



LET'S TALK



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In a close relationship, one person sometimes says, “We need to talk.” These words should be sweet to our ears, filled with eager anticipation and peaceful trust. However, too often, they bring tension and nervousness because they reveal a conflict that must be faced. Avoiding the conversation only weakens the relationship, because conversation between two people is where our relationships take place. Talking with a friend is more than just sharing words. When we talk we share ourselves. We entrust our personal thoughts and feelings to someone we love. Whether we are people of many words or few, if we want to be close, we need to talk. Our relationships with people are God’s lesson book to teach us about the most important relationship—our relationship with Him. What is true with people is also true with God—we need to talk.

1 What is even more important than knowing all there is to know about God?

John 17:3 “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”

Knowing correct information about God won’t rescue us from sin’s consequence of eternal death. God offers so much more than information. He wants us to actually know Him, the source of all knowledge.

2 What does it mean to “know God?”

Revelation 3:20 “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.”

To really know God means we have a firsthand, one-on-one experience with Him. This is what God offers to us.

1 John 5:12 “He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”

What does it mean to “have the Son?” We use similar language when we say that we have a spouse or a friend. What we mean is that we have a relationship with that person. Jesus is “the Son,” and we must have a relationship with Him.

John 15:15 “No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.”

Really knowing God is all about a close and personal friendship. A friendship can’t be forced on us. We have to choose to be friends of God. We know that God counts us as His friends; “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends” (John 15:13).

3 What is the way to become a close friend with God?

Jeremiah 29:12 “Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.”

Psalms 66:19 “But certainly God has heard me; He has attended to the voice of my prayer.”

Friendship exists when there is honest communication, since real friends talk to each other. Prayer is the way we talk personally with God, and He listens. Jesus invites us to learn what real friendship is from His perfect example. He said, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and

learn from Me ...” (Matthew 11:28–29). When Jesus’ disciples asked, “Lord, teach us to pray” (Luke 11:1), He showed them God’s way for staying close to Him through prayer.

4 What did Jesus teach us about how to pray?

Luke 11:2-4 “So He said to them, ‘When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’”

Jesus’ pattern for talking with God in prayer is not a script of required words, because at another time, He gave us an example of praying in completely different words (John 17:1–26). Jesus’ model prayer teaches us to first praise God for His perfect holiness that is as far above our own—as Heaven is above Earth. Then we seek to know and obey His perfect will, rather than our own. When asking God about our physical needs, Jesus showed that we should recognize our spiritual needs, too, by confessing our sins to Him and asking for forgiveness. The joy of God’s forgiveness leads us to become more like Him by forgiving others. And finally, we trust God with our future when we ask for help to be victorious over Satan’s temptations.

5 Why is prayer so important for a Christian?

Psalm 145:18 “The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth.”

Prayer is essential because it keeps us near to God so we may receive His free gift of salvation through faith in Jesus. Without His close companionship, we are powerless. “... He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing” (John 15:5).

Proverbs 3:6 “In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.”

When we acknowledge God through prayer we claim His promised blessing to “instruct you and teach you in the way you should go” (Psalm 32:8). If we do not seek His counsel, we follow the perilous example of Israel’s leaders when “they did not ask counsel of the Lord” (Joshua 9:14).

6 What is the first step guilty sinners must take to become friends with God?

Psalm 51:17 “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise.”

The starting place for a relationship with God is right where we are at this moment. We begin by confessing our sins. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). Jesus welcomes us into His friendship when we come to Him in this way. “Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25).

7 What do we learn from the examples of God’s close friends in the Bible?

ENOCH interacted with God everywhere he went. Their friendship was so close that God permitted him to enter Heaven as a promise of what will happen when Jesus returns for others who walk with God. “And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him” (Genesis 5:24).

ABRAHAM trusted everything God said, and acted on God’s promises. “... ‘Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’ And he was called the friend of God” (James 2:23).

JACOB refused to let go of God, holding tightly to Him, as if his life depended on it. “... But he said, ‘I will not let You go unless You bless me!’” (Genesis 32:26).

JOB considered God’s friendship even more important and more desirable than his meals. “I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food” (Job 23:12).



“The starting place for a relationship with God is right where we are at this moment.”

MOSES permitted no barrier to get in the way of his personal contact with God. “So the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend ...” (Exodus 33:11).

HANNAH prayed earnestly for her child, Samuel, and dedicated him to God with a thankful heart. “I prayed for this child, and the Lord has granted me what I asked of Him. So now I give him to the Lord ...” (1 Samuel 1:27–28 NIV).

DANIEL searched the Scriptures that were available to him, then talked earnestly with God in response to what he read. “... I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the Lord through Jeremiah the prophet Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer ...” (Daniel 9:2–3).

8 What do David’s prayers in the book of Psalms demonstrate about complete honesty with God?

Psalms 38:9 “Lord, all my desire is before You; and my sighing is not hidden from You.”

Psalms 62:8 “... Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us.”

Many of the psalms in the Bible are prayers that show we can honestly share every thought and feeling with God. He already knows us inside and out, since “there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account” (Hebrews 4:13). When we honestly share our thoughts and feelings with God we learn to trust Him even more.

9 What did the apostle Paul teach us about how often God’s friends talk with Him?

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”



“When we honestly share our thoughts and feelings with God we learn to trust Him even more.”

Prayer is not enjoying a few short moments with God followed by living life without Him. Instead, unceasing prayer is enjoying God’s presence continually, like our non-stop breathing that keeps us alive moment by moment. We can delight in God’s presence without ever stopping to have a few moments alone, away from Him.

10 What should we talk about or ask of God when we meet together in prayer?

Philippians 4:6–7 “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

It is our privilege to open every part of our lives to God to guide us as our loving Friend. We can pray about and ask for:

- Forgiveness for sin (Psalm 32:5)
- Wisdom (James 1:5)
- The Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13)
- Grace from God to help us (Hebrews 4:16)
- Our daily needs (Matthew 6:11)
- Help when facing trouble (James 5:13)
- God’s will to be done (Matthew 6:10)
- The physical and spiritual condition of our friends and family (3 John 1:2)
- Healing of sickness in God’s way (Jeremiah 17:14)
- People who mistreat us (Matthew 5:44)
- People who are sharing the gospel (Colossians 4:2–3)
- People of influence in the world (1 Timothy 2:1–2)

11 What habits will strengthen our friendship with God when we pray?

Luke 5:16 “So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.”

Jesus, who was sinless, depended on frequent times alone with God in the solitude of nature. We, too, need to separate from all the distractions of the world to talk with God alone.

Psalms 55:17 “Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, and He shall hear my voice.”

Establish a predictable daily pattern of making time to talk with God. Daniel, God’s friend in the Old Testament, would rather have died than miss even one of those treasured appointments with God (Daniel 6:7–10).

Matthew 6:6–8 “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;



“Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.”
1 Peter 5:7

and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. 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. Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.”

Honest prayer is personal. It is not a performance or a dry ritual. Elegant words or complicated sentences will not make God take notice of us. Real prayer comes from the heart, the way a friend talks with a friend.

Matthew 6:33 “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”

Ask God to help you desire what is most important—His kingdom and His righteousness. With the most important things in place first, God can help us in every other way, as well.

1 Peter 5:7 “Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.”

Talk to God about your actual life—the big things and the little things. God wants to be welcomed as a partner in everything we think about, and in all we do. “The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and He delights in his way” (Psalm 37:23).

Jeremiah 32:16–17 “... I prayed to the Lord, saying: ‘Ah, Lord God! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You.’”

Instead of questioning if God is able, thank Him that He is “able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us” (Ephesians 3:20).

Hebrews 11:6 “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.”

Trust in God and in His promises, even though you can’t see Him with your eyes. This strengthens your faith and your prayers.

Proverbs 28:9 “One who turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination.”

If we pray but do not follow God’s clear instructions, we will eventually remove ourselves from God’s friendship. On the other hand, “the prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective” (James 5:16 NIV).

12 Is there more to prayer than telling God what is on our heart and what we need?

Psalm 85:8 “I will hear what God the Lord will speak ...”

In a friendship, one person doesn’t do all the talking. Prayer is a conversation. Consider the following examples of listening intently for what God is saying to us:

John 8:47 “He who is of God hears God’s words ...”

Isaiah 30:21 “Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, ‘This is the way, walk in it,’ whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left.”

Psalm 119:147 “I rise before the dawning of the morning, and cry for help; I hope in Your word.”

Isaiah 50:4 “... He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to hear as the learned.”

Jeremiah 33:3 “‘Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.’”

Isaiah 55:3 “Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live ...”

John 10:27 “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.”

By always listening to God and never turning away from His invitation to follow Him, our desires can be so influenced by His Word that, by following our will, we will be carrying out His plan for us.

13 We speak our words to God, but how does He speak to us?

2 Timothy 3:16 “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”

When we read the Bible every day, we hear God speaking His message and instruction to us. “Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart ...” (Jeremiah 15:16).

John 14:26 “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.”

God speaks to us through the prompting of the Holy Spirit, who helps us understand and apply God's Word (John 16:13). The Holy Spirit does not shout. He communicates through holy thoughts as "a still small voice" (1 Kings 19:12) that we must be careful to never ignore or push away. Thoughts from the Holy Spirit will always agree with the full Word of God because He has told us, "I am the Lord, I do not change" (Malachi 3:6).

Romans 1:20 "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse."

God put the beauty in nature to communicate about its Creator. When we slow down to humbly listen, God will teach us lessons through the things He made.

Psalms 105:5 "Remember His marvelous works which He has done ..."

God's divine intervention in the world communicates His love and instruction to us. He reveals His thoughts to us in the simple, daily experiences of our lives. When we listen patiently for His voice, we begin to recognize Him speaking to us.

14 Should we stop praying when we don't hear God's voice, or if we don't see His response to our prayers?

Colossians 4:2 "Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving."

Psalms 34:15 "The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry."

Even God's friends in the Bible asked if He really heard their prayers when the pain caused by sin made God seem far away. "Why do You stand afar off, O Lord? Why do You hide in times of trouble?" (Psalm 10:1). David, the friend of God who prayed this prayer, trusted in His goodness even when it was hard to see, and ended the prayer with thanksgiving, saying, "Lord, You have heard the desire of the humble ... You will cause Your ear to hear" (Psalm 10:17). When Jesus said that "men always ought to pray and not lose heart" (Luke 18:1), it was His promise that God does not ignore any sincere prayer, even when we don't see the response at the time we expect it.

15 What happens when we neglect talking to God in prayer?

Matthew 26:41 "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Without prayer, we face temptation with only our own weakness; and we will be overcome. Without prayer, we drift away from Jesus, from His forgiveness, and from His life-changing power.

16 What blessings will we experience when we are friends of God?

John 16:33 "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

God has not promised that we won't have trouble, but "He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you'" (Hebrews 13:5). Human friends may abandon us in a crisis, but God, as our closest Companion, will be "our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1). "Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36).

2 Corinthians 3:18 "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord."

We become like those whom we love to spend time with. As we talk with God and listen to Him, He transforms our character so that we reflect what He is like. We will be restored to what we were meant to be, friends of God for all eternity.

"Without prayer, we drift away from Jesus, from His forgiveness, and from His life-changing power."



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR MY LIFE TODAY?



1. Toddlers learn to talk when they are surrounded by a spoken language.

As Christians, we learn to talk with God when we are surrounded by Him speaking to us through His Word—the Bible. How can you bring God’s Word into every part of your life, so you can learn to talk with Him naturally?

2. A close friendship grows stronger when we spend quality time together.

How can you adjust your daily schedule to share quality time with God?

3. Have you ever been so familiar with hearing a loved one speak that you could recognize their voice, even if it came from across a crowded, noisy room?

The same will be true of God when we become familiar with His distinct voice. What distractions can you remove from your life in order to have quiet time alone with God and learn to hear and recognize His voice?

4. God won’t force His way into our lives.

When we pray about all our experiences and relationships, we give Him permission to guide us. What parts of your everyday life will you talk about with God, so He can direct you?

5. Who do you know that needs to hear what you have learned?

“I will praise You, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Your marvelous works. I will be glad and rejoice in You ...” (Psalm 9:1–2).

Additional Notes:

WHAT IS THE GOOD NEWS FOR ME IN PRAYER?



1. Everyone is invited to be friends with God. “And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely” (Revelation 22:17).

2. You don’t have to be an expert for God to listen. You can talk with God just as you are, and you will learn as you grow. “Now, O Lord my God, You have made Your servant king instead of my father David, but I am a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in” (1 Kings 3:7).

3. God answers our prayers. “It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear” (Isaiah 65:24).

4. The Holy Spirit helps us when we are weak. “... For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” (Romans 8:26).

5. Praying together unites us as the family of God. “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20).

6. No prayer is too small for God. “And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, “God, be merciful to me a sinner!” I tell you, this man went down to his house justified ...” (Luke 18:13–14).

7. No one can force you to abandon your friendship with God or take away your privilege of speaking to Him in prayer. ““All the governors of the kingdom ... consulted together to establish a royal statute and to make a firm decree, that whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions...’ Therefore King Darius signed the written decree. Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days” (Daniel 6:7–10).

LESSON SUMMARY

1. Knowing *about* God is not enough. We must know Him personally as a friend.

2. Prayer is talking with God. It is essential to being God’s friend, because it connects our hearts to His, so we may receive eternal life through Jesus.

3. Jesus’ words and His example teach us how to pray.

4. We need to talk with God consistently, frequently, from the heart, and without worldly distractions.

5. Prayer is not just *talking* to God. We need to learn to *listen* attentively to His voice, since He is always speaking to us.

6. God speaks to us through the Bible, through the Holy Spirit prompting our thoughts, through nature He created, and by His divine actions.

7. Prayer involves more than talking and listening. It is about trusting and obeying God in every part of our lives.

Additional Notes:



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