



***How do I PRAY & Why Should I?***

As you go through each lesson, look up the Bible verses and answer the questions in the blanks provided. When you are finished with this lesson you and your mentor will meet to discuss your answers and any questions you may have. This is not a pass/fail test, so answer honestly as you understand things. We want you to understand, not just to give the “right” answer.



Prayer is the Christian’s vital breath. It is God’s gracious arrangement whereby His saints are privileged to work together with Him in furthering His sovereign purposes. Prayer unites puny man to Almighty God in a miraculous partnership. It is the most noble, essential ministry God gives to His children – but is the most neglected. Every Christian needs to learn its value!

The Bible teaches that God wants us to pray to Him. Prayer is communicating directly with God, i.e. *talking* with God.

**Matthew 7:7-8** (KJV) 7 “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: 8 For every one that *asketh* receiveth; and he that *seeketh* findeth; and to him that *knocketh* it shall be opened.”

**1. What three words describe prayer in Matthew 7:7-8?**

(1) \_\_\_\_\_ (2) \_\_\_\_\_ (3) \_\_\_\_\_

**2. How many will receive answers to their prayers? (See Matthew 7:8)**

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**3. Does God want us to pray? Read John 16:24**

Yes     No

**4. To whom should our prayer be addressed? Read John 16:23**

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**5. Should we pray directly to God the Father? Read Matthew 6:9**

Yes     No

**6. In whose name should we pray? Read John 14:13-14**

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The word “name” means “authority.” Jesus Christ has given us the authority to go directly to God the Father. When we pray in His Name, we are praying with His authorization.

**7. Why should we pray in Jesus’ name? Read I Timothy 2:5**

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**Note:** *A mediator is a “go-between.”*

**8. How many mediators does God recognize? Read I Timothy 2:5**

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**9. How often should we pray? Read Psalm 88:9**

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**10. Should we keep “in constant touch” with God? Read I Thess. 5:17**

Yes     No

**11. What two conditions need to be met in order for us to receive answers to prayer? Read John 15:7**

(1) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_

**12. What does God promise to do when these conditions are met?**

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**13. List some of the things that stand in the way of answered prayer.**

A. Psalm 66:18 \_\_\_\_\_

B. Proverbs 28:9 \_\_\_\_\_

C. Proverbs 28:13 \_\_\_\_\_

D. Matthew 6:7 \_\_\_\_\_

E. James 4:3 \_\_\_\_\_

F. I Peter 3:7 \_\_\_\_\_

G. I John 5:14 \_\_\_\_\_

**14. Name an important reason why we should pray. Read Matt. 26:41**

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**15. Is it important to believe God's promises when we pray? Read Matthew 21:22**

Yes     No

**16. Who will help us in our praying? Read Romans 8:26-27**

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*The minute you asked Jesus Christ to save you from your sins, the Holy Spirit came to live within you. He is called "The Comforter" or "The Helper" and He will assist you in many ways.*

**17. How much of a difference can prayer make in your life? Read James 5:16**

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**18. What did you learn from this lesson that you did not know before?**

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## 19. How can you make this a part of your everyday life?

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Here is a list of some things for which you should pray:

- **Personal Needs:** † *Spiritual* † *Emotional* † *Physical* † *Financial*
- **Family**
- **Friends**
- **Church**
- **Pastor**
- **Unsaved friends & Loved ones**
- **Our country and the Government officials**
- **Wisdom and understanding**
- **Victory over temptation**
- **God's leading and guidance in your life**

## MEMORIZE THESE VERSES for Lesson Four

(pick the translation that works best for you)

Title to verses: PRAYER PROMISES

**Jeremiah 33:3** (KJV) Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.

**Jeremiah 33:3** (NASB) Call to Me and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know.

**Philippians 4:6-7** (KJV) Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

**Philippians 4:6-7** (NASB) Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

# ACCOUNTABILITY PAGE

My Name: \_\_\_\_\_

My Mentor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date I completed Lesson Four: \_\_\_\_\_

My Mentor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

A Pastor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



HAMILTON SQUARE  
BAPTIST CHURCH

**Remember:**

*It's important to be at church whenever you are able, so you can continue to grow in the Lord!*

**SUNDAYS**

9:45 am – Bible Study or Sunday School

10:50 am – Morning Worship Service

*Lunch & Mingle*

1:30 pm – Afternoon Church Service

**WEDNESDAYS**

7:00 pm – Midweek Bible Study & Prayer Meeting

## Discipleship Lesson #4: How to Pray & Why Should I?

Now, begin daily to pray for certain specific needs that the Lord lays upon your heart. Fill in the days below to get started. You may wish to keep an ongoing prayer list in a notebook.

<b>PRAYER LIST</b>	
<b>REQUEST</b>	<b>HOW ANSWERED</b>
<b>MONDAY</b>	
<b>TUESDAY</b>	
<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	
<b>THURSDAY</b>	
<b>FRIDAY</b>	
<b>SATURDAY</b>	
<b>SUNDAY</b>	

# DIGGING DEEPER

*OPTIONAL: An article to read...*



## FIVE HINDRANCES TO EFFECTIVE PRAYER

*By Harold S. Martin*

It would be well if each of us kept a record of the time spent in prayer during just one week. It might convince us of how little praying we really do. This is an age in which records are kept anyhow. The farmer records the number of bushels of grain produced per acre; the teacher records the progress of her pupils; the businessman records his inventory of stock. And it might be profitable if we kept a record in the matter of prayer. If we are inclined **not** to do it, the reason might be related to the fact that we know how embarrassing the record could be. Jesus said to His disciples one time, *“Could you not watch with me (in prayer); could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation”* (See [Mark 14:37](#)).



Jesus prayed often, and if He found praying necessary in His life, surely prayer ought to have a significant place in the lives of each one of us! To simply begin the day with a few lines, and to close it with a couple routine words—is not the effectual fervent prayer that should characterize the true believer. Mothers can lift up their concerns to God in prayer while mending clothes and waxing floors and preparing meals. Fathers can meet God in behalf of that boy away in grade school, or the married daughter who is now raising a family of her own, while working with a bale of hay, or laboring at a workbench, or sitting at a desk in the office.

## Discipleship Lesson #4: How to Pray & Why Should I?

The Bible says, *“Men ought always to pray and not to faint”* (Luke 18:1). We must cultivate the habit of being constant in an attitude of prayer.

The normal Christian life should be a life of regular, daily answer to prayer. In the model prayer (the “Lord’s Prayer”) Jesus taught His disciples to pray daily for bread and to expect to get it, and to ask daily for forgiveness and to expect to be forgiven. While answered prayer should be the normal experience, it remains a fact that many times we fail to get the answer to the cry of our hearts. Sometimes there are certain hindrances that cause God to withhold the request we ask.

### 1. ASKING FROM A SELFISH MOTIVE

God says, *“You ask and receive not because you ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts”* (James 4:3). The first thing that hinders prayer and causes God to withhold what we ask, is a selfish purpose in our praying. If we pray simply for the gratification of self and for the satisfaction of our own pleasures, the Bible says we ask amiss. We may even ask for perfectly legitimate things (things which are according to God’s will as revealed in the Scriptures), but if we ask from a selfish motive instead of for the glory of God, He does not promise to give our request.

You remember the story that amused us when we were children. It was the story of a wishing cap, and when the possessor wore the cap, he was vested with the power of obtaining immediately whatever he wished for.



Men sometimes seem to regard God’s promise to answer prayer in a similar fashion. They think God is pledged to satisfy all their selfish desires and that He ought to lavishly give them everything they ask. There was a time, for example, when I prayed for a Rolls-Royce. The motive was quite obvious; I was eager to show off. Surely it is best that God never gave me the chance to sit behind the wheel of such an elaborate automobile.



## Discipleship Lesson #4: How to Pray & Why Should I?

Sometimes folks desire great wealth and pray that God will bless them financially. It may be all right to pray for success and prosperity in business, but we must be very careful to examine our motives and see that they are proper. God knows the motive of the heart, and He loves us too much to entrust us with riches, when He knows we would spend them on our own pleasures, and thus let them become a detriment to our souls.

Sometimes a Christian wife prays for the conversion of her unsaved husband. This is a proper thing for which to pray, for it is God's will that all men should be saved. But as proper as that prayer is—it is often hindered because the wife who offers it is praying for the conversion of her husband from a purely selfish motive. She says to herself: "Our married life would be so much happier, and it would be far more pleasant for me around the house, if my husband were a Christian." All that, of course, is true. No two persons can know the deepest joys of married life, when one is a Christian and the other is not. But for a wife to pray for the conversion of her husband **for those reasons alone**, is selfish. The real reason for praying for the conversion of one's husband should not be so that things will be more convenient for you—but because you know that without Christ he is lost and without the hope of eternal life. James says that sometimes we do not receive the answers to our prayers because we are too selfish in our praying. We ask and receive not because we ask amiss, that we might consume it on our own pleasures.

### 2. A GENERAL INDIFFERENCE TOWARD THE BIBLE

If our hearts are turned away from the Scriptures, and the Bible fails to be of any interest to us, then our prayers are going to be an abomination. **Proverbs 28:9** says, "*He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be an abomination.*"



## Discipleship Lesson #4: How to Pray & Why Should I?

It is proper for Christian people to read good books, but if those books stand between you and your regular reading of the Bible, it is better not to read the books. After all, how can anyone who is not interested in the Bible; who fails to read it; whose heart is turned away from it; how can he ever please God in prayer? Jesus says, *“If my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you”* (John 15:7). And John says (in 1 John 5:14), *“If we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us.”* The person who doesn’t love the Bible, and who isn’t eager to read it, and doesn’t gladly accept its commands—cannot meet the conditions of these promises, and thus his prayer-life will be hindered. God says we should ask according to His will. And if we want to know God’s will, then we must study God’s book. Ignorance of the Bible and its basic teachings accounts for many hindered prayers.

One Christian says, “I prayed for years that God would sanctify me wholly and root out inbred sin and make me absolutely pure within, but He hasn’t heard my cry.” But this person prayed without carefully consulting the Scriptures. God has expressed His mind far too clearly (in the Bible) concerning the matter of rooting out inbred sin, to let us be familiar with the Scriptures and at the same time pray a prayer like that. The Apostle John says that *“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us”* (1 John 1:8). John—the disciple whom Jesus loved—the one into whose care Jesus entrusted His mother; the one who wrote five of the New Testament books; this same Apostle John **includes himself**, and says, *“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.”* You see, if the person who prayed the prayer had read the Bible carefully, the prayer would never have been prayed as it was. Every Christian should earnestly seek to familiarize himself with the Scriptures, for *“He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be an abomination.”* (Proverbs 28:9)

### 3. AN UNFORGIVING SPIRIT TOWARD OTHERS

Jesus states plainly that Christians who will not forgive others, will not be heard themselves when they ask forgiveness. Jesus says in Mark 11:25,

## Discipleship Lesson #4: How to Pray & Why Should I?

*“When ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any.”* And in **Matthew 6:14**, we read, *“For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”*

It is mere folly to expect God to answer our prayers if at the same time we are cherishing wrath and bitterness in our hearts toward others. There are some Christians who would never attend a theater and never belong to a lodge and never play a game of bridge—but who at the same time are guilty of the sin of unforgiveness. It is easy to brood over past differences just enough to keep our wrath warm. If we pray while holding bitterness in our hearts toward others, our prayers are really hypocritical, and God has not promised to hear.

We are to completely forgive others. Jesus says we are to forgive “from the heart” (that is, without limit)—because God has so graciously forgiven us. And yet in almost every congregation of believers there are



persons who refuse to speak to others, and who are so gripped with the sin of holding bitterness in their hearts that they have made shipwreck of their lives. If we want our prayers answered, we must learn to completely forgive. God has never promised to answer the prayer of one who harbors an unforgiving spirit.

### 4. DISCORD IN THE HOME

Contention and misunderstandings in the home become a hindrance to an effective prayer life. Many times this hindrance is overlooked. Peter (in 1 Peter 3) speaks about the conduct of husbands and wives, and tells us that an inconsistent life in the home will cause our prayers to be hindered. He says, *“Likewise ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel—and being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered”* (**1 Peter 3:7**).

## Discipleship Lesson #4: How to Pray & Why Should I?

The wife must be subject to her husband or her prayers will be hindered. The husband is to dwell with his wife according to the knowledge that she is the weaker vessel, or his prayers will be hindered. Harmony in the home is tied into receiving the answers to our prayers.

When two unite in marriage, God views them as one flesh. He expects them to think together and to plan together and to pray together—and if there is disharmony and a lack of agreement, prayers are going to be interrupted. We should never let the sun go down on a family squabble because it is like a snowball—the farther it rolls, the larger it will grow. Discord in the home, grieves God. If there is a lack of harmony and a lack of agreement in your home, your prayer-life will be hindered.

We can make all kinds of pretense about piety. We can be very faithful in attending Sunday services and various church meetings, and participating in Christian work, but remember that God's eye is on our home life! How many a man is there who, if you heard him talk in prayer meeting or in the Sunday School class, you would think he is a perfect saint of God. His words are so winsome and winning and earnest. But he is quite different in his home. He's harsh and domineering and impatient and crude and overbearing. Some men who are angels in public are devils at home—and then they wonder why their prayers are hindered.

And some women are as sweet as a summer morning when you meet them at the Lord's house, but at home they are peevish and nagging and hard to please. The husband is tired when he comes home from work. As husband and wife sit down to the evening meal, she says, "John, did you mail that letter I gave you this morning?" He looks aghast. He puts his hands into his pockets and finds the letter still there. He says, "Darling, I'm sorry, but I forgot to mail it." She says, "Of course you forgot to mail it! You always forget to mail it! You never do what I ask you to do!" And on and on she goes. No wonder prayers are hindered.

True—many homes are burdened with family members who are not Christians—and many times there is a lack of cooperation on the part of

## Discipleship Lesson #4: How to Pray & Why Should I?

the unbeliever. In such cases, the Christian partner must continue to pray, and God does graciously answer. But remember—it never helps to nag and constantly criticize the one who is slow to cooperate. Our sweet reasonableness in the midst of tense moments, will have tendencies to win the unbeliever.

### 5. ANY UNCONFESED SIN

A final factor that hinders the answer to prayers is any unconfessed sin. We have pointed out a number of sins thus far which are mentioned in the Bible as hindering the answer to prayer. These include praying with selfish motives, harboring an unforgiving spirit, and allowing discord in the home. There are other reasons why prayers are hindered. These include a lack of faith (failure to believe that God will answer), an unwillingness to help answer the prayer, and a failure to pray with uncovered head for men, and with the veiled head for women. God may do **more** than He promised, but He never promised to answer the prayers of those who disregard His order in headship.

Finally, however, it must be pointed out that **any** unconfessed sin can block the answer to our prayers. No Christian can ever be successful in prayer if he practices sin in his life—if he knows he is doing wrong and he is not willing to confess his transgression. The Bible says, *“If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me”* (Psalm 66:18).

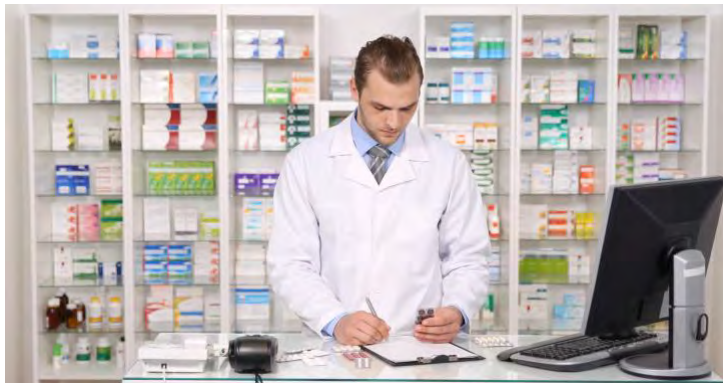
True—all of us have sinned. But if we hold to a sin, and love it, and make an alibi for it, and excuse it—then that puts a separation between God and me. It short-circuits the communication system, and I am just wasting my time even trying to pray.

If your prayers are not reaching God’s throne, search your life for some evil that might be lurking there. Look back into the dark recesses of your heart and mind. It may be some questionable habit; or some petty jealousy; or carelessness; or lustful passion. It may be the love of money, or some shameful secret sin in your life. Perhaps only you and God know about it. If you love a sin, and if in your heart you are excusing it—it is

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going to hinder your prayers and stop heaven and shut the ears of God so that He will not hear. The solution is to get it confessed and forsaken, and to restore fellowship with God.

Prayer is a communication system almost like a telephone between us and God. An older friend in Christ said to me one time: “Brother Martin, do you know what God’s telephone number is?” I said, “No, I can’t say that I do.” She said, “It is **Jeremiah 33:3**.” God says (as recorded in that passage of Scripture), “*Call on me and I will answer thee and show thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not.*” That is a beautiful promise—yet often we behave as if the lines were busy or as if the phone were out of order.



A Christian night-attendant in a city drugstore tells of his experience with prayer. The store was open all night to fill emergency prescriptions. The attendant slept on a couch at the rear of the store, and one who wanted

service during the night rang a buzzer at the front door. The attendant was just about sleeping one dark, rainy, dismal night—when he was aroused by the buzzer. When he answered the door, it was a little boy, who said, “Please mister, get this medicine as soon as you can; my mommy is awful sick.” Sleepily and hurriedly he filled the prescription and the boy was off. After the boy had gone, the pharmacist put away the bottles and recorded the prescription—only to notice to his horror that he had given the boy a deadly poison, instead of the medicine he had intended to give.

The pharmacist did not know which way the boy had gone; it was raining and dark outside; he looked in the phone book, but there was no name to match his record. And then he did as we often sing—“What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear; what a privilege to carry,

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everything to God in prayer”—he went back to his cot and on his knees asked God to overrule this tragic mistake for His own glory. He then lay down again.

Soon the night attendant was aroused by the buzzer again. It was the same little boy. He was crying fiercely. He said, “I was running down the street to get this medicine home as soon as I could, and I slipped and fell and broke the bottle. Will you please fill it again?”



You see—God overruled this tragic mistake in answer to the prayer of a humble Christian.

Prayer is the Christian’s source of strength and joy. It is a vital link between the soul and God. It is a major source of spiritual power. Don’t neglect it. And if after checking carefully, examining my life with regard to the hindrances pointed out in this message—there is still silence when I pray—I need to accept God’s silence in the belief that He is using it to discipline me and to help me grow.

If you are unsaved—you have no promise that God will answer your prayers. God may do **more** than He promised, and as a result He has sometimes answered the prayers of unbelievers. But the only prayer you can pray with the certainty that God will answer, is the prayer, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” Will you acknowledge your hopeless and helpless condition today, and call on God to save you while you still have the opportunity?

*Print copies of this article may be obtained from: **BIBLE HELPS**  
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HAMILTON SQUARE  
BAPTIST CHURCH

## THE DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING COURSE

### *Lesson Schedule*

Lesson #1	What Happens When One is “Born Again?”	Salvation
Lesson #2	What to Do When You Fall	Confession of Sin
Lesson #3	What About Baptism?	Baptism
Lesson #4	How to Pray & Why Should I?	Prayer
Lesson #5	Bible Study: Making it Personal	Bible Study
Lesson #6	Obedience Brings Blessing	Obedience
Lesson #7	Church Membership Matters	Membership
Lesson #8	Tithes & Offerings: Bible Principles	Giving
Lesson #9	Overcoming Sexual Sin & Temptation	Victory
Lesson #10	Our Lord’s Commission	Witnessing
Lesson #11	Putting Anger & Bitterness to Rest	Bitterness
Lesson #12	Alcohol & Other Addictive Substances	Addictions
Lesson #13	Music and the Christian	Music
Lesson #14	Social Media, TV, Movies, The Internet & The Future	Media
Lesson # 15	Biblical Separation: The Dangers of Compromise	Separation
Lesson #16	Bloom Where You’re Planted! Staying in the City	City Ministry
Lesson #17	Happiness Forever: The Fruit of Faithfulness	Heaven

If you have questions, ask your mentor to help you.  
If he or she can’t help you, they will help you set up an appointment  
with a pastor at our church. They are here to help you!