

STEPS TO PEACE WITH GOD

STEP 1 GOD'S PLAN—PEACE AND LIFE

God loves you and wants you to experience His peace and life. The Bible says: *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life"* (John 3:16, NKJV).

STEP 2 OUR PROBLEM—SEPARATION

Being at peace with God is not automatic, because by nature we are separated from God. The Bible says: *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:23).

STEP 3 GOD'S REMEDY—THE CROSS

God's love bridges the gap of separation between God and you. When Jesus Christ died on the cross and rose from the grave, He paid the penalty for your sins. The Bible says: *"[Jesus] Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed"* (1 Peter 2:24, NKJV).

STEP 4 OUR RESPONSE—RECEIVE CHRIST

You cross the bridge into God's family when you receive Christ by personal invitation. The Bible says: *"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name"* (John 1:12, NKJV).

To receive Christ, you need to do four things:

1. Admit your spiritual need. "I am a sinner."
2. Be willing to turn from your sins (repent).
3. Believe that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross and rose from the grave.
4. Pray and invite Jesus Christ to come in and control your life through the Holy Spirit. (Receive Him as your Lord and Savior.)

When you make this commitment, you become a new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17) and a part of His family (John 1:12).

Here is a suggested prayer: *"Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I ask for Your forgiveness. I believe You died for my sins and rose from the dead. I turn from my sins and invite You to come into my heart and life. I want to trust and follow You as my Lord and Savior. In Your Name, Amen."*

If you've made a new commitment to Christ or would like more information about our ministry, please call us at 1-877-2GRAHAM (1-877-247-2426) or visit our Web site, billygraham.org.

 Billy Graham
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POWER WHEN YOU PRAY



THE BILLY GRAHAM
SERMON SERIES

BILLY GRAHAM EVANGELISTIC ASSOCIATION

LEARN HOW TO PRAY WITH POWER:

- UNDERSTAND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PRAYER
- LEARN HOW TO PRAY FROM CHRIST'S EXAMPLE
- HAVE CONFIDENCE THAT YOUR PRAYERS ARE HEARD

Prayer is natural. We were fashioned in the beginning to live a life of prayer, but sin has built a barrier between us and God. As someone has said, “Prayer is the highest use to which speech can be put.”

Today many people regard prayer as a venerated tradition. We have no sense of coming to grips with God; we simply use prayer as a formality. Yet how can we go on unless there is a renewed emphasis on prayer?

Thousands of people pray only in times of great stress, danger, or uncertainty. Christ instructed His followers always to pray

(1 Thessalonians 5:17). So fervent and so direct were the prayers of Jesus that once when He had finished praying, His followers turned to Him and said, “*Lord, teach us to pray*” (Luke 11:1). They knew that Jesus had been in touch with God, and they wanted to have such an experience.

THE POWER OF PRAYER

From one end of the Bible to the other is the record of those whose prayers have been answered—those who turned the tide of history by prayer; those who fervently prayed, and God answered. Abraham prayed, and so long as he prayed, God did not destroy the city of Sodom where Abraham’s nephew Lot lived (Genesis 18:20–33).

Hezekiah prayed when his city was threatened by the invading armies of the Assyrians under the leadership of Sennacherib, and the entire army of Sennacherib was destroyed and the nation was spared for another generation—because the king had prayed (2 Kings 19:15–37).

WE CAN CHANGE THE
COURSE OF EVENTS IF WE
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BELIEVING PRAYER.

Elijah prayed, and God sent fire from Heaven to consume the offering on the altar he had built in the presence of God's enemies (1 Kings 18:17-40). Elisha prayed, and the son of the Shunammite woman was raised from the dead (2 Kings 4:17-37).

Jesus prayed at the door of the tomb of Lazarus, and the one who had been dead for four days came forth (John 11:1-44). The thief prayed, and Jesus assured him that he would be with Him in Paradise (Luke 23:39-43). Paul prayed, and churches were born in Asia Minor and in Europe (Acts 9:11-31). Peter prayed, and Dorcas was raised to life to have added years of service for Jesus Christ (Acts 9:36-42).

John Wesley prayed, and revival came to England. Jonathan Edwards prayed, and revival came to Northampton, Massachusetts, where thousands of people joined the churches. Events have been changed time after time because of prayer.

TOO OFTEN WE USE
PETTY PETITION ...
RATHER THAN THE CRIES
OF OUR INMOST BEING.

What a glorious thing it would be if millions of us would avail ourselves of the privilege of prayer! We can change the course of events if

we go to our knees in believing prayer. Jesus Christ told us of the joy in Heaven when one sinner turns from sin to God (Luke 15:10) and breathes the simple prayer, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner."

CHRIST'S EXAMPLE IN PRAYER

When the disciples came to Jesus and said, "*Lord, teach us to pray*," the Savior answered by giving them His model petition, the Lord's Prayer. However, it was only part of His sacred instruction. In scores of passages, Jesus Christ offered further guidance and a series of lessons on prevailing prayer. Jesus had only three years of public ministry, yet He was never too hurried to spend hours in prayer.

How quickly and carelessly, by contrast, we pray. Snatches of memorized verses hastily spoken in the morning, then we say goodbye to God for the rest of the day until we rush through a few closing petitions at night. This is not the prayer program that Jesus outlined. Jesus pleaded long and repeatedly. It is recorded that He spent entire nights in fervent appeal. But how little perseverance and persistence and pleading we show!

The Scripture says, "*Pray without ceasing*" (1 Thessalonians 5:17, NKJV). This should be the motto of every follower of Jesus Christ. Never stop praying, no matter how dark and hopeless your case may seem. A woman once wrote me that she had been

pleading for 10 years for the conversion of her husband but that he was more hardened than ever. I advised her to continue to plead. Then some time later I heard from her again. She said that her husband was gloriously and miraculously converted. Suppose she had stopped praying after only 10 years?

Our Lord frequently prayed alone, separating Himself from every earthly distraction. I would strongly urge you to select a room or corner in your home where you can regularly meet alone with God. That quiet, secluded, soul-to-God praying in which you come to the mercy-seat can be your greatest blessing.

As we observe the prayer life of Jesus, we notice the earnestness with which He prayed. The New Testament records that in Gethsemane He cried out with a loud voice, that in the intensity of His supplication He fell headlong on the damp ground of the Garden, that He pleaded until His sweat became “*like drops of blood falling to the ground*” (Luke 22:44).

QUIET, SECLUDED,
SOUL-TO-GOD PRAYING
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Too often we use petty petitions, oratorical exercises, the words of others, rather than the cries of our inmost being. Too often, when we go to prayer, our thoughts roam. We insult God by speaking to Him with our lips while our hearts are far from Him. Suppose we were talking to a person of prominence, would we let our thoughts wander for one moment? No, we would be intensely interested in everything that was said. How then dare we treat the King of kings with less respect?

PRAYING FOR OTHERS

Jesus teaches us for whom we are to intercede. How startling His instructions and His example! He tells us to “*pray for those who persecute you*” (Matthew 5:44). In other words, He says to pray for our enemies. We are to plead for our enemies, asking God to lead them to Christ and for His sake to forgive them.

In the first words that Jesus uttered from the cross after the heavy nails had been hammered through His hands and feet, He interceded for His crucifiers, saying, “*Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing*” (Luke 23:34). How many of us have ever spent time praying for our enemies?

We are also told in Scripture to pray for the conversion of sinners. I listened to a

discussion of religious leaders on how to communicate the Gospel. Not once did I hear them mention prayer. And yet I know of scores of churches that win many converts each year by prayer alone. If there is a person of our acquaintance who needs Christ in his life, then we need to start praying for him. We will be amazed at how God will begin to work.

OUR CONFIDENCE IN PRAYER

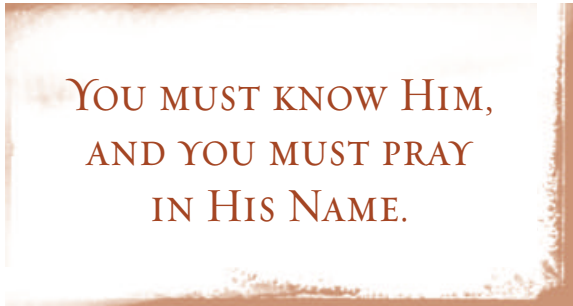
One more lesson that Jesus teaches is the victorious assurance that God answers every true petition. Skeptics may question it, deny it, or ridicule it. Yet here is Christ's own promise: "*If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you*" (John 15:7, NKJV). We need to trust that promise. Our Father possesses everything, and He "*shall supply all [our] need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus*" (Philippians 4:19, NKJV). Let His Holy Spirit help in our prayer life just as He promised in Romans 8:27: "*He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God*" (NKJV).

With God nothing is impossible. No task is too arduous, no problem is too difficult, no burden is too heavy for His love. The future with its fears and uncertainties is fully revealed to Him. Turn to Him, and say with Job: "*He knows the way that I take; when He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold*" (Job 23:10, NKJV).

PRAYER ESSENTIALS

Do not put your will above God's will. Do not insist on your way. Do not dictate to God. Do not expect an immediate answer in the way, the place, and the manner that you are demanding. Rather, learn the difficult lesson of praying as the sinless Son of God Himself prayed: "*Not My will, but Yours, be done*" (Luke 22:42, NKJV).

Many of you have never come to know Jesus Christ so that you can pray in His Name. The Scripture says that the only mediator between God and man is Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 2:5). You must know Him, and you must pray in His Name. Your prayers must be directed according to the will of God, and the Holy Spirit will do that for you.



YOU MUST KNOW HIM,
AND YOU MUST PRAY
IN HIS NAME.

If you do not know how to pray, start now by saying, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." Ask God to forgive all your sin, transform your life, and make you a new person. He can do it now in answer to your

prayer. That simple, direct prayer will open new horizons of spiritual victory for you and add a new dimension to your life.

MOVING FORWARD

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HAVE A MORE POWERFUL PRAYER LIFE:

1 COME IN JESUS' NAME

In order to communicate with God in prayer, you must have a relationship with Him. The Bible makes it clear that we can only know the Father through His Son, Jesus Christ (John 14:6). To learn how you can know Christ personally, please read the "Steps to Peace With God" on the back of this pamphlet.

"For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5).

2 BE PURPOSEFUL AND PERSISTENT WHEN YOU PRAY

Praying is not repeating the same phrase, like a magic formula, until you get what you want. Prayer is simply talking to the personal, living God; therefore, you should pray with sincerity, expressing the true concerns of your heart. God also wants you to come to Him in prayer often.

"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" (Matthew 6:7, NKJV).

"The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" (James 5:16, NKJV).

3 PRAY LIKE CHRIST

In Jesus' prayers in the Bible, He ultimately prayed that the Father's will would be accomplished. He submitted Himself to the Father's desires and purposes for His life and actions. When we pray like this, we can be sure that God will hear and answer our prayers.

"Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him" (1 John 5:14-15, NKJV).

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1 Billy Graham Parkway, Charlotte, NC 28201

Originally published in *Decision* magazine, May 1989

Printed in U.S.A. 44983