

Lesson 7 of 8: Is sincere prayer & study necessary to remain faithfully obedient?

- I. How can we have an ongoing and active relationship with God?
- Communication is important and absolutely necessary for any real relationship to even exist. Therefore, in order to have a relationship with God, we must communicate with Him. Studying God's word is the way in which we allow God to instruct us in His ways while prayer is the way in which we talk to God.
 - **Psalm 15:29** ²⁹ *The LORD is far from the wicked, **But He hears the prayer of the righteous.***
 - **John 17:8** ⁸ ***For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.***
- II. Sincere prayer is as equally important as sincere study; just as a real world relationship requires communication from both parties.
- Who are we to pray to?
 - We are only to pray to God the Father.
 - **Matthew 6:6** ⁶ ***But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.***
 - How are we to pray?
 - We cannot go to the Father except through Jesus Christ, He is our Mediator. Therefore, all things we pray and ask for must be done in His name.
 - **1 Timothy 2:5** ⁵ ***For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,***
 - **John 14:6** ⁶ ***Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.***
 - **John 14:13-14** ¹⁴ ***If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.***
 - **Colossians 3:17** ¹⁷ ***And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.***
 - What are some reasons why we should pray?
 - Consider how often you stay in touch with those you love. We should also continuously stay in touch with God with an attitude of thanksgiving.
 - **1 Thessalonians 5:17-18** ¹⁷ ***pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.***
 - We should pray to make our requests known to God.
 - **Philippians 4:6** ⁶ ***Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;***
 - Prayer should also include asking for wisdom in order to better understand study, to make the right choices, and to overcome trials.
 - **James 1:5** ⁵ ***If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.***
 - While praying, is there anything we need to avoid?
 - Requests that are selfish and contrary to the will of God won't be accepted by the Father. For example: praying to successfully rob a bank or to levitate.
 - **James 4:3** ³ ***You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.***
 - **1 John 5:14** ¹⁴ ***Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.***
 - Prayers that are repetitious and are not genuine or sincere in nature are done in vain.
 - **Matthew 6:7** ⁷ ***And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.***
- III. We talk to God through prayer and He has communicated to us through His word. Must we hear and study His word in order to remain obedient?
- The first century Christians studied and continued living by the word.
 - **Acts 2:42** ⁴² ***And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.***
 - **2 Timothy 4:13** ¹³ ***Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchments.***
 - **1 Timothy 4:13** ¹³ ***Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.***
 - We are commanded to study and in doing so we will know whether or not our decisions are acceptable to God.
 - Studying is pleasing to God and assures us that we are living an acceptable life.
 - **2 Timothy 2:15** ¹⁵ ***Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*** (King James Version)
 - The word which we study will be used to judge us; therefore, by studying we can know how we need to live to be justified.
 - **John 12:48** ⁴⁸ ***He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.***
 - The knowledge and understanding we gain from sincere study gives us the strength to overcome sin.
 - One who lacks the knowledge of God and His word will be destroyed because they will not be able to be freed and overcome their slavery to sin.
 - **Hosea 4:6** ⁶ ***My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.***
 - **1 Corinthians 15:34** ³⁴ ***Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.***
 - **John 8:32** ³² ***And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."***
 - Studying increases and strengthens our faith in Jesus Christ. Faith is essential for salvation.
 - **Romans 10:17** ¹⁷ ***So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.***
 - **Hebrews 11:6** ⁶ ***But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.***
- IV. When we study we are to examine ourselves while comparing our lives to Christ and the word of God.
- Socrates, a philosopher, once said that "a life left unexamined is not worth living". By studying we examine and test ourselves compared to the word of God.
 - **Galatians 6:4** ⁴ ***But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.***
 - **1 Thessalonians 5:21** ²¹ ***Test all things; hold fast what is good.***
 - Studying the word of God takes courage. By studying one is completely denying their own way of thinking while seeking areas of where they can make adjustments in their life to become more like Christ.
 - **2 Corinthians 13:5** ⁵ ***Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.***
 - William Butler Yeats, a famous poet, once said, "It takes more courage to dig deep into the dark corners of one's own soul and wrestle with what one finds than it does for a soldier to fight on the battlefield."
 - **Luke 9:23** ²³ ***Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.***

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- By studying we learn how to follow and imitate Christ.
 - **1 Corinthians 11:1** ¹ *Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.*
- V. Through study we are able to mold our attitudes.
 - We are able to rejoice and be thankful by realizing what we actually deserve compared to what God has done for us.
 - **Romans 3:23** ²³ *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*
 - **Romans 6:23** ²³ *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
 - **Colossians 3:15-16** ¹⁵ *And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*
 - **Philippians 4:4** ⁴ *Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!*
 - We are what we think about and by studying God's word we are able to mediate on righteousness.
 - **Proverbs 23:7** ⁷ *For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. "Eat and drink!" he says to you, But his heart is not with you.*
 - **Philippians 4:8** ⁸ *Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.*
- VI. By studying, we will be able to recognize those that preach false doctrine and give a defense to those teaching falsely as to why we're turning from their teaching.
 - There are those that teach that one can be saved by just saying a prayer and believing in Jesus.
 - **Mark 16:16** ¹⁶ *He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.*
 - **James 2:19-20, 24** ¹⁹ *You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!²⁰ But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? (...)²⁴ You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.*
 - **1 Peter 3:21** ²¹ *There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,*
 - There are those do not seek to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth.
 - **John 4:23-24** ²³ *But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. ²⁴ God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."*
 - Some who seek to serve the Lord in certain ways throughout various denominations are forbidden to marry. There are also those that teach one must abstain from certain meats and foods while others command that we are to still keep the sabbath holy.
 - **1 Timothy 4:1-5** ¹ *Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, ² speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, ³ forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. ⁴ For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; ⁵ for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.*
 - **Colossians 2:16** ¹⁶ *So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths,*
 - Some teach falsely by twisting the scriptures in an attempt to make them align with their own agenda.
 - **2 Peter 3:16** ¹⁶ *as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.*
 - However, if those who teach falsely lead others into false doctrine, then both will be destroyed.
 - **Matthew 15:14** ¹⁴ *Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch."*
 - Therefore, we must be diligent to study and search the scriptures being certain that the truth is being taught.
 - **2 Peter 3:17-18** ¹⁷ *You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked;¹⁸ but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.*
 - **Acts 17:11** ¹¹ *These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.*
 - A diligent study life supplies us with the understanding of God's instruction to then lovingly teach others the truth. We must always be ready to teach.
 - **2 Timothy 4:2** ² *Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.*
 - **1 Peter 3:15** ¹⁵ *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;*
- VII. The word of God supplies us with the ability to overcome all temptation.
 - There is no temptation that we cannot overcome.
 - **1 Corinthians 10:13** ¹³ *No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.*
 - Christ overcame temptation by using the word of God.
 - **Matthew 4:8-10** ⁸ *Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹ And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me."¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"*
 - We too can overcome temptation and bring every thought into full submission to Christ by using the word.
 - **2 Corinthians 10:4-5** ⁴ *For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, ⁵ casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,*
- VIII. Through perseverance and continuously applying the word of God to one's life, one will grow spiritually and strengthen their relationship with God.
 - One can never know and fully understand the entire word, meaning, there is no end to study because one can always grow in the knowledge of God.
 - **2 Peter 3:18** ¹⁸ *but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.*
 - It has been said before, that approaching a study of the Bible is like approaching the ocean and trying to dip it dry with a teaspoon.
 - **Psalms 119:160** ¹⁶⁰ *The entirety of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.*
 - If we just study the word without acting upon it, then we fool ourselves. The word can only impact our lives if we put it into action.
 - **James 1:22** ²² *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*