19.

3. But are we told we must ASK before we receive? Luke 11:9-10. What are some of the things we may confidently ask for? Verses 11-13.

COMMENT: In your personal requests, you can break down the details into fine points and ask God to guide you to do YOUR PART. At this time all our physical needs for the day such as shelter, food, clothing and other NEEDS may be mentioned. God knows of these needs even before we ask Him (Mat. 6:8). However, He has not promised to automatically supply what we do not ask for.

4. Does James say some people do not receive things because they DON'T ASK for them, and then sometimes when they DO ask for things, they do so for reasons of LUST and GREED? James 4:2-3.

COMMENT: We should ask for our REAL NEEDS, and not just what we would like to have. BELIEVINGLY ask God to intervene where necessary that you may live the kind of life you ought in order to be a "light" to others.

5. Is our "DAILY BREAD" DUAL? Mat. 4:4. Did Jesus say He was the SPIRITUAL "bread of life"? John 6:35.

COMMENT: Come to God through daily PRAYER and BIBLE STUDY and He will supply your DAILY spiritual needs as well. You have more daily need of SPIRITUAL FOOD than even of physical food -- but God promises you both, if you will only ASK Him.

## Confess Your Transgressions

1. Are we also to ask forgiveness of OUR sins? Mat. 6:12.

COMMENT: All of us sin daily in one way or another. We need to sincerely RECOGNIZE, and REPENT of our daily sins, our shortcomings and our innate REBELLION against the laws of God and man, and then ask God to FORGIVE US. Remember to ask that "OUR," not MY, sins might be forgiven. Learn to be concerned for other Christians and have proper love and compassion for them.

2. Should we also be forgiving toward others? Same verse. Compare with Luke 11:4, first part. Does Mark 11:24-26 verify that we MUST forgive others before God will forgive us? Does I Timothy 2:8 tell us essentially the same thing?

COMMENT: Remember that you may ask God's forgiveness ONLY IF YOU FIRST FORGIVE OTHERS. When you kneel before God in prayer, never come before Him with feelings of bitterness, resentfulness, or hate toward others. If you cannot first rid yourself of these feelings, ask God to CLEAN YOU UP and replace the spirit of HATE with His spirit of LOVE. God's love is charitable, and patient

with others. It is a wonderful feeling to know that you hate no man!

Pray for Deliverance From the Devil

1. What is the last request of Jesus' example prayer? Mat. 6:13, first part. But doesn't the Bible elsewhere state that God does NOT TEMPT anyone? James 1:13. Is it the Devil and his demons who are walking about, watching for the chance to TEMPT, and even DESTROY US, when we are off our guard? I Pet. 5:8.

COMMENT: Jesus' statement in Mat. 6:13 is more correctly rendered from the ORIGINAL Greek as follows: "Bring us not into SORE TRIAL, but deliver us from the evil ONE." GOD TEMPTS NO MAN, but He DOES PERMIT US to fall into trials and troubles of our own or Satan the Devil's devising, IF WE ARE NOT KEEPING CLOSE TO HIM AND SEEKING HIS GUIDANCE AND HELP.

We should constantly pray that He would not permit us to be BROUGHT INTO, or PARTAKE OF, any SORE or severe trial or temptation -- that He would give us the spiritual POWER to master any wrong desires and DO His will daily.

2. Should we ask God to CORRECT US daily so we will not fall into "sore trial"? Jer. 10:24.

COMMENT: God teaches us many things in various ways. When we do not learn these lessons as we should, when we are unresilient and not pliable in the hands of the Almighty Creator, He must take more DRASTIC action.

That drastic action may be to LEAD US into a situation where we are sorely tried in SEVERE TRIAL. We need training, chastening, molding and fashioning. We must ask God for this chastening, for this training, and we should ask for it DAILY. However, let us also ask God that we WILL LEARN the necessary lessons NOW so that He will not find it imperative to lead us into SORE TRIAL either now, or during the terrible period of severe trial immediately prior to Christ's return.

One important way to escape such sore trial is to pray daily, and earnestly, so that we will be spiritually strong and learn these important lessons now!

Close With Praise and Adoration

1. How did Jesus say we ought to close our prayers to the Father? Mat. 6:13, last part.

COMMENT: AS Jesus' inspired OUTLINE of prayer begins with praise and adoration of God, so does it close. This reminds us, again, TO WHOM we are praying and the CHARACTER and OFFICE of the true God who rules over the nations of men! Note that this verse is in the INSPIRED original Greek New Testament. It is DELETED in the Latin Bible for obvious reasons.

A wonderful example of this inspired instruction regarding the opening and closing of a prayer is found in the prayer of Daniel, when he cried out for deliverance of the people of Judah (Dan. 9:3-19).

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 PHOTO CAPTION: "SORE TRIAL" -- These emaciated slave laborers lived in the Nazi concentration camp at Buchenwald during World War II. Many had died from malnutrition before U.S. troops entered the camp in 1945. God admonishes us to pray for correction DAILY in order to learn our lessons NOW -- so we won't have to experience similar "sore trials" during the great

tribulation!

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2. How did Daniel begin this prayer? Dan. 9:4. What was his heartfelt appeal to God at the close of this fine prayer -- a prayer which was HEARD and ANSWERED? Verses 18-19.

COMMENT: Not only praising God's name, His OFFICE and AUTHORITY, but having this right ATTITUDE of total REPENTANCE, SUBMISSION and OBEDIENCE -- this is another vital "key" to answered prayer!

CLOSE YOUR PRAYERS with a sincere acknowledgement -- in a spirit of WORSHIP -- that all real and lasting GLORY and POWER belongs to God, and that the right to all GOVERNMENT authority and KINGSHIP belongs to Him who CREATED US all in the first place!

Finally, as Jesus shows by this example prayer, we are to AFFIRM that what we have prayed is so, and that we really MEAN it by concluding with "AMEN." Amen simply means "be it so."

Jesus' OUTLINE of prayer contains vital "keys" to help you in your prayer life. USE THEM DAILY! You don't have to ask all of these things in each prayer, but you certainly ought to BEGIN each day praying "after this manner."

Two Things to Avoid

During Jesus' "Sermon on the Mount," and before giving His disciples the outline of prayer, He made two vital points CLEAR.

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PHOTO CAPTION: PRAYER BOOTHS -- Ambassador College students pray to God in the privacy of specially built, soundproof prayer booths.

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1. Did Jesus caution His disciples not to pray just to be SEEN and HEARD of men? Mat. 6:5. Was this the way the Scribes and Pharisees prayed? See Mat. 23:14. WHERE did Jesus say true Christians should do their praying? Mat. 6:6.

COMMENT: Jesus cautions us to commune with our heavenly Father "in secret." He clearly shows that it is absolutely WRONG to make long prayers in front of others to "show off" as did the Scribes and Pharisees. Preachers and "deacons" who delight in doing this are DISOBEYING GOD!

Jesus' plain teaching shows that we should do our PERSONAL praying in PRIVATE -- in the privacy of our inner closet or room, without others present. IF we follow this instruction, Christ promised that when our Father in heaven sees us praying in SECRET, He will reward us OPENLY! (Some modern translations wrongly delete the word "openly." It IS in the original INSPIRED Greek.) If you expect God to hear your prayers, YOU MUST follow this simple and clear instruction!

2. And have you ever heard certain denominations REPEAT prayers over and over again? Does Jesus also warn us not to REPEAT our prayers? Mat. 6:7. Is this the way the HEATHEN pray? Same verse.

COMMENT: The "Now I lay me down to sleep" and other types of MEMORIZED prayers violate this clear teaching! Memorized prayers -- including the "Lord's Prayer" -- soon lose their meaning and sincerity. And God says such prayers will NOT be heard!

Nowhere in the entire New Testament is the "Lord's Prayer"



repeated. The apostles didn't repeat it over and over again. Jesus gave it only as a pattern or example after which we could fashion OUR OWN prayers.

This world's churches are in absolute ERROR when they practice repeating ANY prayer over and over again each week. Avoid this error. AND TRY NOT TO GIVE THANKS IN THE SAME WAY AT THE TABLE EVERY MEAL. When you pray, don't just "rattle off" so many words. THINK about your blessings, your needs, and PRAY FROM THE HEART!

Remember you are praying to the Supreme GOVERNOR of the entire universe! Don't insult your Creator by saying the same things to Him every time you pray. Rather, enter His presence with RESPECT and AWE, and put your entire BEING into your prayers. You are praying to, your great FATHER in heaven -- the Author of LOVE and MERCY, WISDOM and POWER. Don't forget this when you pray!

Don't Be Ashamed to Pray

We should be careful not to pray "to be seen of men." BUT does this mean that we should be overly secretive -- as if we were ASHAMED -- when we pray?

ABSOLUTELY NOT!

Many "babes in Christ" are faced with this problem. Perhaps some of you are afraid to pray as often as you should because you are AFRAID OTHER PEOPLE WILL KNOW ABOUT IT! Have no such fear! Should the nearness of your wife, husband, or children prevent you from maintaining an intimate contact with your Creator and God? Of course not!

1. Do we find examples where Christ -- our PERFECT EXAMPLE -- prayed a short distance from His disciples who knew WHERE He was and WHAT He was doing? Luke 9:18, 28. Did He also occasionally give a public prayer? Mat. 14:19.

COMMENT: When Jesus did pray in public, His prayers were very short and for such things as asking God's BLESSING on food or to HELP and ENCOURAGE His disciples. Such short prayers, if not said to be "seen of men," or for the sake of VANITY, do not violate Christ's own instructions of Matthew 6:5.

SO DON'T be ashamed if anyone knows you are praying! Just be careful not to pray to be "seen of men," and try hard to find a closet or a "private place" where you will not be disturbed, and likewise NOT DISTURB OTHERS around you.

2. How did Jesus make sure He got to pray when He was staying at Peter's home with His disciples? Mark 1:35. And though He sometimes had no time for rest or sleep, did Jesus ALWAYS take time to pray? Mark 6:31, 33, 46.

COMMENT: YOU can be alone with God if you will follow Christ's example and MAKE A WAY!

Position in Prayer

1. What position did Daniel take when He prayed to God? Dan. 6:10. Is it also proper to bow our heads as we pray? Psalm 95:6.

COMMENT: The Bible records many different positions in prayer. But it ALWAYS shows that in private, personal prayer, you should KNEEL on BOTH knees. It has always been a custom to kneel on ONE knee to a king or other ruler as a sign of RESPECT and ESTEEM. But the Bible always records that we should bow BOTH knees to God in REVERENCE and WORSHIP.

2. What position is especially conducive to FERVENT prayer?

I Kings 8:54 and Ezra 9:5.

COMMENT: Notice that Solomon and Ezra kneeled upon BOTH knees and spread out their hands UPWARD TOWARD GOD. This is a position of humility and supplication especially conducive to FERVENT prayer.

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 PHOTO CAPTION: PRAYER WHEEL -- This Tibetan priest is shown holding a prayer wheel. The belief is that each revolution of the wheel sends a prayer wafting off to their gods.  
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God may not answer "sleepy-time prayers" that you mumble in bed just before dropping off to sleep. If you want an answer, better GET OUT OF THAT BED and KNEEL before your Creator!

3. Is it also proper to pray while standing or even sitting in public? I Kings 8:22 and Mat. 15:35-36.

COMMENT: In public or at the dinner table, you may pray while standing or sitting -- whichever way you feel would honor God the most in each situation.

4. Did Jesus on occasion look toward heaven while praying? Mark 6:41 and John 11:41; 17:1.

5. What position did Jesus take in private prayer? Luke 22:41.

COMMENT: In your personal prayers, you should KNEEL before God and pray FERVENTLY.

Concentrate your WHOLE BEING on communing with the Creator of heaven and earth -- and your own loving, spiritual Father. A correct position in prayer will help you do this.

#### How Often to Pray

In Acts 13:22, we read that David was a MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART. You should read some of the Psalms to see why God favored David so highly. Many of the Psalms are simply David's PRAYERS! He prayed to God in time of trouble, for guidance and in thanksgiving. In EVERY CIRCUMSTANCE David went to God in prayer.

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 PHOTO CAPTION: ISLAMIC CALL TO PRAYER -- A Muezzin's main qualification is a loud, clear voice for calling faithful Mohammedans to prayer. Mohammedans' believe they should pray to their god five times a day -- at dawn, at noon, before sunset, just after sunset, and just after the day has closed.  
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Don't think you are "bothering God" by sharing your joys and your problems with Him. Talk to God often -- in EVERY CIRCUMSTANCE. That is undoubtedly one of the main reasons that David was a man after God's own heart.

If you want to be a child of God, then "get acquainted" with your heavenly Father. Talk to Him OFTEN. SHARE YOUR LIFE with God. And then let God talk to you as you STUDY His Word daily.

1. How many times a day did David go to God in prayer? Psalm 55:17. Did God's prophet Daniel follow this same example? Dan. 6:10.

COMMENT: These examples are not commands, but they certainly show that to kneel in prayer THREE TIMES A DAY is a good way to bring God into our lives.

2. What is the apostle Paul's instruction to all Christians

concerning the frequency of prayer? I Thes. 5:17. What did he mean? Col. 4:2 and Rom. 12:12.

COMMENT: Paul obviously meant that we are never to DISCONTINUE our prayer life -- that we should pray EVERY DAY! We should even occasionally talk to God in our minds as we go about our work or play. We should ask Him to direct our THOUGHTS AND ACTIONS.

When you seem to be losing your temper, quickly ask God for the power to curb your emotions and help you guide your speech. Or, when you are in doubt about a certain course of action -- STOP AND THINK, "would Jesus do that if He were here today?" Then ask God to show you, and STUDY your Bible, so you will KNOW what He would have you do. Ask God for the WISDOM, the FAITH, and the POWER to rightly carry out what you know is His will.

This simple process will change your whole life! Your life will then have more MEANING, and more REAL HAPPINESS, than ever before!

#### How Long to Pray

Prayer should be one of the most important and MOST ENJOYABLE activities of your life.

If you really love God as your Father, you will want to spend a great deal of time talking to Him.

Your spiritual food is obtained by contact with God through prayer and Bible study. Preparing and eating your material food takes at least two hours each day. Isn't your "spiritual food" EVEN MORE important? So why not spend MORE TIME acquiring it?

Time is precious! Use your time where it COUNTS. It's better to miss a few physical meals sometimes, better to FAST once in a while, than to get "too busy" to drink in the spiritual things from God.

That is the very PURPOSE of your life!

1. Did Jesus take out special time for prayer when life became unusually busy? Luke 5:15-16.

2. When He had a very important decision to make, did He spend a long time praying in preparation for it? Luke 6:12-13.

3. Did Jesus pray AFTER performing great spiritual works, as well as BEFORE? Mat. 14:23 and John 6:15.

COMMENT: If we pray more like Jesus did, we will be able to go on to greater accomplishments. Go to God every day in prayer and HUMBLE yourself. Give HIM all the glory -- it doesn't belong to you! Empty yourself and you will be spiritually recharged. But get all puffed up and then you will really be empty -- filled only with air like overleavened bread.

Throughout history some who once did God's work with the power of God's Holy Spirit, have returned completely to vanity, because they thought they were too busy -- or too important -- to pray.

Time spent in prayer is not time wasted, but time invested -- at big interest!

SCHEDULE YOUR TIME for the activities of the day, including a certain amount of time for prayer. Mr. Herbert Armstrong has repeatedly stressed that Christians should definitely spend at least a bare MINIMUM OF ONE HALF HOUR ON their knees daily, in order to keep growing spiritually. The Bible does not specify the exact required amount of daily prayer, but a Christian should try to spend nearer AN HOUR IN PRAYER each day, and may sometimes spend much more than this (Luke 6:12).

4. Did Jesus set the INSPIRED EXAMPLE of spending the first

part of His day in prayer -- BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE COULD INTERRUPT? Mark 1:35.

COMMENT: All of us need to SET ASIDE specific TIMES for prayer -- and EARLY IN THE MORNING should DEFINITELY be one of these times! If you pray three times a day as did David and Daniel, try to spend more time on your knees in prayer in the morning while your mind is fresh and alert. Then you might split up the remaining time during the next two or more periods of prayer.

BUT BE CAREFUL NOT TO BE A "CLOCK WATCHER" WHEN YOU PRAY. LET YOUR PRAYERS BE FROM THE HEART, and not just a duty or "ritual" you PERFORM every day! Prayer has to become HEARTFELT -- full of thanksgiving, praise and joy. It should be a spontaneous and natural TALKING TO God -- "conversational prayer."

Sometimes you will need to spend a LONG SESSION with God when you have a tremendous decision to make, or when facing serious trouble. In such a crisis, spend a LONG TIME in God's presence. Pray with all your might. God WILL HEAR. And it will be an inspiring experience that you will never forget!

### Pray With Thanksgiving

It would not be wrong to spend as much as ONE-THIRD of our prayer time every day in simply going over our blessings and giving God THANKS FOR THEM. David spent MUCH TIME in praising and thanking God.

Notice the apostle Paul's NEW Testament example and teaching regarding the giving of thanks to God.

1. Did Paul repeatedly thank God that people were being converted and lives were being changed? Eph. 1:15-17.

2. Did he thank God that converted Christians were helping to spread the gospel? Phil. 1:3-5.

3. Does I Thes. 1:1-3 verify this and show that the other true ministers of Paul's day were doing the same?

4. Wasn't he thankful -- because he LOVED God's children -- that they were GROWING toward salvation? I Thes 1:3; 2:13 and 3:9-10.

5. Did Paul also thank God for His overflowing mercy personally shown to him? I Tim. 1:12-14.

COMMENT: These are only a FEW hints about what to give thanks for in our prayers. Every Christian has MANY things in his own life for which to be thankful. NOTHING is too SMALL or too "INSIGNIFICANT" to thank God for. And this giving of thanks every day helps build Godly character in us.

6. Is thanksgiving to God necessary for the peace, confidence, and quiet trust which precedes ANSWERED prayer? Phil. 4:6, 7.

7. Does the Bible indicate many do not think to be thankful to God for their blessings? Read Luke 17:12-18.

COMMENT: There were 10 lepers healed, but only one turned back to thank his Healer. The other nine are typical of many people who, when God has graciously given them what they asked, go on their own way without stopping to meditate on what has occurred. Then many wonder why most of their prayers go unanswered.

MEDITATING ON AND BEING GRATEFUL FOR ANSWERED PRAYERS HELPS TO MAKE FAITH GROW GREATER!

David was a mighty man of prayer and his psalms literally sparkle with thanksgiving and praise -- as a result of his meditation on God's works.

The apostles were also mighty men of prayer. We read "they were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God" (Luke 24:53)

Paul was a mighty spiritual leader because he was in a constant attitude of prayer and thanksgiving. Time and again his epistles break forth in thanks to God for definite blessings.

8. Jesus is our model -- our example -- in all things. Was His unfailing custom of giving thanks at the simplest meal so distinguishing, that two of His disciples recognized Him by it after His resurrection? Luke 24:30-31.

Pray for God's Work.

1. Did Paul say we should pray for other Christians, and especially for God's servants everywhere? Eph. 6:18-20 and II Thes. 3:1.

2. To what end should we especially pray for God's Work on earth? II Thes. 3:1-2. Is this why we are to pray for those who are in AUTHORITY in our land? I Tim. 2:1-2.

COMMENT: In your prayers ask God to lead the civil officials to grant His people FREEDOM to live Christian lives and to conduct the Work of God.

Pray every day that God would direct His Work and that His gospel would CONTINUE being preached as a "witness" to this dying world -- that it would have "free course" -- that God will REMOVE, or help His Work AROUND, every obstacle.

3. Did the apostle Paul say that the prayers of individual Christians are absolutely necessary for the Work of God's Church to prosper? II Cor. 1:11. Did he especially ask that God's ministers be prayed for? I Thes. 5:25 and Heb. 13:18-19.

COMMENT: God's ministers today also need spiritual inspiration so they may speak and write the truth PLAINLY and SIMPLY!

4. Do Christians need to pray that God will open "doors" for His Work so the gospel may be preached more effectively? Col. 4:3-4.

5. Was it as a result of prayer that PRISON doors were opened, and a jailor was converted? Acts 16:25-27, 33.

COMMENT: Prayer opens doors -- whether of prisons, or "doors" of radio, television and the printed page.

6. Should we also pray that God will send more LABORERS to help in His great Work? John 4:35 and Mat. 9:37-38.

COMMENT: Pray that this gospel will PIERCE the hearts and minds of more listeners. Pray that God will lay it on the hearts of many more to become co-workers in helping to support His growing Work with their tithes and offerings.

And pray for more consecrated laborers to be led directly INTO the Work of God. There is a tremendous need for the right caliber men and women to do the work that is YET TO BE DONE!

7. Are you separated from other true Christians, but want to have a greater part in helping them and God's Work? What is the marvelous example set for you in Colossians 4:12-13?

COMMENT: Epaphras was one of the apostle Paul's helpers. This man's LABOR was in PRAYER! That was HIS PART in God's Work that Paul referred to especially. It can be YOUR PART as well!

Do you have a ZEAL to help God's children? Do you get down on your knees EVERY DAY and ask God to help and direct them? Do you pray for God's ministers and His Work? You should!

Other Things to Pray About

Here are some other things we should be praying about every day, in ADDITION TO what we have studied.

1. Does Jesus teach us even to pray for our enemies and those who persecute us? Mat. 5:44. Did Jesus explain why we should love our enemies and PRAY for them? Verses 45-47.

COMMENT: God loves all mankind. He brings rain upon the just and the unjust alike. He is RESPONSIBLE for blinding the vast majority of this world to His plan and purpose for mankind. You should therefore pray that God would forgive your enemies their evil actions against you, even as Jesus asked forgiveness for His tormentors and murderers! (Luke 23:34.) Pray that God, in His OWN TIME, will reveal the truth and His love to them as He did to you.

2. Does godly KNOWLEDGE and an enlightened "heart" -- or mind -- form an important part of the things we should pray God would give to all Christians? Eph. 1:15-18.

3. Are brotherly love and discernment two more of the things to be sought through prayer, in order to bring forth the "fruits" of righteousness? Phil. 1:9-11.

COMMENT: Notice the word "judgment" in verse 9. This word means DISCERNMENT -- ability to PERCEIVE THE DIFFERENCE between things good and bad, profitable or unprofitable. The marginal rendering for "judgment" in some Bibles is "sense." This is the quality in a BALANCED mind called "common sense" or some times "horse sense" -- though horses don't have it and it is not "common." (See Proverbs 1:4, 22.)

These are the spiritual attributes the apostle Paul prayed that God would give individual Christians. We need to pray God would give them to all of His people today so we may all grow up together in spiritual character to the stature of Jesus Christ (Eph 4:13). We find it all summed up in Eph. 3:14-19.

4. Finally, should we pray that we might be accounted WORTHY to escape the terrible things soon to befall this earth? Luke 21:36. Are we to "WATCH" AS well AS pray?

COMMENT: Jesus obviously meant for us to "watch" the fulfillment of prophecy in WORLD EVENTS -- and in this way be stimulated and inspired to PRAY EARNESTLY to the REAL GOD WHO ACTIVELY INTERVENES IN HUMAN AFFAIRS. To pray to HIM about all the things we have studied in this lesson, as well as our own future safety!

But don't LIMIT the things you pray about to the points mentioned in this lesson. Ask God to show you what else HE wants you to pray for. HE will show you, IN HIS WORD, many other things to pray about.

Pray BOLDLY!

Some are AFRAID to ask God for much in their prayers -- afraid to ask God's richest blessings. They hang back in DOUBT. They are sometimes hesitant and apologetic in their prayers! They are not sure of God's will, so they only ask HALFHEARTEDLY.

What about You?

1. Are we to approach God's glorious throne with BOLDNESS? Heb. 4:16. And with a sense of fervency and urgency? James 5:16.

COMMENT: When Moses prayed for Israel, he prayed BOLDLY and courageously! When Elijah prayed, he prayed BOLDLY -- with faith and confidence. All the prophets and servants of God did NOT hang back apologetically in FEAR and gnawing doubt.

They KNEW God's will, and they prayed accordingly -- BOLDLY!

For you to pray boldly -- with real faith and CONFIDENCE -- you must first KNOW God's will. His will is revealed in the Bible! You must come to know how God thinks, how He acts and how He looks upon things. You must know His CHARACTER and His holiness, the purpose He is working out here below, and the PROMISES He has made in His Word.

Then you can lift up your voice in prayer, and cry aloud to God BOLDLY!

2. What is our CONFIDENCE when we pray to God according to His will and with boldness? I John 5:14-15. Will God sometimes perform even above and beyond what we ask of Him? Eph. 3:20.

COMMENT: Your personal, heartfelt PRAYERS on the behalf of GOD'S WORK, on behalf of those who are sick and afflicted, on the behalf of God's ministers -- your prayers for help, deliverance, healing and strength to overcome temptations -- YOUR FERVENT PRAYERS CAN ACCOMPLISH MIRACLES!

And so learn to EXPECT answers to your prayers. God reveals Himself as a REAL God -- a LIVING, ACTING GOD who will INTERVENE on your behalf, if you will beseech Him in BELIEVING PRAYER!