

God Centered Prayer
Lesson Four: Faith – The Key to Prayer
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Introduction: Prayer is Worthless without Faith.

- A. There is a danger of our prayers becoming a vain activity over time.
 - 1. Just as the pagans erroneously believed that the more words prayed the more effective they were (**Mt. 6:7**), our prayers can also be prayed in vain.
 - 2. Like “vain repetitions,” prayer becomes a mere ritual when we say the same words each time we pray without genuine faith in our hearts.
- B. Faith is of the utmost importance when addressing the invisible God.
 - 1. We can easily take our focus off of God when praying and as a result, our prayers will be of no effect!
 - 2. Prayers that please God will be offered in faith (**Heb. 11:5-6**).
 - a. Faith that God *really* exists, that though He is invisible (**1 Tim. 1:17**) we believe *absolutely* that God is a real living spiritual being.
 - b. Faith that God listens to our prayers, answers according to His will, and will reward us just as He has promised.
 - 3. Prayer must not be treated as a mere ritual, routine, tradition, or hobby, lest our prayers are not accepted by God.
- C. Doubt must be banished from the heart.
 - 1. Trials of suffering, temptation, worldliness, etc. can negatively influence us to such a degree that we begin to doubt God (**Lam. 3:17-18**).
 - 2. Doubt hinders prayer and the requests we ask of the Lord (**Jas. 1:5-8**).
 - 3. All doubts of God are removed from the heart in preparation for prayer.

I. Replacing Doubt with Faith.

- A. Doubt comes when we take our eyes off of the Lord.
 - 1. When we lose sight of who the Lord is and allow the trials of life to overwhelm us, we will doubt and begin to “sink” (**Mat. 14:25-33**).
 - 2. We must not forget who the Lord is, who exactly it is that we are praying to and asking for help from (**Mark 4:35-41**).
- B. Faith in God requires Bible study.
 - 1. Prayer alone will not maintain our faith.
 - 2. A personal commitment to Bible study will help keep our faith strong (**Ps. 119:25-32; Rom. 10:17; Acts 20:32**).
 - 3. Partaking of “spiritual milk” will cause us to grow in our relationship with God and in our understanding of His goodness (**1 Pet. 2:2-3**).
- C. Remember what God has done.
 - 1. In our anguish or grief, we are tempted to doubt God and question His goodness toward us (**Ps. 77:7-10; cf. Isa. 49:14-15**).
 - 2. To renew our faith, we need to remember the deeds of the Lord and meditate upon His holiness, greatness, and power (**Ps. 77:11-15**).
- D. Ask God for more faith: “*Lord, increase our faith!*” (**Luke 17:5**).
 - 1. At times, we all wrestle in our hearts with doubt or distrust in God.
 - 2. Like Jesus who prayed for Peter, we must pray that our “*faith may not fail*” for Satan wants to also “sift us like wheat” (**Lk 22:31-32; 1 Pet 5:8**).

3. We may have faith, yet still need the Lord's help to overcome our unbelief so we can put our *complete* confidence in Him (**Mark 9:14-29**).
4. Our faith should continue to increase as we grow in Christ (**2 Thes 1:3**).

II. Faith is Essential to Receiving What We Request of God.

- A. Too often, we trust in ourselves instead of the power of God (**Matt 17:18-21**).
 1. Like the disciples, there is a tendency to rely too much on our own abilities and not enough on the power of God.
 2. By putting our faith *in God*, we can overcome problems as big as "mountains" and accomplish much more for Christ's sake than we ever thought possible (**Mat. 17:20; cf. Eph. 3:20-21; Phil. 4:13**).
 3. Prayer that is powerful is centered on the all-powerful God!
- B. "*And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.*"
 1. The apostles, who would perform miracles to confirm the gospel to the world, needed to hear these words (**Mat. 21:18-22; cf. Mark 11:20-24**).
 2. Today Christians can expect to receive what they ask for *if they believe*: "*Prayer offered in faith*" (e.g., **James 5:14-15; cf. James 1:6-8**).
 3. This is not a promise to provide our every whim, but to supply all things we need to according to God's will (**1 John 5:14-15**).
 4. God knows what is best for us and sometimes the answer is "no" (e.g., **2 Cor. 12:7-10**).
 5. *Obedient Faith*: Our commitment to obey God's commandments is absolutely essential if we expect to receive what we ask (**1 John 3:22**).

III. Have Faith in the Promises of God.

- A. "*Full assurance of faith*" (**Heb. 10:19-22**)
 1. Sometimes in alarm or despondency (loss of hope and courage) we express great doubt that God will deliver us or hear our plea (**Ps. 31:22**).
 2. We need to remember always of our acceptance before God through Jesus Christ and how we may call on God with *complete* confidence.
 3. In Christ, there is the great privilege to petition God's throne and to know with certainty that He hears and will answer us (**Heb. 4:14-16**).
- B. "*He who promised is faithful*" (**Heb. 10:23**).
 1. God who cannot lie promised us eternal life (**Titus 1:2; cf. Heb. 4:1; 9:15; James 1:12; 2:5; 2 Pet. 1:4; 3:13; 1 John 2:25**).
 2. Since every word in the Bible is "God-breathed" or inspired of God, we can trust in *all* of its promises (**2 Tim. 3:16-17**).
 3. God is faithful to all that He has promised us in His word (e.g., **Mat. 5:3-12; Rom. 8:28; 1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Cor. 1:3-4; Heb. 2:17-18; Jas. 1:5**).
- C. Belief in God's promises in prayer.
 1. Let us be like Abraham and waver *not* at the promises of God, but be fully convinced that what God promises, He is able to do (**Rom. 4:20-21**).
 2. We demonstrate faith and confidence in God, in part, by "reminding" God in prayer what He has stated in His word in prayer (e.g., **Ac. 4:24-31**).
 3. *When the Lord says something, we ought to believe it!* (e.g., **John 4:50**); such faith will be demonstrated by what we say in prayer.

Conclusion: Faith is the First and Foremost Step for God-Centered Prayer!