

# Communicating with God

## Prayer, Part 2

### Summary for Teachers

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#### Theme

Develop the praise and prayer habit!—Build a relationship with the Lord through prayer. Take time to praise.

#### Aim

To build the attendees' faith in prayer, that the Lord answers in miraculous ways. To teach them how to acknowledge the Lord throughout their daily activities and build good prayer habits. For them to see the importance of incorporating praise into their daily life.

#### Roundup

Opening Activity and Prayer (15 minutes)

Prayer with promises

Class Section 1: Our Relationship with the Lord (30 minutes)

A good relationship

The story of Mary and Martha

What if you feel you've failed?

The Lord is always there, no matter how you feel

The closer walk

Discussion

Class Section 2: The Prayer "Habit" (40 minutes)

The good habit of prayer

Making prayer a habit!

Nothing is too small for the Lord

Pray!—And God will bless and answer!

Waiting for the Lord to work

Believing the promises

The importance of praying for others

Ways to pray

Praying Written Prayers

Class Section 3: Praise (20 minutes)

The importance of thanking and praising the Lord

Taking time to say "thank you" to Jesus

Fitting "Praise Time" into our daily life

Here are some ideas of what to do in Praise Time

Closing Activity and Prayer (15 minutes)

Praise time

Prayer

## Get Prepared

- See the “Get Prepared” comments for the previous class as most also apply here.
- Throughout the class you’ll find examples of how God answers prayer. Try to also have a few testimonies that you were involved in personally to share.
- You are not expected to share every testimony in the class. We have included a variety so you will have plenty to choose from. Whatever you don’t use could be shared at another time.
- When sharing these testimonies, try to use your own words rather than reading the text. You can dramatize your telling of them if you wish, but do stick to the facts! And assure the students that all of these testimonies are actual true stories that have been published.
- Try to also draw out some testimonies from the students. For instance, when you share a testimony of healing, ask if anyone else has ever been healed in answer to prayer. Encourage him or her to testify of what the Lord has done.
- There is a lot of text in this class and it would be quite dry if you read it all aloud. It would be better that you study the class well beforehand and then be able to tell at least parts of this in your own words.
- In some places there are a number of verses for one point. If you find that reading all the verses is making the class become dry—don’t. It should be a moving class. If you wish, you can just pick the verse(s) you find most applicable.
- You will need to have a promise box with verses ready. (You may like to use the ready-made “Promise Sets” from the Teacher’s Supplement.)
- Related material in *Activated* magazines:  
*Activated* Issue #13 (All articles on pages 1–9)

## Student Reading Material

Optional: *My King and I* (Get Activated! booklet)

# Prayer and Opening Activity

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15 minutes

## ► Prayer with promises

In our last class, we talked about the importance of claiming Scriptures when praying. We thought we could start today’s meeting by praying together for what we all need. We can go around now and each pray for something that we personally need, or for our loved ones, or something related to the class. We’ll pass around these verse cards. You can claim a promise when you pray.

- ① *You can adapt this activity, depending on the attendees. Not everyone needs to pray if you have a large class. You may want to ask some of the students to explain their prayer requests and have someone else pray for them, or each can pray for his or her own request. Asking the students to share their prayer requests will be a way of involving everyone right from the start of the class.*
- ① *You may want to sing one or two songs before praying.*
- ① *Pass out the “Promise” verses. (The Teacher’s Aids “Promise Sets” are organized according to subject. If you have these available, you can explain the different types of promises to claim, such as the healing promises for a healing request, and so on.)*
- ① *You should begin the prayer, so you can show the students how to use these promises as part of a prayer. Remind them that the prayer can be short. For example:*

*Jesus, thank You for the good health that most of us enjoy. We come before You now for the healing of Mary's asthma. You promised in Your Word that "Unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His Wings." We bring Mary before you and pray that You will touch her with Your healing wings and restore her to full health. Amen.*

## **Class Section 1: Our Relationship with the Lord**

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**30 minutes**

### **► A good relationship**

It takes time and effort to build a good relationship with someone. Let's look at some of the ways we can apply the lessons we learn with people to our relationship with the Lord.

We need to invest time into building a relationship and give the person our attention.—We talked in the last class about focusing on the Lord when we pray, even visualizing Him if we can.

We should talk to Jesus as we would to our dearest loved one. In a good marriage or relationship, one person doesn't do all the talking! So we need to be sure to not only talk to Him, but most importantly, listen to Him.

A good relationship also needs lots of appreciation and thankfulness and not taking the other for granted. We need to thank the Lord for what He gives us and does for us.

A good relationship is one where we can trust and confide in our partner, knowing he or she will listen and keep on loving us unconditionally. Our partner will comfort us when we need it, and he or she will honestly point out our shortcomings when we need help in facing things. But no matter how we fail or what mistakes we make, he or she will keep loving us. That is how Jesus is with us.

### **► The story of Mary and Martha**

Whatever happens, we know the Lord wants us to draw closer to Him. We should not get so wrapped up in our work and the day-to-day grind of living that we forget that we need to be close to Jesus, and that that is very important to the Lord! All our activities and work might be good and necessary, but we should not neglect our relationship with Jesus. We can be assured that everything else will fall into the proper place as long as we keep close to the Lord.

Let's look at this in the Bible.

**①** *The following could be acted out as a skit, getting the students involved:*

*Luke 10:38–42—Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. (39) And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. (40) But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." (41) And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. (42) But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."*

#### **[Optional] Discussion**

☛ *Who do you identify more with—Mary or Martha?*

☛ *If you were Martha, how would you have reacted to Jesus' words?*

## ► What if you feel you've failed?

When we slip and fall because of sin or disobedience, it's easy to feel condemned, like, "Oh, I can't possibly be close to the Lord because of my sins, because of all my faults and shortcomings!" But you must not let the Devil—or even your own heart—condemn you.

*1 John 3:20—For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.*

*Romans 8:1—There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.*

Even if you have disobeyed the Lord, if you're sorry for your sins and you sincerely desire to be close to Him, He forgives you.

*Psalms 103:8—The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.*

*Psalms 37:24—Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord upholds him with His hand.*

*1 John 1:9—If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

*Psalms 51:17—The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise.*

A lot has to do with your heart, with your attitude. If you sincerely want to please the Lord and do His will, love Jesus and live for Him, then He will certainly "draw nigh unto you" when you call out to Him. David of old wrote:

*Psalms 145:18—The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth.*

*Psalms 34:18—The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit.*

So regardless of any feelings of discouragement or condemnation that the Devil may try to barrage you with, if you know you're truly seeking to love and please the Lord, obey His Word and follow Him, then you're close to Him!—Whether you happen to feel close to Him or not!

## ► The Lord is always there, no matter how you feel

We've talking about concentrating and we've talked about visualizing the Lord when you pray, and we've talked in the previous classes about the gifts of the Spirit, but maybe you haven't felt any different. Maybe you don't feel close to Jesus. The Bible makes it very clear that we're not supposed to go by our feelings, or by any of our physical senses!

*2 Corinthians 5:7—For we walk by faith, not by sight.*

The Lord loves each of us very much and promises to be with us. Whether we feel we are close to Him or not, we can know from His Word that He is close to us! His Love for us is unchangeable, unwavering.

*Hebrews 13:5b—For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."*

*Isaiah 54:10—"For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but My kindness shall not depart from you, nor shall My covenant of peace be removed," says the Lord, who has mercy on you.*

### [Optional] Poem or skit: Three men walking on the wall.

Three men were walking on the wall—  
Feeling, Faith and Fact.  
Feeling had an awful fall.  
Faith was taken back.  
Only Fact remained.  
So Fact pulled up Faith.  
And Faith pulled up Feeling.  
And they walked on the wall again. ("Fact" is the Word!)

## [Optional] Don't rely on feelings

① *Only use this section if you need to expound on the point of not relying on feelings.*

If we start trusting or relying too much on our feelings as an indicator of how well we're doing spiritually, we're going to be very unstable! We'll be continually tossed to and fro by every wind of feeling that happens to come along.

*James 1:6—Let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.*

We'll never know how we're going to be doing tomorrow, as that would be determined by how we feel when we get up in the morning. Regardless of how we may happen to feel, if we love the Lord and are walking by faith and obeying His Word, then we know that our relationship with the Lord is still firm.

Some people do feel close to Jesus. Some people just have more creativity to be able to picture things. We all have certain personalities, and some of us are much more emotional than others. But just because some people don't feel a big emotional closeness to the Lord, they don't need to sit around feeling sorry for themselves or feel that they are not close to the Lord. We all just need to take things by faith! There aren't too many verses in the Bible on going by feelings, but there are a lot about faith and trusting the Lord and believing His Word!

Even if you can't feel any closeness at all, you can still know you're close to Him if you're doing your best to love the Lord and please Him and obey His Word and do what you know He has said.

We've got to just go by the Facts, by the Word, and your faith in His Word, your obedience and yieldedness have nothing to do with your feelings! So it doesn't really matter whether you feel close to the Lord or not. You don't have to feel that emotion!

## ► The closer walk

How do you get close to Jesus? You get close to Jesus by obeying His Word and yielding to His will and taking time with Him! Jesus says,

*John 14:23—If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.*

If you're obeying what He says in His Word, if you're spending time praising Him, talking to Him, listening to Him, and reading His Word, then of course you're close to the Lord!—He'll come and make His home with you. Paul says,

*Hebrews 10:22—Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.*

## [Optional] Poem: Feelings come and feelings go

(By Martin Luther)

For feelings come and feelings go,  
And feelings are deceiving;  
My warrant is the Word of God,  
Naught else is worth believing!

Though all my heart should feel condemned,  
For lack of some sweet token,  
There is One greater than my heart,  
Whose Word cannot be broken!

I'll trust in God's unchanging Word,  
Till soul and body sever;

For, though all things shall pass away,  
His Word shall stand forever!

## ► Discussion

- ① Take around 10 minutes to discuss any of these points. Encourage the students to participate.
- How do you usually pray? Do you have a set time or a set place or are you more spontaneous?
- What occupies most of your time in prayer? Praise; pouring out your heart to the Lord about personal situations or trials; asking the Lord for things you need; praying for others?
- What do you find most distracting when you are praying? Have you found any ways to overcome this?

## Class Section 2: The Prayer “Habit”

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40 minutes

### ► The good habit of prayer

*Luke 18:1—Men always ought to pray and not lose heart.*

*1 Chronicles 16:11—Seek the Lord and His strength; seek His face evermore!*

*1 Thessalonians 5:17—Pray without ceasing.*

*Ephesians 6:18—Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.*

*Philippians 4:6–7—Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; (7) and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

### ► Making prayer a habit!

The key to being prayerful is making it a habit. There’s not really anything that’s so mystical or mysterious about it, you just have to keep doing it and keep at it, faithfully acknowledging Him in all your ways

*Proverbs 3:6—In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.*

To truly make prayer a habit you have to endeavor to pray about everything! Of course, it’s a good start if you pray before you eat and before you drive and before you go to bed and upon waking up, but what about all the other things you do during the day? You could pray about which work you should do, or if you already know, if it’s a set pattern, you could pray about how to do it. If you faithfully pray every day before doing your work, the Lord might show you a better way of doing it that day, or a faster way.

One of the most important phrases we could introduce to our vocabulary and which we should frequently use is, “Let’s stop and pray.”

To form a good habit takes a lot of conscious effort over a period of time. It also usually involves a lot of forgetting and some remembering. Then, finally we start remembering more than we forget!

Just like with teaching little kids to brush their teeth every day, you have to keep reminding them and keep reminding them every morning and every night. They’ll forget half the time unless you remind them. But as they get older and they keep doing it year after year, finally, they’ll rarely

forget! When they get up to their teens, lo and behold, after all those years they've finally made it a habit!

That's what it takes with prayer, although we certainly hope it won't take that long! Pray for the Lord to help you cultivate the habit as quickly as possible. It takes effort on our part, but if we pray and ask the Lord to check us when we don't pray, then cultivating a good habit of prayer will go much easier and much faster.

We should learn to pray over everything! The Bible says,

*1Thessalonians 5:17—Pray without ceasing.*

We need to strive to really make it a habit in some of these areas where we don't normally pray.

► **Discuss:** *Let's do a quick brainstorm of the times when we could and should pray.*

① *Have the students shoot out suggestions. You could write them up on a white board or a poster-size piece of paper.*

### **[Optional] Thoughts on prayer**

\* Prayer is a connecting link between human need and divine resources.

\* Seventeenth-century physicist Isaac Newton, considered by many as the father of modern science and discoverer of gravitation, said: "All my discoveries have been made in answer to prayer."

\* We should believe that nothing is too small to be named before God. What should we think of the patient who told his doctor he was ill, but never went into particulars?

## **► Nothing is too small for the Lord**

Sometimes we don't think about praying for little things. Maybe you lose your pen or you have a cold or you need a certain article of clothing. None of these are drastic situations. However, one of the ways that the Lord can get us into the habit of praying is to teach us to pray for the little things. If we only pray for big things, big things don't usually come along very often, at least not often enough to cause us to make a habit of prayer.

If we get into the habit of praying for the little things that come along, then we will automatically get in the habit of praying for everything—big or small. And if we pray for the little things and see how the Lord answers in those miraculous little ways that He does, then our faith will be increased to face the bigger needs when they come up!

Another reason to pray for little things could be illustrated by the above example of the case of someone with a simple cold. If you don't pray for healing, you could get sicker. The "little" thing can become a very big thing if we don't pray!

① *Teachers: Share one or more personal examples of what you mean by praying for little things and how the Lord answered. Also, ask the attendees if they have any examples to share.*

## **► Pray!—And God will bless and answer!**

*2 Chronicles 26:5—He sought God ... and as long as he sought the Lord, God made him prosper.*

*Psalms 62:8—Trust in Him at all times, you people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us.*

*Isaiah 30:19b—He will be very gracious to you at the sound of your cry; when He hears it, He will answer you.*

*Jeremiah 29:13—And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.*

*Jeremiah 33:3—Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.*

*Matthew 7:7-8—Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. (8) For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.*

*Isaiah 55:6—Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near.*

① *Share some personal answers to prayer, or any of the following:*

### **[Optional] Truly a God of miracles!**

From Lucas, Rute, and Madalena, Brazil

Maria is a friend who has been learning about the Lord with us, and most recently about the Lord's power to heal. She's been putting those lessons into practice with great results.

First she read some Family literature with her mother who had insomnia. The two prayed that the mother would be able to sleep well, and for the first time in years, she slept soundly all night. The next morning she told Maria that she wanted to keep reading those wonderful words together. They've been doing so ever since, and Maria's mother has continued to sleep well all night, every night.

Maria also prayed for her brother who was in the hospital waiting to have surgery to remove a tumor from his stomach. He had been in the hospital for three days and was so weak that he couldn't even talk. As Maria prayed for the Lord to heal him, she felt a great peace come over her.

The next day when Maria arrived at work (where her brother also works), she found him already on the job. The doctors had done another examination, he explained, and had told him there was no need to operate because the tumor was gone. They had released him from the hospital, and since he felt just fine he decided to go to work.

Maria said later that when she saw him at work she didn't know whether to cry or laugh. "Lord, You really do answer prayer!" she exclaimed for her brother and all to hear. "Truly You are a God of miracles!"

### **[Optional] God's supply!**

The Christian elementary school in Vacaville, California, had just been remodeled. That is, it had been remodeled except for shingles (roof slates). Funds had run just that much short. And the need was serious, for the rainy season was approaching.

The smaller children, in Kay Buzelli's room, had memorized the Words of Jesus, "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26). And they believed those Words were true. For days they had prayed for shingles. And earlier that September morning, in Bible class, little Karen had prayed, "Dear Jesus, please be with us today. Help us to do something to show we love others. And please, dear God, don't forget to take care of our school."

Then it happened. The freeway was only a stone's throw away. Suddenly there was a great "boom" as a giant truck tire blew out. Seventeen frightened children looked up to see the big truck swerve into the path of oncoming traffic. But those little people, believe it or not, did not race outside, or even to the window to see what was happening. One of them said, "Let's pray that no one will get hurt." And seventeen children gathered in one circle with their teacher and prayed—while the screeching, thumping, bumping, crashing sounds of a serious accident continued.

Their prayer was answered even as they prayed. The big truck had turned over and dumped its contents on the edge of the freeway. A smaller truck, in which a two-year-old boy was riding with his father had turned over and landed in the creek beside the school. But there were no serious injuries. Even the newspaper called it a miracle.

But wait! What had the big truck dumped on the edge of the freeway? Shingles! Shingles just the right color needed for the school! Shingles strewn everywhere, it seemed! And nobody wanted to pick them up!

A school board member was at the school at the time, and he negotiated with the insurance adjuster to buy them all for a very small sum. The children picked them up and stacked them neatly. The roof was finished before the rains, and the shingles left over were sold for a profit of \$300!

Could anyone tell those Vacaville children that God doesn't answer prayer?

### **[Optional] We put God on the spot!—God's supply**

From Sammy and Belen Siervos, Latin America

Our rent went up 600% in one month. The day we had to pay it we didn't have the money, due to some unexpected expenses. So that morning we all got together and prayed desperately for the Lord to do a miracle right away as we wanted and needed to pay the rent on time. We specifically asked the

Lord to supply the money we needed that morning, although we didn't know from where the money was going to come. We had to really stretch our faith as it was such an impossible situation!

After we prayed we went to have breakfast. Ten minutes later somebody knocked at the door. It was our friend who came in, kissed and hugged everybody and sat down at the table and wrote out a cheque for us, saying he just came to give us this donation because the Lord told him to do so. He gave us a cheque for the amount we needed to pay the rent! A genuine and immediate answer to prayer!

*Isaiah 65:24—It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear.*

## ► **Waiting for the Lord to work**

Someone once said "God's delays are not denials." We don't always get immediate answers to our prayers, and that causes us to exercise patience.

*James 1:3–4—Knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.*

*James 5:10—My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience.*

We can't always see how the Lord is going to answer prayer, and we can't always see why He may delay answering. Whatever happens, we need to remember that the Lord will never fail. He will bring what He knows is best to pass. Sometimes when we pray He answers with a "yes"; sometimes with a "no"; and sometimes with a "wait"!

### **[Optional] God's answers**

The Lord's answers to prayer are infinitely perfect, and they will show that often when we were asking for a stone that looked like bread, He was giving us bread that to our shortsightedness looked like a stone (Matthew 7:7–11).

## ► **Believing the promises!**

Even if we can't always see with our eyes what the Lord is doing, we can see with eyes of faith because He's promised to answer prayer.

*Matthew 7:7—Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.*

*John 15:7—If you abide in Me, and My Words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.*

*Mark 11:24—Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.*

### **[Optional] Just for fun!**

A dignified old clergyman owned a parrot that he was exceedingly fond of, but the bird had picked up an appalling vocabulary of cuss words from a previous owner and, after a series of embarrassing episodes, the clergyman decided he would have to get rid of his pet.

A lady in his parish suggested a last-ditch remedy. "I have a female parrot," she said, "who is an absolute saint. She sits quietly on her perch and says nothing but, 'Let's pray.' Why don't you bring your parrot over and see if my own bird's good influence doesn't reform him?"

The clergyman said it was worth a try, and the next night he arrived with his pet tucked under his arm. The bird took one look at the lady parrot and chirped, "Hi, Toots! How about a little kiss?"

The lady parrot responded gleefully, "My prayers have been answered!"

## ► The importance of praying for others

*1 Samuel 12:23a—Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you.*

*Romans 15:30—Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me.*

*1 Thessalonians 1:2—We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers.*

Praying for others is an important part of your prayer life. Sometimes it helps to keep a list of those in special need of prayer. When you know people who are struggling with health problems or job problems or financial problems or personal problems—just any problems—the very best you can do for them is pray for them!

### [Optional] Miraculous change through prayer!

From Sarah, India

One of our fellowship members was still quite distant until the Lord proved Himself to her through a miracle. At a meeting she asked for prayer for her brother who was on drugs and who had embezzled some money from their company and then stole a motor scooter and disappeared!

At the next meeting she shared the testimony of how her brother had come to them a few days after we'd prayed and confessed how much money he had stolen and offered to pay it back. He also returned the scooter and testified that he had given up drugs. He said that he himself didn't know how he had made this complete turn-around, and he confessed that it must have been due to our prayers! As a result of this miraculous answer to prayer, this dear member is really enthusiastic now and wants to have a closer walk with the Lord.

### [Optional] Her lasting legacy

There was once a young invalid who lay upon her deathbed. She had given herself to God and was distressed because she could not labor for Him actively among the lost. Her pastor visited her, and hearing her complaint, told her that from her sick bed she could pray earnestly. He went away and thought of the subject no more. Soon a feeling of religious interest sprung up in the village and the churches were crowded nightly. The little invalid heard of the progress of the revival and inquired anxiously for the names of the saved. A few weeks later she died and among a roll of papers that was found under her pillow was one bearing the names of 56 persons, every one of whom had been converted in the revival. By each name was a little cross, by which the poor crippled saint had checked off the names of the converts as they had been reported to her.

## ► Ways to pray

① *In explaining this section, bear in mind that the best guide is the one who shows the way! The example you set throughout the course, of meaningful to-the-point prayers, prayed in a variety of methods, will have more impact on the students than mere instruction. You teach more by your example than your words.*

Prayer is not judged by the length of words. Sometimes you'll be praying for a desperate situation and you'll want to go into details with the Lord. Other times your prayer can be very short.

The most important thing about your prayer is that you're concentrating on the Lord, whether you pray a lengthy or short prayer!

When you use different ways of praying, such variety can help keep your inspiration for prayer high and help you to concentrate.

Look at "Ways to Pray" in *Prayer Power, a Get Activated!* booklet, for more ideas. See pages 58–63.

① *We have not repeated here what is in the Prayer Power booklet as there would not be enough time in this class. You could, however, refer the students to it.*

### [Optional] ABC...

A little lad was keeping his sheep one Sunday morning. The bells were ringing for church and the people were going over the field, when the little fellow began to think that he, too, would like to pray to God. But what could he say? He had never learned a prayer. So he knelt down and commenced the alphabet—A, B, C, and so on to Z.

A gentleman happening to pass on the other side of the hedge heard the lad's voice, and, looking through the bushes, saw the little fellow kneeling with folded hands and closed eyes, saying, "A, B, C."

"What are you doing, my little man?"

"Please, sir, I was praying."

"But what are you saying your letters for?"

"Why, I didn't know any prayer, only I felt that I wanted God to take care of me and help me to care for the sheep; so I thought if I said all I knew, He would put it together and spell all I want."

"Bless your heart, my little man, He will, He will, He will. When the heart speaks right, the lips can't say wrong."

## ► Praying Written Prayers

Although most of the time it is good to pray as you are led of the Lord, out of the fullness of your heart, at other times, praying prayers that have already been thought out and have been powerfully expressed, even though by someone else, can be very meaningful. If you can find an already written prayer that's appropriate for whatever you are praying for, you may like to use it as your prayer.

Jesus Himself set the precedent for printed prayers in the most famous prayer of all, the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9–13). When His disciples asked Him how to pray, He didn't give them generalities like, "Well, just pray from your heart. Just say what you feel." He actually gave them a prayer—word for word that they could memorize and repeat—not their own words, but His Words. What better example of the power and effectiveness of written prayers could we ask for than that?

## Class Section 3: Praise

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20 minutes

### ► The importance of thanking and praising the Lord

We've talked a lot today about the petition aspect of prayer. Now we want to focus on praise and thankfulness.

*1 Thessalonians 5:18—In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*

*Psalm 34:1—I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.*

*Psalm 86:12—I will praise You, O Lord my God, with all my heart, and I will glorify Your name forevermore.*

*Psalm 118:21—I will praise You, for You have answered me, and have become my salvation.*

*Psalm 105:1–2—Oh, give thanks to the Lord! Call upon His name; make known His deeds among the peoples!  
(2) Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him; talk of all His wondrous works!*

Any relationship is very one-sided if it involves a lot of taking but not much giving. The Lord certainly doesn't mind our taking all that He has for us, but in return He looks for our thanks and appreciation. He wants us to acknowledge that we are pleased with all the gifts that He has given us and how He takes care of us so well! He delights in taking care of us, but part of His pleasure is receiving our gratitude.

## [Optional] The story of the leper who returned to praise God

*Luke 17:12–19—Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. (13) And they lifted up their voices and said, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!” (14) So when He saw them, He said to them, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. (15) And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, (16) and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. (17) So Jesus answered and said, “Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? (18) “Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?” (19) And He said to him, “Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well.”*

### 📖 [Optional] Skit: A basketful of praise

See skit script at the end of this class.

## ▶ Taking time to say “thank you” to Jesus

Often we keep asking for our needs, but then we almost get too busy gathering up all our blessings that we don’t take time to thank Him for them!

The courteous, polite thing to do when one receives a gift is to sit down and write a thank-you letter—to take the time and effort to acknowledge your gratitude. When you take this special time to voice your appreciation, the sender then knows that it meant something to you. However, if he hears nothing, or maybe just a “one-liner” stuck in the middle of another barrage of requests, he figures that his gift must not have meant very much to you. He also can quite legitimately figure that giving you all the other things that you are asking for will be met with the same lack of gratitude.

Therefore it’s a little difficult for the Lord to keep pouring out His gifts to you when you don’t take time to properly acknowledge them, showing your gratefulness and thankfulness by stopping and formulating your “letter of thanks” to Him for the wonderful gifts that He has sent you—in this case, God’s priceless gifts, treasures so rich and so valuable they can only come from His hand—blessing upon blessing!

## [Optional] The banquet

There was once a king in Spain called Alfonso XII. Now it came to the ears of this king that the pages at his court forgot to ask God’s blessing on their daily meals, and he determined to rebuke them. He invited them to a banquet that they all attended. The table was spread with every kind of good thing, and the boys ate with evident relish; but none of them remembered to ask God’s blessing on the food.

During the feast a beggar entered, dirty and ill-clad. He seated himself at the royal table and ate and drank to his heart’s content. At first the pages were amazed, and they expected that the king would order him away. But King Alfonso said never a word. When the beggar had finished, he rose and left without a word of thanks. Then the boys could keep silence no longer. “What a despicably mean fellow!” they cried.

But the king silenced them, and in clear, calm tones he said, “Boys, bolder and more audacious than this beggar have you all been. Every day you sit down to a table supplied by the bounty of your Heavenly Father, yet you ask not His blessing nor express to Him your gratitude.”

## [Optional] The only excuse...

The only excuse for not praising the Lord is if you are out of breath:

Psalm 150:6—Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.

(But of course you could still praise the Lord in your mind and heart!)

## ▶ Fitting “Praise Time” into our daily life

If we don’t have a special time allotted solely for the purpose of praising the Lord, we often do not do it, because there are so many other demands on our time.

Something we have tried is scheduling five minutes three times a day when we stop and praise the Lord. We call this “Praise Time.” We specifically use this time to praise the Lord. We don’t ask Him for anything or petition Him. We only thank Him.

We’ve found that setting aside specified daily times for praise has helped us get more in the habit of praising the Lord.

Although these should not be the only times we praise the Lord, at least we know that we have these special periods three times a day to stop and acknowledge the Lord, to thank Him for how much He has done for us.

## ► Here are some ideas of what to do in Praise Time:

- Sing a song of praise to the Lord.
- Close your eyes and thank Him for specific blessings.
- Read a poem of thanks.
- Read a written “praise.”

① See what other ideas the attendees suggest.

## Closing Activity and Prayer

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15 minutes

### ► Praise Time

① Have Praise Time. (Teach the students how to do this. For instance, you may want to go around the room and have each person say three things they are personally thankful for that happened or that they received from the Lord during the past week.)

① Next, sing some lively “thanking the Lord” songs. Select songs from the “Praise Song Sheet.”

### ► Prayer

① Close the meeting with a short prayer for safekeeping.

## Skits and Songs

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### Skit: A Basketful of Praise

**Characters:** The Lord and an angel.

**Props:** A basket and something to fill it with (such as paper, leaves, various items)

**(Important note:** Please be careful to portray the Lord in a fitting way. Although the skit can be amusing, it should still be respectful towards the Lord.)

**Lord:** I’d like to know how much My beloved people are praying. My angel, I’d like you to go down to Earth and collect for Me all the people’s prayers and bring them before Me, so that I may rejoice in My creation and know that My people need Me and want to come to Me with their needs. I so enjoy answering all their prayers. Go, My angel, swiftly.

**Angel:** Yes, my Lord. As You wish.

*(Angel comes back huffing and puffing, barely able to carry the load. The basket is full to the brim.)*

**Angel:** Here, my Lord. I can hardly carry it all. Your people sure like to petition You for their needs and desires.

**Lord:** Oh, how I delight in My people. How I like their prayers. So many of them, so many. Make sure they're all answered, down to the last and smallest one.

*(Later)* **Lord:** Now My angel, after all these prayers have been answered, My people must be very thankful. I wish to see just how much they appreciate it. Go and gather now all the praises of My people.

**Angel:** Yes, my Lord, with delight.

*(After a short while the angel comes back with an almost empty basket:)* My Lord ... I tried so hard, I looked everywhere ... but all the praises I found ... are here, my Lord.

**Lord:** Oh, my ... the basket is almost empty. Are you sure you collected them all?—All the people's praises?

**Angel:** Yes, my Lord, but this is all there was.

**Lord:** Oh, it really isn't much. My people sure know how to ask for things, but when it comes to thanking Me... It is very sad, very sad indeed.

**Angel:** We should encourage Your people and remind them somehow to praise You more.