

Acquiring the Skill of Prayer

By Pastor Kevin Wilfley

After Adam and Eve sinned they tried to hide from God (Gen. 3:10). Since that time mankind has had difficulty communicating with God.

1. Rom. 3:11 – We do not naturally seek God.
 - A. Rom. 8:7 – The carnal heart detests spiritual things.
 - B. 1 Cor. 2:14 – The natural man does not discern the things of God.
 - C. Since we have a natural heart and prayer is a spiritual discipline we encounter difficulties.
 - Hab. 1:2 – We wonder if God is listening.
 - Ps. 22:1-2 – We sometimes feel forsaken by God.
 - Ps. 69:16-18 – We want answers more quickly than they come.
 - Ps. 35:13 – Our prayers seem to bounce off of the ceiling.
 - Matt. 26:40-41 – We may have a willing heart, but our flesh is weak when it comes to prayer. We sometimes fall asleep (Ps. 77:4).
 - Ps. 55:2 – Our minds wander.
 - Rom. 8:26-27 – We don't know what to say.
2. Luke 11:1 – Prayer does not come naturally—it is a skill we must learn.
 - A. John 16:7 – The Lord Jesus promised to send us a Helper who would enable us to overcome our weaknesses.
 - Jude 20 – There is something called “praying in the Spirit”.
 - Eph. 6:18 – The Bible tells us to pray at all times “in the Spirit”.
 - Rom. 1:10 – To be “in the Spirit” means to be controlled by the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - The Holy Spirit is the Helper (Paraclete in Greek), which means, “the One who comes alongside to help”.
 - B. The Holy Spirit is not in heaven praying for us, but Jesus is (Heb. 7:25). The Holy Spirit comes to us and gives us power to overcome our weaknesses so we can pray.

“We must not only pray in Christ's name, but by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This explains what is meant when it is said that the Holy Spirit ‘maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered.’” COL 147

“Christ, our Mediator, and the Holy Spirit are constantly interceding in man's behalf, but the Spirit pleads not for us as does Christ who presents His blood, shed from the foundation of the world; the Spirit works upon our hearts, drawing out prayers and penitence, praise and thanksgiving. The gratitude which flows from our lips is the result of the Spirit striking the cords of the soul in holy memories, awakening the music of the heart.” 6BC 1077-78

- Zech. 12:10 – God will give us power to pray.
- C. Phil. 2:12 – God works along with man's effort. It is a biblical formula for success. HE+DP=V (Human Effort + Divine Power = Victory).
 - Pray using Scripture to suggest what you should pray about.
 - Make a list of things to pray about.
 - Use an acronym.
 - Journal.
 - Use music—sing your prayers to God.
 - Vary the location.
 - Don't pray in a warm and stuffy room.
 - Lift your eyes to heaven and speak outloud.
 - D. Luke 18:1-7 – Persist—don't give up.

“Though the mind may wander in prayer, be not discouraged, bring it back to the throne and do not leave the mercy seat until you have the victory.” 2MR 37

“The Holy Spirit will be given to those who seek for its power and grace, and will help our infirmities when we would have audience with God.” 5BC 1078.