



TAKING A KNEE

PRAYER [CAN I TRUST HIM WITH MYSELF?]

THE HURDLE

I asked God for one thing. I felt a little guilty talking to Him just because I needed something, but I did it anyway. I prayed my heart out that this time my knee would hold up, but here I sit on the sideline again during what should be the biggest game of my senior season. Does He care about what I want? Did I use the wrong words? What's the point of praying if God can't hear me or help me? Maybe He just doesn't care. Or maybe I'm just afraid God will let me down when I need Him most...

When (if ever) do you pray to God? About what?

Have you ever wondered if God really cares about you or the things that matter to you? What makes you think this way?

Do you sometimes think that you have to say just the right words or that you shouldn't tell God how you really feel? Explain.

Do you ever feel guilty for talking to God only in moments of crisis and seldom at other times?

“

Basically, I'm for anything that gets you through the night—be it prayer, tranquilizers, or a bottle of Jack Daniels.

Frank Sinatra
Entertainer

”

Living in a fast paced, independent society will always work against cultivating an honest and consistent prayer life, but our lives desperately need connection with God. It can be difficult to honestly pray to Him if you're hindered by guilty thoughts or incorrect teaching.

I HEAR YA

The Bible is full of people who pray to God in all different circumstances, hoping He cares about what matters to them and will do something about it...

Jeremiah: “Why do you (God) forget us forever, why do you forsake us for so many days? ... Renew our days as of old—unless you have utterly rejected us, and you remain exceedingly angry with us.”
(Lamentations 5:20-22)

The Early Church: “So Peter was kept in prison, but the Church was earnestly praying to God for him.”
(Acts 12:5)

David: “How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?”
(Psalm 13:1)

Paul: “ ... there was given to me a thorn in the flesh ... three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me.” (2 Corinthians 12:7b-8)

LISTEN UP

Read Philippians 4:4-7.

1. As you read through the passage a second time, write down the actions we are to do or not do.
2. Do you ever think some of your requests are too insignificant or too big for God to answer? Why?
3. How might rejoicing in the Lord with a thankful heart instead of dwelling on your circumstances help you to approach God?
4. What is the result when we communicate with God as described in these verses (see verse 7)?
5. The “peace that will guard your heart” is contrasted with what in verse 6? What difference could this make in your prayer life?

FOR THE RECORD

God knows about your situation better than you do; nothing comes into your life that He hasn't allowed, including the desires of your heart. He cares for you the way a perfect father cares for his child, though sometimes it may not feel that way in the moment. He wants us to trust Him so we can discover that He had our best interests in mind all along, even when He seemed silent or far away. He is working all

things together for His glory and our good—even in the dark days when hope seems lost. We'll know and understand His ways better as we fully open our hearts and minds to Him, bringing our real hopes, fears, desires, and sins to His feet. While He may not always give you what you want, He can be trusted to do what's best for you and He will always give you what you need most: Himself.



YOUR MOVE

1. The following are common hindrances to communicating freely with God. Which of these false thoughts can you most identify with? Why?
 - He won't do anything for me.
 - He will respond like my earthly father.
 - He doesn't care about what matters to me.
 - He won't hear me because I'm not living the way I should.
 - He already knows what I feel, so why say it?
 - He wouldn't like what I really think about this situation.

To some degree, we all think these things at one time or another—it's human nature. Yet despite how may think/feel the fact remains: God cares deeply for us and everything we're going through! Though he already knows our every thought, he wants us to communicate with him.

2. To what degree are you motivated (hardly, somewhat, extremely) to move past the hurdles that keep you from talking to God and trusting that He wants to hear from you—anytime, anyplace, about anything?
3. Think of a person or situation that is difficult to bring before God. Make a list of at least ten things for which you are (or could be) thankful related to this person or situation. Remember: peace and perspective come from God when we choose thanksgiving over complaining.

“To pray is to listen to the One who calls you “my beloved daughter,” “my beloved son,” “my beloved child.” To pray is to let that voice speak to the center of your being, to your guts, and let that voice resound in your whole being.

*Henri Nouwen
Teacher/Author*

4. Take five minutes each morning or evening. Bring your requests to God and see what happens to you in the process. Consider writing in a journal and including the ACTS of prayer when you talk to God.

Adoration: Lifting God up and praising Him for who He is.

Confession: Acknowledging your sin and desire to change.

Thanksgiving: Gratitude for every bit of your life.

Supplication: Praying on behalf of other people.

For additional work on your own, visit **The Training Room** on the next page to develop your honest relationship with the Living God.

AS YOU ENTER

“NOT MY WILL BUT YOURS BE DONE.” (MATTHEW 26:39)

Different Areas of Prayer

- Praises:** Psalm 145; Philippians 4:4
- Corporate confession:** Nehemiah 1:3-11
- Personal confession:** Psalm 51; I John 1:9
- Desperation:** Matthew 15:21-28; 26:38-44
- Intercession:** Genesis 18:20-32; Romans 8:26-28
- Unanswered prayer:** 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

The Model Prayer Matthew 6:9-13

Read Jesus’ model prayer and then talk to God in your own words.

- “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name”
(Let God know how great He is.)
- “Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”
(Trust God for His will to be done amid the darkness in and around you.)
- “Give us today our daily bread”
(Tell God your needs and ask Him to meet them today.)
- “Forgive us our debts”
(Tell God all your sins of thought, word and action.)
- “As we also have forgiven our debtors”
(Forgive those who have offended you and offer them grace.)

Your Heavenly Father

Knows all about you and loves you just the same (Psalm 139)

Will always be with you to give you strength and power (Isaiah 41:10)

Is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness (Jonah 4:2)

Has forgiven you all of your sins (Colossians 1:13,14)

Will finish the work in you that He started (Philippians 1:6)

Delights in His unchanging love for you (Micah 7:18)

Has a mansion in heaven prepared for you (John 14:2)

AS YOU LEAVE

- » MAKE TIME IN YOUR DAILY SCHEDULE TO COMMUNICATE WITH GOD.
- » START A PRAYER JOURNAL TO SEE HOW GOD WORKS IN AND THROUGH YOU.
- » PRAY HONESTLY ABOUT EVERYTHING AND TRUST THE LIVING GOD!