

Unit 1

Lessons

- 1 Think About God When You Pray**
- 2 Come to God the Right Way**
- 3 Listen to God When You Pray**

LESSON

1 Think About God When You Pray

Do you ever wonder why some people receive such wonderful answers to prayer, while so many of your prayers seem to be unanswered? Do you wonder why some people talk to God so easily and you find it hard to know what to say? Are you curious about why you feel the presence of God only sometimes? Perhaps every Christian has asked these questions.

Even the disciples of Jesus had questions about prayer. They could see in His life how important prayer was to Him and what wonderful things happened in answer to His prayers. So they asked Him:

Luke 11:1 “‘Lord, teach us to pray.’”

Jesus answered this request not only by His words but also by His example. He showed the disciples how to pray.

Today, God wants us to talk with Him. He is the One who has given us the desire to pray. Let us make the request of the disciples our request as we study these lessons on prayer.

The Plan

- A. God Will Teach You to Pray
- B. God Is Good
- C. God Loves You
- D. God Is Our Father
- E. God Can Do Anything

The Goals

1. Identify God's purpose for us in prayer.
2. Describe the manner in which we should approach God in prayer.
3. State how God's love led Him to provide for the forgiveness of our sins.
4. Describe what it means to have God as our Father.
5. Identify the greatness of God to meet our needs.

A. GOD WILL TEACH YOU TO PRAY

Goal 1. Identify God's purpose for us in prayer.

When God made us, He put something in us that reaches out for Him. We realize that we need a power greater than our own to solve our problems, protect us, and meet our needs. We reach out to the world of the supernatural for help. But our urge to pray goes beyond that. We feel the need to worship, honor, and serve some supernatural being.

How important it is to direct this worship to the right Person—the One who made us, God! Only then can we find the deep satisfaction that He wants us to enjoy. God made us so that we could talk things over with Him and He could talk with us and help us. Life is not complete without this communication with Him.

God invites us to come to Him in prayer and ask Him for whatever we need. Just think of it—the One who made the world and everything in it, the Lord and Ruler of the universe wants to talk with us. He made us, understands us, loves us, and wants to help us. Time and again in the Book He has given us—the

Holy Bible—He invites us to take our problems to Him, talk everything over with Him. That is what prayer is—talking with God. He said to a prophet of old:

Jeremiah 33:3 “Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.”

God will teach you as you study and practice what the Bible teaches about prayer. The title of each lesson in this book gives a biblical principle, a simple rule that will help you when you pray. Then the lesson is full of practical suggestions on how to apply it. The principle for this lesson—think of God when you pray—is one that Jesus teaches us. If we follow the model He gave, we will begin our prayers recognizing who God is, honoring Him, and praying for His will to be done.

Matthew 6:9–10 ““This, then, is how you should pray: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”””

Application

- 1** Read Luke 11:1 and Jeremiah 33:3 several times. How do you plan to use these verses as you study?
 - 2** Look at the list of contents at the beginning of this course. With a pencil, make a check mark (✓) by things you already do when you pray. Mark a plus sign (+) by those you want to practice more.
 - 3** This lesson teaches that when you pray, you should think more about
 - a)** God—who He is, what He has done for you, and what He wants you to do.
 - b)** Yourself—your problems, what you want God to do for you.
- Check your answers with those at the end of this lesson.



B. GOD IS GOOD

Goal 2. Describe the manner in which we should approach God in prayer.

When we talk with someone, we do not just think about ourselves and our needs. We think also about the other person. Our first lesson in how to pray effectively is to apply the same principle when we talk to God: *Think about God when you pray*. This is a basic part of worship. The word *worship* in English comes from *worth + ship* and means to recognize the worthiness of God.

Because God is good, He wants to free us from the things that bring suffering. He wants to bless us and make us happy, healthy, and useful. Thinking about how good God is makes us join in the song of the psalmist:

Psalm 100 “Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.”

Application

4 Read Psalm 100. Then answer the questions.

a) Who should sing to the Lord? (v. 1)

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b) How should we come to God? (v. 2)

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c) What should we always remember? (v. 3)

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d) With what attitude should we come to God? (v. 4)

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e) What is true about God? (v. 5)

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C. GOD LOVES YOU

Goal 3. State how God’s love led Him to provide for the forgiveness of our sins.

God loves you and me. It is His very nature to love. The Father sent His Son Jesus Christ into the world to: 1) tell us about His love, 2) demonstrate this love in His life and death for us, and 3) make it possible for us to be with Him and enjoy His love forever. Jesus said:

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

Because God is good, He has set certain standards for the world He has made. He teaches us right from wrong in the Bible and helps us to do what is right. As Ruler of the universe, He must judge us for what we do, regarding those who do right and punishing those who do wrong. Unfortunately, we have all done wrong and were condemned to be separated from God, unless there was some way to save us.

And there was a way! God loved us so much that He sent His own Son, Jesus Christ, to take our place. Jesus loves us too and died for our sins. He came back to life and went back to heaven. Someday He will return to the earth and put everything right.

John 10:10 “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

If we think about how God loves us, we will want to please Him. We are sorry for the wrong we have done and ask Him to forgive us and help us do what is right.

1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

Application

- 5** John 3:16 teaches that you can be sure God loves you because
- a)** you have a feeling that He loves you.
 - b)** He gave His only Son so you could live.
 - c)** other people say that He loves everyone.

- 6 First John 1:9 says that we are forgiven of our sins if we
- try to do what is right.
 - tell them to a priest.
 - confess them to God.
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D. GOD IS OUR FATHER

Goal 4. Describe what it means to have God as our Father.

When we accept Jesus as our Savior, God becomes our Father. He does more than just adopt us. He sends His Holy Spirit to live in us, gives us a new nature, and makes us His children. Jesus teaches us to call God *Father* when we pray, just as He always did. Think about what it means to call the Creator of the universe *Father!* We can come to Him at any time and ask for whatever we need. Jesus tells us that the Father loves us and wants to give us what we need.

John 16:27 “No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.”

Matthew 6:25–26 “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?”

Matthew 7:11 “If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!”

Luke 11:9 “So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”

Our part is simply to *ask* God for what we need. This is an important part of prayer. We ask and He has promised to answer. We need not be afraid that we are asking for something that is too hard for God to do. He can do anything! And so we ask, knowing that God is our Father.

ASK AND YOU WILL RECEIVE

Luke 11:9

YOUR NEED GOD’S SUFFICIENCY

Weakness	God’s Strength
Failures	God’s Forgiveness
Loneliness	God’s Love
Ignorance	God’s Knowledge
Problems	God’s Wisdom
Sickness	God’s Healing

Application

7 Have you accepted Jesus as your Savior? If so, thank God for being your Father. If not, would you like to pray this prayer? *God, I would like to have You as my Father. Thank you for sending Your Son to save me. Please forgive all the wrong things I have done and help me to do what is right.*

8 Memorize Matthew 6:25–26.

9 Start a prayer notebook. First, review the list following “Ask and You Will Receive” to remind yourself of what God can do for you. Then write in your notebook any of those needs or any other special needs you want your Father to supply. Pray about them. As He provides, write beside each need the date that you receive the answer. This notebook will help you remember the things your Father has done for you.



E. GOD CAN DO ANYTHING

Goal 5. Identify the greatness of God to meet our needs.

Your needs—though they may seem huge to you—are actually very small compared to God’s greatness. God is infinite in power—He created the universe and operates it by His commands. The laws of nature are simply the patterns that God has established for His world; He is not limited by them. Whenever it suits His purpose God may speed up or slow down

their operation. Or, He may even temporarily suspend their action by a higher law, the order of the Creator. The result is the miracles that Jesus did: He healed the sick, raised the dead, made the blind to see and the deaf to hear; all with a word or a touch. We need never fear that our problems are too big for God!

Matthew 19:26 “Jesus looked at them and said, ‘With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.’”

He is not limited by time—He has always been and always will be. He is eternal. God sees the future just as clearly as He sees the past and present because He is infinite in knowledge. Nothing is hidden from Him—not even our thoughts. He is also present everywhere in the universe.

God understands us much better than we understand ourselves and knows just what is best for us. As we go to Him in prayer and ask Him to guide us, we can trust in His infinite wisdom, goodness, and love. Whatever He does is right. We can surrender our lives to Him joyfully, knowing that He will take good care of us.

God Is Infinite	In	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being Wisdom Knowledge Goodness Power Love
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Application

10 Repeat these great truths:

God is good and wants to answer my prayers.

God has all power; He can help me now.

God is everywhere; He is with me now.

God is all wise; He will do what is best.

God is my Father; He wants to meet my need.

God loves me and I love Him.

What do you feel about God when you repeat these sentences? I suggest that each day you find a place of quiet meditation and repeat these truths before you pray. Do this until you have formed the habit of really thinking about God whenever you pray.



Check Your Answers

The answers to your study exercises are not given in the usual order. This is done so you will not see the answer to your next question ahead of time. Look for the number you need, and try not to look ahead.

- 6 c)** confess them to God.
- 1** Your answer may be different from mine. I would make Luke 1:1 my prayer as I begin to study each lesson, and then remind myself of God's promise in Jeremiah 33:3.
- 7** Your answer. I hope that you have received Jesus as your Savior. If you need to know more about this, ask your teacher about it when you send in your answer sheet.
- 2** Your answer.
- 8** These verses will help you remember what is most important when you pray.
- 3 a)** God—who He is, what He has done for you, and what He wants you to do.
- 9** Your answers. Your teacher also will be praying that God will meet your needs.
- 4 a)** All the world
b) With joy and happy songs
c) That the Lord is God, that He made us, and that we belong to Him as His people and His flock
d) With thanksgiving and praise
e) That the Lord is good, that His love is eternal and that His faithfulness lasts forever
- 10** You probably feel more confidence in God and have more desire to talk with Him in prayer.
- 5 b)** He gave His only Son so you could live.