

# Relating to God Through Scripture

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[ 0 : 00 ] Everybody in my family is here, and we've had something going through the house for the last week and a half or so. It's finally hit everybody except for me and Jamie. She's been helping take care of everybody, but that's why they're not here.

I think at this point everybody's kind of on the other side of it, but still it's been a rough week.

Well, go ahead and open up your Bibles to, we're going to look, start in Psalm 27 today. Psalm 27.

You know, speaking of family, you know, kids are the best. But, especially when they're young, and especially when they start talking.

Has anybody ever had one of those kids that just talks incessantly? It's a little chatterbox. I actually love it. Right now we have a four-year-old, and when he's around people he doesn't know, he's pretty shy.

[ 1 : 14 ] But when he's around people that he knows, or especially his family, he is just talking a mile a minute. He's talking about his favorite book or cartoon show or his favorite food.

Or sometimes he talks about his non-favorite foods. Or his broken cookie that is so devastating. The toys that he played with maybe at a friend's house.

Or his new Spider-Man socks that he just got for Christmas. He's constantly asking questions. Daddy, how come you have to go to work? That one's kind of hard to explain.

Daddy, can bad guys get into the house? Daddy, do I have to eat my vegetables? And then there are just constant requests.

Constant requests. Daddy, can you hold me? Daddy, can we play a game? Daddy, can I have some ice cream? Can we go outside? Can you read me a book? And then my favorite, when I go into the pantry to sneak out a snack, and he says, Daddy, what are you eating?

[ 2 : 21 ] Can I have some? And you know, sometimes it's just exhausting. All the questions and all of the chatter. But you know what? It is the best kind of exhausting in the world.

And I wouldn't trade it for anything. And I certainly wouldn't trade it for just silence. Parents love to hear from their kids. And you know what?

What we're going to be talking about today is that God loves to hear from his kids, too. We've been doing a series here on building a relationship with God.

And last week, or was it last week, two weeks ago, whenever it was, we talked about the Scripture, relating to God through Scripture, where we get to have God talk to us.

The Scriptures is the primary way that God communicates with us. And that's part of us building a relationship with God, is hearing from Him.

[ 3 : 25 ] You know, if a relationship just has one-way communication, that's not really much of a relationship, is it? That's just more like a monologue or a lecture.

You know, and I like a good lecture, but a lecture is not a relationship. It's not, relationships are so much better. And you know what? God wants to know us.

God wants to know you. And prayer is the means that we use to share our lives with God. If you're in Psalm 27, I just want to look at one verse.

Psalm 27 and verse 8. And it says this, We see here that God is speaking, and He's providing an invitation.

An invitation to seek Him. He's saying, Come, talk to me. I want to hear from you. And what's David's response in this psalm?

[ 4 : 45 ] Your face, Lord, I will seek. I'm going, I've received the invitation, and I'm going to accept the invitation. And seek after you.

Seek after your face. You know, there are many praying people in the world. It's not just Christians, right? Sometimes even atheists pray, especially if they get into a lot of trouble.

One of the things, one of those phrases, right? There are no atheists in foxholes. But for many people, they pray to God without really knowing who He is.

And not really feeling in any kind of connection with God. A lot of times it's prayer that's just in desperation, or just seeing maybe if this works.

But as Christians, as believers in Christ, we have a special connection with God. A special confidence that we can have in coming to Him. And what is the basis for that?

[ 5 : 50 ] On what basis, on what foundation, do we come to God and talk to Him? Turn to Romans chapter 8. Romans chapter 8.

In Romans chapter 8, it speaks of the spirit that we have from God. See if I can find it.

We'll start at verse 15. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, Abba, Father.

The spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. When someone becomes a Christian by they put their faith in Jesus Christ, there is a transaction that takes place.

But one of the primary things is a relational change from becoming an enemy of God to becoming a child of God.

[ 7 : 13 ] And here it mentions a process of adoption in which we are adopted into God's family. And when we are adopted into a family, a relationship change with your adopted parents.

Instead of being strangers or maybe just acquaintances, they become mother and father. And so as adopted children of God, as Christians, as believers, it says here, it uses this phrase, by whom we cry out, what?

Abba, Father. And as many of you know, that word Abba is actually an Aramaic word. That's the primary language that the Jews spoke at this time that the Bible was written.

But it's not just a word that means father. It's actually a word that children would use to address their father. A very informal way of talking to a parent.

It's not religious language in any kind of way. It's actually very intimate and very personal. Today, in English, we would use the word dad or even daddy or papa, something like that.

[ 8 : 30 ] So as Christians, God has given us a right, a privilege to come to him as a child would a father. And that's the way that God wants us to come to him.

Not as a slave, not as a servant who's just trying to get an audience with a king, but as a child who hops on to his father's lap and says, Daddy, I want to tell you about my life or I have a request or I have a question.

Having this perspective and this foundation, understanding our relationship with God is so important to how we pray. Turn to Hebrews.

This is actually our memory verse for this month. Hebrews chapter 4, 16. So if any of you are on top of it, maybe you already have this one memorized.

Hebrews 4, 16 says this, Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

[ 9 : 52 ] Boldly. As Christians, we can come with confidence and boldness to the throne of grace. Now typically, as you see throughout history, when you have a throne and a king on a throne, how do people usually come?

Well, with some amount of fear and trepidation and timidity. I think about the story of Queen Esther, right? And that's a big part of the story is she was going to approach the king.

Even as his wife, one of his wives, as the queen, there was some amount of fear and trepidation with just approaching the king. God is the king of all kings.

But as his children, he has given us the privilege of coming to him at any time with any request or anything to talk to him, to come to him as our daddy.

with that as a foundation, our access, the privileges that we have as Christians to talk to the Lord and communicate with him.

[ 11 : 03 ] I want to talk a little bit about, well, what are some of the mechanics of how we ought to pray and maybe some of the things how we ought not to pray.

And Jesus actually spent some time when he was here on the earth in the gospels. He taught his disciples how to pray. Let's go ahead and turn to Matthew chapter 6.

We're going to look at several verses here in Matthew chapter 6. We'll start with verse 5.

Matthew 6 verse 5. So he gives, by the way, and we're just going to look at two things. He gives two kind of warnings regarding ways that people should not pray, not come to God.

Matthew 6 verse 5, And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of streets that they may be seen by men.

[ 12 : 15 ] assuredly, I say to you that they have their reward. This is a warning about a prayer for the sake of other people, where instead of talking to God and building a relationship with God, we're doing it to be seen by men.

We're thinking more about how others are perceiving us than about our communication with God. God. And some people might think as they read this, well, you should never really pray in public, and that's not true.

In fact, there are many examples in the Bible. Even Jesus himself prayed openly in public for his disciples or others to hear, and that is good. But what is the motivation in doing that?

And also just being careful. Many of us have opportunities to pray in public, whether it's just among your family where your children are listening, or maybe from the podium like this, and we can think maybe too much about, well, everybody's listening to what I have to say, and I've got to make sure that I get all the words right.

And I don't think we should be so concerned about what other people think. And so when we talk to God, we can talk to him in a way not to be seen of men, not thinking about how men are perceiving us, but just coming to God to communicate with him, having that audience of one, thinking mostly of that audience of one that we have with the Lord.

[ 13 : 53 ] On down to verse seven here in Matthew chapter six, it continues on, and when you pray, he says, do not use vain repetition as the heathen do, for they think that they will be heard of their many words.

He's talking about the way that the pagan world would pray. And the pagan world, their prayers were very ritualistic, lots of mantras and saying things over and over and over again.

We have the same thing today. I think about the Hindus, they have their mantras that they say, but it's actually not even just among the religions outside of Christianity.

I think many of you have come from the Catholic world and our Catholic friends teach praying of the rosary, where you rub beads and you just repeat the same words over and over again.

And they actually pray to the wrong person, they pray to Mary, of all things. Mary's not going to be able to help them, she's not listening by the way, she's busy with other things. At least the scriptures don't indicate at all that those who are with the Lord are listening or receive our prayers.

[15:13] But then even the, you know, you've got the Hail Marys and the Our Fathers, but they're just these repetitions that we repeat over and over and over again.

Kind of like a, it just becomes a ritual, like an incantation. It's not really building a relationship. Can you just imagine for a moment you have a husband and wife, and that's an intimate relationship.

And the husband, the only thing he ever says to his wife is he wakes up in the morning and he says, Dear wife, you are beautiful. Thank you for dinner. Would you please help me at work tomorrow?

Amen. And that's the only thing he ever says, and he just says it over and over again. And you know what, there's value in those words, right? They mean something, but it's just this same thing over and over again, every single day.

that's what I think vain repetition sounds like to God. He wants a relationship with us. He doesn't want just a recording.

[16:27] So Jesus continues on and he teaches how one ought to pray. And so this passage we'll read verse, chapter, excuse me, Matthew 6, 9 through 13.

Well, it says this, in this manner, therefore, pray, our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. We actually have a name for this. We call this the Lord's Prayer. Many of us in the Christian world have memorized this.

And you know, I was critical of some of the Catholic prayers out there, which by the way, those aren't the only prayers. Now, for some Catholics, I think that is the only time that they pray. But I've actually seen a similar kind of thing even among non-Catholics, among evangelicals.

[17:38] Well, they'll take this teaching of the Lord's Prayer, and this, they use it in a similar way. They just repeat this prayer over and over again.

And they just quote right from the scriptures exactly what Jesus said here. And there's nothing, I've been in groups, right, where you have maybe a mixed group of all kinds of denominations and we want to pray together, so everybody just prays the Lord's Prayer together.

I think that that's fine, but that should not be the whole or entirety of your prayer life by any means. But notice what he says when he teaches this prayer.

He doesn't say, this is exactly how you ought to pray. What does it say? In my New King James, it says here, this is the manner in which you ought to pray. He's giving a template, not a script in which we should just kind of read or memorize.

It's a model, it's a pattern. just look real quickly at what the prayer teaches. He says, our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Start with talking to who?

[ 18:44 ] Your Father. Right? And giving him praise, adoration, telling him how amazing he is. The next thing, your kingdom come, your will be done.

That's where we humble ourselves and we acknowledge his authority and we want his will to be done on the earth. Not ours, but his. Give us this day our daily bread.

This is where Jesus is teaching, you know what? You can come to God with your material needs. Needs for food and clothing and health.

And he goes on, forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And that's where there's a request for not material needs but spiritual needs. We need forgiveness.

And then finally, deliver us from the evil one. Again, another request for God to help us in specifically a spiritual way to provide us protection from evil, from sin.

[ 19:52 ] Sometimes it's protection from the temptation in our own hearts. So this is just a template for a conversation. We don't want to use the template and create just a script that we repeat over and over again.

But it does teach us in general the kinds of things that we can come to God with. There's a what do you call it? What do you call it when you have an acrostic?

An acrostic. And if you're taking notes by the way, you can write this down. There's an acrostic called Acts, which teaches the kinds of things that we can talk to God about or should talk to God about.

And so let me just share this real quick. This is something that I've gotten from elsewhere. This isn't my own invention or creativity. But an acrostic helps us kind of remember, especially if you're kind of a new Christian or a young Christian Christian and you don't have a lot of experience with prayer, usually what's the most common things people come to God with?

I need this right now. Usually it's in an urgent situation and that's the only time they ever talk to the Lord. But if you write Acts on your paper, A-C-T-S, down vertically, A stands for adoration.

[ 21:16 ] Adoration. When we come to God, we can just tell him that we love him, basically. The letter C is confession. We can come to God and just be honest about our failures and our sins and our requests for him to help us with those failures.

T is thanksgiving. We should take the opportunity to thank God for all the things that he's done for us. And then lastly is the letter S and that's for supplication.

It's like not a word that we use a lot today but it just means a request, supplication. You're requesting things from God. And by the way, that is perfectly legitimate to ask things from God.

Jesus himself in teaching in that Lord's Prayer teaches that we can ask not only for spiritual things but also even for help with material things.

And so this is a nice little framework, especially if you're a new Christian or a young Christian, to remember the ways in which we can talk to God.

[ 22:26 ] It's so easy just to only come and talk to the Lord when we have needs. But these other things, adoration and confession and thanksgiving, are such an important part of really building a relationship.

relationship. You know, I think about it's not even that these things are unique to our relationship with God or praying to God. These are things that are part of any human relationship, aren't they?

The adoration, should you tell your husband or wife I love you on a regular basis? Yes, absolutely. Should you praise them for things that they've done?

should you confess your sins to people and tell them about your failures or your struggles? Absolutely. You can say, I'm sorry for what I said to you this morning.

Thanksgiving, you can tell your wife, thank you for ironing my shirt last night. Or a wife can tell her husband, thank you for taking care of me while I was sick.

[ 23 : 36 ] And then, even in our human relationships, right, we come to each other with our needs, our requests. Hey, could you help out with the dishes? Or a child to parents for Christmas, could you buy me a BB gun?

By the way, I asked for a BB gun when I was a kid, and I never got one. But this year, my dad got me a BB gun.

But listen, if in any relationship, you only ever come to someone to talk to them when you have a need, when you have a request, is that a healthy relationship?

It's not, is it? One of the things I'm so grateful for, the Bible's a big book, you know, and there's lots of teachings in here, and then a lot of narrative, just stories, just accounts.

But one of the things we have in the Bible is there are a lot of prayers. A lot of prayers that we can take note of, that we can emulate. Now, sometimes there are prayers in the Bible that are actually not legitimate.

[ 24 : 54 ] They're ways that we should not pray. But, one of the great books full of prayers is actually the book of Psalms, which are actually songs. But these songs, many of them, are prayers.

And we can, I think, take these as examples. I'm just going to quote a few here. And I'm going to kind of categorize them. So we talked about adoration.

Adoration in our prayer. Psalm 103 says this, We can just bless the Lord at any time.

Psalm 116 says this, I love the Lord because he has heard my voice and my supplication. You can just tell the Lord at any time, I love you.

You can praise God for all of his works at any time of day. Morning, noon, or night. Confession, that letter C, confession.

[ 25 : 59 ] I think about Psalm 51, which is that psalm in which, I almost said Paul, David pours out his heart to the Lord because of the sin of adultery and then murder regarding Bathsheba. His adultery with Bathsheba. And I'll just quote the first few verses of that psalm. He says this, have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving kindness, according to the multitude of your tender mercies.

Blot out my transgressions, wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgression, and my sin is always before me. Against you and you only have I sinned, and done this evil in your sight, that you may be found just when you speak, and blameless when you judge.

Now, I think we do also have to be careful when it comes to the psalms, because the psalms are written in an old covenant context. And the people of Israel at this time, their relationship with the Lord was actually somewhat conditional.

They had to do certain things in order to be blessed by God, and also even to receive forgiveness. There was a real risk that they would be condemned if they didn't thoroughly confess all of their sins.

[ 27 : 21 ] For us, in the body of Christ today, living under the grace of God, the Bible actually teaches that all of our sins have already been done away with, past, present, and future. But does that mean that we should never talk to God about our sins or confess them? Or tell God that we're sorry for what we've done? Or ask him for his help in overcoming temptation?

We definitely should. Thanksgiving is the next one. Psalm 105 verse 1 says this, Oh, give thanks to the Lord, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people.

A couple chapters later, Psalm 107 verse 1, Oh, give thanks to the Lord for he is good, for his mercy endures forever. Are you thankful that God is good?

He should be. We don't have a malevolent God, a God who's looking to just be mean to everybody, a malevolent God like the gods of the Greeks and Romans I think of.

[ 28 : 32 ] We have a God who is good and we can just thank him for his goodness, his mercy, his love. And then the last one, supplication. We have so many of those throughout the scriptures.

I wanted to actually categorize these a little bit further into when we pray and ask God for things, we can ask them things for ourself, but should you only ask for things for yourself?

No, we should also ask God, give him a request regarding others too. So 1 Kings 3, 9, this is the account of Solomon when God told Solomon, give me a request, what do you ask for?

I'm going to give you whatever you want. You remember what Solomon said? He said, give your servant an understanding heart to judge your people. He was asking God for something for himself but something that would help other people.

And any of us can do that anytime. Ask God, God I need wisdom, I'm such an idiot so many times. Would you help me to be wise, wise in raising my family, wise in my work, wise in the leadership positions that I hold, wise in my finances?

[ 29 : 47 ] And God will answer those prayers. And then we can pray on behalf of others. I have an example here from Paul praying for his own brethren.

In Romans 10 he says this, brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God, for the Israelites is that they may be saved. He was praying for his own people, the Jews, that they would come to Christ.

We can do the same thing. And then examples of material needs. The Lord already mentioned in the Lord's prayer, give us this day our daily bread.

Another passage in the book of 3 John, verse 2, John says this to the people he's writing to, beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health just as your soul prospers.

Just as God has prospered you spiritually, I pray that you would also prosper physically, financially, and in your health. And then also praying for spiritual needs.

[ 30 : 49 ] Lead us not into temptation, Jesus said, but deliver us from the evil ones. That's part of the template. And going back to Psalm 51, as part of David's confession, he follows up with this.

He says, create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. He's asking God to work on his behalf, to change his heart, to be clean.

But there's actually, I think, something missing from this ACTS acronym. We have adoration, we have confession, we have thanksgiving, we have supplication, or requests.

And again, I think this is totally helpful. I don't think we should, throughout our whole lives, have that list, right, of four things by our nightstand, and we just kind of go through them.

But maybe we should start out our prayer life that way. So that we can just remember what we can talk to God about and what we should talk to him about. Until they become habits, regular habits in our life.

[ 32 : 04 ] But here's one thing I think that's missing from these four things. And that's just sharing your life with the Lord. Just sharing what's going on in your life with him.

And isn't that what we do as human beings with one another? We share our lives with one another? how we're doing when things are going well and when things are going bad. The argument I had with somebody at work.

The stresses that I'm under. The joys that I experienced last week on my trip. We can do the same thing with the Lord. We just talk.

Share how we're feeling. And sometimes just processing your life. Have you ever done that? Especially with a spouse or a close friend. You just process your life with somebody who's right there, who can listen.

Sometimes they just listen, sometimes they talk back. But you know that that is how our prayer life can and should be. Scripture actually points us to this.

[ 33 : 15 ] We see an example from David. Again, back to the book of Psalms. Psalm chapter 6. This is where David is experiencing a lot of persecution from his enemies.

And his life is on the line. He's going through an extremely challenging time. And he says this in Psalm 6 verse 6.

In him talking to the Lord. He says, I am weary with my groaning. all night I make my bed swim. I drench my couch with my tears.

My eyes waste away because of grief. It grows old because of all of my enemies. things. And here is David just talking to the Lord about his problems.

Do you think God is tired of hearing about his problems? Going back to the illustration of the child and their father. Does the father, a good father anyway, get tired of hearing about their daughter or son's problems or needs?

[ 34 : 24 ] here's David. He's exhausted. He indicates that he's been crying so much that his bed is just completely soaked in tears and his eyes are swollen from weeping.

And he brings his needs, his emotions, his life to God. And he doesn't sanitize it in like religious language. He doesn't repeat some kind of mantra to the Lord.

He's just talking to him, just expressing his life, his emotions, how he's feeling, how things are going. It's raw, it's messy, it's gut wrenching. But he's talking to the Lord.

And the Lord welcomes it. And just like, you know, for some people, sometimes we're not able to handle that kind of unload, right? But the Lord, you know what?

He can handle it. In fact, he invites it. In fact, there are many places in Scripture where the word explicitly tells us that God invites us to share our life and our cares and our joys with him.

[ 35 : 37 ] 1 Peter 5, 7 says, casting all of your cares upon him because he cares for you. At any point, at any time of day, you can just talk to the Lord and cast your cares on him, tell him all about how things are going.

The good, the bad, the ugly. And not even just the spiritual stuff, the material things. All of it because he cares for you, it says.

Psalm 62, 8 says this, trust in him at all times, you people. Pour out your heart before him. God is a refuge for us.

Pour out your heart. This isn't something that's measured or careful. It's just letting it all out. Telling him what's going on in our lives.

Psalm 34, 4 says this, I sought the Lord and he heard me and delivered me from all my fears. They looked to him and were radiant and their faces were not ashamed.

[ 36 : 38 ] This poor man cried out and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles. And again, you know, we know that God doesn't save us from all of the physical things going on in our lives.

But ultimately, right, we are in the Lord's hands. Our eternal lives are in his hands and he will ultimately take care of us and comfort us regardless of what we're going through.

James says this in James 5, 13, Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Just talk to the Lord. Is anyone cheerful?

Let him sing songs, which is a way of praying, right? Just a sing-songy way. Pray to the Lord. So whether we're suffering or we're rejoicing, regardless of what it is, it's an opportunity to take it to the Lord.

going back to the husband and wife illustration, can you imagine a wife? And she's beyond just that script that we talked about before.

[ 37 : 55 ] She's doing more than just that script each and every day. But still, she just kind of sticks to those four points, right? She makes requests, hey, honey, can you pick up the milk or fix the sink?

Can you help out with the kids? And she even says thank you, right, when he does something good for her. And she praises him, right, for doing a good job, good job, honey, on whatever it might be.

And she might even confess if there's something that she's struggling with. But if she never shares her life, her emotions, how she's feeling, what her dreams are for the future, what she wants to get out of life, her relationships with other people, if she never does any of those things, is that a healthy relationship?

relationship? I don't think so. I think a husband is going to want to hear about how her day went. If she was hurt by something, he wants to hear about it so he can process it with her.

When she's afraid, he wants to hear about it. He wants her to share her life with him. that's what God wants from us. He doesn't want just transaction, just to check a box, I prayed today, so now I'm a good Christian.

[ 39 : 30 ] He wants a relationship with you and me. He wants to hear about your life. He wants to hear about the promotion that you got, or about the diagnosis that's really scary, or the temptations that you're fighting, or you know what, just the sunset that you saw this morning that took your breath away.

He wants to hear your thoughts on how beautiful his creation is. Or maybe it's the argument that you had with your husband or your wife that you haven't figured out yet.

Or about your dreams for the future, for you and your family. He wants to hear all of it. And after all, hasn't God done this for us?

Hasn't he shared all of his life with us? As we open up the scriptures, God has shared everything. His past, his history, the great exploits that he's done, his dreams and his hopes and plans for the future he shares with us.

He shares his frustrations throughout history with mankind. He's even shared his agony and sorrow and pain.

[ 40 : 55 ] And he shared his rejoicing and the things that he delights in. He shares all those things with us through the scriptures. And shouldn't we do the same?

And that's a relationship. It's having a relationship with God. Now, it doesn't mean that it's easy. Prayer is not easy. In fact, of all the things, I'm good with the Bible.

I love the scriptures. I open up the Bible basically every day because I just love it so much. But prayer, for me, has always been just a real struggle building those habits and that relationship with the Lord.

God's invisible. And as we've talked about before, it's hard because, well, God's invisible. It's easy to have a conversation around the water cooler when somebody's standing right there and you can look them in the eyes.

It's actually a challenge with God. And the Bible actually acknowledges that challenge. Not only that, but we have a life full of responsibilities and things going on and taking the time to just talk to the Lord isn't always top of mind.

[ 42:05 ] but we can maybe put some practices in place that can help us to develop a healthy prayer life where we change that.

A few tips, a few tips here, okay, that I'd like to share. One, I think it is healthy to schedule at least one time a day of private prayer where you just talk to the Lord.

Whatever fits, whatever fits, whether it's in the morning or in the evening or lunchtime, whatever, is, maybe on your drive to work, schedule that time. It doesn't have to be an hour, it doesn't have to be a half hour, it can just be five minutes where you just talk to the Lord.

The other thing too is I think it would be good to actually, especially if you have a family, to schedule one time of day where you're praying together. For many people I think probably the best opportunity is at the dinner table.

You know at the dinner table a lot of people pray, Christians will pray, we usually say thank you for the food or bless the food or whatever, but you can maybe expand that where you have an opportunity as a family, led by the husband, sometimes you can ask the kids to pray, mom can pray, whatever.

[ 43:13 ] Everybody can go around, everybody can take turns if you'd like, but just to, as a family, pray together in a public way because that's encouraging to everyone.

It's instructive, especially to kids, on how to have a relationship with the Lord. But talk to the Lord about what went on that day or what you're thankful for or why you love him.

The other thing is, I think I see a tendency for a lot of people, well I pray but I always pray just kind of in my mind or kind of in my heart. And by the way, the Bible indicates that God totally hears and listens to those prayers.

He knows what's in your heart, he knows what's in your mind. Jesus called out people for what was in their mind that they didn't say out loud. God knows when we pray that way. And those are legitimate prayers by the way.

But I think it can be a bad habit to only pray in our hearts. God gave us a voice for a reason. And we see throughout scripture, the Psalms, these are things that are being said out loud.

[ 44:19 ] I think there's just something about voicing our communication with God out loud that is just different. God is right there that God is right there with you all the time.

But actually, you know what? We don't have to pretend, do we? Does the Bible say that God is way up there and that one day we'll be with him?

No, the Bible says that God is right here. He actually lives in us through the person of the Holy Spirit. And we can talk to him at any time as a child to a father.

So when something happens, talk to him about it. Just like you might text a friend and mention something that happened in your day or maybe chat with your husband or wife, not formal prayers about the divinity and the great deity.

We're just talking to our father, just having a conversation. When you wake up in the morning, just try this. When you wake up first thing, just say, Lord, I love you. It doesn't have to be anything beyond that.

[ 45:43 ] Just Lord, I love you. In the middle of the day, you can say, Father, I love this sunshine. Thank you for the sunshine. when you're going to bed at night, maybe the rain is coming down on the roof and you can just say, Lord, thank you for the rain.

Lord, I'm excited for my new job or Lord, today was just really hard and tell him about it. That's what prayer is. It's building a relationship with God.

We get to know him through his word and we get to share our lives with him. through prayer. Let's finish up by talking to the Lord this morning.

Father, it is, and the scriptures acknowledge this and I acknowledge this, there is a challenge, a friction, a frustration in trying to build a relationship with an invisible God, a God that we can't see.

We're looking forward to the day in which we will see you with our eyes and we'll stand and our flesh will see Jesus himself, God the Son, standing in front of us.

[ 47 : 02 ] And it will be different and it will be actually better. But today you want to build a relationship with us today and help us to pursue that.

You gave us the invitation to come and seek you. Help us each and every day to take that invitation and to pursue you to share our lives with you, our needs, our wants, our desires, our gratitude, our love, our confessions and sin.

but then just the everyday things of life that that would become a pattern in our lives of building a close relationship with you, a relationship that just starts now and will go on forever and ever.

We thank you for making yourself so available to us. In Jesus' name, Amen.