

Communicating with God

Prayer, Part 2

☑ **Target: Develop the praise and prayer habit!**

Key Verses

Psalm 34:1—I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

Psalm 100:4—Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.

1 Thessalonians 5:17—Pray without ceasing.

Suggested Bible Reading

- ☐ Matthew 5–9
- ☐ Psalms 139 and 145: Prayers from the Psalms
- ☐ Acts 10:1–43: Prayer results in God giving guidance

Other Recommended Reading

- ☐ Finish reading *Prayer Power*

Prayer and Praise: Before Reading God’s Word

Jesus, I’m just beginning to really understand that to love You means to love Your Word. Help me to realize, Jesus, that when I sit down to read the Bible, it’s not an academic exercise and it’s not so I can grow intellectually. I read Your Word so I can spend time with You and get to know You.

And when I neglect Your Word, I neglect You. The Bible is not just words on a page, they’re not just lessons or a collection of nice stories!—The Word is You, Jesus, it’s Your thoughts, it’s Your way of looking at things, it’s Your character, Your personality—everything about You is shown in Your Word.

Having special close time with You when I read the Word is like cuddling up in the arms of a dear friend and finding comfort, or walking hand in hand and talking heart to heart, sharing everything and drawing close to each other. I can ask You questions, and You can give me answers to the things that I wonder about. Or if I have a problem, I know I can talk it over with You. And it’s not just a one-way street; You are actually listening when I pray. And when I read Your Word, You talk to me. It’s a two-way conversation.

I want to know You, Jesus, so help me to know Your Word. I want to spend time with You so I can think Your thoughts and see things the way You see them.

Meditation: Turning Every Thought into a Prayer

We think thousands of thoughts every day and each thought can be turned into a prayer. This is a habit that has to be formed, but when you try it, you'll see how very wonderfully effective it can be in teaching you to truly "pray without ceasing." You don't have to think up things to pray for all day long; you just turn each of your thoughts into a prayer to the Lord!

For example, if you wake up in the morning and think, *Oh, I'm so tired, I don't know how I can get out of this bed*, you can immediately change that into a prayer: "Lord, You know how tired I am and how I need Your strength for this day!"

It can be a very fun exercise to see how many of your thoughts you can remember to turn into prayers. You just have to ask the Lord to help you make it a habit, and then give Him your cooperation by doing your best to bring your thoughts to Him in prayer.

Even if you have a critical thought about somebody, something like, *Why is he always late?* instead of just being critical, turn those thoughts into a prayer for the person—if he actually has a problem along those lines. And if the problem is you, rebuke the critical thoughts and ask the Lord to help you be more loving and merciful.

Even with your positive thoughts, like, *Oh, what a gorgeous day!* turn it into praise to the Lord, giving Him the glory!—"Thank You Jesus for giving us such a beautiful day!"

<To think about> *How could you make more of an effort to direct your thoughts towards the Lord, turning them into prayers?*

Putting the Word into Action: Pray for Others

1 Thessalonians 1:2—We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers.

Don't neglect to pray for others! It helps to keep a list of those in special need of prayer. When you know somebody is struggling with problems—with health or employment or financial or personal problems, *any* problems—the very *best* you can do for that person is pray for him or her!

■ For you to do: Write up a prayer list and keep it in your Bible or next to your bed to remind you to pray for those people and situations.