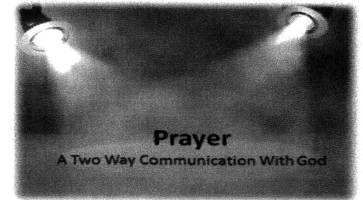


Prayer a Two Way Communication with God



4 QUESTIONS:

1. Define prayer:
2. Why does God want us to pray?
3. Favorite verse on prayer.
4. Rate your prayer life (1 = Minimal 10 = Wow)

WORKSHOP:

In groups, look at one of the following prayers of the Bible. Note your observations. (Who, What, Why, etc.)

- Ezra 9:5-15
- Philippians 1:3-11
- 2 Samuel 7:18-29
- 1 Kings 8:22-30
- Hannah's Prayer for a Son, 1 Samuel 1
- Daniel 9: 1-19
- Mathew 6: 9-15

IMPORTANT:

- Prayer as an Attitude vs an Activity
 - I cannot do this. Thessalonians 5:17
- Doing things **not FOR** but **FROM** a relationship with Jesus Christ
 - Galatians 2:20, Colossians 3:4, Philippians 4:6-7

A Few Things that Hinder Prayer:

- Mathew 5:23-24
- 1 Peter 3:7
- Psalm 66:18-19

Other Factors:

- James 1:1-3
- John 16:24



Two way communication? Listening Prayer.... Does God speak to me?

Yes! Our Problem: Psalm 46:10, Exodus 14:14
Are we listening? John 10:27, Mathew 13:15



Two Foundational Realities in Listening to God:

1. The Importance of God's Presence Ps 46:1, John 7:37
2. The Importance of the Living Voice of God Ps 85:8

The lives of David, Paul, and Jesus are examples of dependence upon hearing God's voice.

- The example of King David: 1 Chronicles 14:9-16
- The example of Paul: 2 Corinthians 12:7-9
- The example of Jesus: John 12:49

How Does God Speak?

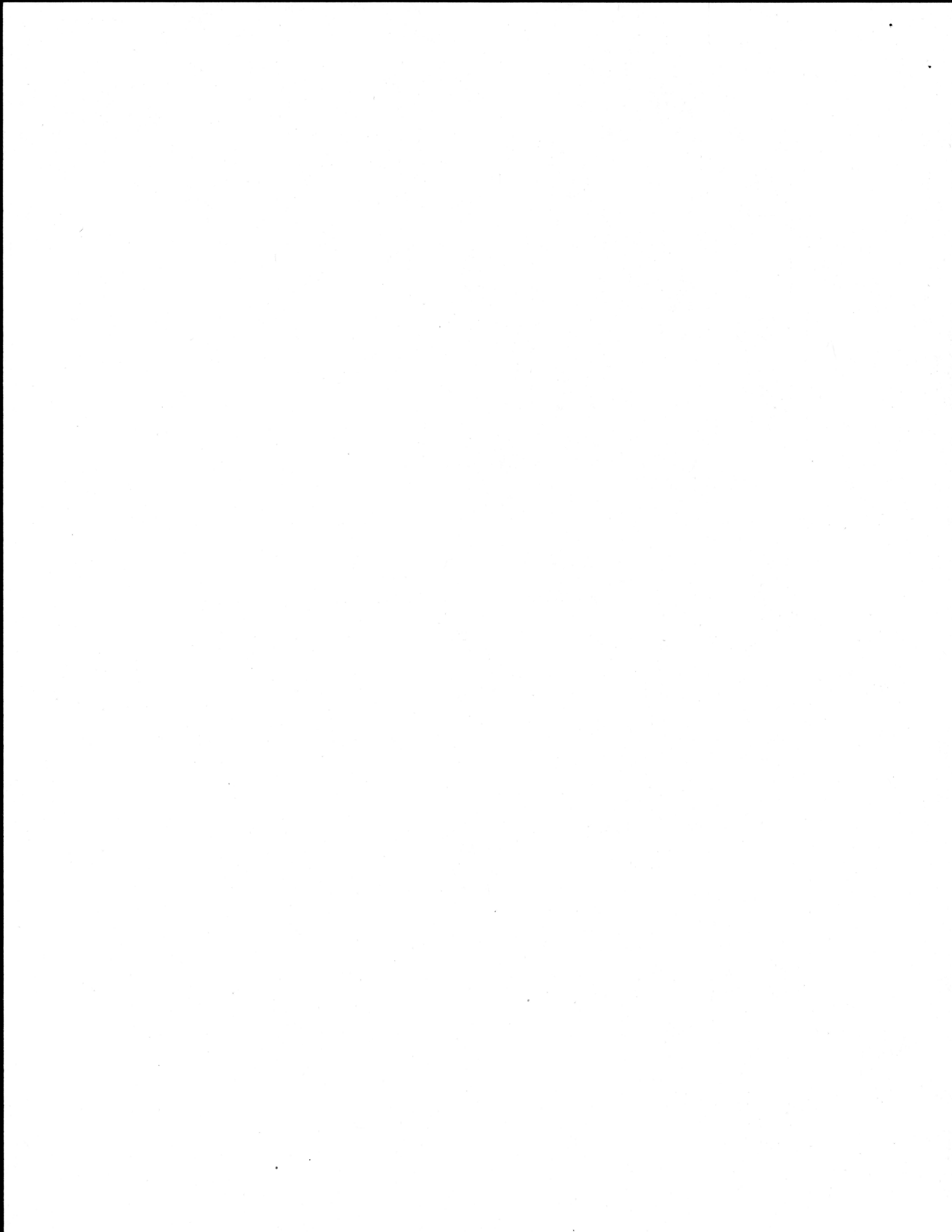
- His written Word 2 Tim.3:16
- Still small voice 1 Kings 19:12
- Pictures or images Acts 10:11
- In our thoughts 1 Cor. 2:13,16
- Other people Acts 2:37



The Indwelling Voice of the Holy Spirit:

John 16:12-14

"The great people of the earth today are the people who pray! I do not mean those who talk about prayer; nor those who say they believe in prayer; nor those who explain prayer; but I mean those who actually take the time to pray. They have not time. It must be taken from something else. That something else is important, very important and pressing, but still, less important and pressing than prayer. S.D. Gordon



1Thessalonians 5:17 (NLT)- Never stop praying. Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.

Galatians 2:20 (NIV)- I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Colossians 3:4 (NIV)-When Christ, who is your life, appears, then, you also will appear with him in glory.

Philippians 4:6-7 (NIV) - Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, 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.

Mathew 5:23-24 (NIV)- "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

1 Peter 3:7 (NIV) -Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers

Psalms 66:18-19 (NIV) - If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened; but God has surely listened and has heard my prayer.

James 4:1-3 (NIV) - What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

John 16:24 (NIV) - Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

Psalms 46:10 (NIV) - He says, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."

Exodus 14:14 (NIV) - The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still."

John 10:27 (NIV) - My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.

Mathew 13:15 (NIV) - For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.

Psalms 46:1 (NIV) - God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

Psalms 85:8 (NIV) - I will listen to what God the Lord says; he promises peace to his people, his faithful servants— but let them not turn to folly.

1Chronicles 14:9-16 (NIV) -Now the Philistines had come and raided the Valley of Rephaim; so David inquired of God: "Shall I go and attack the Philistines? Will you deliver them into my hands?" The Lord answered him, "Go, I will deliver them into your hands." So David and his men went up to Baal Perazim, and there he defeated them. He said, "As waters break out, God has broken out against my enemies by my hand." So that place was called Baal Perazim. The Philistines had abandoned their gods there, and David gave orders to burn them in the fire. Once more the Philistines raided the valley; so David inquired of God again, and God answered him, "Do not go directly after them, but circle around them and attack them in front of the poplar trees. As soon as you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the poplar trees, move out to battle, because that will mean God has gone out in front of you to strike the Philistine army." So David did as God commanded him, and they struck down the Philistine army, all the way from Gibeon to Gezer.

2 Corinthians 12:7-9 (NIV) -Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

2 Tim.3:16 (NIV) -All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness



1 Kings 19:12 (NIV) -After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.

Acts 10:11 (JB Phillips)- Next day, while these men were still on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up about mid-day on to the flat roof of the house to pray. He became very hungry and longed for something to eat. But while the meal was being prepared he fell into a trance and saw the heavens open and something like a great sheet descending upon the earth, let down by its four corners. In it were all kinds of animals, reptiles and birds. Then came a voice which said to him, "Get up, Peter, kill and eat!

1 Cor. 2:13, 16 (NIV) -This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words.

Acts 2:37 (NIV) - When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

John 16:12-14 (NIV) - "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. 13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. 14 He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you.

Other Tools and Exploration

1. PRAYING IN YOUR TIME ALONE WITH GOD – Read a passage of scripture

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. Confession | Pro 28:13 |
| 2. Adoration | 1Chr 29:11-13 |
| 3. Thanksgiving | 1 Thes. 5:16-18 |
| 4. Intercession | Col 4:12 |
| 5. Petition | 1 Jn 5:14, 15 |



2. PRAYING THROUGH THE DIFFERENT NAMES OF JESUS

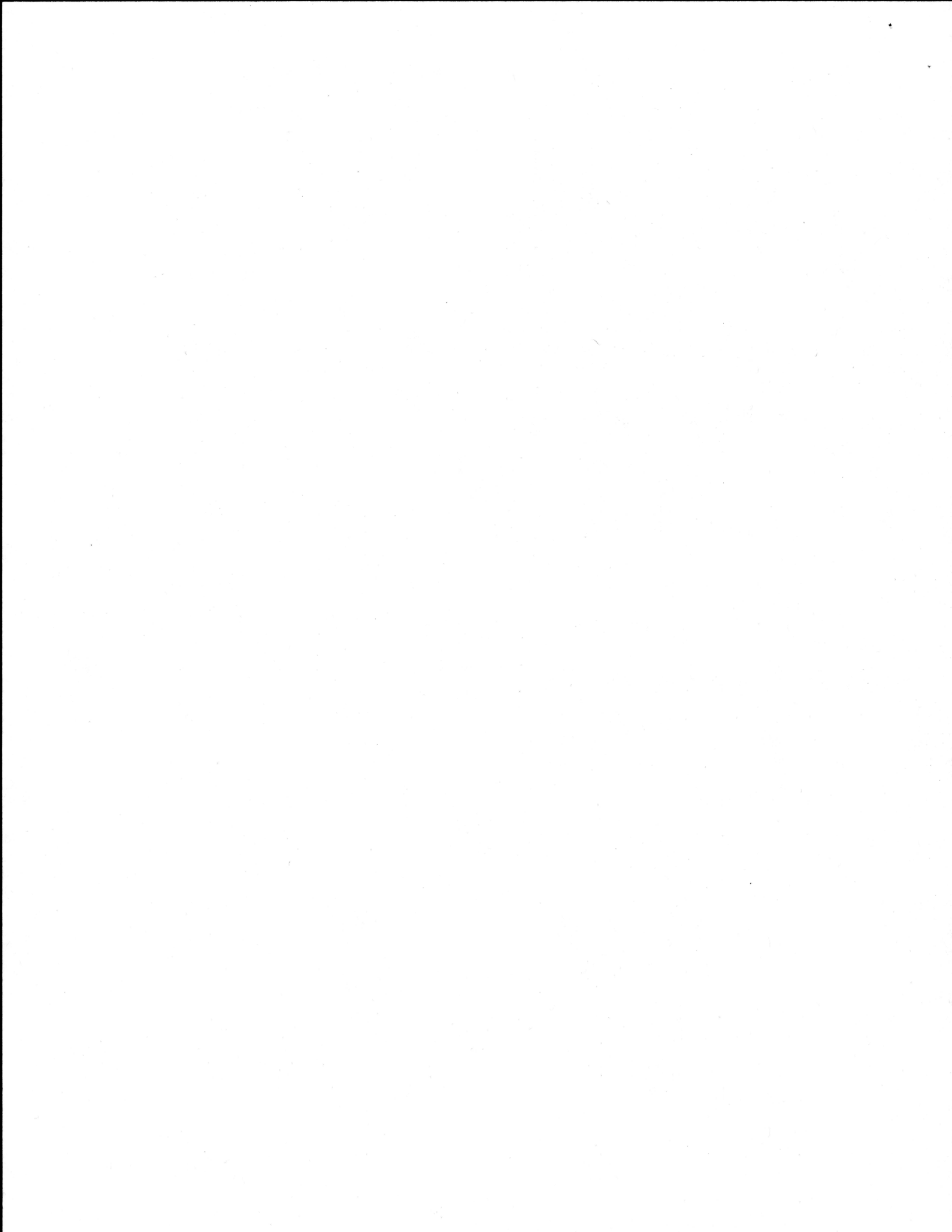
Lord
Savior
Messiah
Prince of Peace
Lamb of God
Alpha and Omega
Prophet
Priest
King
The Word



The Door
The Resurrection
The Way, Truth, Life
The Good Shepherd
The True Vine
The Bread of Life
The Head of the Church
Lion of Judah
The Light of the World

3. USE PRAYER LIST USING INDEX CARDS OR PHOTOS





Focused on The Father

How to Make Prayer an Adventure Rather than a Burden

By Rusty Rustenbach - Oct 1, 2012

It's been estimated that a typical Christian layman spends about three-and-a-half minutes each day in prayer. Full-time Christian workers average about seven minutes per day. Why do we fail to take full advantage of the privilege of prayer? Is it a lack of discipline? Are we too busy? Are we unmotivated?

Perhaps the basic cause relates to how we view God. We may have no genuine awe for the one "who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth" (Isaiah 51:13). And if we aren't captivated by God, prayer is a tedious task—a discipline that only those with wills of steel can master.

I once regarded prayer as "gutting it out" before God—bringing reams of petitions before Him. The more requests I could bring, the more spiritual I was.

I also misinterpreted statements from godly men about the importance of prayer. Martin Luther's statement that "I have so much business I cannot get on without spending three hours daily in prayer" implied to me that prayer was a guaranteed formula for success.

Rather than being dynamic communion with the sovereign Lord of the universe, prayer was an exercise meant to wrestle effects into the lives of people and to manipulate God's hand. Prayer became lifeless and tedious. It was like castor oil: tasting terrible, but good for me.

Yet God reminded me of the truth I was neglecting: He wanted to commune with me. Communion is the intimate sharing of thoughts and emotions. It's intimate fellowship, rapport or communication. This is the kind of relationship God wants.

I realized afresh that God desires communion with me and has little interest in the petition gymnastics I was trying to perfect. He wants me to be preoccupied with Himself.

Seeing God this way enables us to stand in awe of him. It stimulates our heart to vital communion and conversation with Him. Seeing God as He is requires faith on our part, but whoever is enamored and thrilled with God is then rightly motivated to pray. I believe that's what John 4:24 is hinting at: "God is spirit and His worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth."

What can we do? God has graciously given us two major resources to enable us to see Him as He is: His works and His Word.

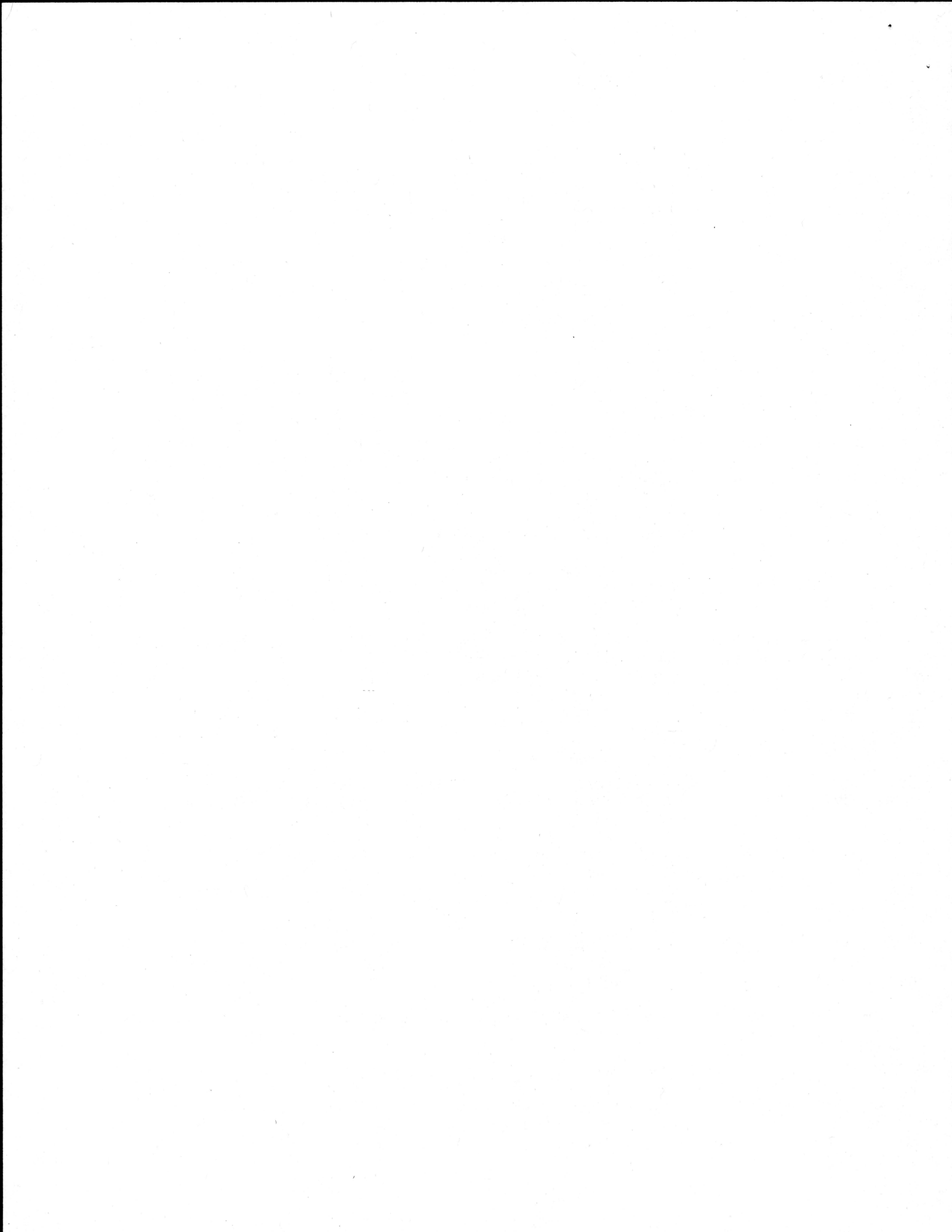
Most of us think of the works of God as His spiritual work in people's lives. But another work of God, neglected by many of us, is His creation. The universe declares God's glory, but many of us have lost our sense of wonder at the ordinary miracles God performs all around us each day.

God wants us to experience awe and wonder when we see the return of spring, or the variety in the animal world, or the impressive powers of wind, rain, and sea. Isaiah wrote, "Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these?" (Isaiah 40:26). We, too, should consider the one who made it all, and we can ask God to help us see Him in His creation.

The second resource available to us is God's Word—a vast reservoir of riches designed to remind us of the greatness of the God we serve. Many passages focus on what God is like. When you read them, think of the implications these attributes have for our lives, and talk with God about them.

The life of Jesus Christ as told in the Gospels also draws our attention to God's character. As we read about Jesus talking with and living among people, we see vivid examples of God's character in action.

Communion also means sharing the same thoughts as we communicate. We need to respond to God about the specific things He has spoken to us about. We often fail to do this when we read the Bible. In a particular passage, God may speak to us about His holiness. But our mind is preoccupied with how we can come up with enough money to pay next month's rent. So when we put down our Bible and pray, what do we talk to God about? Not His holiness, but the rent money!



It is not wrong to pray about our needs, but God wants us to listen to Him and give Him a proper response. Imagine telling someone, "I love you very much," only to hear him respond, "I sure hope I get a raise soon at work." Such conversations don't do much to build intimacy in a relationship.

Another way to appreciate God and commune with Him is to read and meditate on the great prayers of the Bible. When the early Christians prayed for boldness (Acts 4:24–30) most of their words recounted what God had already done. No wonder their prayer for boldness was clearly answered. Many of the psalms of David and the prayers of Paul also focus on who God is and what he has done, rather than on their requests.

Growing in reverent communion with God isn't another burden to add to your already busy schedule. It is not an activity, but an attitude of heart that should influence your Bible study, Scripture memory, quiet times, and prayer.

William Carey said that "secret, fervent, believing prayer lies at the root of all personal godliness." We could add that an exciting sense of reverence and worship—an increasing appreciation of God's presence—lies at the root of all secret, fervent, believing prayer.

Adapted from Focus on the Father in Discipleship Journal, November/December 1981. Used by permission of NavPress.

The author Rusty Rustenbach is serving with The Navigator with the People Resource Team. His blog can be seen at: <http://rustyrustenbach.blogspot.com>

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