

3 The Holy Spirit Helps You Pray

Some students baptized with the Holy Spirit have written:

“There was a newness in prayer, a newness that for many of us marked the beginning of a deeper faith life. . . . Many were drawn to long periods of prayer, marked by the predominance of the praise of God.”

“Prayer became a real joy—the sense of the presence and love of God was so strong that I can remember sitting for a half hour just laughing out of joy over the love of God.”

“My times spent in prayer were the happiest times. I was realizing the joy of prayer. Praise of God was something I had never done before. I always prayed when I wanted something or in thanksgiving, or because I knew it was the thing every good Christian should do in order to become closer to God and to better his life as a Christian. Now it was joyful to pray to God in praise of himself. I experienced an extreme closeness and joyfulness while I prayed.”
(Ranaghan, 40–41, 64, 80–81)

The Plan

- A. The Holy Spirit Teaches You to Pray
- B. The Holy Spirit Helps You Worship God
- C. The Holy Spirit Helps You Confess
- D. The Holy Spirit Shows You What to Ask
- E. The Holy Spirit Prays Through You

The Goals

1. Identify important truths about prayer as the Holy Spirit teaches you.
2. Learn steps that can help you make worship part of your daily life.
3. Explain how the Holy Spirit helps you remove hindrances to your prayers.
4. Discuss how the Holy Spirit can help you pray effectively.

A. THE HOLY SPIRIT TEACHES YOU TO PRAY

Goal 1. Identify important truths about prayer as the Holy Spirit teaches you.

What is prayer in your daily life—a duty or a conversation that you enjoy with God? Does God seem near when you pray? Are your prayers answered? Do you want to work with God in prayer and see wonderful results? The Holy Spirit teaches people how to pray.

You have studied how the Spirit makes God real to you. As He shows you how much God loves you, you love God more and want to spend more time with Him in prayer. You know that God cares about you, so you have confidence to ask Him for what you need.

The Spirit gives you faith to ask and the assurance that God will answer. He uses God's Word to teach you to pray.

The Bible tells you what to pray for, how to pray, and what to expect. The Spirit makes God’s promises real to you and helps you claim them.

Prayer is talking with God. It may be spoken words or just in your thoughts quietly turned toward God. It should be a two-way conversation—you should listen to God as well as talk to Him. And when you speak to God you should do three things:

1. Worship God.
2. Confess your faults.
3. Ask for what you want.

Think of your prayers as wheels that help you move forward in your Christian life and service for God. A wheel would not go very far with one section left out. The Holy Spirit wants to help you in every part of your prayers.

Application

1 What is prayer?

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2 Name three things that you should do in prayer. Put an X beside any part that seems weak in your prayers.

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B. THE HOLY SPIRIT HELPS YOU WORSHIP GOD

Goal 2. Learn steps that can help you make worship part of your daily life.

What part does worship have in your prayers? In worship you express your love for God. If there is no love, there is no

true worship, nothing but an empty form. The Holy Spirit takes you into God's presence and helps you respond to His love. Sometimes the words of a hymn express best the love you feel, so you sing to God. Sometimes you praise Him in words and sometimes in silent appreciation of His goodness.

Ephesians 2:18. Through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

Philippians 3:3. For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh.

John 4:24. God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth.”

The great preacher Charles Finney wrote:

As I went in and shut the door after me, it seemed as if I met the Lord Jesus Christ face to face. . . . He said nothing, but looked at me in such a manner as to break me right down at His feet. I wept aloud like a child, and made such confessions as I could with my choked utterance. . . . As I turned and was about to take a seat by the fire, I received a mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost. . . . No words can express the wonderful love that was shed abroad in my heart. I wept with joy and love.

Do you want to make worship a part of your daily life? You can do it by cooperating with the Holy Spirit in these five ways:

1. Read a Psalm every day. The Psalms will help you appreciate God more.
2. Notice the prayers in the Bible. They are a pattern for you.
3. When you pray, worship God first before asking Him for your needs.

Psalm 100:4. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.

4. Sing songs of worship and thanksgiving. Sing to God at home or in church. Think of the words and mean them. The Holy Spirit may even give you a new song of worship to God.

Ephesians 5:18–20. Be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

5. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you. Many of those who have been filled with the Holy Spirit tell of the new joy and freedom that they find in worship. The Holy Spirit wants to help you too.

Application

- 3** Thank God for sending the Holy Spirit to help you worship Him. Then for several minutes praise and worship God without asking Him for anything.
 - 4** Read Psalm 145 aloud to God. Sing a worship song to God.
 - 5** In your notebook, list things for which you are thankful.
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C. THE HOLY SPIRIT HELPS YOU CONFESS

Goal 3. Explain how the Holy Spirit helps you remove hindrances to your prayers.

Have you ever felt that you were praying against a wall and could not get through to God? The Holy Spirit wants to help you get rid of anything that hinders your prayers. Think of how a boy acts when he is disobeying his father. Is he glad to see his

father? Does he run to meet him or stay out of his way? If he needs his father's help, his guilt is a barrier. He needs to confess what he has done, ask his father to forgive him, and stop disobeying. When he does this, he is reassured of his father's love and has confidence to ask for help.

The same thing happens between God and us. However, we are often blind to our own faults. So the Holy Spirit helps us by showing us our faults. He shows us how terrible sin is and helps us confess our sins to God. If we have wronged others, He tells us to ask their forgiveness too and helps us do all we can to make things right. This is an important precursor to biblical revivals.

Jonathan Goforth gives many examples in *When the Spirit's Fire Swept Korea*. For months the Presbyterian and Methodist missionaries had been meeting daily to pray for revival. A great revival came which went on for years and produced strong, spiritual churches. It began in one of the outstations of Ping Yang.

While conducting the service in the usual way many commenced weeping and confessing their sins. Mr. Swallen said he had never met with anything so strange, and he announced a hymn, hoping to check the wave of emotion which was sweeping over the audience. He tried several times, but in vain, and in awe he realized that Another was managing that meeting. (1943, 8)

After this, the mother church in Ping Yang expected special blessing during the week of prayer, but it seemed their prayers were not answered. On the last evening, the 1,500 persons present were startled when the leading man of the church, Elder Keel, stood up and said that God could not bless them because of his sin. At the request of a dying friend, he had agreed to administer his estate. But in doing

so he had kept back a large sum of money for himself. After confessing his sin, he said: "I am going to give the money back to that widow tomorrow morning."

Instantly it was realized that the barriers had fallen, and that God, the Holy One, had come. Conviction of sin swept the audience. The service commenced at 7 o'clock Sunday evening, and did not end until 2 o'clock Monday morning, yet during all that time dozens were standing weeping, awaiting their turn to confess.

It paid well to have spent the several months in prayer, for when God the Holy Spirit came He accomplished more in half a day than all of us missionaries could have accomplished in half a year. In less than 2 months, more than 2 thousand . . . were converted.

By the middle of 1907 there were 30,000 converts connected with the Ping Yang center. It was clear that the revival had not died down by 1910, for in October of that year 4,000 were baptized in one week. (Goforth, 9, 12)

What happened at Ping Yang has happened time and again all around the world in many different churches, during the twentieth century. As Christians let the Holy Spirit search their souls He reveals the hindrances to revival. When Christians confess their sins and make things right with God and themselves, God can use them for His glory. Revival comes. Prayers are answered. Souls are saved.

If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land. (2 Chronicles 7:14)

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:8–9)

Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults. . . . May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer. (Psalm 19:12, 14)

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. (Psalm 139:23–24)

Application

- 6** Circle the letter before each TRUE statement.
- a)** In Ping Yang, the Holy Spirit directed many people to confess and repent of their sins.
 - b)** First John 1:8–9 says that God will show us the future if we confess our sins.
 - c)** Sometimes we need the help of the Holy Spirit to see our own faults.
- 7** Read Psalm 51. Verse 4 is an example of
- a)** worship.
 - b)** confession.
 - c)** asking God to supply needs.
- 8** Memorize 2 Chronicles 7:14 and Psalms 19:12, 14; 139:23–24. Repeat these verses to God. Wait for the Holy Spirit to show you your faults. Ask His forgiveness and help, and obey Him.



D. THE HOLY SPIRIT SHOWS YOU WHAT TO ASK

Goal 4. Discuss how the Holy Spirit can help you pray effectively.

The Holy Spirit encourages you to ask your heavenly Father for what you need. He reminds you to pray for others and their needs. And He gives you faith to believe God will give you what you ask.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.
(Philippians 4:6)

But sometimes you do not even know what you need. So the Holy Spirit, your helpful Friend, is right there to put in your mind what to ask in prayer both for yourself and for others.

God has chosen to work through your prayers. Where there is a need, He tells His children to pray. Then He does what is necessary in answer to their prayers. This is how He saves souls, sends revival, heals the sick, and supplies needs.

God gives you the responsibility of praying for your family, your friends, your church, your country, and your world. How you pray affects God's work all around the world.

The Holy Spirit may impress you to pray for a certain man without letting you know what his need is. Maybe the person is deathly sick, or in great danger, or facing a terrible temptation, or in urgent need of supernatural power to do God's work. Your prayers will help this troubled man.

A Christian on the western coast of the United States said to his pastor, "I had a wonderful experience today. God spoke to me and told me to pray for someone by the name of Alva Walker in Africa. I prayed until I felt the assurance that God had answered." Half a world away a missionary named Alva Walker had been dying with black water fever. While his unknown brother in Christ prayed, Alva fell asleep and woke

up on his way to recovery. His life was saved because someone obeyed the Holy Spirit. Paul urges us:

Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. (Ephesians 6:18)

Application

9 Memorize Philippians 4:6 and Ephesians 6:18.

10 Pray for others you may know who are studying this course. Also pray for any of your friends or relatives who need to know Jesus Christ and accept His salvation.

E. THE HOLY SPIRIT PRAYS THROUGH YOU

The Holy Spirit will pray through you in your own language with an intensity beyond your natural way of praying. It may be for a need you have already felt. Or it may be for a need that the Holy Spirit makes you conscious of as He directs your mind and feelings. The prayer pours out the depths of your soul with great urgency. The Holy Spirit pleads with God for your needs or for the needs of others.

As you pray you may feel a burden as if the desperate need were your own. The Holy Spirit may pray through you in weeping over a need you sense but do not understand.

During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. (Hebrews 5:7)

The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches

our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit,
because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in
accordance with God's will. (Romans 8:26–27)

Sometimes the Holy Spirit may want to pray through you in a language that He and the Father know but you do not. Paul calls this praying in tongues, or *glossolalia*. In some places it is translated “to speak in strange sounds” because any language that we do not understand is strange sounding to us.

The Holy Spirit prays through you for details of problems that you do not need to know about. He takes authority over the satanic powers that would hinder your prayers. He claims the victory and praises God for the answer. And He expresses in the language of heaven the love that you do not know how to express, the need that burdens your soul, or the praise that fills your heart.

Paul taught the Corinthian church that letting the Holy Spirit pray through them in tongues was important, but that it did not take away their responsibility of praying with their understanding too. Both kinds of prayer are necessary.

For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit. (1 Corinthians 14:2)

For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind. (1 Corinthians 14:14–15)

Pray for each other. (James 5:16)

God offers you the exciting adventure of working with Him. Let the Holy Spirit lead you, teach you to pray, and pray through you. You will see many wonderful answers to prayer as you accept this ministry.

Application

11 Memorize Romans 8:26–27. The Holy Spirit prays in accordance with whose will?

12 Do you want a ministry of prayer? Begin now. Ask the Holy Spirit to make you sensitive to His leading. Use opportunities to pray at church, at home, or wherever you are. If possible, join for an hour or more of prayer with friends who know how to let the Holy Spirit pray through them.



Now that you have completed the first unit, you are ready to answer the questions in your student report for UNIT ONE. Review the previous lessons, then follow the instructions in your student report. Send your answer sheet to the address given on the first page of the student report.

Check Your Answers

- 6** Statements **a)** and **c)** are true.
- 1** Talking with God
- 7 b)** confession.
- 2** worship, confess, ask
- 11** God's will
- 9** Is there anything that you are worried about right now? Why not tell God about it and ask for His help.



Lessons

- 4 The Holy Spirit Leads You**
- 5 The Holy Spirit Gives Power**
- 6 The Holy Spirit Fills You**