

Draw Me Near

Workbook

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Week One

Day 1 - The Power of Communication

"Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole Earth."

Genesis 11:4

Have you ever heard someone pray and thought to yourself, "Wow, I wish I could pray like that!" Although many Christians today claim to pray (and most will admit prayer is important), you find few who faithfully pray on a daily basis, year after year. It's these who have passion and intimacy with God who have a track record to prove it. When you ask them to pray, you know they will. Their passion for, and belief in prayer, stands in stark contrast to the blank, awkward stare some give at the mention of prayer.

In general, there are two types of people:

1. Those who believe and actively pray on a regular basis.
2. Those who advocate prayer, yet pray sporadically.

There are many varying degrees of dedication to prayer. Some people believe in God but fail to pray on a regular basis until they are in great need. Others pray on a very regular basis however their prayers are shallow and repetitive. They faithfully go through the motions but their hearts lack the passion to intimately communicate with God.

Our goal in this study is to learn to pray in a way that pleases God and brings us closer to His heart. When we lack communication with God, it is never His fault. God wants to communicate with us. Communication breakdown always occurs on our end. Once we humbly accept this never changing fact, we will be able to draw near to God in a new way.

GOD IS ALWAYS SEEKING MAN

Since the Garden of Eden way back when time began, God has been actively seeking to communicate with man. After forming him from the dust of the Earth, God breathed life into his nostrils, placed him in the garden, and gave him clear instructions on what he could and couldn't eat.

"The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

Genesis 2:15-17

God does not sit on His throne piously waiting for man to come to Him. He always meets man on his own level. The Bible is full of examples of God seeking to guide man.

- *God spoke to Noah instructing him to build an ark (Genesis 6:13-22)*
- *The Lord spoke to Abram to leave his home for an unknown destination (Genesis 12:1)*
- *The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron with instructions to bring His people out of Egypt (Exodus 6:13)*
- *The Spirit of the Lord spoke to David (2 Samuel 23:2)*
- *The Lord spoke to Job (Job 40:6)*
- *The Lord spoke to the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 8:5)*
- *The Lord spoke to the prophet Jeremiah (Jeremiah 46:13)*
- *The Lord spoke to Daniel granting him wisdom to interpret the king's dream (Daniel 2:18-23)*
- *The Lord spoke to Paul (Acts 18:9)*
- *The Lord spoke to John in the revelation of Christ (Revelation 1)*

Question and Reflect

Although many things change over time, God's desire to communicate with man has never changed. God still speaks to us today because of His great love and faithfulness toward us.

According to John 16:7,13-16, how does God communicate, guide, and direct us today in New Testament times?

THE TOWER OF BABEL

Before Christ in the time of the Old Testament, God spoke through priests, prophets, and kings who then relayed God's word to the people. Today God speaks to us individually through His Word, the Holy Scripture, and through the Holy Spirit dwelling in all who believe in His Son. God has never been far from His people and today He is closer than ever as He dwells in us, seeking to guide and direct our way.

Today's technology is a direct result of accumulated information that has been recorded, built upon, and passed down to each successive generation. Our modern conveniences of today did not come from the mind of one or even a few inventors. They spring from each generation's knowledge added to the previous. As each generation adds to the one before, man continues to advance. Technology today is progressing at the fastest rate in history.

Question and Reflect

Read Genesis 11:1-9.

What did one universal language give man (vs. 6)?

___ Insight

___ Power

___ Wisdom

___ Humility

The communication between men had never been better. However, man's communication with God was at its worst. What did God do as a result?

Man spoke one language before God confused his speech at the Tower of Babel. Without any barriers, this universal language gave man great power and unity, prompting God to say:

*"If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this,
then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them."*

Genesis 11:6

God knew this power of unity among men without Him would lead to their destruction. Man's heart easily becomes prideful. True to man's nature, their goal was to build a tower. A sort of stairway to heaven which allowed them to control and dominate the people.

Read Genesis 9:18-19.

After the flood, what did God do with Noah's descendants?

After the flood God desired to repopulate the Earth so he scattered Noah's descendants over the Earth. Over time, men became aware of the power they had when they united as one. With that power they decided to build the tower to heaven and take control. The pride in their hearts led them to rebel and would eventually have led to self-destruction if God had not intervened by confusing their speech.

“Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall.”

Proverbs 16:18

The Tower of Babel is a prime example of the prideful hearts of men before a great fall. Never again in history has God allowed the Earth to have one universal language. Isn't it amazing how eagerly we learn from other people but how quickly we forget the lessons God has taught us? With the exception of Noah and his family, God destroyed all of mankind due to their wickedness through the great flood. In no time at all, man again turned from God seeking their own desires to the point where God had to supernaturally intervene to keep them from their own destruction. Biblical records clearly show that physical advancement without spiritual advancement is a sure path to destruction. As powerful and vital as communication is to man and his physical advancements, spiritual growth and development are also dependent on the power that only communication with God provides.

So why do so many Christians today fail to tap into this power that lives inside of us? Why do we so often fail to communicate with God? These are very good questions and ones we will address soon but let's first look at three key communication principles:

1. Good communication is required for any relationship to grow.
2. Good communication involves both talking and listening.
3. Close proximity does not ensure good communication.

GOOD COMMUNICATION IS REQUIRED FOR ANY RELATIONSHIP TO GROW

Webster's Dictionary defines the word "relationship" as a state of being related, interrelated, or connected. For example, two cousins are related or connected through a bloodline giving them the relationship or connection as cousins. However, this alone does not ensure a close, intimate, relationship. They must communicate with one another to achieve a close bond. The degree and effort they put into communication with one another will determine the closeness of their relationship.

The same is true between God and His children. Though you and I may be His children and saved through the blood of Christ, we cannot achieve a close relationship with Him without good, regular, and ongoing communication.

GOOD COMMUNICATION INVOLVES BOTH TALKING AND LISTENING

Talking and listening are like a two-way road. Both are vital keys to good communication. One lane is used to talk to the other person, the other used for listening. So often we mistake this two-way road for a one-way highway. We have all been guilty of speeding down this road, talking a mile a minute, failing to realize there is another person who wishes to speak and needs our attention.

Often the biggest reason for our jump to speak and hesitation to listen is simply pride. Can't most of our problems be traced back to pride? We would much rather share our opinions than have to listen to and consider the opinions of others. Proverbs 18:2

addresses this when it says,

“A fool finds no pleasure in understanding but delights in airing his own opinions.”

And often when we pray, we speed down the road in the same fashion. We beg, bargain, cry, and complain to God while rarely waiting to hear an answer. In our foolishness we list our requests and complaints as if God were a fast food drive-through. We quickly place our order and then pull up to the window expecting our answer. If our order isn't ready, or not what we expected, we drive off down the road still hungry and in need.

God has so much to say to us if we will take the time to listen to Him, the One who created us and knows us better than we know ourselves. He is our only source of wisdom and understanding; all we need to do is seek Him in prayer.

CLOSE PROXIMITY DOES NOT ENSURE GOOD COMMUNICATION

A husband and wife can live together for years under the same roof but not communicate effectively so that they know each other intimately. In fact, if good communication is lacking, they can be like complete strangers.

The same is true in our relationship with God. We often mistake going to church frequently for being close to Him. We can even teach Sunday school, help those in need, and be thought highly of by all who know us, and yet still never know God's heart. It's frightening to realize we can unknowingly settle for a distant relationship with God, or worse, settle for not knowing Him at all. Even those whom we admire and esteem as godly can fool themselves and others. The enemy is amazingly masterful in shifting our focus onto the things we do for God instead of the depth of our intimacy with Him.

CONCLUSION

As we close our first day's lesson, I hope you realize in a new way the important role communication plays in our physical and spiritual lives. It is absolutely vital for our growth and development.

Take time now to meet with God. Ask Him to reveal to you how He wants you to improve your communication with Him. List any new prayer needs He reveals to you and write down any answers to these prayers. Seek God. He is eagerly waiting to communicate with you!
