

Talking to God *1 Samuel 1:8-18*

Theme: Prayer

Aim: Can you just talk to God by thinking without engaging in prayer?

1. Statistics and polls tell us that the vast majority of Americans believe in God.
2. Those same stats tell us that the majority of folks pray at least once a day.
3. What a blessing prayer is to all of us, to know that the God of heaven hears our prayers.
4. To question prayer is not to question the power of God, but our faith in His word.

I. From Matthew 6: 5-13 we learn that prayer is:

A. Praise of God.

1. Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.
2. A recognition of the sovereignty of God.
3. We know His power and that He is in control, as did David, Psalm 145.
4. That is one reason we pray.

B. Prayer is petition.

1. In prayer we take our needs and wants to God.
2. We ask for our daily bread, forgiveness and deliverance.
3. We know His promise: 1 John 5:14-15. Note that prayer must be in His name and according to His will.
4. Psalm 37:25-26.

C. Prayer is a place of struggle.

1. Two examples:
 - a. Paul wrestling with the thorn in the flesh, 2 Corinthians 12:7-10.
 - b. Jesus in the garden, Matthew 26:36-46.
2. We know that God will hear and understand our struggles.

D. We also know that prayer is not limited to the assembly, it can be done in the closet. In fact it can be done anywhere.

II. But here is a question: “Can we just talk to God in our thoughts and ask for His help?”

A. Let’s look at some verses and draw out some principles that might help answer the question.

1. God knows the heart and thoughts of each of us.
 - a. Matthew 9:4, Mark 2:6-8.
 - b. 1 Corinthians 4:5.
 - c. Acts 15:8.
2. Consider the example of Hannah in 1 Samuel 1.
 - a. One might raise the question; “Did Hannah say a silent prayer or did she just speak so softly as to not be heard by Eli?”
 - b. But it seems to me that verse 13 indicates that the thoughts of Hannah were not vocalized.
3. Consider the words of Paul, Romans 8:26-27.
 - a. This passage indicates that the Spirit knows our hearts and thoughts and aids our prayers.
 - b. Even when we do not know how and what to pray.

B. Consider the following real life scenarios.

1. You head out in the morning and see a beautiful sunrise and you think “What an awesome God we have, I am thankful to be alive.” Is God aware of this praise?

2. You head into a very important business meeting (or to face a big test) and you silently pray “Lord, give me strength to get through this.” Does God hear?
3. You are standing in the door and your grown children and grandchildren are heading home after a wonderful holiday gathering and you silently pray “Please God, go with them.” Will God hear?
4. You are facing a decision that will affect your family and your future. As you are going about your daily tasks, you are subconsciously wrestling with the decision. You silently ask “God help me, give me direction.” Will he answer?

III. Having said all of that let us:

A. Not neglect public prayer.

B. Not neglect prayer in the closet of private devotion.

C. Never stop talking to God, but do not all such to substitute for a healthy prayer life.

1. Prayers are the moments when it is easiest to break through the veil to eternity and whisper into the ear of God. John Killinger.
2. There is a great difference between the skill and the grace of prayer. The skill consists chiefly in a readiness of thought consistent with the various aspects of prayer, and a facility for expressing those thoughts in speaking to God. The grace consists in the inward workings of the heart and conscience toward God and our life of faith. The skill is but the outside, the shape, the carcass of our responsibility. The grace is the soul and spirit that gives it life, vigor, and efficacy, that renders it acceptable to God and of real advantage to ourselves. -- Isaac Watts, *Leadership*, Vol. 9, no. 1.

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