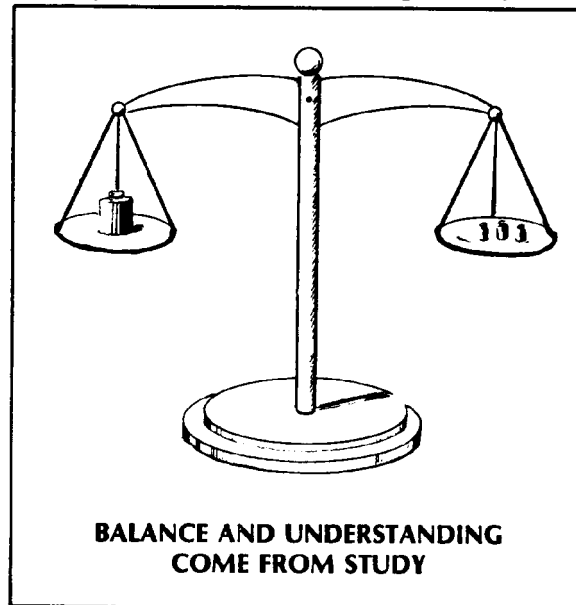


Lesson
6

Topical Study

Paul talked about prayer in his letter to the Colossians. He said, “Be persistent in prayer, and keep alert as you pray, giving thanks to God” (4:2). Then he asked the people to pray for him and his fellow workers. He wanted God to give them chances to preach the gospel. To understand why Paul told the people to be persistent, to keep alert, to give thanks, and ask for specific things in prayer, we will do a topical study of prayer.

Any time you do not understand something about your Christian life, you can do a topical study on that subject. You may want to know how to live by faith. Maybe you need to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Do you know who you are in Christ? How can you live a holy life? Whatever the topic is, a study of it will show you a little more of God’s plan for you.



In this lesson you will study . . .

The Benefits of Topical Study
The Approach to Topical Study
The Topic of Prayer

This lesson will help you . . .

- Describe the value of topical studies.
- Put into practice a topical study of *prayer* as a model for other topical studies.

THE BENEFITS OF TOPICAL STUDY

Objective 1. *State two benefits of topical study.*

We already suggested one benefit of topical study. It is to be able to find answers to questions about how to live a Christian life. You might want assurance of your salvation. You may need

victory over a fear you have. Or you may be wanting to know God's will for you. You can find the answers. Search the Bible for passages which teach about these things.

Another benefit of topical study is that it helps you to balance the teachings on each of the main topics of God's Word. These main topics are the basic truths which God intends for us to live by. The Bible says:

He must hold firmly to the message which can be trusted and which agrees with the doctrine. In this way he will be able to encourage others with the true teaching and also to show the error of those who are opposed to it (Titus 1:9).

As you study each truth from various viewpoints, compare one reference with another. Then you will be able to interpret God's Word as He intends for you to.



For You To Do

- 1 In your own words, state two reasons why topical study helps us.

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THE APPROACH TO TOPICAL STUDY

Objective 2. *List three steps in topical study.*

A topical study may take a short or long time to do. Some topics, like the Holy Spirit or salvation, occur often in the Bible. Bible scholars who write books on these topics sometimes spend years searching for all the references to the topic.

Step 1 List all the references you can find to the topic you wish to study. (A Bible concordance lists many references for any given topic.) Write both the reference and the relevant part of the Scripture in a notebook.

Step 2 Arrange the references into groups of related material. Write a title or heading for each list of references.

Step 3 Summarize the main points about the topics in each list. To do this, read each Scripture and its context to be sure of the correct meaning. Place Scriptures under other headings if you see they should be changed. Write brief summaries in your own words.



For You To Do

- 2 List three steps in a topical study.

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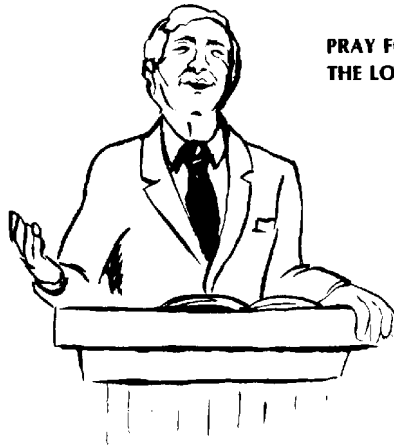
**PRAY FOR
YOUR CHILDREN**



When to pray. 1 Samuel 1:10, 16; Matthew 26:36-44; Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16; 18:7; Romans 12:12; Ephesians 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 3:10; 1 Timothy 5:5.

Hindrances to prayer. Proverbs 15:8; 28:9; Isaiah 1:15; 59:2; Matthew 6:5; Luke 18:10-14; 20:47; James 1:6-8; 4:3.

**PRAY FOR
THE LOST**



Where to pray. Isaiah 56:7; Matthew 14:23; Mark 6:46; Luke 9:18; Acts 1:14; 10:9; 1 Timothy 2:8.

Answers to prayer. Genesis 20:17-18; 25:22-23; Daniel 9:21-23; Jonah 2:7; Acts 4:29-31; 8:17; 10:31; 2 Corinthians 12:8-9.

Prayer requests. 1 Kings 18:36-38; Nehemiah 1:5-11, Psalm 64:1; Isaiah 38:2-5; Matthew 26:41; Luke 22:32; John 17:1-26; Acts 1:24; 4:29; 8:15, 22; 9:40; Romans 10:1; 15:31; Ephesians 6:18; James 1:5; 5:13-14.

**PRAY WHEN
YOU STUDY**



**PRAY FOR
THE SICK**





**PRAY WHEN YOU
NEED HELP**

How to pray. Jeremiah 33:3; Matthew 6:7-14; 18:19-20; 26:39; Mark 11:24-25; Luke 11:5-13; 18:1, 10-14; John 14:13-14; 15:7; Romans 8:26-27; 1 Corinthians 14:13-25; Philippians 4:6; Colossians 4:2; 1 Timothy 2:8; Hebrews 5:7; 10:22; 11:6; 1 Peter 4:7; 1 John 3:20-22; 5:14-15; Jude 20.

Praise and thanksgiving. 2 Samuel 7:18-29; Isaiah 38:10-20; Matthew 14:19; Acts 10:1-2; 16:25; 1 Timothy 4:4; James 5:13.

Posture. 1 Kings 8:22; Psalm 95:6; Jeremiah 33:3; Daniel 9:3; Matthew 19:13-15; 26:39; Mark 11:25; Luke 18:13; Acts 8:17; 9:40; 1 Timothy 2:8; James 5:14.

Effects of prayer. Proverbs 15:8; Luke 3:21-22; 9:28-35; 2 Corinthians 1:11; Ephesians 3:20; Philippians 1:19; James 5:16-17; Revelation 5:8.



For You To Do

3 Draw a circle around the letter in front of each Scripture that refers to prayer.

- a) 1 Peter 3:7
- b) 1 Peter 3:9
- c) 1 Peter 3:12
- d) 1 Peter 3:17

4 Match each Scripture with the category it fits and write the number in front of the category in the space in front of the Scripture.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| a Psalm 66:18 | 1) Praise and thanksgiving |
| b Matthew 7:7-11 | 2) Hindrances to prayer |
| c Mark 6:41 | 3) How to pray |
| d 1 Thessalonians 5:17 | 4) Effects of prayer |
| | 5) When to pray |

Objective 4. Summarize the main points about prayer which are made in a given set of Scriptures.

Now we are ready to summarize the main points given under each heading relating to prayer. The best commentary on the Bible is the Bible itself. Let the Bible speak to you and answer your questions.



For You To Do

5 Turn back to the Scriptures listed under *whom to pray for*, and look them up. After reading them all, circle the letter in front of each TRUE statement about whom we should pray for.

- a Pray for leaders, but only if they are godly.
- b Pray for all God's people everywhere.
- c Pray for our enemies.

6 Turn back to the Scriptures listed under *when to pray*, and look them up. After reading them all, circle the letter in front of each answer that could complete this sentence. We should pray

- a) both day and night.
- b) continually.
- c) no matter how we feel.

7 Another reason we should pray always is found in Psalm 121:4. Write that reason here.

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8 Are we sometimes responsible for our prayers not being answered? The Bible has something to say about that too. Read the Scriptures under *hindrances to prayer*. Then mark the reasons you would give if someone asked you what might hinder our prayers.

- a) Disobedience or hidden sin in our lives
- b) Asking for selfish reasons
- c) Maybe our parents or grandparents sinned.

9 The list of Scriptures given in this course is by no means complete. Bible stories, too, give interesting insights concerning the places where people have prayed—like Jonah crying out to God from the belly of the whale. After reading the Scriptures under *where to pray*, mark the sentence you feel is correct.

- a) The church is the best place to pray.
- b) If you really want answers, pray alone.
- c) We can pray anywhere and God will hear.

10 *Answers to prayer*. God’s answers vary. Some are immediate, others delayed. People receive healing, longer life, children, forgiveness, help, and all kinds of problems taken care of. There is no limit to His provision. On the basis of God’s Word, how would you complete this sentence? Circle the correct letter. Some people receive answers that are different from what they expected,

- a) and some will never get answers.
- b) but all receive answers from God.
- c) so maybe they didn’t have faith.

11 *Prayer requests* also vary. People ask for signs, healing, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, divine guidance, greater faith, and for material needs to be met. Perhaps what you want most hasn’t been named, but you can ask in faith and receive. On the lines below write your own request and the Bible reference you choose as your authority.

.....
.....

12 *How to pray*. We must ask God for all that we need in the name of Jesus. We must ask from a heart free from sin, such as unforgiveness. In the list of Bible references given, one is a pattern for prayer. What do we usually call that pattern and where is it found?

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.....

13 When we think of God’s goodness to us, our hearts respond in worship and praise. The Bible also encourages us to sing hymns and songs of thanksgiving. Complete this verse found under *praise and thanksgiving*, together with the reference.

About midnight.....
.....
.....

14 Our posture during prayer seems to be a matter of personal choice. Some people stand up and some raise their hands. Others bow or kneel. Over a period of time we may do all of these. After reading the verses listed under *posture*, which statement would you say is correct?

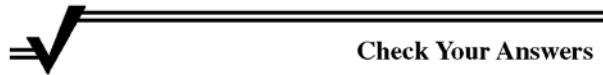
- a) Our posture in prayer must hold true to tradition.
- b) The Bible gives us no set of rules for posture during prayer.

15 *Effects of prayer.* Prayer is powerful. It draws us to God, transforms us into Christ's image, releases the power of the Holy Spirit within us. And our prayers are precious to God. What Scripture in the list given tells us that our prayers are as incense to Him?

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From this study you can see that prayer is communication with God. You talk to Him and He answers you. As you practice the Bible's teachings on prayer, your life will change. You will receive great blessing from God. You will have power to share the gospel with others.

Continue to learn about prayer. Add references to your study of prayer as you study other topics, for the main themes of the Bible are closely interwoven. Also take time to listen to other people's experiences with prayer.



Check Your Answers

- 1** It helps us find answers we need and also helps us balance Bible truths.
- 9 c)** We can pray anywhere and God will hear.
- 2** List Bible references.
Group the references.
Summarize the main points.
- 10 b)** but all receive answers from God.
 - a) 1 Peter 3:7.
 - c) 1 Peter 3:12.
- 11** Your own answer. It might be one like asking for wisdom on the basis of James 1:5.
 - 4 a** 2) Hindrances to prayer.
 - b** 3) How to pray.
 - c** 1) Praise and thanksgiving.
 - d** 5) When to pray.
- 12** The Lord's Prayer. Matthew 6:9-13.
 - 5 a** False.
 - b** True.
 - c** True.
- 13** Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them (Acts 16:25).
 - 6 a)** both day and night.
 - b)** continually.
 - c)** no matter how we feel.

14 b) The Bible gives us no set of rules for posture during prayer.

7 God never slumbers nor sleeps. Revelation 5:8.

8 a) Disobedience or hidden sin in our lives.

b) Asking for selfish reasons.

3 a) 1 Peter 3:7

15 Revelation 5:8