

Study 1. Talking to God

READ: Matthew 6: 5-8, Hebrews 11: 6, James 1: 5-8

Him to do. But we should also pray for ourselves, not just asking for things all the time. God doesn't want to hear a shopping list from us every time. We should not forget to tell God of our appreciation of Him, and to thank Him for what He has done for us. We can also pray for guidance, for increased understanding of the Bible, for holiness, for help when we are feeling tired or depressed.



KEY VERSE: James 5: 16
"The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much."

How do we talk to God? We talk to Him when we pray. Prayer is very important for the Christian. In **Acts 2** we saw that Christians in the early days of the church met together to pray. This is a very important part of church life, and we should go to the prayer meeting as often as we can. But the Bible tells us that we should pray on our own, too. Private prayer is also very important. One of the things which showed that Saul of Tarsus was converted to Christ was, when God told Ananias, "**He is praying**". (**Acts 9: 11**)

There are a number of important things we should know about personal prayer.

1. IT SHOULD BE PRIVATE.

The Lord Jesus said that when you pray to God you should go into a private place and "**pray to your Father who is in the secret place**". (**Matthew 6: 6**) This is not because there is anything embarrassing about praying, but God does not want us to show off to others, and make them think how super-spiritual we are. In public prayer meetings, we unitedly ask God for things we need, but in private prayer we speak to God about our personal affairs.

2. IT SHOULD BE REGULAR.

Daniel prayed to God three times a day. (**Daniel 6: 10**) We should make it a habit to pray, at least once a day, perhaps after we have had our daily Bible reading. It is a good idea to keep notes of what we prayed for and when, so that we can thank God when He answers our prayers. We should remember to thank Him every day for the many good things with which He blesses us.

3. IT SHOULD BE PERSONAL.

When we pray, we should tell God what is on our minds or hearts, what we hope for, or are afraid of, what is troubling us, or what we would like

4. IT SHOULD BE UNSELFISH.

We should pray for ourselves, but not only for ourselves. God expects us to pray for other people too, "**for all men, for kings and all who are in authority . . .**". (**1 Timothy 2: 1 & 2**) You can pray for your friends who are not yet Christians, for your family, for the Government and the country, and for any news items that are pressing.

5. IT SHOULD BE HOPEFUL.

We should pray believing that God will answer our prayers, rather than expecting Him not to. Praying in faith is very important. (**James 1: 6 & 7 and Hebrews 11: 6**)

6. IT SHOULD BE FERVENT. (**James 5: 16**)

That means, we should put some effort, some meaning into our prayers. God doesn't want to hear us saying, "Bless mum and dad, and bless my sister, and help my friend, and give me this or that, and help me to have a nice day. Amen". He wants us to put some heart into our prayers. "Lord, I really long for my friend to know You. Please help her to understand the Good News about the Lord Jesus. Do help me to use the opportunities You give me, to explain these things to her."

7. IT SHOULD BE FROM HOLY HEARTS.

That doesn't mean we have to be perfect when we pray, but it does mean that if we are wilfully disobeying God, He will not respond to our prayers. "**If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear.**" (**Psalms 66: 18**) Confessing our sins is always an important part of our personal prayer life. (**1 John 1: 9**)

Some people say that because God knows everything there is no point in praying; we are only telling Him what He knows already. But prayer is not just telling God things. It is communicating with Him, so that we can have a relationship with Him. He said to His disciples, "**Watch and pray.**" (**Matthew 26: 41**) That is what you should be doing.

Study 1. Talking to God

1 A. READ *MATTHEW 6: 5-8* AGAIN. HOW DID JESUS SAY “the hypocrites” PRAYED?

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B. IN CONTRAST TO “the hypocrites”, HOW WERE THE DISCIPLES OF JESUS TO PRAY?

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C. WHAT IS SO WONDERFUL ABOUT OUR FATHER IN RELATION TO OUR PRAYERS?

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2 ‘DANIEL WAS A MAN OF PRAYER’

i. How frequently did he pray each day? (See *DANIEL 6: 10*)

ii. When his life was in danger, he prayed and God answered him. Write out his prayer of thanksgiving. (*2:23*)

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iii. Write a list of things for which YOU could thank God.

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3 A. WHAT DO YOU THINK “LET HIM ASK IN FAITH” MEANS? (*JAMES 1:6*)

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B. WHY IS FAITH SO IMPORTANT WHEN WE PRAY?

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4 READ *1 TIMOTHY 2: 1 & 2* AGAIN.

a. When we ‘talk to God’, it may take several forms. List THREE of them.

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b. Which words in **verse 1** would you connect with these kinds of prayer?

i. Being grateful to God.

ii. Praying for other people.

iii. Asking God to supply definite needs.

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5 HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER SOMEONE WHO SAID THAT THERE IS NO POINT IN PRAYING BECAUSE GOD KNOWS EVERYTHING ANYWAY?

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6 EXPLAIN AS CLEARLY AS YOU CAN WHAT *PSALM 66: 18* MEANS.

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This study sheet belongs to:

Study 2. Listening to God

READ: Psalm 19: 7-14



KEY VERSE: Psalm 25: 5

“Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; on You I wait all the day.”

When we pray, we speak to God. But how does God speak to us? Are we to expect to hear a voice from Heaven telling us what to do, as people did in the Old Testament? Will God speak to us in dreams, as He used to, in Bible days?

In **1 Samuel 3**, we read how God spoke to Samuel by calling him in an audible voice. Samuel, however, thought it was Eli, the priest, who was calling him. **(See verses 5-8)** In the New Testament, when the Lord Jesus was baptised, God’s voice was heard from Heaven saying, **“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”**. **(Matthew 3: 17)** Today, however, God does not speak to us in that way! Neither does He normally communicate with us through dreams, as He did in the days of Pharaoh, king of Egypt **(Genesis 41)** or in the case of Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. **(Daniel 2)**

God spoke to men and women in New Testament days through His Son, the Lord Jesus. Jesus told people the things they needed to know about God. Then God, through the Holy Spirit, caused men to remember and write down the words and miracles of Jesus. In this way, people who hadn’t seen Him or heard Him could know what He had said. He also revealed other things by the Holy Spirit to the apostles, who wrote them down. These writings were collected together to form a book, or series of books, called the Bible. God speaks to us today when we read the Bible. He speaks to us by helping us understand the meaning of the words He has written. Through His Holy Spirit, the words teach us, rebuke us, correct us, inspire us and guide us. **(See 2 Timothy 3 : 16 & 17)**

As the Bible is the main way in which God speaks to us we should be careful to do three things regularly.

1. We should try to **READ PART OF THE BIBLE EVERY DAY. (Psalm 1: 2)** Some people can manage to read



large sections of it at a time, others can manage only a few verses. Find out what you are most comfortable with, and then set aside the same amount of time each day in which to read the Bible. One of the best ways of doing this is to use daily Bible reading notes, along with your Bible. (Contact those who supply you with this course, if you want details about how to obtain daily reading notes.) You should also have a notebook and a pencil to write things that you find interesting, or questions you want to ask someone. Make a habit of reading the Bible every day, and you will find God speaking to you through His Word. If we are too busy to give God time in reading His Word, we shall never know His will for our lives. Mary took time to listen to her Lord’s Word.

(See Luke 10: 38-42)

2. We should **LISTEN TO THE TEACHING OR PREACHING OF GOD’S WORD**, in the church to which we belong, as often as possible. While private reading of the Bible is good, it is no replacement for listening to the public preaching of the Bible. This is because God blesses the preaching of His Word in a particular way. You will only get real benefit from the preaching of the Word if you listen to it. When you listen to the preaching you hear God speaking to you. At home, you can give more time to the topic preached about, and allow the Lord to speak, as you quietly think about what you have heard.
3. We should try to **BE IN THE COMPANY OF THOSE WHO KNOW THE BIBLE** better than we do. Other Christians can point out to us when we are doing wrong things. We need Christian friends who know the Bible, to guide us in our lives.

If we do these three things, we put ourselves in the position where we are reading and hearing God’s Word regularly. Then God will use the Bible to speak to us. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to apply the teachings of the Bible to our hearts and consciences. Is God able to speak to us through the Bible? Are we reading it, hearing it, discussing it? We should be!

Study 2. Listening to God

1 FINISH THESE SENTENCES:-

- i. When we pray, we
- ii. When we read the Bible

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2 A. IN WHAT WAY DID GOD SPEAK TO THE YOUNG BOY SAMUEL?

B. WHAT MISTAKE DID SAMUEL MAKE?

C. WHAT DID HE SAY WHEN HE EVENTUALLY ANSWERED THE LORD? (1 SAMUEL 3: 10)

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3 A. WHAT OTHER METHOD OF COMMUNICATING WITH PEOPLE DID GOD USE IN OLD TESTAMENT TIMES? (CLUE - READ JOB 33: 14 -16)

B. NAME TWO PERSONS TO WHOM GOD SPOKE IN THIS WAY.

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4 ANSWER TRUE OR FALSE?

- i. Today, God speaks mainly to us through dreams.
- ii. The Holy Spirit controlled the minds (and the pens!) of the men who wrote down the words which the Lord Jesus had spoken.
- iii. The Bible is the chief way in which God speaks today.
- iv. It is impossible for anyone to understand the Bible properly without the help of the Holy Spirit.
- v. Reading the Bible once a week is sufficient.

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5 IN VERSES 7-11 OF THE BIBLE READING THERE ARE SEVERAL NAMES, SUCH AS "the law", "the testimony", "the commandment". THESE WORDS ALL STAND FOR 'THE WORD OF GOD', OR 'THE BIBLE'. FROM THE PSALM, WRITE DOWN THREE EFFECTS WHICH THE BIBLE CAN HAVE ON US - IF WE READ IT!

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6 "MARY.... SAT AT JESUS' FEET AND HEARD HIS WORD." (LUKE 10: 39) HOW CAN WE FOLLOW HER GOOD EXAMPLE?

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7 WRITE A SENTENCE TO EXPLAIN HOW WE CAN BENEFIT FROM HEARING THE PREACHING OF GOD'S WORD.

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Study 3. Learning about God

This study sheet belongs to:

READ: Acts 17: 10-12, 2 Timothy 2: 15-19



KEY VERSE: 2 Timothy 2: 15

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

Now that you have become a believer, it will soon become clear to you that you have a new desire to read the Bible yourself. Reading the Bible on its own is very important. It makes it possible for God to speak to you, as we saw in the previous Study.

It is also very important for you to study the Bible. Studying the Bible is more than just reading it. It means coming to the Bible to ask questions and find answers. You should ask such questions as, “What do these words I have just read in the Bible mean?” and “What does the Bible teach about such things as - love, marriage, families, drinking alcohol, war, and the end of the world?” To help you to understand and study the Bible more fully you will probably need a number of good books.

1. You should try to get a one-volume **COMMENTARY** on the Bible. A commentary is a book that comments on each passage of the Bible and helps us to find the meaning of it. There are several excellent one-volume commentaries on the Bible. One of the best is the **BELIEVER'S BIBLE COMMENTARY** which was written by William MacDonald.
2. A good **CONCORDANCE** will also be helpful. A concordance is like a large index of all the important words in the Bible. It will help you to find a verse where it says something which you can't fully remember, but you know one or two words of it. Look up those words in the concordance, and it will list the verses where those words occur. Then you should look down the list until you come to the one you are trying to find. A good concordance for new believers is **CRUDEN'S CONCORDANCE**. The biggest concordance of all is called **STRONG'S EXHAUSTIVE CONCORDANCE**. It claims to list every word in the Bible, including all the 'if's', 'and's' and 'but's'. 'Exhaustive', by the way, does not mean 'exhausting'. It means 'full, thorough and complete'!



3. Another book you will find useful is a **BIBLE DICTIONARY** or **ENCYCLOPAEDIA**. It contains information on all kinds of Bible subjects. These, along with the maps, charts, and diagrams, will help you in your Bible study.

Now that you have these three tools, you will be able to sit down with a **NOTE-BOOK AND A PEN**, turn to the section you want to study in depth, then ask yourself questions to help you to understand what the passage is saying. “Who wrote these words?” “To whom was he writing/speaking?” “Why did he use these particular words?” “What do they mean?” “What should I learn from this passage?” “What should I do, or avoid doing?”

If you have a computer, you can buy a Bible Study CD. In fact, so much is available to help believers to study the Bible, that we have no real excuse not to be students of God's Word. The Bereans in the New Testament were commended for the fact that they **“searched the Scriptures daily”**. (**Acts 17: 11**) We should also pray that God will help us understand His Word. (**Psalms 119: 18**) We, too, should study the Bible so that we know what it teaches. Then we will be sure of two things. First of all, we will not be **“carried about with every wind of doctrine”**. (**Ephesians 4: 14**) That means if we know what the Bible teaches we will not be confused by other people. Secondly, we will be able to help other people to understand what the Bible teaches. After all, you cannot teach other people what you do not understand yourself! If you want to be a preacher or a teacher, you must first of all be a student. Are you studying the Bible seriously? You should be!



Study 3. Learning about God

1 WHY DO YOU THINK IT IS IMPORTANT TO STUDY THE BIBLE, NOT JUST TO READ IT?

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2 A. WHAT IS A COMMENTARY?

B. WHAT IS A CONCORDANCE?

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3 WHY DO YOU THINK THE STUDY SUGGESTS THAT YOU USE A NOTE-BOOK AND A PEN WHEN YOU STUDY THE BIBLE?

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4 a. WHY DO YOU THINK THE PEOPLE OF BEREA WERE SAID TO BE “MORE FAIR-MINDED” (NOBLE) THAN THOSE IN THESSALONICA?

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b. IN WHAT WAY ARE THE CHRISTIANS AT BEREA A GOOD EXAMPLE FOR US TODAY?

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5 READ 2 TIMOTHY 2: 15-17 AGAIN.

i. Write out *VERSE 15*.

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ii In what way had the two men named in *VERSE 17* “*strayed concerning the truth*”?

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6 THE MANY FALSE TEACHINGS WHICH ARE AROUND US TODAY ARE LIKE THE “WIND” WHICH COULD BLOW US ‘OFF COURSE’. (SEE EPHESIANS 4: 14 & 15) WHAT SHOULD WE DO TO MAKE SURE WE STAY ‘ON COURSE’ FOR GOD?

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7 READ 1 TIMOTHY 4: 15 & 16, 2 TIMOTHY 3: 14 & 15 AND 2 TIMOTHY 4:2.

HOW IS TIMOTHY TO USE THE WORD OF GOD AND WHAT BENEFITS WOULD RESULT FROM IT?

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Total marks for this study



KEY VERSES: Luke 21: 3

“Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all.”

How is the work of God to grow? The Holy Spirit makes it grow

when He uses our preaching, teaching or other forms of witness for Him. But in turn this involves expense! Buildings have to be maintained, and materials purchased. Where does the money come from? It doesn't drop down from Heaven! It comes from Christians.



God expects us to give what we can to support His work.

OLD TESTAMENT TITHING.

One of the things that God expected His people in the Old Testament to do was to give a tithe to God. A tithe means a tenth, and in Old Testament times the Israelites were required to give a tenth of all their crops and animals to the Lord. (**See Leviticus 27: 30 & 32 and Deuteronomy 14: 22**) The produce and money collected through tithes were passed on to the Temple priests and Levites who were dependent upon it for their livelihood. In addition to tithing, the Israelites gave 'free-will offerings'; these were voluntary, whereas tithing was compulsory.

NEW TESTAMENT GIVING.

There is no commandment given to us in the New Testament about giving ten percent of what we have to the Lord. The early Christians were so keen to help each other that they shared what they had and handed it out **“as anyone had need”**. (**Acts 2: 44 & 45**) Much later on, Paul was concerned that some believers were very poor and had no one to help them. So he wrote to Christians in **1 Corinthians 16: 1-2**, saying, **“concerning the collection for the saints . . . on the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper”**.

READ: Luke 21: 1-4, 1 Corinthians 16: 1-3

Here we see four principles of Christian giving:-

1. IT IS TO BE REGULAR.

Most churches had, and still have, a weekly collection, into which believers put a contribution. The offering was made **“on the first day of the week”**.

2. IT IS TO BE INDIVIDUAL.

“Let EACH ONE of you lay something aside . . .” Both rich and poor, were involved.

3. IT IS TO BE PROPORTIONATE.

The principle seems to be, not a straight ten percent, but **“as he may prosper”**. So if a man had more money one week, than the previous week he was to give more.

4. IT IS TO BE PURPOSEFUL.

Giving is to be thoughtful and cheerful, always bearing in mind how much the Lord has given to us. (**2 Corinthians 9: 7**)

The money was distributed to Christians who were in financial need, as **2 Corinthians 8: 1-4** shows us. On occasions, Paul received gifts from churches to whom he had brought the Gospel in the first place. As an example of this, we read in **Philippians 4: 15-19** of how he thanks the church at Philippi for their generosity towards him. We can be quite sure that other apostles and missionaries were helped in the same way. Nowadays, churches use the money from the offerings to pay for all kinds of expenses, such as paying for electricity and water services, buying hymn-books, Sunday School materials or printing of Christian literature. Even today, local churches support financially those involved in the Lord's work, both at home and abroad.

Putting something in the collection should be done carefully and privately so that no one sees what we give. The important thing, Jesus said, is to give so that only God knows how much we give. (**Matthew 6: 1-4**) The Lord Jesus said that the widow in **Luke 21**, who had given only two mites, had contributed more than all the rich people, because she had given everything she had. However little we are able to give it will be recognised and rewarded by the Lord, if we have done it for His sake! His promise is,

“Those who honour Me I will honour”.
(**1 Samuel 2: 30**)

Study 4. Giving to God

1 A. WRITE A SENTENCE TO EXPLAIN WHAT 'TITHING' MEANT FOR THE ISRAELITES.

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B. TO WHAT USES WERE THE MONEY AND GOODS COLLECTED IN THIS WAY PUT?

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2 THE FIRST CHRISTIANS, IN JERUSALEM, WERE VERY GENEROUS AND CARING IN THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARDS EACH OTHER. READ ACTS 4: 32, 34 & 35, AND SAY IN YOUR OWN WORDS, WHAT THEY DID TO HELP THEIR POOR BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

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3 1 CORINTHIANS 16: 1-3 CONTAINS PAUL'S INSTRUCTIONS TO THE CHURCH ABOUT "the collection for the saints". (I.E. THE CHRISTIANS)

i. Write out the phrase which tells us that the collection was to be REGULAR.

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ii. Which words suggest that the amount which a person gives may vary, from week to week?

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iii. Write out the words which instruct us that ALL the members of the church were to contribute.

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4 READ THE INSTRUCTIONS WHICH THE LORD JESUS GAVE HIS DISCIPLES ABOUT 'GIVING' OR 'DOING ALMS', IN MATTHEW 6: 1-4.

i. He taught them not to "sound a trumpet". What do you think this means?

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ii. What does the saying, "Let not your left hand know what your right hand is doing" mean?

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iii. What will the Father do if we give secretly?

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5 EXPLAIN WHAT THE LORD JESUS MEANT BY SAYING, "THIS POOR WIDOW HAS PUT IN MORE THAN ALL".

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6 A. EXPLAIN WHY 'GIVING TO THE LORD' IS IMPORTANT IN THE CHRISTIAN'S LIFE.

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B. TO WHAT USES COULD THE WEEKLY COLLECTION BE PUT?

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7 READ 1 SAMUEL 2: 30 AND EXPLAIN WHAT GOD WILL DO FOR THOSE WHO HONOUR HIM.

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Total marks for this Unit

Return your study sheets to:

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Total marks for this study