



Communication Networks

In this age of communication, there are many kinds of networks—postal, radio, telephone, television, computer, and so on. Whatever we need to know seems to be available at the push of a button. Unfortunately, it is always possible to get the wrong address, number, channel—whatever. And even if you and I connect to the right information center, the information itself may be incorrect. Therefore, for the really important issues of life, we need ...

THE RIGHT CONNECTIONS

1. How do we connect with Heaven?

"His windows being open in his chamber, ... he kneeled ... three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime" (Daniel 6:10 KJV). Requesting anything from anyone except the king had been made a capital crime in the Medo-Persian realm, where Daniel was prime minister. But he refused to be disconnected from the omnipotent God.

2. What is prayer?

"When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven" (Luke 11:2). Prayer is talking to our Father in heaven.





3. Is prayer a luxury or a necessity?

Said Jesus, *“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing”* (John 15:5). To be connected with Christ is vital. Prayer is the secret power that keeps the flame of spiritual life glowing. In prayer we obtain strength to resist temptation and receive instruction and wisdom to master the difficulties of life, as well as comfort and relief in sorrow. Prayer, the “breath of the soul,” is our lifeline to heaven.

4. But why do we need to tell God anything? Doesn't He already know everything?

“I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you” (Luke 11:9). We do not pray to inform God; rather, we pray for several very important and practical reasons:

- a) We get to know God personally by the way He answers our prayers.
- b) Prayer is therapeutic. God never gets tired of our pouring our hearts out to Him, even when we tell Him the same things over and over. Meanwhile, He communicates with us through this lifeline and give us His wisdom.
- c) A very necessary part of therapy is learning to be honest with ourselves, especially because we realize that we *cannot* deceive God. Prayer doesn't bring God down to us; it lifts us up to and bonds us with Him.

5. Who is our greatest example in prayer?

“Now it came to pass in those days that [Jesus] went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God” (Luke 6:12). The Son of God spent much time conversing alone with His heavenly Father, especially when facing a critical situation. This was the secret of Christ's power to accomplish the awesome task of sacrificing Himself for the sinners. Whatever Jesus asked, He did so according to God's will.¹

6. What should we say to God?

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God” (Philippians 4:6). Whatever is in our hearts, whatever makes us joyful, whatever bothers us, we can share with

¹ Matthew 26:39.

Bible verses are taken from the New King James Version (NKJV) unless designated as the King James Version (KJV). The remaining Bible versions used are referred to by their full titles. All emphases and italics are ours.

Him. The depth of our experience with Him depends on our recognizing everything that comes to us as being from Him and for the best.

7. How often should we pray?

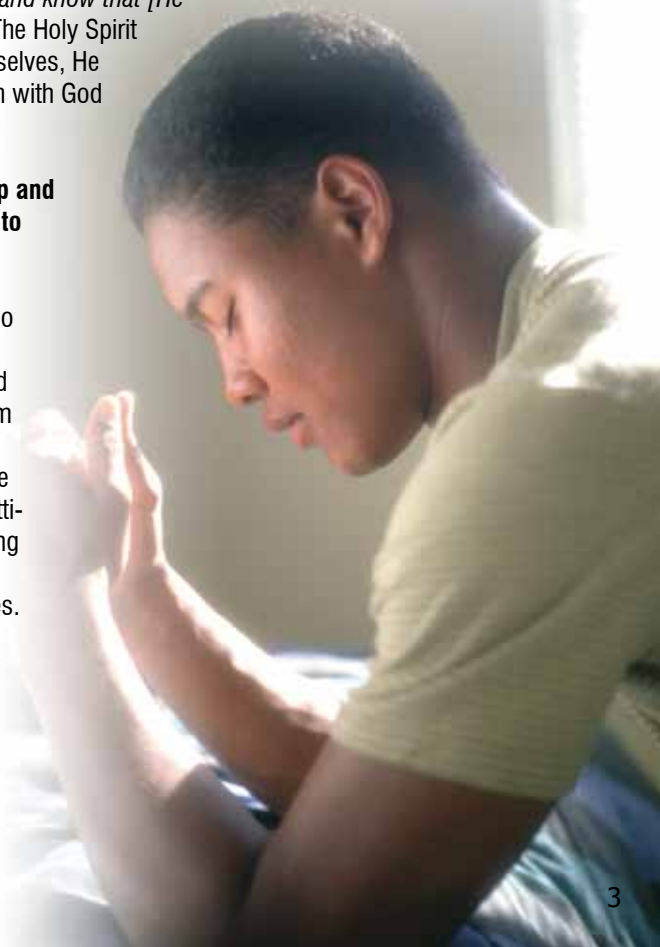
“Pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). It is our privilege to set aside two or three times a day, as Daniel did, for a “scheduled interview” with our heavenly Father. This may be combined with our time for daily Bible study. When God speaks to us in His Word, we can respond in prayer. We may also make special experiences by praying when there is a special need.²

8. Does Heaven try to connect with us?

God speaks to us in countless ways we are not always aware of—through nature, His Word, our consciences, our experiences, and other people. At times the Spirit will create in us a longing to connect with God. We may respond by finding a quiet place to kneel and pray to Him. We can say what is on our hearts, and the Spirit will make our prayer acceptable. *“We do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us . . . according to the will of God”* (Romans 8:26-27). Or, if we have nothing to say, we can just *“be still, and know that [He is] God”* (Psalm 46:10). The Holy Spirit is there. If we humble ourselves, He will give us the connection with God we long for.

9. What if you or I need help and there is no time or place to kneel?

“Enoch walked with God” (Genesis 5:24). Those who walk with God are always aware of His presence and will communicate with Him in their thoughts as things come up all throughout the day. This is actually an “attitude of prayer”—maintaining an open channel to the heavenly throne at all times.



² Daniel 2:12-19.

10. Is there something we can do to make our prayers more acceptable?

“Turn at My reproof; surely I will pour out My Spirit on you; I will make My words known to you” (Proverbs 1:23). The Spirit of God lives within those who obey Him.³ He deepens our understanding and strengthens our relationship with God, who answers our prayers *“exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think”* (Ephesians 3:20). Jesus said, *“If you ask anything in My name, I will do it”* (John 14:14). To ask in His name presupposes that we ask according to His will.⁴

11. How does God answer prayer?

He answers in a variety of ways, depending on what we ask and the circumstances. Sometimes He answers by giving insight, especially when we study His Word; sometimes He answers through other people; and sometimes He answers by giving us an experience. He may answer immediately, He may delay the answer, or He may deny our request, as he did Paul’s (see question 12). Whatever He does, there will come a day when we will recognize that He did what was for our ultimate best.⁵

12. Will God always give us what we ask for?

“And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me.... Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in [your] weakness’” (2 Corinthians 12:7-9). Paul was blinded by the presence of Christ at his conversion; but while he got some of his sight back, he remained blind enough to need help.⁶ God had a great work for Paul to do, and pride would have ruined him. Therefore, God decided that it was in Paul’s best interest for him to stay partially blind and dependent on Him. Like Paul, we can trust God when He doesn’t give us what we ask for.

13. Is the Holy Spirit our only connection with Heaven?

Jacob *“dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it”* (Genesis 28:12). Jacob deceived his father, Isaac, into giving Jacob the birthright of his brother, Esau. As a result, Jacob fled from his brother’s wrath. Tired, sad, and lonely, Jacob fell asleep in the wilderness. Then God showed him in a dream that Heaven is always near.

14. Just who are the angels?

“For You have made [man] a little lower than the angels.” “Bless the Lord, you His angels, who excel in strength, who do His word.... Bless the Lord, all you His hosts,... who do His pleasure” (Psalms 8:5; 103:20-21). They are strong, responsible, highly intelligent beings whose greatest joy is to do God’s bidding.

³ Acts 5:32.

⁴ 1 John 5:14-15.

⁵ Matthew 10:19; Acts 8:26-35; chapter 10; Isaiah 65:24; Daniel 9:20-23; Luke 18:1-8; Romans 8:28.

⁶ Acts 9:1-18; Galatians 4:15. Paul dictated all his letters except the short epistle to Philemon. That one Paul wrote with his own hand (Philemon 19).

15. What special assignment has God given the heavenly angels?

“Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?” Said Jesus: *“Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven.”* *“The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear [respect] Him, and delivers them”* (Hebrews 1:14; Matthew 18:10; Psalm 34:7). Picture this reality: Angels are always watching and guarding members of the human family!

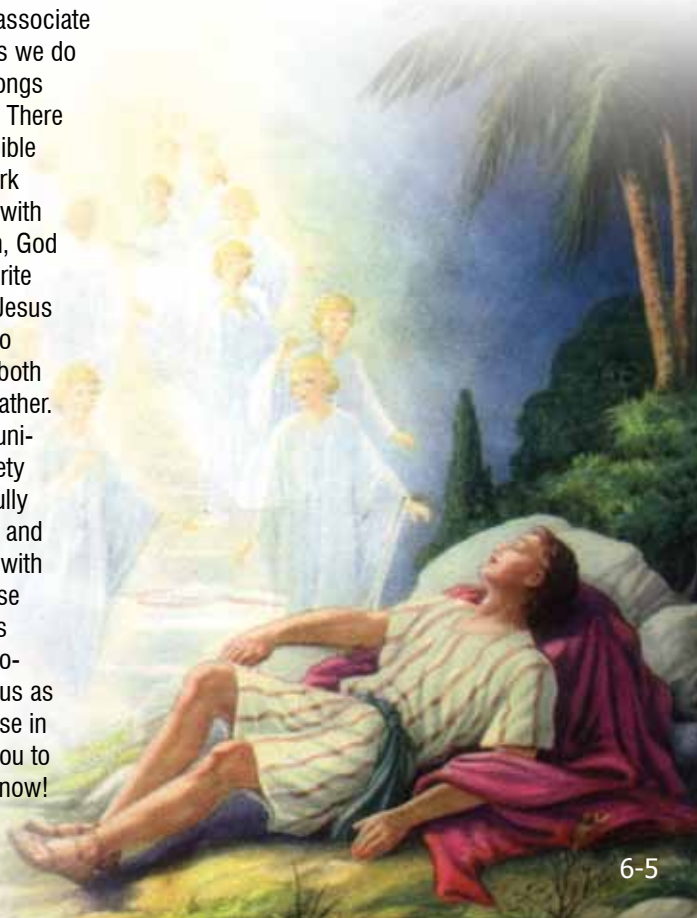
16. Do holy angels care about us, or do they serve us just because they are commanded to?

“There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents” (Luke 15:10). Like their Master, angels care deeply for sinners.

17. Did Christ need the help of the holy angels while He was on earth?

Yes, in His humanity, Christ was like one of us. *“Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him”* (Matthew 4:11). When Jesus was tested to the limits of His endurance, angels came and strengthened Him (Luke 22:41-43).

Although God cannot associate with sinful humanity as we do with one another, He longs to be in touch with us. There is a huge, mostly invisible communication network that connects Heaven with all creation. In addition, God inspired prophets to write down His messages. Jesus came in human form to make us familiar with both Himself and God the Father. The Holy Spirit communicates with us in a variety of ways. Angels faithfully travel between heaven and earth. We may confer with the Ruler of the universe anytime! He never puts anyone on hold! God focuses on each one of us as if there were no one else in the world. He invites you to make that connection now!



What about ...

YOUR CONNECTION WITH HEAVEN?

- **Why is watching television and videos so exciting, while prayer seems so uninteresting?**

To visualize eternal realities, we must exercise our imaginations; this will probably seem difficult if we are used to letting television or other media do all the imagining for us. Also, the excitement various media offer is addicting, making healthful pleasures seem boring. Watching sin, even in a story with a good moral, harms our characters and souls. *“He ... who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed, and shuts his eyes from seeing evil: he will dwell on high”* (Isaiah 33:15-16). The great enemy tries to divert our attention and occupy our minds with the things of this world so that God’s realities cease to attract us.⁷

- **Does God answer the prayers of evil people?**

All people are sinners. But it would harm our souls for Him to bless us when we sin willfully. *“If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear”* (Psalm 66:18). Also, *“one who turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be an abomination”* (Proverbs 28:9). But when we plead for His help to overcome sin, we may *“come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need”* (Hebrews 4:16).

For a “concise and precise view of the major world events” described in a dream twenty-six hundred years ago, be sure to look into Lesson 7, “History in a Nutshell.”

⁷ 1 John 2:15-17.



REVIEW QUESTIONS

Please answer the following questions—and send them back so we can help you with any misunderstandings. Note that multiple-choice questions may have more than one correct answer. *Circle the letters of all correct answers.*

1. Connection with God is vital, because ...

- a) we need correct information for the important issues of life.
- b) without Christ we can do nothing.
- c) God is offended if we don't pray.

2. Prayer is ...

- a) God's method of obtaining important information.
- b) "the breath of the soul."
- c) talking with our heavenly Father.

3. Prayer helps us for these reasons:

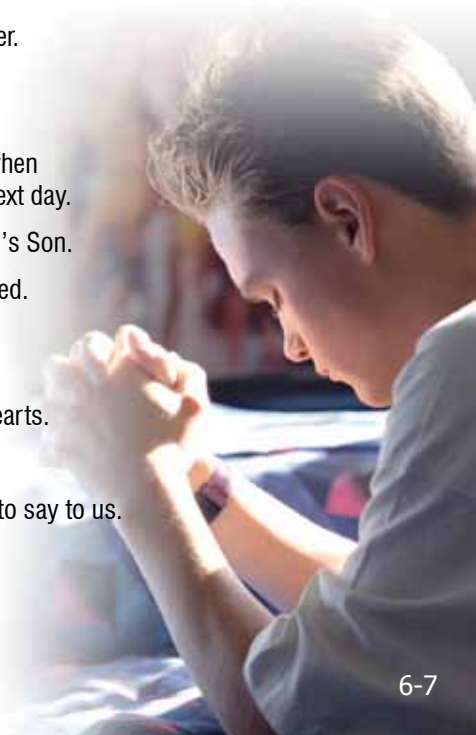
- a) Through it we get to know God personally and bond with Him.
- b) It's therapeutic, especially because we realize that we *cannot* deceive God.
- c) God is flattered, and He will treat us better.

4. Jesus ...

- a) sometimes prayed all night, especially when He had something important to do the next day.
- b) didn't need to pray because He was God's Son.
- c) received help from angels when He prayed.

5. When we pray, we ...

- a) can honestly tell God all that is on our hearts.
- b) need to be careful not to upset God.
- c) can be quiet and listen to what God has to say to us.



6. The Holy Spirit ...

- a) gives us a longing to connect with God.
- b) waits for us to develop a longing for God.
- c) makes our prayers acceptable to God.

7. For our prayers to be effective, we need to ...

- a) accept God's corrections and obey Him.
- b) pray according to His will.
- c) remind Him to give us what we ask for.

8. Angels are ...

- a) independent agents who work and act as they please.
- b) strong, responsible, intelligent beings, who gladly do God's bidding.
- c) beings with no thoughts or minds of their own.
- d) deeply concerned about the fate of sinners.

9. "Although God cannot associate with _____ humanity as we do with one another, He _____ to be in touch with us."

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