

Lesson 5: Communion With God

“The Key to a Fulfilled Life”

How can we achieve the quality of spiritual life that God has chosen for us?

Jesus Christ saved us, not only to take us to heaven when we die, but that we might live a good quality spiritual life here and now. In John 10:10 He said, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” As Christians we should long to have a life of excellence, like that of our Lord. Upon observing His example, it is impossible to overlook the importance Jesus placed on maintaining communication with His Father. He showed us that effective communication with God is a two-way street. When we pray, we speak with Him; when we search the Scriptures, it is God who speaks to us. In spite of being God in the flesh, Christ dedicated a large portion of his ministry to the cultivation of these two important aspects. It is easy to identify this same passion by observing the life of some men and women of God in the Bible: Moses, Abraham, Job, Daniel, Anna, David, Mary, Paul and many others confirm that which for us should be a fervent longing: to be in His presence. Psalm 16:11 says: “Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”

Remember that nobody grows spiritually “by chance”. The purpose of this lesson is to establish a solid basis for communion with God and to guide you in the development of this daily discipline.

I. What are the disciplines necessary for maintaining a healthy communion with God?

A. Is it necessary for us to speak with God daily in prayer?

1. Why should I pray?

- a) Because God orders it. Colossians 4:2 says, “Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.”
- b) Because God longs to be in communion with us. 1 Corinthians 1:9
- c) Because we should long passionately to be in communion with Him. Psalm 42:1-2
- d) Because through prayer we find help in times of affliction. We must believe Hebrews 4:16. “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”
- e) Because when we pray we are strengthened against falling into temptation. Jesus spoke of this in Mark 14:38. “Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.”
- f) Because when we pray, our hearts and our minds encounter peace in the midst of life’s anxieties. Philippians 4:6-7

2. How should I pray?

- a) Pray from the bottom of your heart, as a child would speak to a good father. Prayer is not the repetition of a series of memorized phrases. Matthew 6:7-8
- b) Pray with faith, believing that God will answer you. John 14:13-14
- c) Begin your prayer time always confess your sins to God so you can maintain a fresh communion with Him. Obey what 1 John 1:9 says, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”
- d) Praise God, exalting Him for His greatness and His mercy. Psalm 136:1
- e) Give thanks in all and for all. Note how 1 Thessalonians 5:18 and Ephesians 5:20 complement each other. “In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” “Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;”
- f) Pray for the salvation of others. 1 Timothy 2:1-4

g) Pray for your brothers and sisters in the faith. In 1 Samuel 12:23 Samuel said, “Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way:”

h) When you make your petitions known to God consciously recognize the superiority of God’s will over your own. Luke 22:41-42

3. Where should we pray?

a) Everywhere. 1 Timothy 2:8 tells us: “I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.”

b) Alone. Search for a place set apart from any distraction and where you will not be interrupted. Matthew 6:6

c) In company with other believers. Acts 2:42 shows us that prayer was one of the key elements for the believers of the first church. “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

4. When should we pray?

a) At all times. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 says, “Pray without ceasing.”

b) Any moment of the day is good, but it is ideal to seek God in prayer early in the morning. Psalm 5:1-3

c) The desire to be face to face with our Creator is what really matters. Note the attitude of the Psalmist in Psalm 27:4: “One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple.”

5. What should we expect from God when we pray?

a) That God will answer “Yes” to us if the petition that we make is in conformity with His will. 1 John 5:14-15

b) That God will answer “No” to us if the petition that we make is not in conformity with His will. 2 Corinthians 12:7-9

c) That God will answer us “Wait” if the petition that we make is in conformity with His will, but that the time is not yet appropriate.

B. Just as it is necessary that we speak daily with God, it is also necessary that we listen to Him daily through His Word.

1. Is it possible to hear the voice of God today?

a) Yes. The best means for making our faith grow is through hearing His voice, and we hear His voice through the ministry of His Word. Romans 10:17 says, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

b) Don't fall into the error of seeking to hear “the audible voice of God.”

(1) Be Careful! Peter, who heard the voice of God the Father, (Matthew 17:1-9) said that the written Word of God is more reliable than a physical apparition or the audible voice. 2 Peter 1:16-19

(2) Be careful! Let's remember that “Satan himself appears as an angel of light.” There are many who are sincerely deceived and are certain that they have had an “experience” in which they have seen or heard God or one of His angels. Galatians 1:8

(3) The key to finding the truth and avoiding being deceived by the falsehood of Satan is to always put the Word of God above any type of “experience” that we may see in others or that we may personally experience in our own lives. Psalm 138:2

2. Why should we study the Word of God?

a) So that we may recognize our spiritual condition. James 1:21-25

b) In order to nourish ourselves spiritually with a balanced diet

(1) Like bread, we must take nourishment daily from the Bible. Jesus Himself said it in Matthew 4:4: “But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

(2) Like milk for a newborn baby, there are portions of the Bible which will be very easy to digest. 1 Peter 2:2

(3) Like meat, there will be passages that you will digest more easily when you attain a higher grade of maturity. 1 Corinthians 3:2: “I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.”

c) In order to prepare us for God's work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17

d) In order to enable us to fight and to effectively resist the attacks and temptations of the devil. Let's consider the Word of God to be a weapon.

Hebrews 4:12: “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Read also 1 John 2:14.

e) In order to find guidance in times of decision making. The Bible enlightens us according to Proverbs 6:23: “For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life”

f) In order to renew our mind and to know the perfect will of God so that we might discern the plan that He has for each one of us. Romans 12:2 says: “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

(1) The complete will of God for all mankind is found completely in the Word of God.

(2) God’s specific plan for each one of us may be discerned when we are obedient to what the Bible reveals.

II. How can we keep our communion with God new and fresh?

A. Develop the necessary attitudes

1. Make your time with God a higher priority than other things

a) Consider your time alone with God as the most important of your daily activities. Have the attitude of Job in Job 23:12. “Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.”

b) Consider your encounter with God as an important appointment that is anxiously awaited. Psalm 130:5-6

c) Although you may have a very busy life, don’t allow your many activities to rob you of the blessing of being alone with our Lord each day. Jesus Himself expressed it in the best manner possible in Luke 10:38-42

2. Be Persistent

a) Seeking God from time to time is not sufficient. In order to grow spiritually we must be disciplined.

b) Follow the example of the believers of Berea and nourish your spiritual life. Set aside a time each day to seek God in the pages of the Bible. Acts 17:10-11

3. Be patient

a) Don't be discouraged if, at the beginning, it is hard for you to do. Remember that growth needs the element of time and that it cannot be rushed.

b) Don't worry if you do not understand the implications of each word of Scripture. Peter himself said that not everything in the Bible is easily understood. 2 Peter 3:15-16

B. Develop the necessary habits.

1. Choose an appropriate place and time of day and dedicate it to being alone with God.

2. Begin your devotional time with prayer.

3. Read the Bible.

a) Make it your goal to read the Bible from cover to cover as many times as possible for the rest of your life.

b) Reading is an exercise. If you are not accustomed to doing it, you must develop it little by little.

4. Meditate on the Bible

a) Although the Bible should be read in continuity, one of the keys for our growth is to meditate on those passages that seem to “jump out from the page”.

b) When we arrive at one of those passages, God is dealing directly with us. We should then give it as much attention and study as possible

5. Study the Bible

a) Analyze the passage you are reading. Remember, it is God who is speaking to you.

b) Try to find a practical application for your life and the circumstances that surround you.

c) In order to better recall what you have studied, underline, take notes, ask questions, etc.

6. Memorize the Bible

- a) Choose one of the verses which impacted you during your devotional time and memorize it. Having the Bible in your mind and heart will help you in times of testing and temptation.
- b) Memorization is an exercise. Make it your intent to begin with one verse per week and Do It!
- c) To help record the verse in your memory, try to share it with other people during the day. This way you will learn and the person listening will be ministered to.

7. Keep God’s Word

- a) Make decisions. Promise yourself not to go to the Word of God only to gain knowledge. The Bible does not present God’s “suggestions,” but rather His commandments.
- b) Remember that the purpose of going to the Word daily is to acquaint yourself with God. It is impossible to know God and not obey His Word. 1 John 2:4-5

III. Some Popular Beliefs

- 1. If you pray a lot, and do it for a long time, God will change His mind and grant your petition.
- 2. We should pray to images, to the saints, and to other souls who have already gone to heaven.
- 3. The Bible is just another religious book written by men.
- 4. The Bible can only be explained by one church in particular or by those who have received many years of formal education.
- 5. God speaks to us by means of dreams, prophecies and visions. He is not bound to what He has already said in His Word.

From the Biblical principles taught in this lesson, you should understand why these teachings are completely false.

Write, in your own words, the spiritual principle from this lesson which has had the greatest impact on you:

Put into practice what you have learned:

1. Begin to do your devotional time in accordance with what you have learned in this lesson.
2. Before starting the next lesson, share with your discipler, what God has shown you in your devotional time.

What did we learn?

Circle either T (True) or F (False)

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|---|---|---|
| 1. In order for God to hear us, we must repeat a prayer many times, especially if it is written by someone considered to be a good Christian. | T | F |
| 2. When we pray, we are talking with God. When we read the Bible, God is talking to us. | T | F |
| 3. If we have enough faith, God will always grant our requests. | T | F |
| 4. It is not important that we pray in company with other believers. | T | F |
| 5. The voice of God is physically audible today. | T | F |
| 6. The will of God for all mankind is found in the Bible. | T | F |
| 7. To have intimate communion with God should be the priority of each believer. | T | F |

Before beginning Lesson 6 memorize 2 Timothy 3:16-17:

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”