



The Incredible
Journey

Reaching Out To God In Prayer

HOW TO PRAY

GARY KENT



WATCH OUR PROGRAMS ON DEMAND:

youtube.com/theincrediblejourney
www.tij.tv

Editors: Irene Relihan, Dorothy Pansare
Graphic Designer: Kate Browning

**Unless otherwise noted, all Bible texts are
from the New King James Version**

Published by The Incredible Journey
GPO Box 274 | Sydney | NSW 2001 | Australia

Copyright © Eternity Media Productions Ltd.
Printed in Australia | All rights reserved

REACHING OUT TO GOD IN PRAYER: HOW TO PRAY

As we look at the condition of the world around us, we realise we are living in challenging times. Few people pass through life without encountering problems and disappointments. Even the people who seem to “have it all” face challenges and difficulties. Life is complicated for everyone. We battle traffic to get to work, then function all day under pressure in order to achieve deadlines and deal with difficult customers and people. At the end of an exhausting day, we head home for a second shift of stress and pressure where we often face relationship problems, financial problems, and all of the issues associated

with running a home and raising families in today's complex world.

Some people turn to addictions to enable them to cope with the pressures and stressors of life. They long for that

state of euphoria where the pain is a little less noticeable, so keep coming back for more, only to discover that the more they indulge, the *less* fulfilled they *feel*!

“Many people... think that personal achievement and large bank accounts hold the secret to happiness”

Many restless people climb the corporate ladder pursuing fame and fortune, thinking that personal achievement and large bank accounts hold the secret to happiness. Others believe that knowledge and education will lift them up and shield them from the troubles of life. Millions look to Hollywood as the ultimate destination for someone who has “made it”

in life. Upon close inspection, the lives of the rich and famous that we admire so much are only a façade of love and fulfillment, with many relationships torn apart by infidelity, drugs and alcohol.

What about science and technology? Surely there lie the answers to the problems of life that will ultimately bring us happiness. We have seen

*“Everywhere
there is a
longing for
peace of heart
and mind”*

outstanding developments in the fields of medicine, space exploration, and community development in the past 50 years. But here we find no answers either. In fact, the late Scientist Stephen Hawking, a man of brilliance and education, reports that the problems of this world such as global warming are largely unsolvable by science, and his team have already begun searching for a more suitable dwelling place to sustain life in the future.

Everywhere, there is a longing for peace of heart and mind. People are searching across the globe to find it. They travel north to the bright lights and entertainment grounds of Europe; they go west and put their faith in Western civilisation, with its capitalistic emphasis on materialism; they follow the mystic trails of gurus and exotic religions. But in their relentless search, they fail to realise that in none of these directions can the soul of man be satisfied.

David, the Psalmist, wrote ...*Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest. Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness. I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest* (Psalms 55:6-8).

This cry for “wings” seems to be as old as humanity. The idea of flying can seem like the ultimate freedom, and the kind of freedom

humanity has sought down through the centuries. So is there a place where peace and true happiness can be found?

No need to look to the east or west, north or south in your search. The only way to happiness and inner peace is up! Jesus referred to this way when He said: *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest* (Matthew 11:28).

“Just as the birds overcome the...law of gravity with...flight, so the soul overcomes the lower laws of heartache and stress using the wings of prayer”

Just as the birds overcome the lower law of gravity with the higher law of flight, so the soul overcomes the lower law of heartache and stress using the wings of prayer.

Many people think of prayer as an S.O.S. –

asking God for something they need in an emergency. Shakespeare demonstrated his genius and keen insight into human nature when he wrote, “At wits end all men pray!” Is that the case with you?

Or whether your day is stressful or fantastic, do you reach out to the God who made you and cares about you, and express your gratitude for life and breath?

The Bible has a lot to say about prayer, and that is the subject of this book: not just the ‘why’ of prayer, but how to pray, and the secret of answered prayer.

“Whether your day is stressful or fantastic, do you reach out to the God who made you and cares about you, and express your gratitude for life and breath?”

The subject of prayer can be traced through

the Scriptures. Prayer is vitally important. God is called ‘the God who hears prayer’. We find these words in the book of Psalms: *O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come* (Psalms 65:2).

God is willing to hear prayer – yes, and to answer it. The words of Jesus assure us: *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?* (Matthew 7:11)

God has already shown how much he loves us by giving us Heaven’s most precious treasure - Jesus. *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life* (John 3:16).

He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him

also freely give us all things? (Romans 8:32).

Jesus knew that life would be tough for us on this earth. He must have seen the twenty-first century as these prophetic words fell from His lips: *These things I have spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace. In*

“Jesus said that through Him, we can experience inner peace, even in the middle of chaos and trouble in our lives”

the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world (John 16:33).

This is incredible – Jesus said that through Him, we can experience inner peace, even in the middle of chaos and trouble in our lives! God invites you to experience His peace in your heart today – all you need to do is ask for it as you reach out to God in prayer.

Following are some powerful steps you can take to help you develop a connected and fulfilling prayer life.

1 | Talk to God as You Would to a Close Friend

Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance; it is taking hold of God's

willingness. It is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. Prayer doesn't change God, it changes us. It places us in the channel of blessing.

"Prayer...is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend"

Talk to God. Talk to Him just as if you were opening your heart to your best friend.

Prayer is conversation. Prayer is earnestness, not eloquence. It is found in the earnestness of our soul, not coined in fancy figures of speech.

Prayer that means anything at all to you and

God will include every aspect of your personal life, both the large issues and the apparently incidental ones. Perhaps you feel it would be tedious for God to listen to every intimate and trivial detail of your life. Don't you believe it!!

Is time tedious when you are with the one you love?

Our relationship with God in prayer can be best illustrated by elements of an ideal relationship between a child and his father. Certainly a child will ask his father for the

things he needs, but a son that is respectful and loving will do more than that. If he admires and respects his father and mother, he will say so. If he is grateful for what they do for him, he will express it. If he hurts their feelings or

“Our relationship with God in prayer can be best illustrated by elements of an ideal relationship between a child and his father”

lets them down, he will apologise. In addition to asking for things he needs for himself, he will suggest things he thinks might be nice for other members of the family.

This helps to describe what our relationship with our Heavenly Father should be. Here is a summary of how we should pray:

- Praise God for who He is – our Creator, Redeemer and Friend
- Give thanks for the blessings in your life (and even the trials that are refining your character).
- Ask for forgiveness of sin
- Tell God what is on your mind & heart
- Pray for others in need

2 | Apply the ABC's of Prayer

Published author Glenn Coon first coined the term 'ABC's of Prayer' in a book called 'ABC's of Bible Prayer' which provides a simple but powerful formula to receiving

answers to your prayers.

2.1 Ask

The first step is found in the book of Matthew: *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall*

“It is a part of God’s plan to grant us, in answer to the prayer of faith, that which He would not bestow did we not ask”

be opened (Matthew 7:7,8). The person you are asking is the one who invited you to ask – so don’t be shy! Things happen when you ask that may not have if you hadn’t asked! One of my favourite authors writes this: *“It is a part of God’s plan to grant us, in answer to the prayer of faith, that which He would not bestow did we not ask”* (Great Controversy p. 525).

2.2 Believe

Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them. (Mark 11:24).

If you don't feel like you have enough faith, you are not alone! One day when Jesus was asked to heal a man's son from a serious case of demon possession that tormented him, Jesus said to the father, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes."

The father replied with tears, Lord, I believe; help my unbelief! (Mark 9:23,24). That day, Jesus gave that needy father the faith he needed to put his trust in Christ, and the man's son was healed!

2.3 Claim

Claim God's promises for your individual situation, thanking Him that you have received the answer, even when as yet there

is no visible evidence. It has been estimated that there are somewhere between 3,500 and 7,000 promises in the Bible. Once you have searched for the perfect promise for your situation, place your hand on it, and with simple faith, ask God to make this promise true in YOUR life. One Christian author puts it

this way: *With the persevering faith of Jacob, with the unyielding persistence of Elijah, we may present our petitions to the Father, claiming all that He has promised. The honour of God's throne is staked for the fulfilment of His word* (Prophets and Kings, p 158).

“Claim God’s promises for your individual situation... thanking Him that you have received the answer, even when as yet there is no visible evidence”

3 | Pray in the name of Jesus

And whatever you ask in My name, that will

I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son (John 14:13). Jesus is the one who made it possible for frail humans to approach God's throne in prayer, so in the name of our mighty conqueror, Jesus, press your petitions before the throne of grace.

4 | Specific Place for Prayer

Jesus suggested that there should be a specific place for prayer, a place where you can be alone, where you can shut out the rest of the world. It is true that you can pray anywhere, anytime – even in the midst of the busiest city street – but Jesus was not referring to such moments of spontaneous prayer. He was speaking of a place of regular prayer. We should reserve a specific place for prayer.

How you pray is, to some extent, governed by where you pray. For example, when you are alone, you can talk to God audibly,

spontaneously, conversationally. Jesus alluded to this manner of praying when He urged us not to repeat the same memorised prayer over and over.

Prayer should be like breathing – a day-in, day-out response to our life-giving Heavenly Father. *Praying always with all prayer and supplication... (Ephesians 6:18) and pray without ceasing*

“Prayer should be like breathing – a day-in, day-out response to our life-giving Heavenly Father”

(1 Thessalonians 5:17). This was David’s experience: *Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name for ever and ever* (Psalms 145:2).

5 | Specific Time for Prayer

The Scriptures tell us that David had set times for prayer.

Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice (Psalm 55:17).

David prayed when he awoke in the morning; at noon he prayed for God's blessing through the rest of the day, and in the evening before he went to sleep. We can pray anytime, anywhere, aloud or quietly in our heart. Still it is good to have definite times for prayer. This helps to make prayer a *daily habit*.

6 | Fulfil the conditions of answered prayer

A condition under which God does not answer or hear prayer is revealed in this verse: *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me (Psalms 66:18).*

Similar advice is given in Proverbs: *He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination (Proverbs 28:9).*

God expects those who come to Him to be prepared to live in harmony with His will as it is expressed in the Ten Commandments. A willingness to live according to these principles is basic to a genuine Christian life, and therefore basic to those who want answers to their prayers. We cannot ask God for something we want, but go right out and ignore His leading.

Prayer is not a religious exercise whereby we can make known our wants to God and then suggest to Him how we would

“Prayer does not change God, it changes us”

like them all answered. Neither is it a channel through which we can dictate our will to God. Prayer does not change God, it changes us. Prayer does not bring God down to us, instead, it brings us up to Him.

It's no use praying 'Lead us not into

temptation’, but continuing to engage in some evil habit we know we should give up. It makes a mockery of prayer to say: ‘Lord, I don’t want to be guilty of any evil’ then act as if we have qualified our request with ‘but let me keep just one of my favourite sins’!

There is a proverb that says: ‘Actions speak louder than words’. The Bible tells us: *And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight* (1 John 3:22).

7 | Be Forgiven and Forgiving

In the Lord’s prayer – the model prayer that Jesus taught his disciples to pray - it says: *And forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us* (Matthew 6:12, NLT).

When you pray, always ask for your sins to be

forgiven, and name them specifically.

Additionally, in order for us to be forgiven, God asks us to first forgive others: *If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses* (Matt 6:14-15).

Since we have been forgiven of all our sins, and received such an immeasurable gift of grace, Jesus wants us to also extend the gift of grace to others. We cannot expect to come before God and to make our request of Him while we

“Since we have...received such an immeasurable gift of grace, Jesus wants us to also extend the gift of grace to others”

hold onto any grudge or withhold forgiveness from any person. The one who asks you to forgive will give you the strength to do it.

8 | Ask for God's will to be done

The Lord's Prayer teaches us to pray. *Thy will be done* (Matthew 6:10). Many years later, John, who heard Jesus speak those words, added: *And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us* (1 John 5:14).

Our prayers must be in the context of asking for God's will to be done.

We all have our own ideas as to what is best for us. In fact, we are usually quite impressed with our understanding

of the situations in which we find ourselves. But there is one major difference between our perspective and God's. He knows what the future holds, and we do not.

"Prayer is not a way of getting everything you want. Prayer teaches you to want the best things"

In our ignorance of God's view of our life, we

cannot foresee whether or not we will be able to handle certain situations. We must depend on God to guide us. It is something like a child wanting to play with a pair of sharp-pointed scissors. Possibly he wants to play with these scissors more than anything else in the whole house! But a wise parent says ‘No’. Why? Just to be difficult? Of course not. The reason is that young hands cannot handle such scissors safely. It is the same for us. Often, God knows that we could not possibly handle the very things for which we plead for. Therefore, in love, he says ‘No’.

Remember that prayer is not a way of getting everything you want. Prayer teaches you to want the best things.

Prayer provides the power to cope with a situation, if

“Prayer provides the power to cope with a situation if God sees fit for you to pass through it”

God sees fit for you to pass through it. In other words, prayer makes God's will your will.

9 | The secret to answered prayer

What a wonderful Saviour we worship! He came from the courts of glory and gave His life for you and for me. Now He says, ... *whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do* (John 14:13).

He inspired the prophet Isaiah to write, *And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear* (Isaiah 65:24).

While we must be surrendered to God's will when we pray, it seems that there is a method to prayer that moves the arm of God. As an illustration of the prayer life we need, our Saviour gave the parable of the poor widow who kept on praying and pleading with the unjust judge until he gave her justice.

Jesus' message is that we are not to get tired and stop praying when we do not see our prayers answered right away. The widow did not stop; she returned to the judge again and again.

Notice what the story says: *And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me* (Luke 18:4-6).

Of course God is just the opposite to that unjust judge – God is fair, loving and merciful. However, the lesson this parable teaches is an important one. If we expect to have our prayers answered, we must not let go of the Lord's arm too soon.

Too many people, when they talk to God, 'hang up the phone' before they get their answers. We must keep on praying until something

happens. Jesus summed it up with these words: ‘*men ought always to pray, and not be faint*’ (Luke 18:1).

People have prayed their whole life for a loved one to come to know

God. God can’t force a

human will, but over time, His love can draw them to himself. Your prayers push back the powers of darkness and allow God to work. So please, do not grow tired and give up. We are always to pray. Jesus said we are to be like little children. We know that children don’t give up after asking once. If they really want something, they keep on asking; they certainly don’t seem to tire as easily as their parents.

“Too many people, when they talk to God, ‘hang up the phone’ before they get their answers”

If an answer to prayer does not come in the time and place expected, what are we to do? Give up? Lose hope? Throw away our faith? No! *Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for*

Him: – fret not yourself
(Psalms 37:7).

*“If an answer
to prayer does
not come in the
time and place
expected, what
are we to do?”*

A poor little child once stood looking wistfully over a fence into a beautiful vineyard. The owner came by and said: ‘Would you like some grapes?’ ‘Oh, yes please’, she replied. ‘All right, hand your basket over the fence.’ So, the man took her basket and was gone for a long time. Finally, the little girl became discouraged. She thought the man was not coming back. At last the man returned with the basket heaped full of the choicest grapes in the vineyard. ‘I’ve made you wait a good while’ he said, ‘but the longer you wait, the more grapes you get’.

It is sometimes like that with prayer. We bring our empty basket to God and pass it over the gate of prayer. Sometimes God delays a long time,

and our faith begins to grow weary with waiting. But in His good time, He comes, bringing with him a basket that is heaped full of the blessings that are best for us!

*“Sometimes
God delays a
long time, and
our faith begins
to grow weary
with waiting”*

Persistent prayer is the prayer that gets results. We have powerful examples of this kind of prayer all through the Bible. In Genesis 32, we meet a man called Jacob who wrestled with God all night before he received the answer to his prayer. Because of his persistence, God made him the father of his special people, Israel.

Further on in the Bible, we find the inspiring story of the prophet Elijah, praying for rain to break the long drought Israel had been experiencing (1 Kings 18). Seven times, Elijah’s prayer produced nothing, but still he

prayed. The rain clouds would never have broken that three-year drought if Elijah had stopped praying on Mt Carmel that day.

The iron prison door that led to the street would never have opened of its own accord before the Apostle Peter if the church at Jerusalem had not prayed ‘without ceasing’ for him. Peter therefore was kept in prison: *but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him* (Acts 12:5).

10 | Pray as well as take action

Sometimes prayer will prompt us to take appropriate action, because ‘*faith without works is dead*’ (James 2:20). Are you doing your part to have prayer answered?

We must be like those who not only pray for the unfortunate, but also feed and clothe the stranger, like those who not only pray for good crops, but also till the soil.

A practical man once said, ‘I am a great believer in prayer, but when I pray for potatoes, I do it at the end of a hoe handle!’ If you are praying for a friend, neighbour or loved one to find Jesus, ask God to

“I am a great believer in prayer, but when I pray for potatoes, I do it at the end of a hoe handle!”

show you practical ways to show His love for them through you! Jesus can be revealed to them through a listening ear in times of need, a shoulder to cry on when they are sad, a warm meal when they are sick – practical help when they need it most! You can be the hands and feet of Jesus here on earth.

Do you desire more answers to prayer? I have found that the more I focus on praying for and helping others, the more answers to prayer I receive in my own life.

Conclusion

To the restless heart that longs for peace, to the worn out traveller on the journey of life who is searching for the secret of true happiness, two arms are stretched out, inviting you to come home. Come home to God's loving embrace. He is the friend and father you have been searching for all your life. Reach out to God right now in prayer – pour out your heart to the One who made you, and truly loves you. On the wings of prayer, anything is possible.

NOTES

[illegible]

[illegible]

BIBLE STUDIES

THAT COULD CHANGE YOUR LIFE

FOREVER!



GOD: WHAT IS HE LIKE?
IF GOD IS GOOD - WHY IS
THERE EVIL?
GOD'S DIETARY PLAN
STEPS TO HEAVEN
HOW TO PRAY
THE NATURE OF FAITH
PERSONAL PEACE
HEAVEN
DISCOURAGEMENT

To request these Bible Studies:

Website: www.tij.tv

[Facebook.com/TheIncredibleJourneyMinistry](https://www.facebook.com/TheIncredibleJourneyMinistry)

Australia

0481 315 101

info@tij.tv

The Incredible Journey

GPO Box 274

Sydney NSW 2001

New Zealand

020 422 2042

info@tij.tv

The Incredible Journey

PO Box 76673

Manukau, Auckland 2241



The Incredible Journey

Prayer is an important part of developing a personal, vibrant relationship with God.

Would you like to learn how to pray? Would you like more assurance that God hears your prayers?

Have you ever struggled maintaining a regular prayer experience with God? Would you like to know the secret to answered prayer?

If your answer is 'Yes' to any of these questions, then this booklet is for you.



Pastor Gary Kent is the Speaker for **The Incredible Journey** ministry. He has produced and presented numerous documentaries on subjects including the Bible, Bible prophecy, world events and natural health. His passion is to share the good news of Jesus' imminent return.

The Incredible Journey

Website: www.tij.tv

[Facebook.com/TheIncredibleJourneyMinistry](https://www.facebook.com/TheIncredibleJourneyMinistry)

Australia

0481 315 101

info@tij.tv

New Zealand

020 422 2042

infonz@tij.tv