



FIRST STEPS

STUDIES TO BEGIN YOUR WALK WITH CHRIST
By Marlon Furtado

“How Do I Talk to God”

HOW DO I TALK TO GOD?

TALKING TO GOD IS CALLED PRAYER.

One of the joys of being a Christian is that you now have access to God's ear. Yes, the God of the universe wants to hear from you. Prayer may sound mysterious, but it is simply talking to God.

Now that you know Jesus, you will find yourself praying often throughout your day. Don't worry about using special words. You can talk to God as freely and naturally as you do with your best friend.

ISN'T GOD TOO BUSY FOR ME TO BOTHER HIM?

This is a very common concern of new Christians. They assume that since God has a universe to run, He must have far more important things on His mind than their concerns. Is that true?

Not at all. That's the greatness and magnificence of our God. He *is* running the universe, but it is not *hard* for Him to do so. God is not like you and me. When we get involved in some project, we don't like to get interrupted. But God has the capacity to be fully aware of everything at the same time. That's why He can pay attention to your voice and listen to billions of other people at the same time — and never get confused! So, God may be busy, but He's never too busy to enjoy your prayers. As His child, you have a direct line to heaven anytime day or night.

Hebrews 4:16 *"Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."* Far from being too busy for us, God has invited His children to come to Him because He knows we need mercy and grace throughout our days. It's as though God has opened the doors into His glorious throne room and beckons us to come to Him with our needs.

HOW SHOULD I ADDRESS GOD?

If we were to be introduced to the President of the United States, we would address him as "Mr. President". God is far greater than any president, so how should you and I show our respect when we speak with Him? In the military, you are to address your superiors by their rank. God is far more superior to us than a general is to a private, but Jesus told us to address God as **Father** when we pray. God wants us to feel as free as a small child running to approach God remembering that we now have a close, personal relationship with God.

Matthew 6:9 says, *"This, then, is how you should pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name."*

The term *Father* conveys two very important things. First, I am to have deep respect and honor for the Lord as I approach Him in prayer. Second, I am to feel very comfortable with approaching Him at any time.

Some people have not had very good fathers, making it difficult to address God as their heavenly Father. If that is true for you, in time you will become very secure in God's love and care for you.

WHEN SHOULD I PRAY?

There isn't any particular time that is more special for prayer. In fact, **1 Thessalonians 5:17** says, "*Pray continually.*" That means, all day long you can be talking with God. Even when you are in a crowd, you can be praying silently.

Jesus made sure He started His day with prayer. **Mark 1:35** says, "*Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.*" As soon as you awaken each day, speak to God. Talk with Him as you dress and eat. Talk with Him as you open your Bible.

King David said he would talk to God every morning. **Psalms 5:3** says, "*In the morning, O Lord, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation.*" But David did not limit his prayers to just the morning. He also stated in **Psalms 55:17**, "*Evening, morning and noon I cry out in distress, and he hears my voice.*"

The Old Testament prophet Daniel also made a habit of praying at three regular intervals in his day. **Daniel 6:10**, "*Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed.*"

Jesus wants us to talk with Him throughout our days, not just in the morning or noon or in the evening. He's made His throne available for us at all hours of the day and night. Don't feel that your prayers need to be formal nor a particular length. God just wants to hear from you. So it might be just a few short words of thanks, "Father, I love You. Thanks, Jesus, for giving me new life." Or it might be a silent request that you shout to Him, "God I need Your help with this situation. Give me the strength and wisdom I'll need." Be sure to talk with God for a few moments just before you drift off to sleep.

WHAT SHOULD I PRAY ABOUT?

Philippians 4:6-7 say, "*Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*" There is nothing too trivial to God. If you are faced with something that is causing you to be worried or anxious, then talk to the Lord about it.

In addition to those concerns, the Bible mentions other issues that we should pray about. Below is just a partial list:

- understanding of the Bible
- lost friends to receive Christ
- boldness to tell people about Jesus
- wisdom for decisions
- victory over devil and temptation
- provision of daily needs

KEEP IT SIMPLE.

When a young baby is first learning to talk, the parents are happy to hear any words come out. Later, as the child grows, they will concentrate on teaching their child how to converse in full sentences. So it is with the new Christian. Don't worry about saying the *right* thing to God. Just enjoy talking to Him! When you have a good friend, you feel the freedom to talk about anything and everything. In the same way, think of God as a close friend. You can talk to Him about anything. There is nothing off-limits with God.

When Jesus was teaching on a mountainside one day, He gave the following guide for our prayers. You may have heard of it - people often refer to it as *The Lord's Prayer*. It is recorded in **Matthew 6:9-13**:

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

In many churches, the people will recite this prayer in unison. But Jesus never told us to do so. He gave it more as an outline for guiding our prayers. Let's take a closer look at each part and see how it can help us learn to talk to God.

- *"Our Father in heaven"*
God is not a distant being with whom you have to get an appointment. He wants an intimate friendship with you. He is your loving heavenly Father, whose ear is always ready to hear you.
- *"Hallowed be Your name"*
Take time to honor Him, to praise Him for His character and works, to voice your love for Him, your thanks that He has good plans for your life.
- *"Your kingdom come, Your will be done"*
He has given us the privilege of prayer, not only to voice our requests, but to hear His heart. Before rushing into your list of wants and needs, reflect upon what He has revealed to be His will in the Bible.
- *"Give us our daily bread"*
God wants us to ask Him to meet the needs we have today. They might be financial, relational, emotional, or spiritual. Maybe you need wisdom or patience. Perhaps someone you love needs His guidance. Whatever you are facing, God wants to hear you express your needs to Him.
- *"Forgive us"*
As we talk with our Father we often become aware of our own sins. If God brings these up in our conversation with Him, we should quickly confess them. He wants to forgive us so that there is nothing that gets in the way of our walk with Him.
- *"Deliver us"*
There are plenty of sources of temptation in our world. Prayer includes asking God to lead us away from those things and to help us fight the good fight of faith.

SAMPLE PRAYER

Here is a sample prayer which follows Jesus' outline.

Father, I'm so glad to be one of Your children and to know of Your love. You bring joy into my life and I am so glad to know You as my heavenly Father. Thank You for inviting me into Your presence any time I wish.

As I look at the trees and the flowers, creation shows both Your brilliance and Your power. You are awesome! Your ability to manage this entire universe as well as watch over all the details of my life is beyond my comprehension. I'm so grateful for Jesus' blood and sacrifice that paid the penalty for all of my sins. Thank You for being so gracious in my life. Thank You also for providing for my family's financial needs.

God, I know that You want people to come to know You as Lord. You are King of the universe and You want to be invited to be King of each person's heart. I know that only two things last forever --- people's souls and Your Word. So help me to keep my focus on You and Your desires today. Move in my neighbors' hearts and give me an opportunity to share Jesus with them.

I need Your wisdom today and Your guidance to get my work done. I also bring my family before You and ask You to encourage them and meet their needs today. Help Steve as he continues to grieve the loss of his wife. Encourage our friends who recently put their mother into a nursing home. Help my friend know what to do about her parents' estate as her siblings show such greed.

This afternoon I found myself judging that homeless person without knowing any of the details of his life. I'm sorry. Please forgive me. Thank You.

Guard my mind and my heart from the enemy's lies and deceptions today. I need You to strengthen me.

Thank You for hearing this prayer of mine. I love You, Jesus.

LET'S OPEN YOUR BIBLE

FATHER

Romans 8:15 You did not receive a spirit that make you a _____ again to fear, but you received the Spirit of _____. And by Him we cry, "Abba, _____."

HALLOWED

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 Because He is the Father of _____ and the God of all _____.

1 Peter 1:3-5 Because of His great _____ He has given us _____ into a living hope and into an _____ kept for us in heaven.

KINGDOM

Colossians 1:9 Ask to know His _____.

Luke 22:42 Jesus yielded to God's decision as He prayed, "Father, if You are willing, take this cup [the crucifixion] from me; yet not _____ will, but _____ be done."

BREAD

Hebrews 4:16 Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to _____ us in our time of _____.

Matthew 7:7-8 _____ and it will be given to you; seek and you will _____; _____ and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who _____ receives; he who seeks _____; and to him who _____, the door will be opened.

James 1:5 Ask for _____.

1 Peter 5:7 I know that God _____ about my concerns.

FORGIVE US

Revelation 3:19 Because God _____ me, He will rebuke and chasten me. So, I must be earnest and _____.

1 John 1:9 Once I _____ my sin to the Lord, He will _____ me of my sin and _____ me from all unrighteousness.

DELIVER US

Ephesians 6:12 Our struggle is not against other people, but against the _____ forces of _____ in the heavenly realms.

1 Peter 5:8 The devil prowls like a roaring _____. He wants to _____ my life.