

Session Six

GETTING STARTED PRAYING YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY TO CHRIST

KEY SCRIPTURE

“Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God concerning them is for their salvation!” Romans 10:1

KEY TRUTH

To reach your friends and family for Christ, you must prepare the ground through prayer to sow the seeds of the gospel.

PRAYER IS A POWERFUL EVANGELISTIC TOOL

Prayer not only changes others, but it changes you. Prayer shapes the attitudes that motivate you.

Jesus told us to love our enemies and to pray for those who persecute us (Matthew 5:44). Why do you think He told us to do this? Is it because our hearts are in need of change?

When we pray for people, it changes our thoughts and actions toward them. If we allow God to direct our prayers, we see even our enemies from God's perspective. We become open to sharing the Gospel with anyone, because we know God's over-arching desire is for the world to be saved (John 3:17).

We need to pray for all people, beginning with our friends and family members who are without Christ. If we don't pray for our friends and family, who will?

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We also need to pray for people we don't yet know, such as lost people in our city who we may meet, befriend and have an opportunity to share the Gospel with, one on one. Can you think of examples when Christians have prayed for people they did not know? What have been some of the outcomes?

In this lesson, you will learn to pray for your friends and family to begin a relationship with Christ.

THE BIBLE TEACHES US TO PRAY FOR UNBELIEVERS

List three friends or family members who are unbelievers.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

The Bible points us to the need for prayer for people – anyone without Christ.

a. Pray for all people's salvation.

“First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all those who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good, and it pleases God our Savior, who wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” 1 Timothy 2:1-4

Paul reminds us that God wants all people to be saved and to know the truth. That certainly includes people in influential positions, such as government officials, military leaders, heads of corporations, our own bosses. And, of course, God wants your friends and family to be saved. Jesus considers your prayers for all of them to be good and pleasing.

b. Pray for God's kingdom to come.

Jesus said: "Therefore, you should pray like this:

Our Father in heaven, Your name be honored as holy. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Matthew 6:9-10

The Kingdom becomes real in a person's life at salvation. You should pray for the Kingdom to come into your friend's life or the life of a family member.

c. Pray for salvation of specific groups or people.

"Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God concerning them is for their salvation!" Romans 10:1

Paul loved the Jewish people so much that he wrote about his willingness to give up his citizenship in heaven for them (Romans 9:1-3). Our hearts should have the same anguish and love for specific people we know who are not saved. Can you think of groups who influence our culture who need to know the Lord? Or individuals by name or position who may not have salvation?

THE BIBLE TEACHES US *WHY* TO PRAY FOR UNBELIEVERS

When you understand what is happening to someone without Christ, you develop a sense of urgency. The following lists ways the Bible describes an unbeliever's spiritual condition.

1. Unwelcoming

"But the natural man does not welcome what comes from God's Spirit, because it is foolishness to him; he is not able to know it since it is evaluated spiritually." 1 Corinthians 2:14

2. Blind

"Regarding them: the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers so they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." 2 Corinthians 4:4

3. Captured

“...Perhaps God will grant them repentance to know the truth. Then they may come to their senses and escape the Devil's trap, having been captured by him to do his will.” 2 Timothy 2:25-26

4. Judged

“Anyone who believes in Him is not judged, but anyone who does not believe is already judged, because he has not believed in the name of the One and Only Son of God.” John 3:18

5. Dead

“And you were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you previously walked according to this worldly age, according to the ruler of the atmospheric domain, the spirit now working in the disobedient.” Ephesians 2:1-2

6. Hopeless

“At that time you were without the Messiah, excluded from the citizenship of Israel, and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, with no hope and without God in the world.” Ephesians 2:12

7. Condemned

“And anyone not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.” Revelation 20:15

A THREE-STEP PLAN FOR EVANGELISTIC PRAYER

When you intercede on behalf of the unbeliever, you need a plan. The following three-step plan will help you focus your prayer time.

Step 1: Pray with Thanksgiving

- a. Thank God for salvation.

“Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift.” 2 Corinthians 9:15

- b. Thank God for your salvation.

“In Him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation – in Him when you believed – were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.” Ephesians 1:13

- c. Thank God for your participation in the salvation process.

“Now everything is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed the message of reconciliation to us. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ; certain that God is appealing through us, we plead on Christ's behalf, 'Be reconciled to God.'" 2 Corinthians 5:18-20

Step 2: Pray God's Promises

- a. God wants to save people.

“[God] who wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” 1 Timothy 2:4

“The Lord does not delay His promise, as some understand delay, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance.” 2 Peter 3:9

- b. Nothing is impossible with God.

“Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'I assure you: It will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven! Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.' When the disciples heard this, they were utterly astonished and asked, 'Then who can be saved?' But Jesus looked at them and said, 'With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.'" Matthew 19:23-26

Step 3: Pray for H.E.A.R.T.S.

The acrostic H.E.A.R.T.S. will help you remember what to pray for your friends and family members who are unbelievers.

a. **H**earts to be receptive

“For God, who said, ‘Light shall shine out of darkness’ – He has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of God’s glory in the face of Jesus Christ.” 2 Corinthians 4:6

b. **E**ars to be open

“Therefore, let it be known to you that this saving work of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen!” Acts 28:28

c. **A**ttitudes to be changed

“For the mind-set of the flesh is death, but the mind-set of the Spirit is life and peace.” Romans 8:6

d. **R**epentance to occur

“Therefore repent and turn back, that your sins may be wiped out so that seasons of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,” Acts 3:19

e. **T**ransformation to begin

“Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.” Romans 12:2

f. **S**ervants to be obedient

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8

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