



SERIES: MY PRAYER LIFE

The Key to Answered Prayer Lesson 1

Life Reference: Matthew 4:1-11

Focus Verse:

"It is written" (Matthew 4:4).

If we were invited to attend an inaugural event in our nation's capital, we would research protocol. How should we address the head of our government? What is the appropriate dress for such an event?

Yet, regardless of the amount of fact-finding might we do, we do not know the leader of our nation. We may state our opinions or ask for a favor, but after a formal greeting, there is not much to say.

It is the same with God. Often we do not get past His titles and position to really know Him. Unlike human dignitaries, however, God desires a relationship with us. That is why He created Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. He longed to have fellowship with mankind.



Developing this relationship is the key to answered prayers. Becoming better acquainted with God prevents our making false assumptions about His character and expecting Him to act and respond in ways that are unlike Him.



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Without a true understanding of God, we find ourselves treating Him like a genie, expecting Him to grant our every wish, or as a vending machine where we insert the correct change and make our selection. Neither of these approaches is effective.

We were made in the likeness of God. (See Genesis 1:26.) As each of us is unique, He too is like no other. He is multifaceted. Just as with another person, we must learn all we can about Him to develop and enjoy a healthy, intimate relationship.

Life Reflection:

How can I have a conversation with God when I can't hear His voice?

The answer is simple. Read the Bible. The Bible is literally the words of God. When we read, He speaks to us.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God ... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:1, 14).

When we pray, God often nudges our hearts and plants ideas in our minds. His Word, though, plays a vital role in our knowing Him.

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (II Timothy 3:16).

The Bible is as relevant today as when it was written. It is alive and applicable to whatever situation we may be going through.

"The word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12, NKJV).





Life Reflection:

How can I implement the Word of God into my life?

This story gives us insight:

Pressed by the crowd, Jesus saw two empty ships. He boarded one and continued teaching.

Once finished, Jesus instructed the fishermen, "Cast off from the shore, and let down your nets."

*"But, Master," Simon was patient to explain the reality of their situation to the Lord. "We have fished all night and caught nothing. Nevertheless, **at thy word** I will let down the net."*

They obeyed, and their nets broke at the weight of fish they caught!

(See Luke 5:1-5.)

It is important that we trust and obey God. At times, His direction may seem contradictory to what we think should be done. When we read the Bible and apply its principles, we too are saying, "Lord, here is my situation. This is what I think should be done. But, nevertheless, **at thy word** I will do what You say."

It is impossible to trust someone we do not know. That is why pursuing a relationship with the Lord is necessary. Becoming a student of the Word of God is critical to the life and growth of a Christian.

James 1:25, New King James Version

"But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does."

Mark 4:24, Amplified Version

"And He said unto them, Be careful what you are hearing. The measure [of thought and study] you give [to the truth you hear] will be the measure [of virtue and knowledge] that comes back to you – and more [besides] will be given to you who hear."



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Life Reflection:

Does God know who I am?

He knows and loves each of us.

Exodus 33:17 "I know thee by name."

Isaiah 44:2 "Thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee from the womb."

Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know that thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end."

Acts 10:34 "God is no respecter of persons."

Life Reflection:

If God knows everything and is in control, does prayer make a difference?

Is prayer a top priority in my life?

James 5:16 "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

Hebrews 11:6 "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."

Isaiah 65:24 "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear."



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John 11:41-42

"Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always."

Psalm 5:3, New King James Version

"My voice You shall hear in the morning, O Lord; In the morning I will direct it to You, And I will look up."

Life Reflection:

What are the benefits of having a close, ongoing relationship with the Lord?

When we live right (correctly, carefully, godly) we please Him — we have His attention.

Psalm 11:7, New King James Version

"The LORD is righteous, He loves righteousness; His countenance beholds the upright."

Deuteronomy 7:9

"The LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments."

The attributes of God are endless. He understands every problem we face and is willing to assist us when we ask. When we grasp how great – how glorious – how powerful – how mighty our God is, we can "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in the time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).

Life Response:

Prayer must be an appointment we keep every day. Prayer should not be the last resort but our first reaction.



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More Prayer References:

Below are verses of Scripture that reveal God's character:

- He is our refuge. (See Psalm 9:9.)
- He protects us. (See Isaiah 54:17.)
- He is our help. (See Hebrews 4:16.)
- He gives us peace. (See John 14:27.)
- He gives us rest. (See Matthew 11:28.)
- He called us out of darkness and made us royalty. (See 1 Peter 2:9.)
- He lifts us. (See Psalm 145:14.)
- He is our shepherd. (See Psalm 23; Isaiah 40:11.)
- He fills us with joy, peace, and hope. (See Romans 15:13.)
- He is the creator. (See Genesis 1.)
- He is committed to us. (See Matthew 28:20.)
- He is our provider. (See 1 Kings 17; Mark 8:1-9; John 6:1-13.)
- He forgives. (See 1 John 1:9; Psalm 103:8-14.)
- He is our comforter. (See John 14:18.)

Unless otherwise noted, Bible quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, King James Version.

See The Key to Answered Prayer, Lesson 2.

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