

LESSON 4: COMMUNION WITH GOD: BIBLE AND PRAYER HANDOUT

Man was created to fellowship with God. However, our fellowship with Him was marred by the Fall in *Genesis 3*. Through Jesus Christ's finished work, however, we are able to speak to God and He speaks back to us.

THE BIBLE is the Word of God. It is a record of how God has related with man and how He intends to relate with man. It is divinely inspired (God-breathed) (*2 Tim. 3:16*). It is a collection of books recognized and received by the church.

- **Compilation of the Bible:** It was compiled from a wide range of writings that already existed. The selection of the books was on the basic test of inspiration known as the CANON which means "measuring rod."
- **The authority of the Bible:** The authority of the Bible is the Lord. (*Colossians 1:15-18*)
- **Growing in the Word**
 - God's word can change your life and the world's history. It transforms our thinking (*Romans 12:2*). The word of God is His will. He will not say anything contrary to it. Read and you will discover His will.
- **What must I do with the Word?**
 - Read it daily, research, commit scriptures to memory and meditate about the Word (*Joshua 1:8*)
 - Change your confession, confess the Word (*Mark 11:24*)
 - Act out what God says in His Word (*James 1:22-25*)
- **How to read the Bible**
 - Use a prayer guide, Bible guide, etc.; or you can have a plan to read through the Bible. Let the Spirit lead you on how to begin. Consistency and regularity in reading the Bible are of paramount importance.

PRAYER is defined as talking to, communicating with, hearing and receiving from God. It is yielding to God that He might accomplish His will on earth (*1 John 5:14-15*). Since we are spiritual beings, our communication with God takes place in the spiritual realm.

- **Why should we pray?**
 - We were commanded to do so.
 - Jesus Himself prayed (*Luke 5:16; Hebrews 5:7*) and continues to do so (*Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25*)
 - To find out God's will (*Rom. 8:27*)
 - Prayer is fellowship and communion between God and His children (*Proverbs 15:8*)
 - To overcome temptations (*Luke 22:41-46*)
 - Prayer brings results (*James 5:16-18*)
 - Prayer is spiritual nurture for the growing soul.
- **How should we pray?**
 - Always pray to the Father in the name of Jesus through the ministry of the Holy Spirit
 - We should pray without ceasing -all the time and everywhere (*1Thessalonians 5:17*)
 - The Lord enjoys listening to us as we pray. He also loves to talk back to us. This is what maintains our fellowship with Him
- **Confidence in prayer**
 - Be totally yielded to God and His word. Ask specifically and with good motives (*Nehemiah.2:1-9; James 4:2-3*)
 - Believing (faith): (*Matthew 17:20; 21:22; James 1:5-6; Hebrews 11:1-6*) Faith comes from God by His grace and Word (*Romans 10:17*)
 - Persistence in expectation (*Romans 5:5; Psalm 37:3-5; Luke 11:1-13; Isaiah 62:6-7*)
- **Establishing a devotion/quiet-time**
 - Choose a place (*Mark 1:35*). It should be quiet enough without distractions for you to have quality quiet time.
 - Choose a definite time of day to do this daily (*Daniel 6:10*)
 - Discipline yourself (endeavor to maintain the quiet time).
- **How to conduct quiet time**
 - Read the Bible – ask the Holy Spirit to guide you through the process.
 - Praise and worship—enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise (*Psalms 100*).
 - Prayers—talk to God and expect Him to talk to you.

Ways God speaks: His Word (*2 Timothy 3:16*); Circumstances; Vision and dreams (*Genesis 37; Matthew 2:12-13*); Other believers; Christian literature, radios, TV's sermons, etc.; An audible voice (*Exodus 19:20-21; Luke 3:22*); The Holy Spirit guiding us into all truth (*John 16:13-15*)

How to tune in to God's voice:

- Get a quiet place and purpose to hear Him (*Psalms 27:14; 46:10*), and obey Him when He speaks (*Psalms 95:8-11*)
- Deal with sin and every attitude of sin (*Romans 12:1-2*)
- Desire and be ready to hear from Him all the time (*Psalms 63:1-7; Ephesians 5:17*) He desires to speak to you (*Amos 3:7; John 10:27*)
- Live in His presence (*Psalms 91:1-4; John 15:7*): learning to listen is a journey we walk with God. Cultivate friendship with God.
- Ask him to speak/reveal to you what you don't know (*Luke 24:30-32; Ephesians 1:1-18*)
- Use your faith to believe that the Lord has spoken to you. Act on His word (*Rom 12:3; James 2:18-19*)

Spirit on them as a seal of sonship (*Ephesians 1:13-14*). His presence in the believer makes him holy, unique and distinct from others. The Lord calls and chooses a believer for a divine purpose.

Benefits of adoption:

- We get a Father who loves and cares for us more than even human fathers, and an inheritance in heaven (*Romans 8:17, 1 Peter 1:4*)
- As children, our Father forgives us just like humans parents forgive their children (*Matthew 6:9-12; 1 John 1:8-10; 3:19-22*).
- We are led by the Spirit (*Rom 8:14*) and the Lord disciplines us for our own good (*Proverbs 3:11-12; Hebrews 12:7-10*).
- We get a wonderful family to relate with (*Ephesians 2:19; 1 Timothy 5:1-2*)
- We imitate our Father (*Ephesians 5:1; 1 Peter 1:14-16*)

SANCTIFICATION (*1Peter 5:10, John 15:2*): The Lord sets a believer apart and trains him to become the right channel for God’s blessings. This involves allowing the believer to go through fiery situations and pressures that build the character of God in him/her.

JUSTIFICATION (right legal standing before God) (*Ephesians 1:13-14*): The Lord declares the believer free from the penalty of offences committed and this is on the basis of Jesus’ death on the cross. The Lord sets His seal of approval upon those who believe in Him. The believer is released from the guilt and fear due to transgressions (sins) and enters into the love and divine protection of God. If the justified believer is determined to walk in the Spirit, he has no fear of any condemnation from God (*Romans 8:1*). Whereas regeneration is an act of God in us, justification is a judgment of God in respect to us. The analogy here is of a surgeon and of a judge, respectively.

Defining justification and sanctification

	JUSTIFICATION	SANCTIFICATION
1	Legal standing	Internal condition
2	Once for all time	Continuous throughout life
3	Entirely God’s work	We cooperate with God
5	Perfect in this life	Not perfect in this life
6	The same in all Christians	Greater in some than in others

MAN'S RESPONSE

Because of what the Lord has done and is doing in the life of the believer as indicated above, the believer responds to this work of grace. It is in response to this work of God that the believer lives a holy life. Living a holy life involves:

- Adopting a lifestyle of doing what is right before God based on the new relationship with Him.
- Surrendering one's selfish ambitions and vain-glory and living in accordance to the leading of the Holy Spirit.
- Respecting the presence and call of God on one's life and in such a way that proves the presence of a Holy God in him/her, leading to bearing the image of Jesus in every aspect of life.
- Accepting the freedom from fear and using that freedom to demonstrate the power and love of God.
- Submitting to the authority of Jesus and therefore carrying the name of the Lord in such a way as exalts Him. (Philippians 2: 10-11).

STAGES OF HOLINESS: It is important to note that living a holy life is a journey of faith with the following phases:

- **Instant Phase** (*Romans 10:9-10*): The moment we put our faith in Jesus, we are made holy by the miracle of salvation.
- **Continuous Phase** (*Philippians 2:12-13*): The holiness attained through salvation is daily demonstrated by a life that is acceptable before God because of faith in Jesus.
- **Completion Phase** (*Matthew 10:22*): The Lord is coming back for those whose lives are holy in His sight. He will take them away from the presence of sin and set them in His holy presence. In His presence, the work of salvation is completed.

WHY LIVE A HOLY LIFE?

- We are the Lord's temples and He is holy – 1Cor. 3:16, 6:19.
- To reflect the heavenly nature – 1John 2: 15-17.
- To set a good example for non - believers – Matt. 5: 13-16.
- To give the devil no chance to overcome us – 1 Peter 5:8-9.

- Holiness and obedience makes it possible for God to work in our lives – Isaiah 1:18-20 and 59:1-2, Heb 12:14.
- The Lord chooses us and calls us to holiness (Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:14-16).

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR HOLINESS

- Hear, understand and respond to the call to holiness through repentance.

HOLINESS BEGINS WITH GOD:

- God is holy – it is His nature and character.
- He doesn't conform to standards; He is the standard.
- He calls us to God-centered living.

UNDERSTANDING THE THREE TYPES OF PEOPLE:

THE NATURAL MAN (1 Corinthians 2:14): This is the person who has never committed his/her life to the Lord, and cannot understand the things of the Spirit because the Spirit cannot in-dwell him/her. He/she is separated from God and cannot be holy. The Lord reaches out to him through messages about salvation, and when conviction occurs and the person commits his/her life to the Lord, then he/she can cross over to the second category

THE SPIRITUAL MAN (1 Corinthians 2:15): This person is born again and walks in holiness and a surrendered life. This does not mean that he does not fall into sin, but is quick to repent and not repeat sins. The Holy Spirit is fully at work in his life because his heart is fully surrendered to God.

CARNAL/FLESHLY MAN (1 Corinthians 3:1-3): This person is born again but leads a double life (neither cold nor hot; Revelation 3:15-20). He lives to satisfy the desires of the flesh and often does not feel conviction about what he is doing because of persistent disobedience. He is stagnant –not progressing in the spiritual things.

When we accept Christ, we become **children of God** and so have a relationship with Him. However, this does not guarantee constant fellowship, unless we purpose to live in holiness.

WHAT IS SIN?

Sin means rebellion against God, i.e., doing what we want instead of what God wants both in actions and attitudes. Actions like stealing, lying, immoral behavior are only the results of an attitude of sin.

CONSEQUENCES OF SIN

- Loss of peace and fellowship with God – Psalm 32, Isaiah 48:22 & 59:20-21.
- Answers to our prayers will be hindered – Psalm 66:18
- For non - believers, it prevents them from having a relationship with God

REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS

WHAT IS REPENTANCE: Repentance is turning away from the way of wickedness and turning to the way of righteousness in the Lord Jesus. True repentance involves the following:

- Change of mind i.e. changing one's way of thinking in regard to sin, the world and God.
- Submitting to the will of God i.e. yielding one's will to obey the Lord God.
- Conviction and contrition of heart; feeling guilty and truly sorry for sins; Desire to be delivered immediately (Isaiah 57:15)

Examples: David – Psalm 51; The Prodigal Son in Luke 15:11-32; Zacchaeus in Luke 19:1-10

THE BASIS FOR GOD'S LOVE AND FORGIVENESS: Forgiveness means pardoning someone or excusing them for a fault or an offense. All believers sin and break fellowship with God; therefore, there is need to know how to experience God's love and forgiveness.

- 1 Peter 3:18 – Christ's death is the basis for our forgiveness that brings us into a proper relationship and fellowship with God.
- Colossians 2:13-14 — All our sins were paid for in full and so the whole list is completely erased.

THE PROCESS OF CONFESSION AND REPENTANCE:

INDIVIDUAL SIN: Every Christian needs to deal with sin on a moment by moment basis in order to maintain fellowship with God. When the Lord points out any sin in your life,

confess it immediately. Prayerfully ask the Lord to reveal any sins in your life. Write these down. Be completely honest about yourself. Write “1 John 1:9” over the list. Declare victory over the list in Jesus’ name. Thank the Lord for the forgiveness He has provided for you through Christ.

Tear up the list and throw it away – it is a prophetic action.

CORPORATE SIN: Sin is not merely a personal issue; it is a social matter. All sin is against God and the social community in which we live. Sin as a social act is committed by more than individuals. It is committed by social groups and becomes part of the culture and societal structure of individual social groups and nations. In the New Testament, the Lord deals more specifically with individuals to bring them to repentance, although He does rebuke some places for rejecting Him (e.g. Korazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum – Luke 10:13-15; Jerusalem – Luke 19:41-44).