

Principles and Practice

Prayer, Part 1

☑ **Target:** *Get close to Jesus through prayer and praise!*

Key Verses

Matthew 7:7–8—Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

John 14:14—If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.

Suggested Bible Reading

- Psalms of praise: Psalms 34, 100, and 103.
- Matthew chapters 1–4

Other Recommended Reading

- Prayer Power (Get Activated! book)*

Prayer and Praise: “Thank You, Jesus, for Making Things Turn Out Right!”

Jesus, I don’t always stop and thank You when things are going well. It seems like sometimes I only remember to do that when things turn bad.—Well, actually, not even right away when they turn bad, but often only after they’ve been bad and You’ve turned them good again. That’s not very nice of me, is it, Jesus? Please help me to have faith to praise You even when things don’t look so good, because I know that all things work together for good to them who love You (Romans 8:28).

I want to thank You for showing me that. And, before I forget, I’m going to say with my whole heart that I appreciate all the good things You do for me, the ones I see and the ones I don’t even notice. You make so many things turn out right, and I just love You more than ever.

Help me to tell You more and to love and praise You more often. Thanks a lot, Jesus. I really appreciate You!

Meditation : “God Is Still on the Throne and Prayer Changes Things!”

Many people seem to put the stories of Jesus and His disciples way back in the past. They’re looked on as fairy tales. They have no reality to them. God is far away, Heaven is far away, Jesus has long been dead, everything is so far away! But the Lord is just as real as ever and can still do the same, and even more so. God is still alive, well, and working just as powerfully as ever amongst those that trust in Him! He says in the Bible, “I am the Lord, I change not” (Malachi 3:6), and “Jesus Christ: the same yesterday, today and forever!” (Hebrews 13:8). The day of miracles is not past! God’s Word and His guarantees have no restrictions, no limitations, no qualifications except our faith.

All God asks of us is that we honor Him with faith, by believing the promises in His Word. When you pray, bring those promises with you to remind Him. When you remind God of His Word, it shows you have faith in it. It's a positive declaration of your faith and your knowledge of the Word that pleases God. So quote Scriptures and hold God to His Word!

"Keep on believing, God answers prayer!

Keep on believing, He's still up there!"

He has never failed in one of His good promises! (1 Kings 8:56).

<To think about> *Are you spending some time communing with the Lord in prayer each day? Are you asking for His help?*

Getting to Know the Bible: The Gospel of Matthew

The Gospel of Matthew is the first of the four Gospels.

Matthew was a Jewish man who collected taxes for the Romans. Tax collectors often cheated the people and so were not well liked; yet Jesus called Matthew to be one of His disciples. Matthew probably learned how to keep good records when he was a tax collector, and he must have kept good records of his life with Jesus. If you have a "red-letter edition" of the Bible (in which the Words of Jesus are in red), you will note that the Gospel of Matthew contains more direct quotations from Jesus than any of the other three Gospels. Over 60% of all the verses in Matthew contain direct quotations from Jesus.

Matthew recorded many of Jesus' sermons or teachings. The best known one is called "The Sermon on the Mount" (chapters 5 to 7). Other important chapters include:

Chapter 10: Sending forth the twelve disciples.

Chapter 13: Parables of the Kingdom.

Chapter 18: Lessons on humility, salvation, forgiveness, prayer.

Chapter 23: Woe to religious hypocrites.

Chapters 24 and 25: The Endtime and the Second Coming of Jesus.

Matthew repeatedly quoted the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah to show that Jesus fulfilled them and therefore He was indeed the promised Messiah. This makes the Gospel of Matthew a "bridge book," as it links the Old Testament and the New—prophecy and the fulfillment of prophecy.