

JOYCE MEYER

#1 *New York Times* Bestselling Author

How To

Talk With

God

HOW TO
TALK
with
GOD

JOYCE
MEYER



New York • Nashville

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Introduction

Do you want to pray about something in your life, but you aren't sure how to do it? Or do you pray but wonder if God hears you? Do you believe your prayers are making a difference? When you finish praying, are you convinced that your prayers have accomplished something? Are you satisfied with your spiritual life, including your communication with God through prayer? Are you longing for a deeper, richer, more dynamic relationship with God through prayer?

Perhaps, as you read these questions, something inside of you says "Yes!" Over more than forty years of ministry, I have discovered that people really want to pray; they want to know that God hears their prayers and that their prayers are effective. People want to grow in their prayer lives and to see their prayers become more powerful as they pray for

others and for themselves. There is nothing we can do on earth that is more powerful than prayer.

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One of the most important, life-changing prayers any one person can ever speak is “Lord, teach me to pray.” It’s not just “Lord, teach me to *pray*,” but “Lord, teach *me* to pray.”

We need to learn how to pray as individuals with unique personalities, abilities, preferences, and gifts. God created each one of us specifically, and He wants an intimate, dynamic, personal relationship with us. Although certain principles of prayer apply to everyone, God leads each of us individually as we pray, and He wants to answer us in ways that are personal and meaningful to us. We make a mistake if we try to copy how someone else prays. I knew a woman who prayed from five to nine every morning, but when I tried that, I fell asleep. I had to find my rhythm in prayer, and so do you.

One of Jesus' disciples said to Him more than two thousand years ago, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1 AMP). Even though the disciples spent a great deal of up-close-and-personal time with Jesus, listening to Him, learning from Him, and watching Him work miracles, they still felt they needed Him to instruct them in prayer.

Years ago, I made that same request, and you can make it too. I said, "Lord, teach me to pray." God answered me in a powerful way and changed my spiritual life in wonderful ways. For example:

- I have moved from praying obligatory prayers or panic-based prayers to praying Spirit-filled, Spirit-led, faith-based prayers.
- I no longer focus primarily on prayers for my "outer life" (my circumstances, the activities I am involved in, the things that happen around me). I now pray for my inner life (the condition of my heart, my spiritual growth, my attitudes and motives). I also no longer pray merely for myself, but for many other people as well. As God has taught me to pray,

I have learned to pray to be strengthened internally and to ask Him to help me live out of a pure heart with right motives. God will take care of the externals. As I focus on Him, He will meet my needs.

- I used to strain and strive to manage five minutes of prayer a day. Now I enjoy it, and I actually need and want to begin my day with prayer. I pray throughout the day as the Holy Spirit brings people or situations to mind, finally ending my day communicating with God as I fall asleep. I like to pray my way through the day.
- I have moved from a sporadic, irregular prayer life to regular times of prayer that are disciplined without being legalistic.
- Where I once prayed to fulfill an obligation to God, I now realize that I absolutely cannot survive a day and be satisfied and content if I do not pray. I realize that prayer is a great privilege, not a duty.

Prayer is a great privilege, not a duty.

- I no longer approach God in fear, wondering if He will really hear me and send an answer to my prayers. I now approach Him boldly, as His Word teaches us to do in Hebrews 4:16, and with great joy and expectation.

I believe that if you will ask God to teach you to pray, too, you will also experience great changes in the way you pray, increased effectiveness in your prayers, tremendous satisfaction in your relationship with God, and a refreshing freedom and enjoyment in prayer.

I hope this book will serve as a “prayer primer” for people who may feel they do not know how to pray and as a refresher for those who may feel their spiritual life has become dry or stale. In the first part of the book, I’ll help you understand that the basis for an easy, effective, enjoyable prayer life is your personal relationship with God and that prayer is probably much easier than you may think. In the second part, we’ll look at several important habits of people who pray powerful prayers and several barriers to effective prayer. At the end of the book, I’ll offer some closing words of advice and

encouragement about how to stay strong in your prayer life.

I pray that regardless of your knowledge of prayer or your spiritual condition when you started, by the time you finish this book, you will be excited about prayer and feel equipped to pray with power, expecting God to answer.

God is the only one who can help you take the biblical principles you will learn in this book and cause them to spring to life so that prayer becomes exhilarating and effective for you. I am praying and believing that He will do that for you in an incredible, life-changing way. He knows exactly where you are on your spiritual journey, and He knows how to help you apply the teachings in the following pages in ways that will be just right for you, your personality, and the particular season you are in at this time in your life.

PART 1

Easy, Enjoyable, Effective Prayer

Chapter 1

You Can Enjoy Praying

I think most people would agree that effectiveness is important in prayer. We want our prayers to make a difference in some way. But have you ever considered prayer to be easy and enjoyable? I didn't see it this way for many years, but I have come to realize that prayer can be quite simple and still be powerful, and that I can enjoy doing it. And so can you.

Everything about our spiritual lives, including prayer, depends on our personal faith in God and our individual relationship with Him. We can enjoy that relationship because Jesus' death on the cross gives us free, unhindered access to our heavenly Father, and our faith makes it possible for us to have an intimate, dynamic relationship with Him. The

more we enjoy our relationship with God, the more we enjoy prayer.

Ephesians 3:12 says that in Christ “we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him [that is, our faith gives us sufficient courage to freely and openly approach God through Christ]” (AMP). This scripture is exciting to me because it teaches us that as ordinary human beings we have *free access* to God at *any time* through prayer. We can approach Him boldly without reserve, without fear, and with complete freedom. How awesome is that?

*The more we enjoy our relationship with God,
the more we enjoy prayer.*

We don't need to try to sound super spiritual when we pray. We can be ourselves and be honest with God concerning our thoughts and feelings. The writers of the Psalms were totally honest with God about their feelings. The prayers we read there were not always polished and eloquent. Especially in the Psalms of David, we see that at times he poured out raw emotion due to the agony he felt as a result of

his many enemies. Although he was brutally honest with God about how he felt, he always ended by telling God that he trusted Him and would wait on Him for His deliverance.

ASK JESUS TO TEACH YOU TO PRAY

Early in my prayer journey, I came across a wonderful little book that has helped millions of believers learn how to pray over the years. In this classic volume, titled *With Christ in the School of Prayer*, Andrew Murray (1828–1917) writes about asking God to teach us to pray: “None can teach like Jesus, none but Jesus; therefore we call on Him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray.’ A pupil needs a teacher, who knows his work, who has the gift of teaching, who in patience and love will descend to the pupil’s needs. Blessed be God! Jesus is all this and much more. . . Jesus loves to teach us how to pray.”¹ Don’t just *try* to pray; ask Jesus to *teach* you to pray.

Jesus not only loves to teach *us*—corporately, as believers—how to pray; He also loves to work with us as individuals. He wants to take each of us just the way we are, wherever we are on our spiritual journey, and help us discover and develop a style

of prayer that maximizes our personal relationship with Him. He wants prayer to be an easy, natural, life-giving way of communicating with Him as we share our hearts with Him and allow Him to share His heart with us. And He wants us to enjoy it.

Regardless of what some people may think, prayer is *so simple*. We'll look at this more in a later chapter, but for now let me just say that prayer is nothing more than talking with God. We speak to Him, and He speaks to us. God speaks to us in many ways. If you desire to learn more about *how* He speaks, I encourage you to read my book titled *How to Hear from God*.

God is far too creative to want every person on earth to interact with Him through prayer in exactly the same way. He is the one who designed us all differently and delights in our distinctiveness. There are principles of effective prayer that apply to all believers, but God leads each of us to pray as individuals. Just think of it: some people like to pray with music playing in the background; others like a quiet atmosphere. Some pray as they paint or draw; others like to make notes while they pray or write out their prayers. Some pray with their