



PRAY

LESSON TWENTY-TWO

Follow-up *(As a family discuss the assignment for the lesson Believe.)*

1. What did we learn from the Solution Suggestion we did in the last lesson?
2. How have we been trying to show unconditional love and serve our fellow men?

Concept

Prayer is the act of communicating with God. It is an act of worship which usually involves talking and listening. The unspoken yearnings of our hearts raised in supplication to God are also prayers. The formalities of what we say, in other words, how and what we say, are not as important as the act of reaching out to God in faith that He will hear us.

God wants to help us, and He *will* help us in accordance with His great wisdom and love, His knowledge of our true needs, and our worthiness and desire for His help.

There seems to be no limitations as to when, where, and what we should pray about.

Prayer is a powerful method of communicating our thoughts, needs and desires to One who can help us, strengthen us, and bless us in our efforts to become better people.

Four steps of prayer are suggested:

1. Prepare. As we prepare to speak to God, we should try to rid our mind of worldly thoughts and focus on Him. For a moment we should contemplate God's greatness and goodness and think about what we'll say in our prayer.

2. Express gratitude. The second part of a prayer is to praise God and thank Him for His blessings to us and to our family. We should thank God for specific things, expressing gratitude with all of our heart.

3. Ask for help. We should pray for specific ways God can help us, and seek forgiveness for our wrongdoings.

4. Listen. When we pray, we seek God and try to understand His will. How can we learn

His will for us if we don't listen? We should keep our minds open and believing. During and after our prayers we should pause, concentrate, and listen, trying sincerely to receive insights--ideas that may help us. Divine impressions will come to us more readily when we're quiet and receptive to them.

Family Survey Review

Statement #22. Our family prays together.

- Do you think God hears and answers prayers?
- If we prayed together as a family, in what ways could it help us?

Story

Once there was an injured little orphan boy who was hurried to the hospital where it was determined that he needed an immediate operation. When he was wheeled into the operating room, he heard the doctors and nurses discussing his problem. He knew that it was very serious. The young boy spoke to a doctor as they were preparing to give him the anesthetic. "Doctor, before you begin to operate, will you please pray for me?"

The doctor, with seeming embarrassment, offered an excuse and said, "I can't pray for you." The boy asked the other doctor with the same result. Then the little boy said, "If you can't pray for me, will you please wait while I pray for myself?"

They removed the sheet and he knelt on the operating table. He bowed his head and said, "God, I am just an orphan boy, and I'm awful sick. Won't you please make me well? Bless these men who are going to operate that they'll do it right. If you will make me well, I'll try to grow up and be a good man. Thank you God."

When the little boy was finished, he lay down. The doctors' and nurses' eyes were filled with tears. The child said, "I'm ready now."

The operation was performed. The boy was taken back to his room, and before long he was well on his way to recovery.

Sometime afterwards the experienced surgeon remarked, "I have operated on hundreds of people, men and women who thought they had faith to be healed. But never until I stood over that little boy have I felt the Spirit of God as I felt it then. That boy opened the windows of heaven and talked to his God as one would have talked to his friend, face to face. I want to say to you that I am a better man for having heard a little boy pray."

Discussion

1. Why did the little boy want to pray?
2. How did the surgeon feel about the boy's prayer?
3. How do you feel about talking to God like the little boy did--"as one would have talked to



his friend, face to face?”

Activity

The activity for this lesson is to gather together and say a prayer as a family.



Assignment

The assignment is to lift your thoughts to God often and include Him in your lives through prayer.

ADDITIONAL SOLUTION FOR SUCCESS

THE HEALING POWER OF PRAYER

This interesting discovery concerning prayer was reported by Dr. Larry Dorsey in the *Reader's Digest* Magazine in June, 1995:

It was during residency training at Parkland Memorial Hospital in Dallas, Texas, when I had my first patient with terminal cancer in both lungs. I advised him on what therapy was available and what little I thought it would do. Rightly enough, he opted for no treatment.

Yet whenever I stopped by his hospital bedside, he was surrounded by visitors from his church, singing and praying. Good thing, I thought, because soon they'll be singing and praying at his funeral.

A year later, when I was working elsewhere, a colleague at Parkland called to ask if I wanted to see my old patient. See him? I couldn't believe he was still alive. I studied his chest X rays and was stunned. The man's lungs were completely clear. There was no sign of cancer.

"His therapy has been remarkable," the radiologist said, looking over my shoulder.

Therapy? I thought. There wasn't any - unless you consider prayer.

I had long ago given up the faith of my childhood. Now, as an adult, I believed only in the power of modern medicine. Prayer seemed an arbitrary frill, and so I put the incident out of my mind.

The years passed, and I became chief of staff at a large urban hospital. I was aware that many of my patients used prayer, but I put little trust in it. Then, in the late '80's, I began to come across studies, many conducted under stringent laboratory conditions, which showed that prayer brings about significant changes in a variety of physical conditions.

Perhaps the most convincing study, published in 1988, was by cardiologist Dr. Randolph Byrd. A computer assigned 393 patients at the coronary-care unit of the San Francisco General Hospital to one of two groups. Half were prayed for by prayer groups, and half were not remembered in prayer. No one knew to which group the patients belonged. The prayer groups were simply given the patients' first names, along with brief descriptions of their medical problems. They were asked to pray each day until the patient was discharged from the hospital, but were given no instructions on how to do it or what to say.

When the study was completed ten months later, the prayed-for patients benefitted in several significant areas:

- They were 5 times less likely than the unremembered group to require antibiotics.
- They were 2 ½ times less likely to suffer congestive heart failure.
- They were less likely to suffer cardiac arrest.

If the medical technique being studied had been a new drug or surgical procedure instead of prayer, it would probably have been heralded as a breakthrough. Even hard-boiled skeptics like Dr. William Nolen, who had written a book questioning the validity of faith healing, acknowledged, “If this is a valid study, we doctors ought to be writing on our order sheets, “Pray three times a day.” If it works, it works.

I have since given up practicing medicine to devote myself to researching and writing about prayer and how it affects our health. There are studies which suggest that prayer can have a beneficial effect on high blood pressure, wounds, headaches and anxiety. Here are some of the things I’ve found:

1. Prayer can take many forms. In the studies I’ve seen, results occurred not only when people prayed for explicit outcomes but also when they prayed for nothing specific. Some studies, in fact, showed that a simple “Thy will be done” was more powerful than specific results held in the mind. In many experiments a simple attitude of prayerfulness, an all-pervading sense of holiness and a feeling of empathy, caring and compassion, seemed to set the stage for healing.

2. Love increases the power of prayer. The power of love is legendary. It is built into folklore, common sense and everyday experience. Throughout history, tender, loving care has uniformly been recognized as a valuable element in healing. In fact, a survey of 10,000 men with heart disease, published in *The Journal Of American Medicine*, found close to a 50-percent reduction in frequency of angina in those who perceived their wives as supportive and loving.

3. Prayer can be open-ended. Most people who pray are convinced that it can be used in a purposeful, goal-specific manner. But research shows that open-ended entreaties seem to work too. Invocations such as “Thy will be done,” “Let it be,” or “May the best thing happen” do not involve “using” prayer for specific outcomes, nor do they involve sending complicated messages.

Perhaps this is what some people mean when they advocate, “Let go and let God.” Many recognize in their own prayers a spontaneous, uncontrollable quality that brings results.

4. Prayer means you are not alone. A patient of mine was dying. The day before his death, I sat at his bedside with his wife and children. He knew he had little time left, and he chose his words carefully, speaking in a hoarse whisper. Although he was not a religious person, he revealed to us that recently he had begun to pray.

“What do you pray *for*?” I asked him.

“It isn’t ‘for’ anything,” he said thoughtfully. “It simply reminds me that I am not alone.”

Prayer is like that. It is a reminder of our unbounded nature, of the part of us that is infinite in space and time. It is the universe’s affirmation that we are not alone.