

The Secret to Abundant Living: Learning How to Ask

"Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7).

"And in the morning, a great while before day, he rose and went out to a lonely place, and there he prayed" (Mark 1:35).

Ten Steps to God

Most people feel they should pray, but few know how. The following steps, if used for fifteen minutes daily, will enable you to experience God's peace, joy, and power in a way you have never known before.

As you begin this adventure, remember that prayer is an experience, not an idea. In some ways, prayer is like riding a bicycle. You only learn by doing it, never by thinking about doing it.

Commit yourself to methodically following these ten steps for fourteen

consecutive days. Most people report that they do not experience God's presence as fully during their first three or four days as they do after several days of practice. Persist in your reaching out, and God will come to you. Like falling in love, the experience of God's presence is impossible to define. But when it happens, you will understand why great Christian leaders of every century have so enthusiastically recommended and practiced prayer. And you will understand what Jeremiah meant when he said, "You will seek me and find me; when you seek me with all your heart . . ." (Jeremiah 29:13).

1. In preparation, set aside fifteen minutes in a location where you can be physically relaxed and there is little likelihood of interruption. Read one or two chapters from the Bible, listening for what God says to you. This helps to erase distracting thoughts from the blackboard of your mind. The following passages are especially helpful in preparing for prayer: John 14, Psalm 23, Matthew 5:1-12, Romans 8:35-39, 1 Corinthians 13, Psalm 91, Matthew 6, John 3:1-17, Psalm 46, Romans 12, John 15, Psalm 27, Psalm 103, Psalm 121, Isaiah 55, Luke 15, Psalm 84, John 1:1-18, Psalm 90, Psalm 19, 1 John 4:7-21, Psalm 139, Luke 24, Psalm 130, Luke 18:1-17.

2. Close your eyes and give thanks for three personal blessings of which you are especially conscious today. This helps you move toward God by moving away from a sense of your own self-sufficiency.

3. Ask God to help three other persons who you feel need God's help today. Ask God to help your pastor(s). This helps you move toward God by moving away from self-centeredness.

4. Ask God to forgive your mistakes and sins and give you the strength to forgive others.

5. Ask God to help one person

whom you find it hard to like. Ask God to give that person insights into his/her personal problems and ask for the power to let God's love flow through you to him/her.

6. Ask that you will be sensitive to the needs of one person today with whom you can share God's love in word or deed.

7. Ask for insights into your personal problems.

8. Ask for help in achieving your personal goals.

9. Ask that God will tell you the

most important thing you need to do today in order to "seek first his kingdom" (Matthew 6:33a).

10. Conclude by listening intently for three minutes to what God may say to you.