

# Communicating with God

## A study of prayer and Bible study



What Makes Prayer  
Unacceptable?

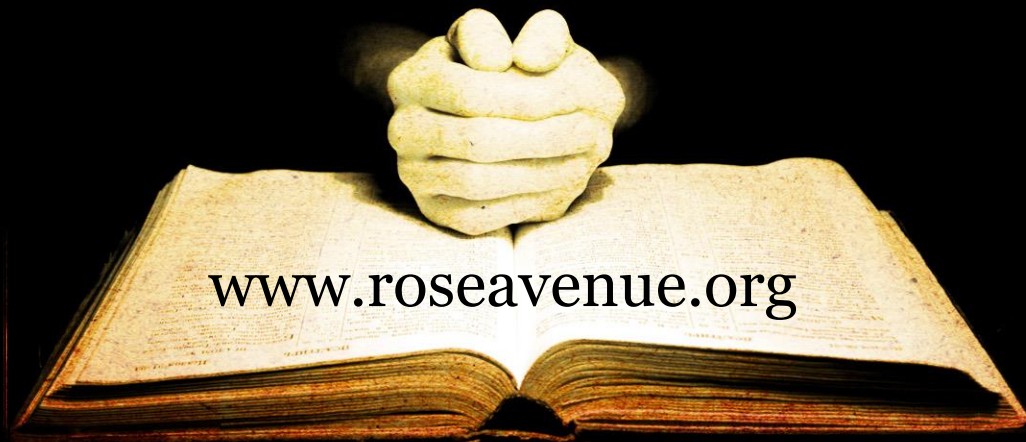
# A study of prayer!



- We have been addressing some aspects to consider as we strive to become better at prayer.
- We have noted that in our prayers we need to be persistent. And we discussed faith as we pray to God in our last lesson.
- Today...

# Prayer (13)

## What Makes Prayer Unacceptable?



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Communicating with God:  
A study of Prayer & Bible Study  
**Our 2024 Theme**



## A Lack of Faith

- **James 1:5-8**, “...*Let him ask in faith...*”
- We discussed faith in our last lesson, here we simply mention this – a genuine trust in God (**Hebrews 11:6**)
- He is “unstable” and will receive nothing from God. “Waves” – indecisive.



## A Lack of Faith

- **James 1:5-8**, “...*Let him ask in faith...*”
- Double-minded (only here & **Jas. 4:8**)  
Describes one who cannot make up his mind who to trust – God or himself (or something else)
- **Cf. 1 Kings 18:21, Joshua 24:15**
- **Matthew 6:24**
- **Luke 9:62**



## A Lack of Faith

- **James 1:5-8** “*Let him ask in faith*

If we do not genuinely believe that God can and will answer our prayers, why are we praying to Him?

If you have doubts, your prayers will be weak.

- **Luke 9:62**

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# Substituting Prayer for Obedience

- **Hebrews 5:8-9, cf. Matthew 7:21-23, Luke 6:46, 1 John 5:3.** We **MUST** obey Him!
- **1 John 3:22**, we receive because we keep His commandments
- **Cf. John 9:31**
- How can we expect God to answer our prayers if we refuse to obey Him?



## Wickedness in Our Lives

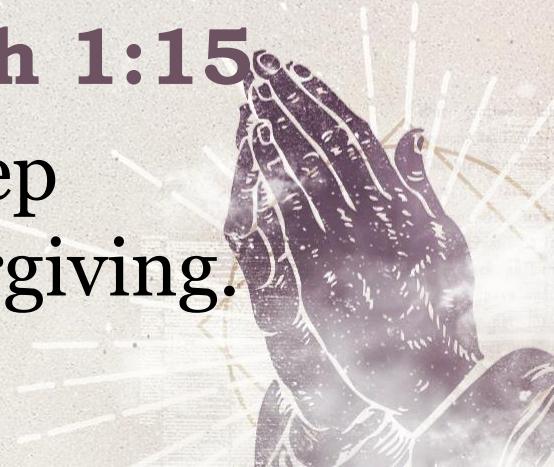
- **Psalm 66:18**, *“If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear”*
- **Proverbs 15:29, 28:9**
- **Isaiah 59:1-2**, your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.





# Wickedness in Our Lives

- WHEN we refuse to repent, we are declaring we do not care what God wants us to do!  
Yet, we expect Him to answer our every whim!
- What if one keeps sinning and “repenting”? Your
- Consider Israel’s rebellion – **Isaiah 1:15**
- It is arrogance to think you can keep sinning and expect God to keep forgiving.



# Wickedness in Our Lives

- When one keeps sinning...
- **NOTE:** This does not mean God will **NEVER** again answer your prayers.  
But He **DOES** expect genuine repentance!  
**Cf. 2 Corinthians 7:9-11**
- Consider **Judges 19 – 20** – Israel punishes Benjamin for gross immorality (**Cf. Judges 10:14, Jeremiah 2:28**)  
**WHEN** they finally repent...



# Selfishness

- **James 4:3**
- God despises selfishness – **2 Timothy 3:1-5, cf. Philippians 2:3-5**
- Our prayers must be “according to His will” - **1 John 5:14-15**
- Recall Jesus praying in the garden, **Matthew 26:39-42**



# When We Fail to Confess our Sins

- **1 John 1:9**, when we confess to God (walking in the light) we are forgiven
- **James 5:16**, confessing to one another for (spiritual) healing.
- **Matthew 5:22-24**, when you bring your gift to the altar...



## Unwillingness to Forgive

- **Matthew 6:14-15**, how you forgive is how you will be forgiven! (**Colossians 3:12-13**, **Ephesians 4:32**)
- **Luke 17:3-4**, up to 7 times in a day.
- **Matthew 5:23-24 & 18:15-16**, YOU take care of it! Don't wait on "the other party"
- If we harbor hatred, we cannot expect God to hear us! (**Cf. 1 John 4:20-21**)



## An Outward Show

- **Matthew 6:5-6**, to be seen by men!  
“They have their reward”
- **Luke 18:10-11**, the Pharisee was “praying with himself”. Clearly, he was interested in outward appearances. See **vs. 14**
- God cares about the heart.
- **NOTE:** This is **NOT** saying we should not pray publicly. Its about motives!



# Vain Repetitions

- **Matthew 6:7**, thoughtlessly repeating!
- **Matthew 22:44, 2 Corinthians 12:8**, repetition has its place!
- The rejected prayer is **EMPTY** & thoughtless
- **NOTE:** Are there times when we pray the same prayer and are not really thinking about the words?



# When We Fail to Treat Our Spouse Properly

- **1 Peter 3:7**, hindered prayers
- We need to be treating family properly. It reflects on how we view our spiritual family, especial our “Father”





# When we Refuse to Obey the Gospel

- Will God hear the prayers of the sinner?
- While developed further in a later lesson, let us conclude by observing that God views the prayers of the believer differently than the non-Christian (**1 John 1:7-9, 3:22, etc.**)
- Yes, God knows what “the sinner” is praying (**cf. Acts 10:1-2**), but His response is VERY limited!



Are you praying according  
to His will?





Let us pray!