



pray

HOW TO TALK TO GOD

LESSON 8 // HOW TO PERSEVERE IN PRAYER

Prayer requires faith. But you won't pray in faith if you're haunted and hounded by doubt. You'll never pray consistently and effectively until you face and overcome the doubts that hinder your prayers.

Doubt is a thief. It enters our hearts and minds and attempts to steal our faith, confidence and conviction. During Jesus' earthly ministry, He exposed and confronted doubt. Jesus was a "doubt-buster"!

What do we see in His example and other insights from God's Word about breaking through doubts that hinder our prayers? Let's look at seven "doubt-busters" we learn from Scripture.

1. Develop simple faith.

All too often we think of faith as something huge that only highly spiritual people possess. Not true. Faith is action based on a realistic assurance and expectation. It isn't complex—it's simple. Faith in God is simply trusting Him confidently based on His integrity, promises and ability. Simple faith in God says, "I believe God is, He can and He will."

Hebrews 11:1, 6 (NLT) *Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see. ... ⁶ And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to Him must believe that God exists and that He rewards those who sincerely seek Him.*

2. Never let your doubts keep you from praying.

It would be great if we all had 100 percent faith all the time and never doubted. But as long as there is a devil around, there will be doubt. The key is to never let doubt dictate your prayer life. Don't let doubt tell you when you will pray or not pray. God works through people who pray despite their doubts. There's a great story about this in Mark 9:14-27. Because the dad in this story cried out to Jesus with the faith he had, Jesus healed his son!

Mark 9:24 (NLT) *Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"*

God is bigger than your doubts. Use the faith you have in prayer, and God will help you get where you need to be.

3. Understand how God answers prayer.

God answers our prayers, not on the basis of our urgencies, but on the basis of His will, always knowing what is best for us. When we pray, God answers "yes," "no" or "wait." Doubt is "busted" when we understand that God answers prayer in these different ways!

4. Trust the superiority of God's wisdom and plans.

God is so far beyond us we can't come close to grasping His wisdom. The Bible tells us that He alone is God—transcendent beyond anything we can comprehend.

Psalm 86:10 (NIV) *For You are great and do marvelous deeds; You alone are God.*

Romans 8:28 (NIV) *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.*

Romans 16:27 (NIV) *To the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.*

When we pray, we need to remember we are calling on the “only wise God”! At times it may look like we're receiving the opposite of what we asked for, but God is actually working in a mighty way. We may only understand later, or in eternity, the incredible wisdom of God that was at work.

5. Record and recall God's answers.

To deal effectively with doubt you've got to remember the goodness of God and His wonderful answers to your prayers. In the Bible we are commanded as God's people to remember what He has done for us (see 1 Samuel 7:7-13; Psalm 77:1; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25) and you need to build personal memories of God's faithfulness, deliverance and help. Remember the times He has come through for you!

6. Focus on the promises of God and the God of promises.

Remembrances take you into the past; promises take you into the future. One of the best ways to deal with doubt is to focus on the promises of God and the God of the promises. When doubt comes your way, answer your doubt with God's promises, knowing that the God who gave the promises never lies.

2 Corinthians 1:20 (NIV) *For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. And so through Him the “Amen” is spoken by us to the glory of God.*

7. Live in obedience.

Obedience is a powerful force against doubt. Real faith is action, not feeling (see James 2:14-26), so when you act on God's Word, you are defeating doubt. This builds a solid foundation for you to stand firm in faith and persevere in prayer!

Discussion questions

1. Read Hebrews 11:1, 6. What do you learn from these verses about faith in God that can help you pray more effectively?
2. How can trusting in “the superiority of God's wisdom and plans” enable you to overcome doubt and persevere in prayer?
3. Why is it important to “focus on the promises of God and the God of promises” as you pray? What difference should this make in your times of prayer with the Lord?