

LESSON 4 Use God's Word When You Pray

Almost everything we do must be with faith, for life is built on faith. We eat food, believing that it will nourish us. We send letters, believing that the postal system will deliver them to people in other towns and cities. We go to see a friend, believing that he will keep his promise to meet us.

The Christian life is also built on faith. We believe God loves us and cares about our problems, so we pray to Him with confidence, expecting Him to answer.

But why should we believe that God loves us? We believe He does because He says so in His Word, the Bible. God's Word is completely reliable and dependable, just as He is. If it says He loves us, He does! When He invites us to pray, He means it!

This lesson explains ways in which the Bible helps you when you pray. You will learn how to study it, use it when you pray, and put its promises into action.

The Plan

- A. Use the Bible as Your Guide
- B. Strengthen Your Faith with the Bible
- C. Use Bible Verses When You Pray
- D. Act in Faith on God's Promises

The Goals

- 1. State the importance of using God's Word as your guide.
- 2. Discuss the importance of faith as an aspect of our Christian experience.
- 3. Identify the importance of depending on the promises of God's Word.
- 4. Describe ways to act on God's promises.

A. USE THE BIBLE AS YOUR GUIDE

Goal 1. State the importance of using God's Word as your guide.

Jesus said there is a direct link between His words and our prayers.

John 15:7 "If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you."

This wonderful promise teaches us that the answer to our prayers may depend on what part the Word of God has in our lives. We must think about what the Bible says and let it guide us in our prayers. We follow the Bible teachings about how to pray, and let God speak to us through His Word when we pray. Praying with others, reading from the Bible, and talking about what we have read make God's presence more real to us.

The Bible teaches us God's will for our lives and lets us know we must pray for His will to be done. We must pray for what will honor God and what will be best for others too, not just for what we want or for selfish pleasure.

James 4:2–3 "You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You

quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.”

Matthew 26:41 “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.”

Many of the prayers in the Bible are a good guide for us. We may pour out our soul in the words of David’s cry for forgiveness or in Jesus’ anguished prayer of submission just before He went to the Cross.

Psalm 51:1 “Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.”

Psalm 51:10 “Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.”

Matthew 26:39 “Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, ‘My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.’”

If we want our prayers to be effective, then let us fill our minds with God’s Word. As it remains in us, we can ask and receive answers to our prayers.

Application

1 Write John 15:7 from memory in your notebook. What do you think Jesus meant by if “my words remain in you”?

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2 How does the Bible guide you in prayer?.....

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B. STRENGTHEN YOUR FAITH WITH THE BIBLE

Goal 2. Discuss the importance of faith as an aspect of our Christian experience.

Have you ever said, “I wish I had more faith,” or “I just don’t have any faith”? But you do already have some faith! Everyone does. At the beginning of this lesson, I said that many of the ordinary things we do each day are built on faith.

Now that you are a Christian, though, you have a new kind of faith. This faith is belief in God, a Person you have not seen. This faith is the foundation of your new life.

Hebrews 11:1 “Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.”

God himself gives us faith—the confidence that He will do what He has promised. He works through His Word to strengthen our faith, and we cooperate with Him in this. Our faith grows as we read about these wonderful things that happen to others. We think about God’s love for us and realize that what He did for people in the Bible He could do for us today.

Hebrews 12:2 “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Romans 12:3 “For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.”

Romans 10:17 “Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.”

In Romans 10:17, we are reminded that it is not just reading and thinking about God’s Word that brings faith. Hearing it preached strengthens our faith. So we go to church services and listen to gospel broadcasts when we can. The sermons, songs, and testimonies about Jesus, the Son of God, strengthen our faith in Him.

We do not understand everything about it, but we know that God works through our faith. Unbelief hinders His work in us.

Matthew 13:58 “And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith.”

Mark 9:23 ““Everything is possible for him who believes.””

Matthew 9:20–22 “Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak. She said to herself, ‘If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed.’ Jesus turned and saw her. ‘Take heart, daughter,’ he said, ‘your faith has healed you.’ And the woman was healed from that moment.”

Matthew 9:28–30 “When he had gone indoors, the blind men came to him, and he asked them, ‘Do you believe that I am able to do this?’ ‘Yes, Lord,’ they replied. Then he touched their eyes and said, ‘According to your faith will it be done to you’; and their sight was restored.”

Application

3 Give an example to show that everyone has some faith.

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4 According to Hebrews 12:2 and Romans 12:3, where does our faith come from to believe in God and trust His promises?

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5 How does faith come according to Romans 10:17? What does this suggest to you about what you should do?

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C. USE BIBLE VERSES WHEN YOU PRAY

Goal 3. Identify the importance of depending on the promises of God's Word.

God's promises to His children are like checks or bank drafts on the bank of heaven. We have them in the Bible (our checkbook) and just have to present them for payment. God's account is never overdrawn, so we can present these verses to God when we pray and know that He will honor the signature of His Son on them. God is completely faithful to His promises.

BANK OF HEAVEN

Pay to the order of *Every Believer*
 the sum of *all he or she needs*

God's Word is filled with promises that meet our spiritual and physical needs. Because Jesus changed people, fed, and healed them, we know that He is concerned about all our needs. He promises comfort for our grief, companionship for our loneliness, forgiveness of sin, deliverance from bad habits, and everything else we need.

Philippians 4:19 "And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus."

King David, head of the royal line from which our Lord Jesus came in His human nature, gives an example of how we can make God's promises a part of our prayers.

2 Samuel 7:25–29 "And now, LORD God, keep forever the promise you have made concerning your servant and his house. Do as you promised, so that your name will be great forever. Then men will say, 'The LORD Almighty is God over Israel!' And the house of your servant David will be established before you. 'O LORD Almighty, God of Israel, you have revealed this to your servant, saying, "I will build a house for you." So your servant has found courage to offer you this prayer. O Sovereign LORD, you are God! Your words are trustworthy, and you have promised these good things to your servant. Now be pleased to bless the house of your servant, that it may continue forever in your sight; for you, O Sovereign LORD, have spoken, and with your blessing the house of your servant will be blessed forever.'"

You can pray a similar prayer for any member of your family who does not believe in Jesus or has not accepted Him as personal Savior.

Father, I thank You because You love my (fill in the relationship and name) _____ who does not yet know You. In Acts 16:31, Paul and Silas told a jailer, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.” I do believe in the Lord Jesus and am asking for all of my family to be saved.

Please help _____ to believe in Jesus. Use me to help him (her). Tell me what I should do and help me to do it. Thank you for answering this prayer. I know that what you did for the jailer you will do for me too, and I do thank you for it. I ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Application

6 Make out a “Bank of Heaven” check in your notebook like the example given. Fill in your name after *Pay to the order of*. Then after *the sum of* write a need that you want God to meet. Talk with Him about it, quoting Philippians 4:19.

7 If any members of your family are not yet believers in Jesus, fill in the blanks in the prayer based on Acts 16:31.

8 Memorize Philippians 4:19 and quote it in your prayers. Does it make you feel a stronger assurance (faith) for the answer?

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D. ACT IN FAITH ON GOD’S PROMISES

Goal 4. Describe ways to act on God’s promises.

Prepare for the Answer

The director of a Bible institute and his wife were praying for the Lord to give them some cows to provide milk that the

students needed. They had plenty of pasture land for cows, but some of the fences were down or needed repairing. One day the Lord spoke to them in their thoughts: "Where would you put the cows you are praying for? If you expect Me to answer, get ready. Fix the fences." So they had the fences repaired. A few days after the work was finished, God provided the cows.

A sick man who had not been able to leave his bed for a long time asked the pastor to come and pray for his healing. He told his wife, "Get my clothes ready. I'll be getting up after they pray for me." He did—perfectly well.

Do you have some "fences to fix" to get ready to receive what you have prayed for and God has promised to give you? Go ahead and do your part, believing that the answer is on the way.

Believe and Thank God

Suppose that you are poor, jobless, hungry, and in debt. Then your rich uncle tells you he is going to pay all your debts and give you a job. He gives you a check so you can get the food you need and some clothes. Would you say, "It all sounds wonderful but I must first see if this check is good. If I get the money for it, I will thank you. And when I get my first pay for the job you offered me, I will surely thank you?" Of course not! You would be very happy, believing you actually had what he promised you. Shouldn't we do the same to God! He is happy when we believe and sincerely thank Him for what He offers us even before we have it in our hands. So, praise God for the answer.

Mark 11:24 "Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."

James 1:6 "But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind."

Keep on Believing

The story of Abraham (ancestor of both the Arabs and Jews) teaches us to keep on believing. God told Abraham that he would be the father of many nations. But twenty-five years passed, and Abraham had no children.

Romans 4:19–21 "Without weakening in his faith, he [Abraham] faced the fact that his body was as good

as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah’s womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.”

Abraham’s example teaches us to turn away from the natural view of faith. So stop looking at the problem and focus on the promise. Do not look at your limitations or the mountain of difficulties that block your path. Look to Jesus. Even when everything seems to go wrong, keep trusting and praising God. The mountain of problems cannot keep you from going forward with Jesus. He will either remove them, show you a way through them, or lift you over them. Mountains are no problem to Him.

Matthew 21:21–22 “Jesus replied, ‘I tell you the truth, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, “Go, throw yourself into the sea,” and it will be done. If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.’”

Accept and Act

When we believe that we receive, we act on it. People who pray for harmful habits to be broken may take a step of faith by throwing away the things that they have asked God to free them from. Those who pray to be used of God step out in faith to do what He tells them to do, trusting in His power to help them. As we start acting on God’s promise, we see it fulfilled. This is the biblical pattern.

James 2:17–18 “In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, ‘You have faith; I have deeds.’ Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.”

Application

9 The titles for this part of the lesson name four ways to act on God's promise when (or after) we pray for something. What are they?

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10 Which of the four ways to act on faith do you plan to use regularly?

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11 Write in your notebook something you are praying for, the promise you are claiming, and the four things you are going to do now about it. After you have done them, write the results.



Check Your Answers

- 5** From hearing people preach Christ, from the Word of God. This suggests we should listen to gospel preaching at church or wherever we have the opportunity.
- 1** “If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.” The phrase “my words remain in you” suggests that we must remember what Jesus teaches us and do what He says.
- 6–8** Your answers. I hope that doing these things has helped you.
- 2** It tells you how to come to God and what to pray for. The prayers in the Bible are an example for you.
- 9** Prepare for the answer, believe and thank God, keep on believing, accept and act.
- 3** You might mention the food we eat, the letters we send, the appointments that we keep.
- 10** I hope you will use all four of the above.
- 4** From Jesus, from God.
- 11** May God bless you as you put these things into practice in your prayers.

