

How to

Pray



More Effectively

by Robert Curry

Jesus Said “When You Pray” But He Didn’t Say When

“**W**hen you pray,” Jesus said to his disciples, and He went on to give some instructions about how to do it including His model prayer (Matthew 6:5-13). But He didn’t say when we should pray.

What did David and Daniel do?

David, a man after God’s own heart who is credited with writing 73 of the 150 Psalms, tells us when to pray.

“My voice You shall hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning I will direct it to You and I will look up” (Psalm 5:3).

But in Psalm 55:17, David went further: “Evening and morning and at noon I will pray ...”



This example was matched by Daniel, the “greatly beloved” prophet. “He knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days” (Daniel 6:10). For such daily spiritual habit, he was thrown into the lion’s den where he no doubt maintained his diligence in prayer!

In Psalm 119:164 David wrote “Seven times a day I praise You.” Did he literally pray every 3.4285714 hours? Or, if you take out eight hours for sleeping, every 2.287142 hours? Seven in the Bible is the number of completeness and perfection. Of course we would all have more successful days if we regularly pray throughout the entire day—and have our minds constantly on things above, walking after the spirit not the flesh, and striving to bring every thought into subjection to the obedience of Jesus Christ.

And that's what 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18 is getting at: "Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks." A 24/7 mindset of oneness and unity with God the Father and Jesus Christ our Brother through the Holy Spirit.

When should we pray? Don't let me interrupt you!

Would You Like to Talk to God Face to Face?

No, just in prayer will be good enough!

God knows all the bad about me! I don't know if I could take what He might say. Like saying hi to a boss in the hall, but what if he called me into his office! Would he dump on me or even fire me!

Did anybody else besides me

think this way as a quick first reaction?

Well, yeah, God knows all the bad about me but I'm forgiven. I'm His son and I want to please Him. I want to do His will. I already ask Him daily to correct me in His mercy and He does.

So yeah, I would like to talk to Him face to face. But I don't expect that to happen until the resurrection (1 John 3:1-2). For now, we can learn from

Job's experience

in relating and talking to God.

We should take into account that Job—and his three friends—did not know what God said about him to Satan: “Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil? And he still holds fast to his integrity” (Job 2:3).

Like me and I'm guessing you too, Job had never received

A direct evaluation from God

He had only heard of God and been taught of God (42:5). He sacrificed after each of his kids' parties just in case they had somehow sinned (1:5). It

would have been natural for him to judge his spiritual status with God by his physical blessings.

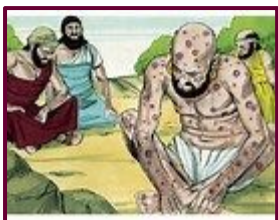
Job seems to be contemporary of the patriarchs of the pre-Mosaic age because there's no mention of the law, tabernacle or temple. Job offered burnt offerings rather than priests. It looks like he was King Jobab, son of Chief Zerah (Gen. 36:17) of the Edomite city of Bozrah, making Job a great grandson of Esau! Job probably lived sometime while Israel was in slavery in Egypt (1682-1443 BC). God called Job "the finest man alive on the earth" (*New Living Translation*)—apparently tucked in between Abraham and Moses.

Total surprise:

Such a righteous man is Edomite not Israelite!

The book of Job, considered a literary classic, is ideal for self-examination, which is good all year long but Paul said necessary before Passover (Tuesday evening, April 18 this year) (1 Cor. 11:28).

"The ethical content of Job's confession, with its emphasis on inward motivation ... and attitude ... is unique and unparalleled until Jesus' Sermon on the Mount"—Nelson Study Bible.



God allowed Satan to inflict painful boils from Job's head to foot! As *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible* describes it, Satan spared only his mouth, lips and teeth—instruments of speech—so that Job would curse God! (Job 19:20). Thanks to that, we get to hear Job's thoughts and words!

He wisely states, "Teach me ... Cause me to understand wherein I have erred" (6:24).

But as Job's boils festered on for "months of futility and wearisome nights" (7:3), and his friends compounded their accusations and condescending discouragement, Job wanted to talk to God.

People commonly say Job's problem was self-righteousness (32:1), but

The two biggest lessons for us to learn from Job

about relating to God and talking to God: “You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.”

Jesus said He appreciates that we believe even though we haven't seen (John 20:29). For now, prayer is good enough!

We must persevere in prayer (Luke 18:1-8) and be grateful for His compassion and mercy. He talks back to us through Bible study, wise counsel and experiences. He is decidedly not an unjust judge.

We must not decide to contend with God, as we'll see Job foolishly did.

Not a Good Idea to Contend with God

Job wanted to talk with God. But the festering boils and the annoying friends wore him down for "months of futility and wearisome nights" (Job 7:3).



“Therefore I will not restrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul” (v. 11).

Job is openly honest with God, baring his anguish, tears and doubts. He is complaining to the right person! God is so patient, gentle and kind with Job—as with us!

“What are people, that you should make so much of us, that you should think of us so often? For you examine us every morning and test us every moment. Why won’t you leave me alone, at least long enough for me to swallow! If I have sinned, what have I done to you, O watcher of all humanity? Why make me your target? Am I a burden to you? Why not just forgive my sin and take away my guilt?” (7:17-20 *New Living Translation*). Maybe Job was musing: If trials are such a blessing, God must really love me!

So Job starts thinking about wanting to

"Contend with Him"

Bring legal case. "Answer Him" in court under cross-examination (9:3-4). Funny that Job realized a being of clay "could not answer him one time out of a thousand... Who has hardened himself against Him and prospered?"

This is the God of the Universe who has seen it all! This is not Judge Judy! And I wouldn't take her on either!

Growing more contentious, Job says, "But I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God" (13:3). Great, God invites "Come let us reason together" (Isa. 1:18). He's interested in our opinions!

As his suffering continues and mounts, Job comes perilously close to accusing God! People suffering often blurt out words they don't mean. God of perfect compassion understands.

Job rests his case

"I would present my case before Him and fill my mouth with arguments" (Job 23:4).

"Till I die I will not put away my integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast ... my heart shall not reproach me as long as I live" (27:5-6).

"Look, I will sign my name to my defense. Let the Almighty answer me" (31:35 *NLT*).

Be careful, you may get what you ask for.

Now My Eye Sees You

The Word blew in like a whirlwind on His portable throne (Ezk. 1:4) and commanded Job's attention! (Job 38:1). He shows up to help Job think straight before restoring him to health and service.

"Who is this who darkens counsel without knowledge? Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me." Who is this spouting in ignorance, presumption and arrogance! Resulting in darkness when we're supposed to be a light to others!

The Word zings out pointed questions to help Job realize He didn't have the wisdom—or the right—to question His awesome great Creator.

"Now God speaks to Job, but not to give Job the justification he had been demanding.... he reminds Job that the wisdom that directs the Creator's ways is beyond the reach of human understanding" (*Zondervan NIV Study Bible*). None of us is even close to being in God's league!

God was not there to browbeat Job. For three chapters (38-41) He gently chides Job like a loving parent comforting a hurting, confused child. The unrivaled Creator explains His great care and concern for all of His creation. As Paul would later explain, we must find contentment in whatever circumstances we find ourselves (Php. 4:10-12).

"Shall the one who contends with the Almighty correct Him? He who rebukes God, let him answer it" (Job. 40:2). Are you going to tell me what to do or complain about what I've done?

What say you

the one who would "fill my mouth with arguments" (23:4)? Hah!

Here's all Job could muster: "Behold, I am vile; What shall I answer You? I lay my hand over my mouth" (40:4).

Because Job was humbling himself, the Word could give him some further correction: "Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you

shall answer me: Would you indeed annul my judgment? Would you condemn me that you may be justified?" (7-8).

The Word challenges Job to be God for a day if he thinks he can do a better job. Why would I need your advice in running the universe? Should I change my plans at the whim of every peevish complainer?

God doesn't attack Job as being self-righteous, but "all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags" (Isa. 64:6) and are not self-perpetuating (Rom. 10:2-3).

Repentance and Restoration

Job responds with what God has taught him and what he has learned:

"I know that you can do everything, and that no purpose of yours can be withheld from you. You asked, 'Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know....



"I have heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:2-6).

What he understood of God was based on what he had been taught by others. Now he is able to really see God for himself. Job abhors what he has foolishly uttered in ignorance and repents in total humility. His relationship with God took on a deeper, more humble bond.

He sounds like David after his egregious sins with Bathsheba and Uriah: "For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned, and done this evil in your sight—that you may be found just when you speak, and blameless when you judge" (Psa. 51:4).

The purpose for all our trials may not be known in this life. God knows exactly what He is doing in all circumstances even when we don't.

God dealt with Job in this special way to teach him something he needed in order to be in the Family & Kingdom. And thank God

We will see too!

We can pray. We can listen to God. We walk by faith—relaxed trust in God in any trial that comes our way.

It would be great to talk with God face to face and that's going to happen for us and Job: "Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2).

So God Won't Say No

**Why bother praying if we don't expect answers.
Common thought says the answer
will be yes, wait or no—
I've got something better in mind!**

So many times God gives us our hearts' desires (Psa. 37:4) that we expect yes's to our prayers.

Nobody ever hears or sees the Father say no (John 5:37). For us yes seekers, He's the right one to pray to!

What seems like a no

may well be the opportunity to persevere like the Luke 18 widow. "And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily" (verses 7-8). Even the unjust judge answered the widow's persistent request, and God is so just. Just keep asking!



If God says "just you wait," it's because He knows Henry Higgins needs to learn some valuable lesson besides that the rain in Spain falls mainly on the plain. "The testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing"

(James 1:3-4).

It looks like three times God said no to Paul. Actually He told Paul, "Yes, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness'" (2 Cor. 12:9).

It looks like God said no to David, though he pleaded for his child with Bathsheba during seven days of heartfelt fasting (2 Sam. 12:16-18). I've never fasted for more than two days. So what an effort David made! Actually, God told David: yes, I forgive sin, but it has disastrous consequences so you must choose to reject it.

Astoundingly, Paul and David are

The only two examples in the Bible

that I've seen where healing was asked for and not quickly granted. God says He is our Healer, and people in the Bible were healed!

So what about all the people we know on our long list of those needing healing? It seems like *YHVH-Ropha* is saying a loud NO to so many. I can't help thinking, if only they had been in the Bible!

Is there anything we can do so God doesn't say no?

Yes, yes, yes

Jesus calls us friends (John 15:15), and friends want to hear from each other. God wants to hear our prayers, and He wants us to reason with Him (Isa. 1:18). Some matters take prayer and fasting (Mark 9:29).

But we should never think we can tell God what to do. We should never fast to make our voice heard on high (Isa. 58:4).

The model prayer Jesus gave teaches near the top: "Your will be done" (Matt. 6:10).

At His greatest time of need in the Garden of Gethsemane, three times Jesus prayed for one hour, passionately asking that there might be some other way than His suffering ahead. The answer would have been no. Jesus knew that because He and the Father had planned everything from the foundation!

But Jesus always ended His prayers with

"Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will" (Matt. 26:39)

We should always pray the same way, whether for healing or any other matter. The Master Timer knows the best time. And He knows what and how would be the best for all concerned.

Healing is guaranteed, if only in the resurrection. It is appointed unto all to die once (Heb. 9:27). We need trials to develop patience, perfection and completion (James 1:4).

If we pray for God's will, not our own, God won't say no. It's a guaranteed "yes, *I will*. Now buckle up and see what I've got in mind."

The Three Most Powerful Words

**I love you?
Please forgive me?**

Powerful words but not the three most powerful words.

Taking a long pause at the entrance of the throne room and probably saying a heartfelt silent prayer, Esther approached King Ahasuerus of Persia—humbly and respectfully because she was uninvited and risking death if the king didn't hold up his golden scepter to his queen. Ominously, she hadn't been invited for 30 days!



Well, King Ahasuerus not only sceptered Esther but he offered her anything she wanted up to half his kingdom! An amazing offer, but did anybody doubt that he would have done just that?

A better throne and a better offer!

We don't need an invitation to come before the Father's throne! We are always welcome to "come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16).

And outdoing the Persian king's offer, Jesus promises

"If you ask anything in my name, I will do it" (John 14:14)

We can absolutely count on that—the word of the Son of God—more than Esther could count on the Persian king.

But we must realize, Jesus is not a genie in a bottle who must grant wishes of any kind to whoever rubs the bottle. He gives conditions in the Bible for asking in His name and claiming His promise to do what you ask:



- ◆ Will what you ask bring glory to the Father in the Son (John 14:13)? John 15:8 says the Father is glorified when we bear much fruit.
- ◆ Will your request help you “go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain” (John 15:16)?
- ◆ Do you “abide in Me, and My words abide in you” (John 15:7)?
- ◆ Will “whatever you ask the Father in my name ...” have this result: “that your joy may be full” (John 16:23-24)? God is a happy God who dotes on His children! And who wants us to have life and have it more abundantly (John 10:10).
- ◆ Do you “keep His commandments and do those things pleasing in His sight” (I John 3:22)?
- ◆ Is what you ask “according to His will” (I John 5:14-15)?
- ◆ Do “you have faith and do not doubt” (Matt. 21:21-22)? A mountain would move!

If we have no doubts about a human king’s offer, why about the King of kings’ promises “who cannot lie” (Tit. 1:2)?

Each of these passages promises that if we fulfill its condition, we are guaranteed not just half a kingdom but

“Whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you”

It’s even more amazing than that: God “is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think” (Eph. 3:20)! With Him all things are possible.

Do you ever catch yourself getting up from prayer and then mumbling as an afterthought: “Oh yeah, in Jesus’ name”? The last words of any communication are potentially the most important.

It wouldn’t be a bad idea to pray “I love you.” Or “Please forgive me.” But make sure you end your prayer by coming boldly before God’s unscattered throne with the three most powerful words: “In Jesus’ name.” Amen!

That Mountain? It's Already on Its Way to the Sea!

Here's an amazing promise from Jesus:
"Whoever says to this mountain,
'Be removed and be cast into the sea,'
and does not doubt in his heart,
but believes that those things he says will come to pass,
he will have whatever he says."
"Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask, when you pray,
believe that you receive them, and you will have them"
(Mark 11:23-24).

Do you hear Jesus saying that to YOU? What a promise! And like Abraham we should know that God keeps His promises (Romans 4:21). He's able! "To do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20)!

You believe in healing. You have a long prayer list that with worldwide Internet communication grows longer each day. It can seem overwhelming but you strive to be an effective prayer warrior.

Get out your prayer list, read that promise above on their behalf, and believe it with no doubts!

◆ Yeah but it's pretty hard to have a good reason why Pike's Peak should be cast into the Pacific Ocean. Why would God relocate this 14,114 ft. mountain at your request?

Doubting voice: You wouldn't bother asking.

Relaxed trusting voice: Each healing situation is a mountain for that person/family. God says He's ready to move it! Come ask, believe and do not doubt!



◆ Yeah but we can't make our demands to be heard on high during fasting and prayer (Isaiah 58:4).

Doubting voice: Why should God care what you say?

Relaxed trusting voice: Jesus invites you to tell what you'd like God to do! Even humans like to see people who are passionate about something! And it inspires us to root for them and even help them achieve it! God might do it for them just because you cared.

◆ Yeah but the Master Timer knows best about the when and how to work out everything for good for everybody concerned.

Doubting voice: You're human, you might have it all wrong.

Relaxed trusting voice: You have been seeking the mind of Christ. You wouldn't want to ask anything that wastes God's time or goes against His will. You are God's child. Jesus calls you friend. They delight to know your thoughts and ideas. God showers you with grace and good things because He wants us to prosper and be in health (3 John 2). Believe and do not doubt!

◆ Yeah but God may say "Wait" because He knows we have need of patience or empathy. Or because a person has lived a long natural life and can be spared the trouble to come and be parked awaiting the resurrection to a healthy perfect spiritual body.

Doubting voice: Who doesn't need more patience and empathy so you'll probably have to wait. And they're pretty old so God will probably let them die.

Relaxed trusting voice: It's fine if God says to wait. Jesus' promise does not say "NOW." But why assume it won't be.

If healing hasn't happened by amen, God "calls things that be not as though they be" (Romans 4:17). Healing is sure! That mountain is already on its way to the sea! In fact

It's already splashed down!

So why not speak faith and believe with no doubts!

We Do Just Ask Thee, Teach Us to Pray

We keep learning how to pray more effectively. Here are three techniques we often see done by Christians we respect, some who have been praying a long time:

- ◆ Use “thee,” “thou” and “thy.” If the King James English was good enough for the Apostles, it’s good enough for you! The burning bush voice spoke that way—we have that on good Hollywood movie authority. Speaking archaic like that will escort you into praying mode because it wouldn’t get you anywhere else.
- ◆ Now, throw in as many “just” phrases as you can. “We just thank you for your blessings.” “We just ask this.” It will make your prayer sound ... well, more just.
- ◆ One final touch: Supersize those “just” phrases by preceding them with “We do.” “We do just ask” and “we do just praise you.” Do this and how can your prayers not sound like impressive deep do-do.

OK, Jesus said we are His friends, and you would never talk that way with a friend. They’d think you were a religious nut! So what? You pray in your room with the door shut.

The real beauty of these simple techniques is for when you pray in public and you can sound like you’re really praying up a righteous storm.

What? You think we should talk normal to God, who knows our thoughts, rather than go into some kind of practiced praying mode?

God is so merciful, He seems to listen anyway, but He might have an easier time figuring out what we’re trying to say!

I do just think thee might be onto something.

Holodeck Not Needed to Visit God's Throne

Faced with mounting intergalactic pressure, Captain Jean-Luc Picard retreats to the Enterprise's holodeck and the next thing you know he's toting a six-iron at the O.K. Corral and relaxing with Wyatt Earp and Billy the Kid.



The first episode with the holodeck by name occurred in *The Next Generation's* episode "Encounter at Farpoint." For the ultimate encounter at far point, wouldn't it be great to have an episode where the holodeck takes somebody to the third heaven. To God's glorious throne ruling supreme over the universe in all its resplendent glory!

No, it wouldn't be great because the second commandment warns against making an idol "in the form of anything in heaven above" (Exodus 20:4).

Paul said he knew a man in Christ who went up there—whether in body or vision, he didn't know (2 Corinthians 12:1-4). Paul's only description was "Paradise" and the words he heard were "inexpressible" and "not lawful for a man to utter."

Good thing for us that Jesus revealed to John a biblical holodeck so that we can rightly picture

The throne room of heaven

Here's Revelation 4:4-8 from the *Living Bible*:

"I saw a door standing open in heaven ... oh, the glory of it!—a throne and someone sitting on it!



"Great bursts of light flashed forth from Him as from a glittering diamond, or from a shining ruby and a rainbow glowing like an emerald encircled His

throne.

“Twenty-four smaller thrones surrounded His, with 24 Elders sitting on them; all were clothed in white with golden crowns upon their heads.

“Lightning and thunder issued from the throne, and there were voices in the thunder. Directly in front of His throne were seven lighted lamps representing the seven-fold Spirit of God. Spread out before it was a shiny crystal sea.

“Four Living Beings dotted front and back with eyes, stood at the throne’s four sides.” The four were in the form of a lion, ox, face of a man and flying eagle. “Each of these Living Beings had six wings and the central sections of their wings were covered with eyes.”

Gene Roddenberry would never do justice to this! Forecasters predict that a holodeck can be a consumer-ready product by 2024. But why wait?

Engage, Mr. Sulu!

Here’s the main point that could right now lift your prayers like it’s doing for mine:



When you pray—and you find your mind on the unmade bed, the crooked painting on the wall, the peeling ceiling, or your purring cat Josie wanting your attention—don’t start talking until you can visualize the Supreme Beings of the universe in this glorious setting just waiting to listen to you!

ENERGIZE, DATA! My second point is to empower your prayers by claiming God’s amazing promises.

God the Father says:

My door’s open! My Son opened it for you! He’s sitting here at my right hand (Colossians 3:1). By His blood poured out for you at His death He ripped the veil covering the earthly Holy of Holies from top to bottom like a piece of paper! (Hebrews 10:19-22). We’re talkin’ the veil 60 feet long, 30 feet wide, 4” thick, made of 72 squares sewn together, so heavy that it took 300 priests to hang ‘em!

My beloved sons and daughters, just come in my Son's name and authority. Quote us John 14:14 because He said if you ask anything in His name and according to His will, He will do it! If He's too tired, I'll do it! (a chuckle reverberates across the crystal sea of glass).



The ultimate power of the universe—my Holy Spirit—which was given on Pentecost in 31 A.D. is here *for your asking!*

Here's another amazing scripture you can quote to us: God can do "exceedingly above anything you ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20).

On your knees is the most powerful position in the universe because with me "all things are possible." Whatever takes place up here trumps anything going on down where you are.

The High Priest used to come once a year, on the Day of Atonement—why don't I hear from you more often!

Hey, trekkies, what're you waiting for? Who needs Scotty ... beam on up! Spock's dead but you can mind meld with me! Go boldly where no man has gone before "to the throne of grace, that [you] may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16)!

My Door's open! Visualize my throne room of the universe that you are privileged to access. And come claim the power you need. Privilege and power!

Who needs warp speed, we're so near.

Just come up and talk!

Imagine That!

You Could Talk to God Right Now



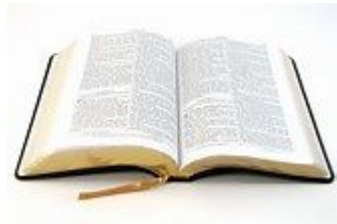
Yes, you can.

On knees is good to help you be humble and teachable, but if you can't, don't let that stop you from being humble and teachable.

Talk to God from the heart. Start with thanks and praise. He doesn't need to hear it, but you need to appreciate who you are privileged to talk to.

How does God do that! Listen to prayers 24/7 nonstop? I have no idea. And still He likes to hear my ideas!

Open your Bible if you have it available. Ask God to direct your eyes and thoughts to the passages He wants to say to you.



God can hear your thoughts but you probably feel more like you're talking to God if you talk out loud.

It's probably best if you go to some private place so it won't look like you're talking to yourself. And so you won't be distracted or feel self-conscious.

No need to speak in tongues with affected lingo like "We do just this and that" and "Thees" and "Thous." Save the "hail Marys" for the next Broncos game. No need to say "Father" every sentence. If you don't forget who you're talking to, God won't either!

God gave the Lord's Prayer as an outline for how to organize a prayer, not as a handy way to speak vain repetition which He asked us not to do.

God wants us to just talk. Like in the "Oh God" movie when George Burns, as He was walking away into vanishment, assured John Denver, "You talk, I'll listen."

But you also want to

Hear what God wants to say back to you



Ask God for wisdom and use it so you don't act stupidly like "And Judas went out and hanged himself" and "Go thou and do likewise." With the Bible context is vital.

You could pray everything nonstop. Then read. But why not back and forth like in normal conversation. Make a point or plea and then pause a bit and be still, actively listening for God's response. God knows that answered prayer is a powerful proof of His existence. Know the thrill of an answer!

Prayer changes things. It changes you. Go to the places in the Bible

Where God speaks directly to the reader

This includes all the **red-letter** words in the News Testament which are directly spoken by Jesus Christ. This includes places in the Old Testament where Jesus Christ, as the God who interacted with man in the Old Testament, spoke directly. Of course, "All scripture is inspired by God" (2 Tim. 3:16). But reading direct words from God really feels special. Hey,

You are special!

You get to talk to the Power of the Universe who wants to be Daddy to you. So Abba, blabba do!

Excuse me, I've got to go talk to Somebody.

Effective Bible Prayers: One Common Ingredient

The Bible gives examples of effective prayers.
We can see what God likes to hear.

And let's especially notice one trait
answered prayers have in common.

Hezekiah, 2 Kg. 20:3—After Isaiah told him God said he was going to die, the king wept bitterly. He asked God to "remember" his obedience and faithfulness, like Moses, Hannah and Nehemiah (5:19, 13:14, 22).

Moses, Ex. 32:11—After the golden calf orgy, God told Moses He was going to consume Israel and start over with Moses. Moses pleaded with God to "remember" His promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And what would the Gentiles say?

Hannah, 1 Sam. 1:10-15, 2:1-10—Provoked year by year for being barren by her husband's other wife, Hannah fasted and wept in anguish. She spoke heartfelt even in silent prayer. She "poured out my soul before the Lord." She asked God to remember His maidservant. After Samuel was miraculously born, she rejoiced and praised God.

Elijah, 1 Kg. 18:36-37, 42—450 prophets of Baal would testify to the power of this 15-second prayer! Elijah asked God to "Let it be known that you are God and I'm your servant." James 5:17 said Elijah "prayed earnestly." When Jezebel scared him, Elijah begged that he might die---but God was not going to grant that request!

Daniel, 9:2-19—Excited about the nearing end of the 70 year desolations of Jerusalem, Daniel prayed with supplication and fasting. He praised God and reminded Him of His promises. He deeply confessed "we have sinned." He pleaded for forgiveness and restoration.

David, Psalm 51—After being confronted by Nathan the Prophet about what he did with Bathsheba and her husband Uriah, David prayed repentance. He said he sinned against God only. “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart.” He pleaded with God to renew a right spirit and restore to him the joy of salvation. His psalm is often sung during Passover services.

Jabez, 1 Chron. 4:10—Jabez asked God to bless him, enlarge his territory and be with him. Thanks to being named "He Will Cause Pain," Jabez so wanted God to "keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!"

Jonah, 1:14, 2:1-9, 4:2-3—Fearing they were about to be smashed and drowned, sailors cried out to God to spare their "innocent blood" when it was Jonah He was angry with. From within the belly of the special fish prepared for him, reeking and draped in seaweed, Jonah cried out to God and thanked Him for delivering him. But after Ninevah repented with fasting, Jonah was exceedingly disappointed because Assyria wouldn't be getting theirs and later they would come against his people Israel, who were too stiff-necked to repent like Ninevah did. Like Elijah, Jonah begged to die, but God rejected his fervent request like he did Elijah's.

Stephen, Acts 7:59-60—As he was being stoned, Stephen cried out with a loud voice for God not to charge them with this sin.

Real Lord's Prayer, John 17—Just before the mob came for him, Jesus glorified the Father and asked for His glory back. He prayed for those the Father would give Him to not be of the world, be sanctified by the Word and be unified in love.

What trait did all these effective prayers have in common?



“The effective fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” (James 5:16).

The Bible compares prayer to incense (Psa. 141:2, Rev. 8:3-4). Prayers should be beaten fine, have blend of ingredients (discuss everything with God) and be sweet and appealing to God.

And they must be heated up (fervent). Room fresheners are designed to heat up at room temperature. Deodorants at 98.6 degrees.

Prayers heat up when you remind yourself that you are *privileged* to talk to the Supreme Power of the universe during the time He is upholding and directing it—at any time you choose!

Make it fervent!



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