



KNOWING THE POWER AND PRESENCE OF GOD

LESSON SEVEN

PRAYER AND ACCOUNTABILITY

OPENING PRAYER

Holy! Holy! Holy! Lord God Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth! The whole world is full of Thy glory! Come, Lord Jesus. Come, Holy Spirit! You are welcome here! We love You. We honor you. We want to be aware of Your Presence. We quiet ourselves to become aware of You. Come, touch our minds, hearts, our lips. We thank You for forming us individually, but in Your image. We thank You for creating us to know You, commune with You. Make Your Presence known to each of us in the unique way You created us to be connected to You. We pray in agreement with Philippians 3:8 NIV *I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.* Amen.

1. Colossians 1:18 and 24 teaches us that Jesus is the head of the church and the church is referred to as His body. The premise of this series of lessons is that the church is the body of Christ and those who have proclaimed Jesus as their Lord and Savior are followers of Jesus, believers in the teaching of Jesus and therefore are present day disciples. John 8:31-32 NIV tells of Jesus teaching those who believed in Him: *“If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”* In John 14:23 it is recorded that Jesus taught: *“Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.”* Matthew 28:19-20 Jesus met with His eleven disciples after His crucifixion telling them to *“go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”* The Book of Acts tells how the first church members learned to follow the teaching of Christ. So generation after generation, disciples have proclaimed their faith in Jesus and have learned what He taught and learned to obey His instructions. We must also be faithful to obey the teaching of Jesus and pass on His truths to the next generation.
2. Through the Bible, Christian books, sermons, classes, the many available visual aids, the testimonies and the examples of the faithful encourage us. But since we each are created to be a unique part of the church, we need to develop our personal relationship with God and this is done most often through prayer. First Corinthians 12:12-31 explains about each of us being a different but needed part of the body of Christ.
3. Enriching our prayer lives is a continual learning and growing experience. Whether our prayers are said alone or with others, sung or written, recorded on a phone or computer, handwritten in a journal, painted on a canvas or sewn upon a quilt, worn on a tee shirt or displayed on a banner, they are heard by God.
4. Recorded in Matthew 6:9-15, **Jesus said, “This, then, is how you should pray:** *‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil.’*” Jesus went on

to explain, *“For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins”*.

In the above example Jesus taught us what is important to the Lord and may inspire us to enrich our prayers with those elements and truths from some of His other teaching.

a. OUR FATHER WHO IS IN HEAVEN

- i. A good first step in prayer is to acknowledge to whom you wish to communicate. One way to do this is to speak words that define God’s character as described in the Holy Bible such as: Lord God Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

b. HOLY BE YOUR NAME

- i. In reverent prayer proclaiming Him as holy is an act of worship and respect. In heaven He is worshiped by the words, “holy, holy, holy.” Isaiah 6:1-3 tells of Isaiah seeing the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted and the train of His robe filled the temple. Angelic beings were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of His glory.”

c. YOUR KINGDOM COME, YOUR WILL BE DONE

- i. Matthew 6:25-33 teaches us to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness rather than worrying over food and clothes. God knows what you need. Instead pray, “Lord, may Your kingdom come, Your will be done.” Another way of saying this is, “Make what is most important to You be most important to me. Teach me what I am to know, do, say and pray so that Your will is done on earth as well as in heaven.” Every day ask the Holy Spirit to teach you from Scripture to confirm what you feel are the Lord’s directions and to teach you the Lord’s priorities for your day. Read the Bible as something that will be a guide for your decisions and actions, not just as a book of history.

d. FORGIVE MY SINS AS I FORGIVE THOSE WHO SIN AGAINST ME



Christ died taking the punishment for our sins upon Himself.

I John 1:9 reminds us: If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive our sins purify us from all unrighteous.

Colossians 3:13 teaches us to forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another as the Lord forgave you.

e. THANK THE LORD FOR HIS GUIDANCE, BLESSINGS AND PROTECTION

- i. In Luke 17:11-19 we learn that Jesus gave directions to ten men who had leprosy which resulted in their healing. Only one returned and thanked Him and Jesus commented on the fact that ten were healed but only one gave praise to God. Speak words of thankfulness to God for Him working in your life in unseen as well as obvious ways. Tell Him how much you love Him. As recorded in Matthew, Jesus taught the greatest commandment is to *“Love the Lord with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”* There are many ways

to fulfill this command to love the Lord and one of the ways is using words to declare who He is to you and what He means to you.

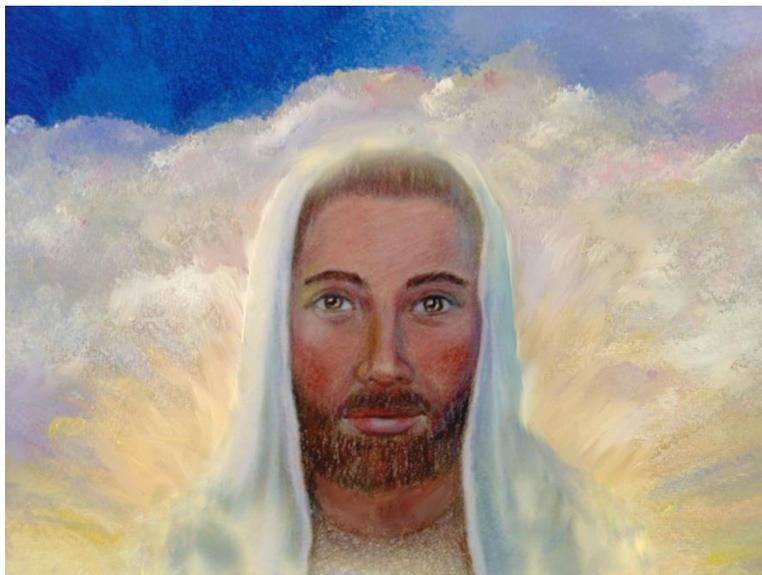
- ii. A simple worship song may express your true feelings.
- iii. Many of the Psalms can be adopted as your own prayer.

ACCOUNTABILITY

He lives! We serve a living Lord. As present day disciples when we listen and obey God's directions, we grow in our ability to be part of the ministry of Jesus.

What helps you be accountable to the guidance God has given to you? Writing down what comes to mind and regularly rereading your notes? Telling a partner, friend or counselor? Joining a small group?

Years ago, I started journaling in the early morning hours, putting the date at the top of the page. My written words often include worship, thankfulness and love and especially gratefulness for answered prayers. I may start the page with a few words of worship such as, "Holy, holy, holy Lord, You are



welcome here. Come, Holy Spirit." Then I may thank the Lord for His blessings, answered prayer, and insights and special events during the previous 24 hours. This is helpful to me for many reasons. First of all, I want to remember the wonders of His touch on My life, the answered prayers and what pleases Him. Going back to review months and years later builds my faith and trust to go forward. Writing keeps my mind from wandering when I want to be learning from Scripture and insights from the Lord. But most importantly, writing what I believe are the Lord's instructions keeps me accountable.

Did I do what He previously asked of me? Because I often forget His directions during the rush of the day, I have learned to jot a few words on yellow sticky notes and put them in a place that I can see as I walk by. My heart's desire is to make what is most important to the Lord be most important to me. Repeatedly, I have asked the Lord to teach me what He wants me to know, do, say and pray and write down what I believe He is putting on my heart. Every day I open my Bible to read Scripture and write down a few of the sentences that are particularly meaningful to me. If I have a special concern, I talk openly and honestly with Him. I talk, write, sing to Jesus as if He is right there, because He is present. Do you know what happens? He leads me to Scripture, or He gives me an insight on His perspective. How healing that is. It's like sitting and talking to a very loving daddy. Like sitting and talking to a counselor who has all the answers and all the love and all the truth. There's no counselor like the counselor of our Holy Spirit. Every day I enjoy that kind of communion with the Lord. It's free. I have to spend the time. I have to make the time of communion my top priority. It is worth every minute. Because I have come as a student in the early morning hours with the Lord, I can say my life is full of challenges and choices, and certainly a life of adventure. But my inner peace and joy is unmistakable. John 15:9-12 NIV *As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my*

Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

Acts 5:17-41 teaches us about Peter and the other apostles being told they must not teach about Jesus. Verse 29 gives the words of Peter: *"We must obey God rather than men!"*

Many years ago, in a church service, I heard within my spirit the Lord saying, "Beverley, kneel before Me." A lady knelt beside me praying quietly. I felt protected and loved by her presence. In my spirit, I saw face after face of my loved ones. As one face would appear the inner voice of the Lord would ask, "Who is your God?" And He just waited. And I would say, "You are, Lord." Then the next person would come; mother, father, brother, sons, pastors, leaders, teachers and friends and as each face would appear, God asked me, "Who is your God?," and He waited. I would say, "You are, Lord" There are a lot of people that I love that have great influence on my life, but He was reminding me I only have one God. He went through my dear family, other loved ones and people I considered in authority over me. I will be forever grateful to Him for that experience because written in my heart is Jesus Christ is my only Lord and Savior. After people, He challenged me about my possessions. An image of my house came up, and He said, "If being obedient to Me as your Lord and Savior, causes you to lose your house, who is your God?" "You are, Lord." My car and other possessions I hold dear to me were pictured before me with the question, "Who is your God?" I gave Him my heart in a way I had not before. In return, He gave me a boldness to follow His directions that I had not experienced previously. This was important because in the following years, He gave me instructions to travel many places to encourage the faithful. I constantly ask for confirmation about what I believe He is guiding me to do. Over and over the assignments were confirmed in enough ways to give me the courage to continue. But misunderstanding does occur which can be very humbling.

Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you from Scripture, to confirm what you feel are the Lord's directions, to teach you the Lord's priorities for your day. Spend time reading what is brought to your attention from the Bible every day. How can you remember His guidance?

First Thessalonians 5: 16-22 NIV *Rejoice always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all, hold on to the good. Reject every kind of evil.*

The apostle Paul taught in Ephesians 6:18-20 NIV *And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.. Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.*