
Following Jesus -- Course A

Instructions:

Please take all courses in order as listed on our home page (the computer will ask!). If you have not done all the lessons of previous courses, please [click here to go to the beginning](#).

If you have not already done so, save this lesson to your computer using the "save" feature of your browser or PDF reader. Then print out the lesson (or at least open it in your browser or PDF reader **offline** – not on the Internet). Read the lesson and **study in your Bible the passages indicated >>> Scripture <<<**. Following each passage, study each question that has a number enclosed in asterisks (*1*, *2*, etc.), and **write down your answers on paper**. Some questions include more than one number because they have more than one blank to fill in. ("Think" questions should be carefully considered for your own benefit, but your answers will not be submitted to us.) Please take your time, study each passage carefully, answer the questions honestly, and consider the applications to your own life (John 12:48; 2 Tim. 2:15).

When you have studied the whole lesson and written down answers to all the indicated questions, return to the menu for this course on our web site at www.BibleStudyLessons.com and click on the link for the **answer quiz** for this lesson (or simply click on the link at the end of this lesson). Follow the directions to submit your answers and receive your grade. You will then be given an opportunity to see the correct answers to the questions. Please save this lesson and the correct answers for future reference.

Then move on to the next lesson or the next course in order. **Please study all lessons in all courses in order as listed in the menus on our web site.**

Thank you for your interest, and God bless your study of His word.

"Teach Us to Pray" – Part 2 Following Jesus -- Course A, Lesson #5

Introduction:

This lesson continues our study of Bible principles regarding prayer. We encourage you to review the last lesson before beginning this one.

III. Can Prayer Really Change the Future?

Are the benefits of prayer just psychological, or does God respond to prayer by changing the course of history?

A. Promises that God Will Answer

Consider what these passages say about God's response to prayer.

>>> Please read 1 John 5:14,15. <<<

1 What confidence can we have when we pray? Answer: God hears us so we _____ what we asked for.

>>> Please read 1 John 3:22. <<<

2 What happens when we pray? (a) God ignores us, (b) God gives what we asked for, (c) God doesn't hear us, (d) God is unable to answer. Answer: _____.

>>> Please read James 5:16. <<<

3 A righteous man's prayer accomplishes what? (a) It is powerful and accomplishes much, (b) It is ignored, (c) It just makes us feel better, (d) the Bible does not say. Answer: _____.

If we meet God's conditions, He has promised to answer our prayers according to what is good for us in harmony with His will.

(Matt. 7:7–11; Mark 11:24; John 14:13,14; 15:7,16; 16:23,24,26; James 1:5,6; Luke 18:1–8; 1 Peter 3:12; 5:7; Matt. 6:6,8; Psalm 55:22; 86:7; 28:6)

B. Bible Examples of Answered Prayers

Many Bible examples show God's response to prayers of His people. God does not do miracles today (1 Cor. 13:8–10), but He is able to control events according to natural law so as to answer prayer without miracles. We will focus on cases of this nature.

>>> Please read 1 Samuel 1:10–20,26–28. <<<

4 What did Hannah receive because she prayed? Answer: Hannah received a _____.

>>> Please read 2 Chronicles 7:11–14. <<<

5&6 What did God promise to do if His people would pray? Answer: He would _____ their sin and _____ their land.

>>> Please read 2 King 20:1–7. <<<

7 What happened because Hezekiah prayed? Answer: Hezekiah lived (give a number) _____ years longer than he would have lived.

(Cf. Ex. 32:9–14; 1 Sam.; 7:5–11; 2 Kings 19:15–37; 2 Chron. 33:10–13; Neh. 1:4–2:8; Psalm 32:5–7.)

C. Some Conclusions about Answers to Prayers

God does act in response to prayer.

Some people claim that, if God does not do miracles, then He must not answer prayer. Others see only psychological benefits in prayer. Even though we pray Scripturally, they claim God does not actually intervene in the course of earthly events to bring about what we requested. But God did act in the above examples. Consider further:

>>> Please read Matthew 18:19. <<<

8 What does God promise when people join in prayer? (a) the Father will do what was asked, (b) nothing, (c) the people feel better. Answer: _____.

Think: If the only benefits of prayer are psychological, couldn't the same effect be produced if a person prayed with sincere faith to an idol? Note James 5:16; 1 John 3:22; Prov. 15:8,29. (Cf. John 14:13,14; 15:7.)

The Bible promises that God Himself acts in response to our prayers, acting by means of natural law.

However, we must also work, to the extent of our ability, to achieve what we requested.

God does act in response to Scriptural prayers, but He will not act if we are not willing to do our part. In the Scriptures below what we should pray for is compared to what we should work for.

>>> Please read Matthew 6:11; 2 Thess. 3:10. <<<

9 What should we pray and work for? Answer: We should pray for our _____, but we should also work for it.

>>> Please read James 1:5; 2 Timothy 3:15–17. <<<

10 We should pray for wisdom, but where is wisdom found? Answer: The _____ are able to make us wise to salvation.

>>> Please read Matthew 9:36–38; 2 Timothy 2:2. <<<

11 What should we pray and work for? (a) popularity, (b) wealth, (c) a new car, (d) God's word to be taught. Answer: _____.

If we pray for needs to be met, we must do what we can to bring about what we requested. God may then bless our work and use it to accomplish good that may not have been accomplished had we not prayed.

God gives, not necessarily what we want, but what is best for everyone involved.

God may give something different from what people asked for.

>>> Please read Matthew 26:36–46; cf. Luke 22:43. <<<

12 Instead of avoiding death, what did Jesus receive? Answer: An _____ from heaven strengthened Him.

>>> Please read 2 Corinthians 12:7–10. <<<

13 Why wasn't Paul's thorn in the flesh removed? (a) he didn't have one, (b) it kept him humble, (c) God ignored his prayer. Answer: _____.

>>> Please read Matthew 7:7–11. <<<

14 What kinds of gifts does a father give? (a) there is no limit, (b) stones, (c) serpents, (d) good gifts. Answer: _____.

(Psalm 34:10; Rom. 8:28; James 1:17; Matt. 6:8)

If we do not receive exactly what we asked for, this does not mean God did not answer. God knows what is best, so we ought to pray for God's will to be done. He can then give us what we asked, something greater, or something different, according to what He knows to be best.

We may not understand **how** God can control the universe without miracles, yet the Bible affirms that He does. If we believe in God's power, then we must believe He is able to answer prayer, even when we cannot explain how He does it.

IV. What Conditions Must Prayer Meet?

God has promised to answer prayer, yet sometimes our prayers are not answered because we have not prayed properly. There are conditions we must meet in order for God to answer our prayers, just as there are conditions we must meet in order for God to forgive our sins.

A. We Must Pray in Jesus' Name (by His Mediation).

Consider these verses:

>>> Please read John 14:13,14. <<<

15 In whose name should we pray? (a) Jesus', (b) Buddha's, (c) Mary's, (d) the Pope's. Answer: _____.

(Cf. John 15:16; 16:23,24,26; Eph. 5:20)

>>> Please read Romans 1:8. <<<

16 Through whom did Paul thank God? (Col. 3:17) Answer: Paul thanked God through _____.

>>> Please read 1 Timothy 2:5. <<<<

17&18 How many mediators are there, and who is He? Answer: There is (give a number) _____ mediator(s) and that is _____.

Note: The immediate context here refers to salvation, but the broader context refers to prayer (see v1,2,8). Jesus mediates in prayer because He mediates in salvation. He is our High Priest (Heb. 4:14–16).

Think: Should we pray to God through Mary or a dead "saint"? Did they redeem us by their death? Can they mediate prayer?

What does it mean to pray "in Jesus' name"?

A person's name stands for the person and all that He is. God's name is "hallowed" because God Himself is hallowed (Matt. 6:9). More specifically, a person's name represents his will and authority.

Think: Why do you sign your name to a check or legal document? What is meant when a police officer says, "Halt in the name of the law"?

We pray "through Jesus" because His authority enables us to be heard. Because of sin, we could never approach God without Jesus. We need a "go-between" to reconcile us to God, so we can communicate with Him. Because Jesus died as our sacrifice, He is the only one who can authorize us to approach God in prayer.

To pray in Jesus' name means we are appealing to His authority as the one mediator between us and God. We are trusting His power to make it possible for God to hear our prayer.

B. We Must Pray According to God's Will.

>>> Please read 1 John 5:14,15; Matthew 26:39. <<<

19 Whose will should be done as result of prayer? (a) our own will, (b) the will of our loved ones, (c) God's will, (d) the will of the church leaders. Answer: _____.

Consider what this means.

In things essential to salvation, God's will is revealed in the Scriptures.

We must never pray for things that contradict God's revealed will.

>>> Please read James 4:3. <<<

20 Why did God not answer these people's requests? (a) they were the wrong race, (b) they were poor, (c) they prayed to please themselves. Answer: _____.

>>> Please read Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38 . <<<

21 What must unbaptized sinners do to be forgiven? (a) believe, (b) repent, (c) be baptized, (d) all the preceding. Answer: _____.

Think: Would it be proper for us to pray for God to save people without faith, without repentance, or without baptism?

Nowhere does the gospel tell an unbaptized person to pray for forgiveness. Such a prayer is not according to God's will.

(Note: If you would like more information about whether or not an alien sinner may pray for forgiveness of sins, please see the links at the end of this lesson.)

(Think of other prayers that would contradict God's revealed will.)

In things not essential to salvation, God's will may not be expressly revealed.

Many events of life are not matters of right or wrong, so we may not know God's expressed will. For example, we know God allows suffering and death, so in a particular instance of illness we may not know whether God would be willing for the person to get better or not (2 Cor. 12:7-10).

In these cases we pray for what we believe to be best, then ask God to do what He knows to be best. Then by faith we accept the outcome.

C. We Must Pray with Understanding, Sincerity, and Humility.

>>> Please read 1 Corinthians 14:15. <<<

22&23 How does this verse say we should pray? Answer: We pray with the _____ and with the _____.

Think: What can you do to help make sure you understand and mean what you pray?

>>> Please read Matthew 6:5,7. <<<

24 Why are some folks' prayers wrong? (a) they pray to be seen by men, (b) they offer vain repetitions, (c) either of the preceding. Answer: _____.

Think of some examples of vain repetition. What can we learn about groups that require members to say a certain memorized prayer a certain number of times? However, is it always wrong to repeat a request in prayer? (Study Matt. 26:36–46; 2 Cor. 12:7–10; Luke 18:1–7.)

Prayer must never become a mere formality or outward ritual that we go through without meaning what we do or simply to impress other people. We must pray fervently from the heart.

(1 Sam. 1:10,15; Luke 22:44; Mark 12:40; 1 Cor. 14:15; Psalm 17:1; 145:18; James 5:16,17)

>>> Please read Luke 18:9–14. <<<

25&26 Who was humble in prayer, and who exalted himself? Answer: The _____ was proud; the _____ was humble.

Our attitudes and speech in prayer should be respectful, exalting God's greatness while recognizing our weaknesses, sins, and human frailty. (2 Chron. 7:14; 33:10–13; Gen. 18:27)

D. We Must Pray in Faith.

>>> Please read James 1:5–8. <<<

27 What happens if we doubt instead of having faith? (a) we receive nothing, (b) God is pleased, (c) we receive wisdom. Answer: _____.

As already discussed, God has expressly revealed that He wants to give some things, such as forgiveness to a penitent child of God. Faith requires us to believe He will give what He has promised. For other things He may not have revealed what He will give (such as good health); so we pray, "Thy will be done." Then we must believe He will do what is best.

Praying in faith also requires us to accept what God sends. Too often, when we do not receive exactly what we asked for, we complain or think God broke His promise. Faith requires us to believe He will give the best thing at the best time, and then believe that the result is what is best.

E. We Must Pray with Repentance for Sin.

>>> Please read Acts 8:21–23. <<<

28&29 What was Simon told to do to be forgiven? Answer: He was told to _____ and _____ to God for forgiveness.

>>> Please read Luke 18:13,14. <<<

30 What happened because the publican admitted his sins? Answer: The publican went down to his house _____ before God.

Forgiveness is not granted to those who persist in sin, excuse it, rationalize it, overlook it, or hide it. To receive forgiveness when we pray, we must be truly sorry for sin and determine to overcome it.

(2 Chron. 7:14; Psalm 32:5–7; James 5:16; 1 Kings 8:33–36,46–53)

F. We Must Pray with Forgiveness for Others.

>>> Please read Matthew 6:12,14,15. <<<

31 What must we do in order for God to forgive our sins? (a) pay a fee, (b) forgive others, (c) deny our guilt, (d) blame others for our sins. Answer: _____.

To have a right relationship with God we must pursue right relationships with people. Have others apologized to you requesting your forgiveness, yet you continue to hold a grudge? Do you seek revenge, wishing harm to come to those who have wronged you, unwilling to pursue peace and harmony? (Mark 11:25; Matt. 18:21–35)

To receive God's forgiveness when we pray, we must have the same attitude toward others that we expect Him to have toward us!

G. We Must Pray While Living a Faithful Life.

Consider how our manner of life relates to God's answer to prayer.

>>> Please read James 5:16. <<<

32 Whose prayer is effective? (a) everybody's, (b) nobody's, (c) a righteous man's, (d) a rich man's. Answer: _____.

>>> Please read 1 John 3:21,22. <<<

33 What must we do for God to answer our prayers? Answer: We must keep His _____.

>>> Please read Proverbs 28:9. <<<

34 What is true of the prayer of one who turns away from the law? Answer: His prayer is an _____.

God heard the prayer of Cornelius before he was baptized (Acts 10:4,31), but what did Cornelius receive as a result? God gave him an opportunity to learn the truth. Beyond that, there is nothing God has promised to give alien sinners in answer to prayer.

But God likewise rejects the prayer of the impenitent child of God. Too many people want to live their lives for themselves, then go running to God in time of need. They expect Him to serve them despite the fact they refuse to serve Him! God says it will not work. If you want God to hear your prayers, first

repent of your sins and live in obedience to Him.

(Isaiah 59:1,2; Psalm 66:18; 34:15–19; 109:7; Prov. 15:8,29; 1:24–29; 21:13; Isaiah 1:15–17; 1 Peter 3:12; John 9:31; 15:5; Lam 3:1,8; 1 Peter 3:7)

Conclusion

God will answer prayer for you. He desires to meet your needs and offer you everything He has promised to His faithful children. But first you must become a faithful child of His by obedience to His gospel (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 10:9,10; 6:3,4; etc.). Then you must meet the conditions of prayer.

Personal application questions:

(These questions are for you to ponder. Your answers will help us understand your thinking, however they will not affect your "score.")

35 Do you believe that prayer to God can actually change the course of future events? _____

36 Whom do you believe people should trust as the Mediator between them and God? _____

37 Which of the following should an alien sinner (who has never been baptized) do to be forgiven of sins: should they pray for forgiveness of sins or should they be baptized for forgiveness of sins?

When you have carefully studied this lesson and written down answers to all the questions, [click on this link to submit your answers.](#)

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Topics for further Bible study

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[Is Obedience Essential to salvation?](#)

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