

Lesson 6

PRAYER: TALKING TO GOD

*How do I
communicate with God?*

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Though all of creation was designed by God to bring Him glory, only humans have the privilege of doing so out of a relationship with Him.

The key to every relationship is communication. God communicates with us through His Word. We communicate with God through prayer.

INTRODUCTION

As we have seen repeatedly throughout this process of biblical discipleship, God created man to GLORIFY Him out of an intimate, personal, love relationship with Him. Though all of creation was designed by God to bring Him glory, only humans have been afforded the glorious privilege of doing so out of a RELATIONSHIP with God. Developing that relationship is really the very essence of the Christian life.

As was stated in [Lesson 5](#), the key to every relationship is communication. God's vehicle of communication with us is His WORD. Our vehicle of communication with Him is PRAYER. It has been said that a Christian is only as strong as his prayer life. There is a great amount of truth in that statement because prayer is our only direct communication with God.

We live in a fast-paced world in which we all find ourselves struggling to master the art of juggling life's demands. While every Christian would agree that our relationship with God is our most important PRIORITY of life, most Christians would also confess that their prayer life is not what they would like it to be, or know it could be.

If we could see prayer from the perspective of God's heart, perhaps we would see the URGENT PRIORITY prayer should have in our lives. That is the purpose of this lesson.

Section A

Our Approach To God In Prayer

For prayer to be all that God intends, how we approach Him is very significant.

- For prayer to be all that God intends, how we approach Him is very significant. Note some of the ways believers tend to approach God in prayer in the following "parable" entitled...

Hailing the Chief



He sat at his desk in the Oval Office, waiting. He waited, even though there was a stack of letters to sign, a cable to read, a press conference to prepare for, a briefing with the cabinet to attend, a tea for an ambassador in the Rose Garden...

Looking up from his schedule, he smiled. Yes, there *was* a lot to do. But first some people were coming— some very important people. At least *he* thought they were very important. That was why he kept inviting them to come to the Oval Office and talk with him. He longed to hear what was in their hearts and minds, to talk about how they felt, what they needed, how they could help him accomplish his goals.

"Mr. President", said a voice on the intercom.

"They're here, sir."

"Ah," he said. "Send the first one in, please." He leaned forward on the edge of his chair, waiting.

The door opened, and a housewife ushered herself into the room. Without acknowledging the President's smile or outstretched hand, she plopped down in a chair. Then she shut her eyes tight.

"Dear Mr. President," she said in a nasal, sing-song voice. "Thank you for the world so sweet, thank you for the food we eat, thank you for the birds that sing, thank you, sir, for everything. Goodbye."

Before the President could say a word in response, the woman opened her eyes, got up, and walked out the door. He sighed. *Why did it always seem to go like this?* He pushed the intercom button. “Next, please,” he said.

The door opened, and in came a stout man who wore a tuxedo. Again the President’s hand was ignored.

“O thou chief executive who are in the White House,” said the man, clasping his hands and looking at the ceiling. O thou in whom so much doth constitutionally dwell, upon whose desk hath been placed a most effective blotter; incline thine ear toward thy most humble citizen, and grant that thy many entities may be manifoldly endowed upon the fruitful plain...”

Wincing, the President closed his eyes and rubbed his temples.

“And may thy thou dost harkenenth whatly didst shalt evermore in twain asunder.” The man concluded in a loud monotone.

“Excuse me,” said the President, “but what...?”

“Goodbye,” said the man, seeming not to hear, and walked out.

The President sighed again. “Next, please,” he spoke into the intercom.

This time when the door opened, there seemed to be no one there. Then the President looked down and saw a man crawling through the doorway on his hands and knees.

“Oh, Mr. g-great and awful P-president,” blubbered the man, not looking up from the carpet. “I am but a disgusting piece of filth in your presence. No, I am less than that! How dare I enter here? How dare I think that you would do anything but grind me into the floor?”

“Please, get up,” said the President, offering his hand. “You don’t have to do that, I *want* to talk with you.”

But the man went right on groveling. “I deserve only to be squashed under the weight of your mighty desk,” he whined. “I could never have gotten an invitation to talk with you. It must have been a mistake. How can you ever forgive me for breaking in like this? Oh, I’m so sorry, so sorry, so sorry...” Still on his hands and knees, he crawled out.

The man’s groaning faded down the hall. The President shook his head then slowly pushed the intercom button. “Next,” he said, sounding tired.

In moments a young man entered. He was wearing headphones and bobbing up and down to the music of his pocket stereo.

“Hey, Prez,” the young man said, ignoring the offered hand. “What’s happening?” He looked out the window. “Nice place you’ve got here. I’m, like, *so* glad we could have this little chat, you know? You’re not bad for an old dude, I guess. You don’t bother me; I won’t bother you, okay? Well, I’ve gotta go. Hang in there.” He walked out.

The President drummed his fingers on his desk. “Next, please,” he said wearily.

An elderly man marched in, staring at a piece of paper in his hand. He, too, ignored the President’s greeting. “Mr. President,” he declared, keeping his eyes on his list, “I want there to be a parking space waiting for me when I go downtown this afternoon. Not a parallel parking space, either — one I can drive right into. Not one with a parking meter. You can see to it that none of those meter maids gives me a ticket. Now, this is important!”

The President cleared his throat politely, “Speaking of important,” he ventured, “how do you feel about my program to feed the hungry? Would you like to have a part in...”

“And another thing!” the man continued. “I lost my best golf club. A putter. Can’t remember where I put it. Now, you find it for me, will you? Got to have that club before Saturday, I know you can do it. Goodbye.”

With that the old man got up and shuffled out the door.

The President slumped in his chair. “Next,” he said.

There was a pause. At last a young woman entered slowly. She looked like a sleepwalker — eyes nearly shut, jaw slack, her feet dragging. She yawned and slid into a chair. “Dear... Mr. President...,” she said, her head drooping. “I know I should talk to you when I’m more...awake...but I’ve got so many things to do...So...sleepy....There was something I was going to say...What...is...? I was going to say...uh...” She started to snore.

The President buzzed his secretary, who stepped in. “Could you help this young lady out?” he asked, sighing again.

“Certainly, Mr. President,” said the secretary as she helped the dozing girl to her feet.

The President gazed sadly out the window. “How many do we have left?” he asked.

“I’m sorry, sir,” the secretary said. “But as usual, most of the people you sent invitations to said they were too busy to talk. They had to watch TV, wax the car, do the dishes...”

“Oh,” said the President, dejected. “Isn’t there *anyone* out there?”

“There is one, sir,” she said. “But you wouldn’t want to talk with him.”

“Why not?”

“Because he’s—just a *child*, Mr. President.”

The chief executive shrugged. “May as well show him in,” he said.

Moments later a little boy entered shyly. He looked around the room, his eyes wide. “Are... are you really the President?” he asked.

The President smiled. “I really am,” he answered, offering his hand.

The little boy reached up and shook it. Then he sat down, folded his hands in his lap, and waited. The President watched, amazed as the boy sat politely for nearly a minute. “Isn’t there... something you want to tell me?” the President asked finally. “Something you have to recite, or ask for, or say?”

The little boy looked down for a moment, thinking. Then he looked up. “Yes,” he said. “I guess there is.”

“Well, what is it?” the President asked.

“Thank you for inviting me,” the boy said. “That’s all.”

When the President heard that, he couldn’t seem to say anything for a while. All he could do was smile.

But then they talked and talked and talked for the longest, most wonderful time.

— John Duckworth

From the book *Joan ‘n’ the Whale and Other Stories You Never Heard in Sunday School* by John Duckworth, copyright © 1987 by Fleming H. Revell Co. Used by permission.

- ❑ Which example or examples in the story best describes your approach to God in the past three months?

- ❑ What do the following verses teach you about how God wants you to approach Him in prayer?

God wants us to approach Him...

As one friend to another;
As a wife to her husband;
As a child to his father.

- Exodus 33:11a; James 2:23; John 15:12-15
God wants me to approach Him as one FRIEND to another.
- Ephesians 5:30-32; II Corinthians 11:2; Romans 7:4; Revelation 19:7
God wants me to approach Him as a WIFE to her HUSBAND.
- Matthew 6:9; Matthew 7:11; Romans 8:15
God wants me to approach Him as a CHILD to his FATHER.

Section B

1. Prayer is the vehicle through which we communicate our relationship with God.

Before sin entered into the world, man's relationship with God was maintained and developed as the "voice" of God walked and talked with Mr. & Mrs. Adam.

Biblically, the voice of God is the Word of God, Jesus Christ. (John 1:1, 14)

God maintains and develops His relationship with us the same way today: Through His "voice," or the Word.

Mr. & Mrs. Adam responded to God's voice using their own voices to communicate back to Him. The Bible's word for such communication is prayer.

The real purpose of prayer from the beginning was the communication of a relationship with God.

The Purpose Of Prayer

- ❑ Prayer is the vehicle through which we COMMUNICATE our RELATIONSHIP with God.

We learned in [Lesson 3](#) that one of the key reasons God created man was His desire to have an intimate, personal, love relationship with us. Before sin entered into the world, Genesis 3:8 lets us know that this relationship was maintained and developed as daily the "VOICE" of God made its way into the Garden to WALK and TALK with Mr. and Mrs. Adam.

Genesis 3:8 says, "And they heard the **voice** of the LORD God **walking** in the garden in the cool of the day..." Have you ever seen a voice walk? A voice doesn't walk – that is, unless it is a PERSON.

- Read John 1:1.
Who is the voice of God? "The WORD."
- Read John 1:14.
Who is "the Word"? JESUS CHRIST.

*How did God maintain and develop His relationship with Mr. and Mrs. Adam?
By communication with them through His "voice," or "the WORD."*

*How does God intend to maintain and develop His relationship with us?
By communication to us through His "voice," or "the WORD." (the Bible).*

Obviously, as God communicated with Mr. and Mrs. Adam, they responded to His VOICE using their own VOICES to communicate back to Him. The Bible's word for such communication is PRAYER.

People today use prayer for many different purposes. Never lose sight of the fact that from the very beginning, prayer was Mr. and Mrs. Adam's RESPONSE to God's Word, as they walked together in the joy of an intimate, personal, love RELATIONSHIP.

□ Prayer is the vehicle through which we EXPRESS our LOVE and WORSHIP to God.

Flowing out of the intimate, personal, love relationship for which God created man in the very beginning, there were two specific things that God wanted to receive from him:

- 1) He wanted man to LOVE Him. (Mark 12:30)
- 2) He wanted man to WORSHIP Him. (John 4:23)

When man sinned against God, not only did he lose his relationship with God, he lost his ability to offer to God the love and worship for which He was worthy, and for which He was seeking. As we learned in **Lesson 3**, our salvation through Christ was for the purpose of RESTORING to man that which was lost in the Fall.

Luke 19:10

Note: The Lord Jesus Christ came not just to seek THOSE who were lost, but THAT which was lost." (i.e. That which was lost through ADAM'S FALL.)

1. Through Christ, God was seeking to restore to man the RELATIONSHIP that was lost in the Fall.
John 1:12-13; II Corinthians 6:17-18
2. Through Christ, God was seeking to restore to man the ability to LOVE Him that was lost in the Fall.
I John 4:10; I John 4:19; Mark 12:28-30
3. Through Christ, God was seeking to restore to man the ability to WORSHIP Him that was lost in the Fall.
John 4:23; I Peter 2:9-10

Those are the three things salvation provided to man because those were the three things that were lost in the Fall. Never lose sight of the fact that as we communicate our relationship with God in prayer, God has always been seeking to receive our love and worship. Through PRAYER, we express from our hearts the love and worship our Father in Heaven is SEEKING.

Key quote:

"To worship is to quicken the conscience by the **holiness** of God, to feed the mind with the **truth** of God, to purge the imagination by the **beauty** of God, to open the heart to the **love** of God, to devote the will to the **purpose** of God. It is all of us, in response to all of Him. It is **all** that we are, reacting rightly to all that He is." – William Temple

□ Prayer is the vehicle through which we ACKNOWLEDGE our DEPENDENCE upon God.

In **Lesson 2** we learned that when iniquity was found in Lucifer, it was expressed in self-will and pride. He made five statements in his heart, each of them beginning with "I will." Simply stated, Lucifer sought to exalt HIS OWN WAY above God's. He wanted to exercise HIS OWN WILL sitting enthroned in the place of God.

Ezekiel 28:15; Isaiah 14:12-14

2. Prayer is the vehicle through which we express our love and worship to God.

Flowing out of the relationship for which God created man in the beginning, God wanted to receive man's love and worship.

Through sin, man lost his relationship with God and thus, the ability to love and worship God.

Through Christ, man has had restored to him... His relationship with God; His ability to love God; His ability to worship God.

Through prayer, we express from our hearts the love and worship our Father is seeking.

3. Prayer is the vehicle through which we acknowledge our dependence upon God.

When iniquity was found in Lucifer, it was expressed in self-will and pride. He exalted his own way and his own will.

When iniquity was found in Adam, it was expressed in self-will and pride. He, too, exalted his own way and his own will.

When iniquity was found in us, it was expressed in that same self-will and pride. Each of us turned to our own way and our own will.

Because of man's exaltation of himself, Jesus presents to each of His would-be followers a sobering prerequisite... "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself..." (Mark 8:34)

"Self" was dethroned initially as our utter dependence upon God for salvation was expressed through a prayer of repentance and faith. We turned from our own way to His, calling upon the name of the Lord.

In prayer, we each acknowledge our continued and absolute dependence upon God, and our longing for Him to be exalted on the throne of our life.

4. Prayer is the vehicle through which we verbalize our desire to glorify God.

Our salvation entailed a spiritual heart transplant by the Great Physician. That new heart provided a whole new set of God-given desires.

Above all, God gave us the desire to glorify Him. Through our prayers we verbalize our desire to glorify God.

When iniquity was found in Adam, it too was rooted in his self-will and pride as he exalted HIS OWN WAY above God's. The Bible says that Adam was not DECEIVED in the transgression. It was the decided act of HIS OWN WILL that caused him to make the choice to sin against God.

I Timothy 2:14

The Bible also lets us know that the iniquity that was found in each of us was rooted in that same self-will and pride, as each of us turned to "HIS OWN WAY" (Isaiah 53:6). Just as Adam before us, and just as Lucifer before him, we each sought to exalt self to the throne of our life so we could exercise OUR OWN WILL.

Isaiah 53:6; Ephesians 2:3

Because of the sinful place of preeminence to which "self" had arisen in the heart of every man, when Jesus extended an invitation for those who were interested in becoming His disciples, He presented a very sobering prerequisite. In Mark 8:34, Jesus said, "Whosoever will come after me, let him DENY HIMSELF..."

In order to be saved we had to be brought to the place of denying our own WAY, our own WILL, our own SELF-SUFFICIENCY, and acknowledge God's rightful place of preeminence in our lives, and express our utter DEPENDENCE upon Him for our salvation. That dependence was acknowledged initially through a prayer of repentance and faith as we turned from OUR OWN WAY to His, calling upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 10:9-10, 13).

As you have certainly already experienced, one of the greatest battles of the Christian life is the daily (and even moment-by-moment!) battle for who will actually sit on the THRONE of your heart—self, or the Lord Jesus Christ?

In prayer, we each acknowledge before God our continued and absolute DEPENDENCE upon Him, and our LONGING for Him to have the exalted place of preeminence on the throne of our life.

II Corinthians 3:5; John 15:5; Philippians 3:3; Colossians 2:6

Prayer is the vehicle through which we VERBALIZE our desire to GLORIFY God.

In the spirit and heart of every child of God is the desire to bring GLORY to God. That desire was one of the incredible gifts of our salvation. In our salvation, the Great Physician actually gave us a spiritual HEART transplant and implanted into our old, dead spirit, a NEW spirit – the very SPIRIT of GOD! With that new heart and new Spirit came a whole new set of God-given DESIRES. Above everything else, God gave to us the desire to glorify Him by OBEYING all that He has commanded us to DO, and by BECOMING all that He has made us to BE. Jesus taught us that we are to express our desire to glorify God through our prayers.

Ezekiel 36:26-27; Philippians 2:13; Hebrews 13:20-21; John 14:13

In the following verses God provides some powerful promises to answer the prayers of his children. **Fill in the blanks** following each verse to identify the specific **prerequisite** necessary to actually receive the promise of answered prayer.

John 14:13-14 –

And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

PREREQUISITE: I must ask in Jesus' NAME that the Father may be GLORIFIED in the Son.

John 15:7 –

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

PREREQUISITE: I must ABIDE in Christ, and His WORD must ABIDE in me.

John 16:23 –

...Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.

PREREQUISITE: I must ask the Father in Jesus' NAME.

John 3:22 –

And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

PREREQUISITE: I must KEEP His COMMANDMENTS, and DO those things that are PLEASING in His sight.

John 5:14-15 –

And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: 15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

PREREQUISITE: I must ask ACCORDING to His WILL.

What these passages are revealing to us is that biblical prayer is not asking God to do what we want Him to do so WE can be BENEFITED. Biblical prayer is asking God to do what the Lord Jesus Christ would want so the FATHER can be benefited (i.e. GLORIFIED!) That is what it means to pray "in Jesus' name." It is approaching our requests to God in prayer with the attitude, "If Jesus were to talk to the Father about this very situation, what would He ask?"

To actually understand what Jesus would ask His Father to do, we must keep several things in mind:

- 1) Jesus would never ask His Father to do anything that would be motivated by SELF - WILL. (See John 6:38 in the margin.)
- 2) Jesus would never ask His Father to do anything that would be motivated by SELF - CONSUMPTION. (See Romans 15:3 in the margin.)
- 3) Jesus would never ask His Father to do anything that would be motivated by SELF - GLORY. (See John 17:4 and John 7:16-18 in the margin.)

Praying "in Jesus' name" is approaching our requests to God with the attitude, "If Jesus were to talk to the Father about this very situation, what would He ask?"

John 6:38

"For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."

Romans 15:3

"For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me."

John 17:4

"I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."

John 7:16-18

"Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. 17 If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. 18 He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him."

Biblical prayer is asking the Father on behalf of the Son to orchestrate the details, events and circumstances of our lives so that in all things, He would be glorified.

When we pray in Jesus' name, we are actually claiming to REPRESENT Christ and to ACT like Him. To genuinely pray in Jesus' name, we must have the MIND of Christ (Philippians 2:5). In other words, we must so abide in Him, and allow His Word to so abide in us (John 15:7), that we begin to think as He thinks.

We must be so immersed in His life and character (I John 3:22) that, like Christ, self-WILL, self-CONSUMPTION, and self-GLORY are not at all in our thoughts, desires, or motives.

Biblical prayer is asking the Father on behalf of the Son to orchestrate the details, events, and circumstances of every aspect of our lives so that in all things, He would be GLORIFIED. That's the kind of prayer Jesus instructed us to pray and promised to answer.

Section C

In "The Sermon On The Mount," Jesus directs the focus of His teaching to clearly expound what God actually intends prayer to be.

The Patterns Of Prayer

□ The Pattern Expounded By The Lord Jesus Christ.

The first sermon Jesus ever preached is recorded for us in Matthew 5, 6 and 7 and is commonly referred to as "The SERMON On The MOUNT." In the midst of this incredible sermon, our Lord directs the focus of His teaching to clearly expound what God actually intends prayer to be.

Matthew 6:1-13

In the first eight verses Jesus offers some general guidelines concerning "THINGS TO DO" and "THINGS NOT TO DO" as we pray. In the space provided below, list the key guidelines you see in verses 1-8 under those headings.

He begins by offering guidelines concerning "Things To Do" and "Things Not To Do" as we pray.

"THINGS TO DO" AS WE PRAY	"THINGS <u>NOT</u> TO DO" AS WE PRAY

He then identifies the key components of prayer that should serve as a guide to direct our praying.

As Jesus moves further into His teaching on prayer in verses 9-13, He is more specific about the actual content of our prayers. Jesus made clear by His statement in verse 9, "*After this manner therefore pray ye,*" that His intent in these verses was not to teach us a PRAYER but rather to identify the key COMPONENTS of prayer that should serve as a guide to DIRECT our praying.

KEY COMPONENTS TO DIRECT OUR PRAYING FROM JESUS' MODEL PRAYER (Matthew 6:9-13)

"Our Father..."

COMPONENT #1 – Communicate your RELATIONSHIP.

As we learned in [Section A](#), how we approach God is very important. As Jesus begins to teach us about prayer, He teaches us first about how God desires for us to approach Him. He wants us to approach Him with the full realization of our relationship with Him as "our FATHER." The blessedness of this relationship will be intensified by remembering that prior to coming to Christ, you were "of your FATHER the DEVIL," and were totally incapable of doing anything to bring yourself into a relationship with God. Jesus is showing you that your prayers should begin with the reminder of the glorious relationship that is now yours with God. Talk to Him about all that is in your heart for the privilege of calling Him "FATHER."

John 8:42-44; Ephesians 2:11-18

"which art in heaven..."

COMPONENT #2 – Acknowledge His LORDSHIP.

Because of God's desire to teach us about our relationship with Him through the father-child relationship, Satan has made an all-out attempt to destroy the BEAUTY of that relationship by making fathers a key target of his attack (Matthew 12:29). For many people in the 21st century, their concept of God as their "Father" carries a negative connotation because of their relationship (or lack of one) with their EARTHLY father. Jesus makes a special point to remind us that God is our "HEAVENLY Father"! Regardless of what our earthly father was or was not, we have a PERFECT heavenly Father who is the LORD of all (Hebrews 12:9).

Earthly fathers are limited to one place and time and could never be everywhere their children needed them to be. Our heavenly Father, however, is the Lord of all. He is OMNIPRESENT. He is always WITH US in every place and in every situation of life.

Psalms 139:7-12

Even if an earthly father could be with his children at all times and in every place, he would not always know what would be the best way to help in their particular circumstances. Our heavenly Father, however, is the Lord of all. He is OMNISCIENT. He always KNOWS exactly what needs to be DONE in every situation.

Psalms 139:1-6

And, even if an earthly father could be with his children in every situation, and could always know the best solution for their situation, no earthly father has the wherewithal and/or the power to meet every need. Our heavenly Father, however, is the Lord of all. He is OMNIPOTENT. He possesses the POWER to do any and all things. He is the Lord! Jesus teaches us to come to God in prayer acknowledging His LORDSHIP as our perfect HEAVENLY Father.

Philippians 4:19

COMPONENT #1 –
Communicate your
RELATIONSHIP.

Your prayers should begin with the reminder of the glorious relationship that is now yours with God as your Father.

COMPONENT #2 –
Acknowledge His
LORDSHIP.

We have a perfect omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent Father who is the Lord of all.

“hallowed be thy name...”

COMPONENT #3 –
Proclaim His WORTHSHIP

“Hallowing His name” is placing worth on the person of God Himself. It is exalting our God as the only One worthy of praise, adoration, and worship because of who He is.

COMPONENT #3 – Proclaim His WORTHSHIP.

After being reminded of our relationship with God and the incredible attributes that set Him apart as our perfect heavenly Father and Lord, Jesus then teaches us to simply spend time proclaiming from our hearts the worship of His glorious name. By “worship” we simply mean exalting our God as the only One WORTHY of praise, adoration, and WORSHIP because of who He is. It is placing worth on the person of God Himself. That is what it means to “hallow His name.”

As you pray, keep in mind that Jesus said that the Father is seeking true WORSHIPERS who will worship Him in spirit and in truth. Spending time worshipping the Father is really the essence of God’s purpose for bringing you into your relationship with Him. It is how you glorify Him.

John 4:23

Key quote:

“Man was made to worship God. God gave man a harp and said, ‘Here, above all creatures that I have made and created I have given you the largest harp. I put more strings on your instrument and I have given you a wider range than I have given to any other creature. You can worship me in a manner that no other creature can.’ And when he sinned man took that instrument and threw it down in the mud and there it has lain for centuries, rusted, broken, unstrung; and man, instead of playing a harp like the angels and seeking to worship God in all of his activities, is ego-centered and turns in on himself and sulks and swears and laughs and sings, but it’s all without joy and without worship... Worship is the missing jewel in modern evangelicalism. We’re organized; we work; we have our agendas. We have almost everything, but there’s one thing that the churches, even the gospel churches, do not have: that is the ability to worship. We are not cultivating the art of worship. It’s the one shining gem that is lost to the modern church, and I believe we ought to search for this until we find it.”

- A. W. Tozer

“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”

COMPONENT #4 –
Long for His KINGSHIP

As we spend time genuinely “hallowing God’s name”, our hearts are filled with a longing for the day He will rule the earth as the King of kings, finally receiving the glory He deserves.

COMPONENT #4 – Long for His KINGSHIP.

As we see God for who He is, and spend time in prayer hallowing His name, our hearts begin to LONG for a different DAY: a day when God finally receives the GLORY that He deserves; a day when all of the earth shall WORSHIP Him and sing unto His name; a day when Satan is no longer the “god of the world” (II Corinthians 4:4), but is CAST into the bottomless pit; a day when Jesus Christ will sit on His throne in Jerusalem, ruling and reigning over the entire earth as the KING of kings and LORD of lords for a thousand years; a day when the holy WILL of our Lord will finally be carried out on the earth in the same way it is in heaven. As our hearts are filled with worship, we pray for THAT DAY. We pray for the KINGDOM to COME.

Psalm 29:2; Psalm 66:4; Revelation 20:1-3

"Give us this day our daily bread."

COMPONENT #5 – Recognize His GUARDIANSHIP.

While Jesus teaches us to express through our prayers the LONGING in our hearts for His day in the FUTURE, He also teaches us to express the DEPENDENCE in our hearts upon Him for the provision of our physical needs in this PRESENT day.

In our fallen state, Satan sought to build into each of us a spirit of independence, self-reliance and self-sufficiency. It was expressed through the attitude – "I can do it myself"... "I can make it on my own"... "I've worked hard for everything I have"... "I provide for my needs."

While God most certainly wants us to WORK for our daily sustenance (II Thess. 3:10; I Tim 5:8), God also wants us to live with the complete recognition that every need that is met and everything that we possess is a GIFT that comes directly from HIS hand (James 1:17).

He wants us to recognize that though we are the ones who work to provide for our needs, it is He who has given us the POWER to get wealth (Deut. 8:18). It is He who has graciously provided us with the physical HEALTH to work. It is He who has graciously provided us with the MENTAL capabilities to carry out our jobs. It is He who has graciously provided us with the very JOBs by which we are able to earn the money to supply our needs (Phil 4:19).

Our recognition and dependence upon God's guardianship expressed in prayer is the affirmation of our Father's CARE and the affirmation of our absolute TRUST in Him to supply all our needs. Jesus lets us know that our heavenly Father wants us to live with that recognition in our spirits, voiced to Him in our daily prayers.

Key quote:

"The schedule of God's provision for His children is daily. The meaning here is simply that of a regular, day-by day supply of our needs. We are to rely on the Lord one day at a time. He may give us vision for work He calls us to do in the future, but His provision for our needs is daily, not weekly, monthly, or yearly. To accept the Lord's provision for the present day, without concern for our needs or welfare tomorrow, is a testimony of our contentment in His goodness and faithfulness."

– John MacArthur

"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."

COMPONENT #6 – Secure His FELLOWSHIP.

The debts to which Jesus is referring are not financial debts, but the moral or spiritual debts we incurred against God by our SIN.

Though, as believers we have been forgiven of the ultimate penalty of sin through the blood of Jesus Christ applied to our hearts through salvation (I John 1:7), Jesus is teaching us in this statement that we need God's constant forgiveness for the sins we CONTINUE to commit. UNCONFESSED sin in the life of a believer interrupts the joy of our FELLOWSHIP with our heavenly Father.

**COMPONENT #5 –
Recognize His
GUARDIANSHIP**

While Jesus teaches us to express the longing in our hearts for His day in the future, He also teaches us to express the dependence in our hearts upon Him for the provision of our physical needs in this present day.

**COMPONENT #6 –
Secure His FELLOWSHIP**

We secure the joy of our fellowship with God by the forgiveness of sin that He graciously and faithfully grants to us upon the confession of our sin.

We secure the joy of our fellowship with Him by the FORGIVENESS of sin that He graciously and faithfully grants to us upon the CONFESSION of our sin.

1 John 1:9; Psalm 86:5

It is important to note, however, the prerequisite Jesus attached to receiving forgiveness for our daily debts against God. He clearly lets us know that God's willingness to forgive our debts against HIM, is contingent upon our willingness to forgive those who have incurred a debt against US. Having RECEIVED from our Father the ultimate forgiveness from the enormous sin debt we had incurred against Him, how could we not EXTEND the same forgiveness to those who sin against us?

Note, however, that God's willingness to forgive our debts against Him, is contingent upon our willingness to forgive those who have incurred a debt against us.

Ephesians 4:31-32; Colossians 3:12-13; Matthew 6:14-15; Matthew 18:21-35

Key quote:

"There is none so tender to others as they which have received mercy themselves, for they know how gently God hath dealt with them."

– Puritan writer Thomas Manton

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil..."

COMPONENT #7 – Submit to His LEADERSHIP.

Because of God's supreme holiness and goodness, James lets us know that God cannot be TEMPTED with evil and would never in any situation TEMPT any man. (See James 1:13 in the margin.)

COMPONENT #7 –
Submit to His LEADERSHIP

In the request, *"And lead us not into temptation,"* Jesus is not suggesting that God would. Jesus is teaching us that as we approach our Father in prayer, He wants our hearts to be filled with such an utter HATRED for sin and evil, and with such a lack of confidence in our own ability to RESIST temptation, that we cry out to Him in total DEPENDENCE and absolute SUBMISSION to His holy and divine leadership.

God wants our hearts to be filled with such an utter hatred for sin and evil and with such a lack of confidence in our own ability to resist temptation, that we cry out to Him in prayer in total dependence and absolute submission to His holy and divine leadership.

As we come to God in prayer with that spirit of submission to His leadership, we are acknowledging the WEAKNESS of our flesh to stand against sin. We are affirming our TRUST in the power of God as the only power capable of DELIVERING us from the clutches of sin. We are voicing the desperate cry of a child saying, "I need your PROTECTION, Father."

Our loving, heavenly Father is more than happy to oblige.

Psalm 37:23-24; James 4:7-8a; 1 Peter 5:6-8

"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen."

COMPONENT #8 – Surrender to His HEADSHIP.

Even for those who have been taken out of the kingdom of darkness and placed into the kingdom of light, there still remains a daily struggle to cease living for our own KINGDOM.

COMPONENT # 8 –
Surrender to His HEADSHIP

Colossians 1:13; 1 Peter 2:9; II Corinthians 5:15; I Thessalonians 2:11-12

Even for those who have been delivered from the power of Satan to the power of God, there still remains a daily struggle to allow God's POWER to be fully exercised in and through us.

Acts 26:18; II Thessalonians 1:11

Even for those who have been bought by the precious blood of Jesus Christ and have thereby been called to do all to the glory of God, there still remains a daily struggle for the motive of our heart not to turn to our own GLORY.

I Corinthians 6:19-20; I Corinthians 10:31; II Thessalonians 1:5, 11-12

In this final statement of our Lord Jesus Christ as He teaches us about the content of our prayers, He now teaches us that in prayer, our Father longs for His children to turn our eyes off of OURSELVES—our **kingdom**, our **power**, our **glory**—and be completely focused on *His kingdom*, *His power*, and *His glory*. He listens for the hearts of His children to express to Him, “Father, my LIFE is no longer my own. It is no longer about ME. It is all about YOU. You alone hold the place of honor and I willingly, willfully, lovingly and joyfully SURRENDER myself to Your purposes and headship.”

Our Lord teaches us that our Father longs for His children to turn our eyes off of ourselves, *our kingdom, our power, our glory* – and be completely focused on *His kingdom, His power, and His glory*.

KEY COMPONENTS TO DIRECT OUR PRAYING FROM JESUS' MODEL PRAYER (Matthew 6:9-13)

- COMPONENT #1** – Communicate your **RELATIONSHIP**.
- COMPONENT #2** – Acknowledge His **LORDSHIP**.
- COMPONENT #3** – Proclaim His **WORTHSHIP**.
- COMPONENT #4** – Long for His **KINGSHIP**.
- COMPONENT #5** – Recognize His **GUARDIANSHIP**.
- COMPONENT #6** – Secure His **FELLOWSHIP**.
- COMPONENT #7** – Submit to His **LEADERSHIP**.
- COMPONENT #8** – Surrender to His **HEADSHIP**.

Now that we have seen “The Pattern Expounded By The Lord Jesus Christ,” lets look next at...

The Pattern Exemplified By The Apostle Paul.

Perhaps the greatest Christian who ever lived was the Apostle Paul. He was used by God like no other human instrument in the entire history of the church. God chose to use Paul to provide those of us living in the church age with the doctrinal and practical instruction for functioning in this dispensation according to God's will, purposes, and plan. He was used of God to pen fully half of the New Testament and was used to write all of the letters addressed to the church or pastors of churches.

On numerous occasions as Paul was writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, God prompted him to include how he had been praying for certain individuals and churches in certain situations and circumstances. God no doubt inspired Paul to record these prayers to serve as an EXAMPLE to us of the actual CONTENT of biblical praying.

We receive further teaching on the patterns of prayer through the ministry of the Apostle Paul.

As Paul wrote to the churches in the New Testament, on several occasions the Holy Spirit inspired him to record his actual prayers for them. They serve as an example to us of the content of biblical praying.

Identifying The Prayers Of Paul In The New Testament

Turn in your Bible to the following passages and fill in the missing words as God reveals to us the content of Paul's prayers.

Ephesians 1:15-19

"Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, 16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; 17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of _____ and revelation in the _____ of him: 18 The eyes of your _____ being enlightened; that ye may know what is the _____ of his calling, and what the riches of the _____ of his inheritance in the saints, 19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his _____ to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,"

Ephesians 3:14-19

"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be _____ with might by his Spirit in the inner man; 17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in _____, 18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19 And to know the _____ of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be _____ with all the fulness of God."

Philippians 1:9-11

"And this I pray, that your _____ may abound yet more and more in _____ and in all judgment; 10 That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; 11 Being _____ with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God."

Colossians 1:9-11

"For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be _____ with the _____ of his will in all _____ and spiritual _____; 10 That ye might _____ worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good _____, and increasing in the _____ of God; 11 _____ with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;"

I Thessalonians 3:11-13

"Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you. 12 And the Lord make you to increase and abound in _____ one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: 13 To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in _____ before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints."

II Thessalonians 1:11-12

"Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you _____ of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: 12 That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be _____ in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ."

Building A Composite Of The Content Of Biblical Praying Through Paul's Example

Using the prayers of Paul listed on the previous page,
identify some of the specific requests that are part of biblical praying.

1) Biblical praying has to do with our LOVE.

- *Ephesians 3:19*
That we would KNOW the **love** of Christ, which passeth KNOWLEDGE.
- *Ephesians 3:17*
That we would be ROOTED and GROUND in **love**.
- *I Thessalonians 3:12*
That the Lord would make our **love** INCREASE and ABOUND toward our brothers and sisters in Christ and toward ALL MEN.
- *Philippians 1:9*
That our **love** may ABOUND yet more and more in knowledge and in all JUDGMENT.

2) Biblical praying has to do with our HOLINESS.

- *I Thessalonians 3:13*
That the Lord would establish our hearts UNBLAMEABLE in **holiness** before God.
- *II Thessalonians 1:11*
That the Lord would count us WORTHY of our calling in the kingdom of God.
- *Philippians 1:10-11*
That we may be SINCERE and without OFFENCE till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of RIGHTEOUSNESS.

3) Biblical praying has to do with our FILLING.

- *Colossians 1:9*
That we would be **filled** with the KNOWLEDGE of His WILL in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.
- *Philippians 1:11*
That we would be **filled** with the FRUITS of RIGHTEOUSNESS, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God.
- *Ephesians 3:19*
That we would be **filled** with all the FULNESS of God.

4) Biblical praying has to do with our STRENGTHENING.

- *Colossians 1:11*
That we would be **strengthened** with all MIGHT, according to his glorious power, unto all PATIENCE and LONGSUFFERING with JOYFULNESS.
- *Ephesians 3:16*
That we would be **strengthened** with MIGHT, by His Spirit in the INNER MAN; that Christ may DWELL in our hearts by faith.

Section D

1. Biblical prayer is
CONTINUAL in its SCOPE

Many people view prayer
more as an event into
which we enter to engage
ourselves in momentary
communication with God,
rather than a way of life
that brings constant
communication with Him.

Characteristics Of A Biblical Prayer Life

- A biblical prayer life is characterized by prayer that is **CONTINUAL IN ITS SCOPE.**

That is,
**PRAYER THAT IS NOT JUST AN EVENT, BUT ALSO A
WAY OF LIFE.**

One of the things most believers learn early in their walk with Christ is the importance of prayer. Learning its importance, most Christians typically set out to include prayer as a part of their daily routine. Many have learned to begin and end their day with a time of prayer, along with praying before meals. All of those prayers are certainly commendable and even biblical, but if that is the essence of our prayer life, it may be that we are viewing prayer more as an EVENT into which we enter to engage ourselves in MOMENTARY communication with God, rather than as a WAY of LIFE that brings CONSTANT communication with Him. Remember, this is all about a relationship! God wants to walk in constant communication with you!

Turn to the following Scripture and fill in the blanks to allow God to show you the kind of communication He desires to have with you.

I Thessalonians 5:17

"Pray _____."

Luke 18:1

"And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought _____
to pray, and not to _____;"

Luke 21:36

"Watch ye therefore, and pray _____, that ye may be
accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to
stand before the Son of man."

Romans 12:12

"Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing _____ in
prayer;"

Ephesians 6:18

"Praying _____ with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and
watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;"

Colossians 4:2

"_____ in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;"

Acts 12:5

"Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made _____
_____ of the church unto God for him."

II Timothy 1:3

"I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that
_____ I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;"

Romans 1:9

"For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that _____ I make mention of you always in my prayers;"

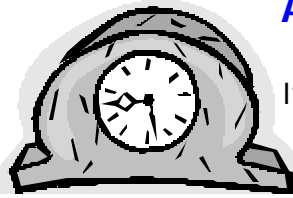
Ephesians 1:16

"_____ to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;"

I Thessalonians 1:2

"We give thanks to God _____ for you all, making mention of you in our prayers;"

**SETTING ASIDE A TIME
AND A PLACE FOR PRAYER**



It should be noted that though Jesus certainly set the example of continual communication with His Father in prayer, He also set the example of purposefully and consistently setting aside

TIME for more intimate, focused and intense communication with Him.

Mark 1:35; Matthew 14:22-23; Luke 5:15-16; 6:12; 9:18; 11:1a

Note also, that when one of Jesus' disciples found Him praying in Luke 11:1, "...he was praying in a CERTAIN place." When he prayed in Mark 1:35, He was praying in a "SOLITARY place." It certainly cannot be proven that this "certain... solitary" place was where Jesus consistently went to pray. Many believers, however, have found it extremely valuable to their prayer life, not only to set aside specific TIME for focused prayer, but also to set aside a specific PLACE for prayer.

- ❑ **A biblical prayer life is characterized by prayer that is PEACEFUL IN ITS EFFECT.**

2. Biblical prayer is **PEACEFUL** in its **EFFECT**.

**That is,
PRAYER THAT RESULTS IN PEACE IN TYPICALLY
STRESSFUL SITUATIONS**

Jesus told us very clearly that "In the world ye shall have tribulation" (John 16:33). Paul said, "That we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God (Acts 14:22). Peter said, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you" (I Peter 4:12). God is letting us know in no uncertain terms that difficulties are par for the course for a Christian. God gives us, however, just as clear instruction about what to do with these difficulties of life that have the potential to cause us to be worried, nervous, anxious, stressed, or even depressed.

As believers in Christ, we will encounter many circumstances of life that have the potential from a human perspective to cause stress.

God gives clear instruction about what to do in those situations.

Turn to the following Scripture and fill in the blanks to allow God to show you His incredible invitation to you!

1 Peter 5:7

"CASTING ALL YOUR CARE UPON HIM; for he careth for you."

Psalm 55:22

"CAST THY BURDEN UPON THE LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved."

Psalm 62:8

"TRUST IN HIM AT ALL TIMES; ye people, POUR OUT YOUR HEART before him: God is a refuge for us."

Philippians 4:6-7

"Be careful for nothing; but IN EVERY THING BY PRAYER and supplication with thanksgiving LET YOUR REQUESTS BE MADE KNOWN UNTO GOD. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

When we are praying biblically about these potentially stressful situations, rather than being stressed, God allows us to experience a peace that passes all understanding.

As God clearly reveals, when we are praying biblically, we are able to take the situations of our lives that would typically and humanly cause us to be full of care (i.e. "careful," Phil. 4:6); and as we pour out our hearts to Him about these things, He becomes for us a REFUGE ... He SUSTAINS us... He reminds us of His LOVE and CARE for us... He floods us with His PEACE ... a peace that passes all UNDERSTANDING !

3. Biblical prayer is ETERNAL in its NATURE.

A biblical prayer life is characterized by prayer that is **ETERNAL IN ITS NATURE.**

That is, PRAYER THAT HAS A SPIRITUAL AND ETERNAL FOCUS, NOT SIMPLY A PHYSICAL AND TEMPORAL FOCUS.

As we just saw in the verses concerning the peaceful effect of prayer, God invites us to bring to Him anything and everything that is a concern in our hearts. There is no detail of our lives in which our loving heavenly Father is not deeply MOVED and completely INTERESTED.

It is interesting to note, however, that as God recorded for us the example of prayer through the Apostle Paul, the essential nature of Paul's prayers were exclusively concerning the SPIRITUAL and ETERNAL. For many 21st century believers, the nature of prayer is the exact opposite. We often seem to

pray only concerning the PHYSICAL and TEMPORAL aspects of the situation we see before us and forget to pray that God would use the situation to accomplish His spiritual and eternal purposes!

In contrast to Paul's prayers for things of a spiritual and eternal nature, many 21st century believers pray only concerning the physical and temporal aspects of the situation we see before us.

Consider the following:

- Though Paul himself was behind the doors of a Roman prison as he writes the epistle to the Colossians, what was his request when he asks them to pray for him in chapter 4, verses 3 and 4?

Not that God would open the door of the PRISON, but "that God would open a DOOR of LITTEANCE, to speak the mystery of Christ, FOR WHICH I AM ALSO IN BONDS: That I may make it manifest as I ought to speak."

- Though the Thessalonian believers were being persecuted unmercifully by the people of Thessalonica (II Thessalonians 1:3-4), which Paul identifies as "suffering" for the "kingdom of God" in verse 5, how does Paul tell the Thessalonians he is praying for them as they endured this time of persecution and suffering in verses 11-12?

Not that God would remove their PERSECUTION and SUFFERING, but "...that our God would COUNT you WORTHY of this calling... that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be GLORIFIED in you, and ye in him."

□ **A biblical prayer life is characterized by prayer that is POWERFUL IN ITS RESULTS.**

4. Biblical prayer is **POWERFUL** in its **RESULTS.**

That is, PRAYER THAT RESULTS IN ANSWERS.

When we are praying biblically it will be evidenced by ANSWERS to our prayers. As we saw in the verses listed on page 71 in **Section B**, the answers we receive in prayer are not because of the power of our prayers to turn the heart of God toward our requests, but because the power of God has turned the requests of our heart in prayer to be so in sync with the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ, that the things we are asking, we ask in Jesus' NAME (John 15:7; 16:23) ...we ask because it is His WILL (I John 5:14-15)... we ask because it will GLORIFY the Father to answer according to our request.

When we are praying biblically it will be evidenced by answers to our prayers.

Because of the clear promises God gave to us concerning answered prayer, if we are not receiving answers, it is an indication that we must be asking for the WRONG things or asking for the right things for the wrong REASONS.

If we are not receiving answers to our prayers, it is an indication that we must be asking for the wrong things or asking for the right things for the wrong reasons.

James 4:3

Writing The "SCRIPT" For Prayer

UNDERSTANDING THE WORDS ASSOCIATED WITH PRAYER IN THE BIBLE

Supplication — The earnest expression of the PETITIONS in your heart concerning specific NEEDS and/or CIRCUMSTANCES.

Philippians 4:6; Psalm 142:1-2; Ephesians 6:18

Confession — The expression of the SORROW in your heart as you AGREE with the Lord concerning your SIN.

Note: The word "confess" means "to agree" or "to say the same thing." Confession means to agree with God about our sin, or to say the same thing about our sin that God says about it.

Psalm 38:18; I John 1:9

Requests — The expression of the DESIRES in your heart to the Lord.

Philippians 4:6; Psalm 62:8; Hebrews 4:16

Intercession — The expression of the PETITIONS in your heart offered to the Lord on BEHALF OF OTHERS

Colossians 1:9; II Timothy 1:3; Romans 1:9

Note: There will be occasions in prayer when we will not even know how to verbalize the requests of our hearts to the Lord. Romans 8:26-27 lets us know that at those times the Holy Spirit intercedes on our behalf!

Praise — The expression of the AWE, WONDER, and WORSHIP in your heart offered to the Lord because of who He is and because of all He has done.

Psalm 150:1-6; 117:1-2; Hebrews 13:15

Thanksgiving — The expression of the GRATITUDE in your heart offered to the Lord because of who He is and because of all of His wonderful works.

Psalm 100:4; 26:7; I Thessalonians 5:18; Philippians 4:6

Section E

The Hindrances To Prayer

- Though God has abundantly expressed His desire to answer the prayers of His children, there are, however, certain hindrances God reveals to us that disqualify us from claiming the promise of answered prayer.

1. An UNCONFESSED or UNFORSAKEN sin.

Psalm 66:18; Isaiah 59:1-2; I Peter 3:12

Key quote —

"It is not primarily the fact of sin, but it is a love of sin, a willingness to sin, an excusing of sin that make it so God cannot answer our prayers."

— John R. Rice.

2. An UNFORGIVING heart or a BITTER spirit.
Matthew 6:14-15; Mark 11:25-26; Hebrews 12:15
3. An UNBELIEVING or DOUBTING mind.
James 1:5-7; Matthew 21:22
4. An INDIFFERENCE or INSENSITIVITY toward the Word of God.
Proverbs 28:9; John 15:7
5. An INDIFFERENCE or INSENSITIVITY toward the needs of other.
Proverbs 21:13; Zechariah 7:9-13; I John 3:22
6. An IMPROPER relationship with your spouse.
I Peter 3:7
7. An IMPROPER or SELF - INDULGENT motive.
James 4:3; Matthew 6:5-6

Key quote –

"If we ask any petition merely that we may receive something to use in our pleasures or in our own gratification in one way or another, we "ask amiss" and need not expect to receive what we ask. This explains why many prayers remain unanswered. For example, many a woman is praying for the conversion of her husband. That certainly is a most proper thing to ask; but many a woman's motive in asking for the conversion of her husband is entirely improper, it is selfish. She desires that her husband may be converted because it would be so much more pleasant for her to have a husband who sympathized with her; or it is so painful to think that her husband might die and be lost forever. For some such selfish reason as this she desires to have her husband converted. The prayer is purely selfish. Why should a woman desire the conversion of her husband? First of all and above all, that God may be glorified; because she cannot bear the thought that God the Father should be dishonored by her husband trampling under foot the Son of God."

— R.A. Torrey

8. An IDOLATROUS heart.
Ezekiel 14:3

Note: The Israelites in Ezekiel's day believed they were keeping the second commandment: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image..." (Exodus 20:4) because they had no PHYSICAL idols in their homes or on their altars. God lets us know in Ezekiel 14:3 that He is just as concerned about the idols we set up in our HEARTS! Note some of the "idols" God identifies in I and II Timothy that are possible to set up in our hearts because of our "love" for them.

- II Timothy 3:2 – The "idol" of SELF.
- II Timothy 3:4 – The "idol" of PLEASURE.
- I Timothy 6:10 – The "idol" of MONEY.
- II Timothy 4:10 – The "idol" of this PRESENT WORLD. (See I John 2:16)

An Overview Of Our Relationship With God Through His Word and Prayer