



Pray Without Ceasing

Key Theme

- God works in believers to accomplish His purpose.

Key Passages

- Philippians 4:6–7; Psalm 146:1–2; 1 John 1:9; Psalm 95:2; Matthew 6:11.

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Describe some ways God wants His children to pray.
- Describe some types of prayer.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

Students will practice the memory verse by working on the Memory Verse Review Sheet and reciting the verse to a friend.



Activity 1: Pray Without Ceasing Class Notes

Students will fill out the Pray Without Ceasing Class Notes as you study the lesson.



Studying God's Word

When we become children of God, we gain access to God through prayer. God desires us to bring all our requests to Him—our good Father—instead of worrying about them. What a privilege it is to be able to come to God in prayer with adoration and praise, confession of sin, thanksgiving, and supplication!



Activity 2: Learning to Pray

Students will review the lesson by acting out a short skit about the importance and different types of prayer.

Lesson Preparation

WHAT YOU WILL DO

WHAT YOU WILL NEED



COME ON IN

- ☐ Print the Memory Verse Review Sheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.

- ☐ Memory Verse Poster
- ☐ Memory Verse Review Sheet for each student



PRAY WITHOUT CEASING CLASS NOTES

- ☐ Print one Pray Without Ceasing Class Notes from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student. Keep the answer key for your use.

- ☐ Pray Without Ceasing Class Notes
- ☐ Pray Without Ceasing Class Notes Answer Key
- ☐ Pencils



STUDYING GOD'S WORD

- ☐ Study the Prepare to Share section.
- ☐ Go Before the Throne.

- ☐ Student Take Home Sheets



LEARNING TO PRAY

- ☐ Print three Learning to Pray Scripts from the Resource DVD-ROM.

- ☐ Learning to Pray Scripts



Memory Verse

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

► **Pace your lesson!** Use the clocks to mark the time you want to finish each section. This will help you stay on track and finish on time. You may need to shorten or drop sections as necessary.





Prepare to Share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the key passages listed above with this background.

We are all sinners and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). As believers we are saved by grace through faith—not by our own works so that we could never boast (Ephesians 2:8–9).

As sinners saved through grace, we know that we have received the Spirit of adoption and can now call God, “Abba, Father” (Romans 8:15–16).

Because of these wonderful truths, we know, as believers, that we can come boldly and confidently to the throne of grace where we find God’s mercy to help in our times of need (Hebrews 4:16). This is both a privilege and a command given to us by God, our Father. The Apostle Paul told the Thessalonians to pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Jesus commanded in His Word to ask, and it will be given; to seek, and it will be found; and to knock, and it will be opened (Matthew 7:7). Jesus assured His disciples (and all believers) that whatever we would ask in His name He would do in order that the Father may be glorified in the Son (John 14:13–14). We see this principle repeated in 1 John 5:14–15 where we read that if we ask anything according to God’s will, He hears us!

The prayers of believers that Jesus is referring to must be presented in Jesus’s name and according to His will. These prayers would be prayers directed, not toward selfish gain, but the furthering of the kingdom so that the Father will be glorified and honored.

But what is the proper way to pray? Most people are familiar with the Lord’s Prayer in Matthew 6:9–13. This is an example set before us by Jesus Himself of how to pray. This prayer includes worship of God, trust in God, supplication to God for daily needs, confession of sins before God, and a humble submission to God as we wait and trust that He will answer our prayers according to His perfect will.

We find more direction from the Apostle Paul in his writings to the Philippians (and to us through the inspired Word of God). Here we are told to be anxious for nothing and in ALL things by prayer, with thanksgiving, to present our requests to God. Only confidence and complete dependence on God will allow us to pray in this way. And it will result in the peace of God guarding our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:6–7).

The Bible gives other examples of various types of prayers that we can learn from. You may have seen the acronym ACTS used to illustrate some of these prayers.

A – Adoration is to worship and adore God—to sing praises to Him while we have our being (Psalm 146:1–2).

C – Confession is to come before God in humility and ask for His forgiveness for the times we sin against Him (1 John 1:9).

T – Thanksgiving is to continually be aware of and thank God for the many blessings He allows in our lives every day! The psalmist said it well: “Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms” (Psalm 95:2).

S – Supplication is to come to God, our heavenly Father, with our daily needs and the needs of others. The Lord’s Prayer includes praying for our daily bread (Matthew 6:11). We know that God cares for us and will supply all our needs according to His riches in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19).

It is truly a privilege as a child of God to approach His throne of grace with our requests. God expects and desires us to come to Him honestly. Praying in all things reveals a dependence on His sovereignty and will for our lives. We can trust that as our “Abba, Father,” He knows all things. He knows our hearts better than we know them ourselves, and He will always answer our prayers in ways that are best for us—according to His perfect will.

HISTORICAL/APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

As believers, we have access to God’s throne of grace through Jesus Christ, our great High Priest (Hebrews 4:14–16). We can present our prayers before Him and have confidence that He hears us (1 John 5:14–15). But we may have heard people ask or may have asked ourselves whether or not God hears and answers the prayers of unbelievers. How many times have we heard non-Christians say they’ll pray for us? Or how many times have we seen prayers offered by those who are from a non-Christian religion? Does God hear or answer these prayers? To answer this question, we’ll need to look at our source for truth, the Word of God.

Of course, God can do whatever He wants that is in accord with His will and His nature. So, He could answer any prayer if He so chooses. But Scripture clearly indicates that God does not listen to or answer every prayer. Here are a number of verses from both the Old and New Testaments that would indicate that God does not attend to the prayers of unbelievers.

Isaiah 1:15 – When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; even though you

make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood.

Isaiah 59:2 – But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.

Psalms 24:3–4 – Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully.

Psalms 34:15–16 – The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry. The face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.

Psalms 66:18 – If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear.

Proverbs 15:8 – The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is His delight.

Proverbs 28:9 – One who turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination.

James 1:5–7 – If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord.

James 4:3–4 – You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

According to these verses, there are several reasons why God may not listen to or answer prayer. He will not answer the prayers of those who are idolaters, who swear falsely, who do evil, who regard iniquity in their hearts, who are wicked, who turn away from His Law, who don't ask in faith, who ask for their own pleasures, and who are friends of the world.

Scripture tells us that all who have not humbly repented of their sin and submitted to the Lordship of Christ are enemies of God (Romans 5:10). They are dead in trespasses and sins and are slaves to sin (Ephesians 2:1; Romans 6:17). They do not have faith,

and thus are unable to please God (Hebrews 11:6). They are idolaters and have substituted the worship of the one true God with the worship of created things (Romans 1:22–23). And because they do not worship the true God, His ears are closed to their prayers.

In our pluralistic society today, such a view would be greeted with cries of intolerance. Who are Christians to say that God doesn't hear the prayers of sincere non-Christians? Don't all religions have access to God? But these complaints are directed at God Himself who has clearly spoken to this in His Word.

The enemy, Satan, loves "religion" and false hope in prayer. He wants people to think that being "spiritual" by praying and being religious are good things in themselves. He is happy with people who think that because they meditate or pray or go to religious services, they are on the right side with God. Satan does not want people to rightly understand the love of God as seen in Scripture through Jesus Christ, the only Savior. Nor does he want them to contemplate and fear the wrath of God promised at the last judgment when God will surely condemn all who have rejected Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son.

The truth is, the only prayer of a non-believer that God will hear and answer with all surety is the prayer of humble repentance for sins followed by the declaration of sincere faith in Jesus Christ, the Savior. This is the prayer of submission to God's will that will bring salvation to the lost soul through the gospel.

And for believers, we can be confident in the one true God and know that the only Mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ, is at the right hand of God the Father making intercession for us (1 Timothy 2:5; Romans 8:34).



BEFORE THE THRONE

Father God, you are a loving provider of all things good. You want your children to come to you in faith believing that you want the best for us, and you will answer. Help us, Lord to trust you in all things—and bring all things before you in prayer. Show my students the importance of using prayer to adore you, confess sin, thank you, and ask you to meet their needs. They have so many years ahead of them. May they learn early in their lives the wonderful privilege it is to pray. Help them to trust your promise to hear and answer the prayers of your children.



COME ON IN

As students arrive . . .

- They will complete the Memory Verse Review Sheet. If time allows, have the students recite the verse together, to each other, or to you.

This time at the beginning of class should be used to review the memory verse. We have provided an activity sheet on the Resource DVD-ROM for you to use. You may have other ideas and ways to encourage your students to memorize the verse.



After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.



REVIEW

Using the Lesson Theme Posters provided with each lesson, quickly review the previous lesson(s) with your students. Take 5 to 10 minutes to reinforce the important truths the students have heard so far in your class.

Ask the children questions about the previous lessons as you display the Lesson Theme Posters. Reflect briefly on the passages you read, bringing the objectives and themes back into focus. This will refresh the truths in your students' minds and maintain continuity as you teach through the lessons.



Pray Without Ceasing Class Notes

MATERIALS

- ☐ Pray Without Ceasing Class Notes for each student
- ☐ Pray Without Ceasing Class Notes Answer Key
- ☐ Pencils

INSTRUCTIONS

Print the class notes for each student. Pass them out at the beginning of class. Have students fill in the blanks as you study the lesson.

We will be completing these class notes as we study the Bible passages. Do not work ahead. We'll finish them together.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

As we complete the class notes today, we will see some of the things the Bible teaches us about prayer.



Studying God's Word

READ THE WORD

Refer to Lesson 7 Lesson Theme Poster. When sinners are saved by grace they are forgiven and given eternal life. This is a free gift of God through His grace.

? *Refer to Lesson 8 Lesson Theme Poster. But what else happens to people who receive Jesus as their Savior? What do they become? Children of God.*

? *That's right. Believers are children of God. What does that mean? Allow discussion as students refer to the Lesson 8 Lesson Theme Poster.*

Those who believe, receive, and trust in Jesus become children of God. We are now adopted into God's family! Jesus becomes our adopted Brother, AND we become heirs of God!

- ? What does that mean—that we are heirs of God? What has God promised to all of His children? *Allow discussion.*

If we are believers, then we are heirs of God with God's Son, Jesus Christ. We can be sure that we will receive a wonderful inheritance from God.

- ? What does that inheritance include? *Allow discussion. Eternal life with God in heaven!*

Becoming a child of God is an amazing gift! And it is available for all who repent of their sins and believe all the Bible tells us about Jesus. Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and rose from the grave on the third day. All who believe these truths are adopted into God's family. God becomes their Father and Jesus their Brother. As members of God's family, they receive an inheritance—a special gift promised from God! That inheritance is perfect in every way. And it is reserved in heaven for all who believe in Jesus.

Today, we will talk about another special privilege we get as children of God.

- ? How many of you talk to your moms and dads? *Show of hands.*

Of course you talk to them. Well, because God is our heavenly Father, we get to talk to Him, too!

- ? How do we talk to God? *Allow discussion.*

We talk to God through prayer! We get to go right to God—the Creator! And we can talk to Him whenever we want. The Bible tells us some ways we can pray to God! We are going to read about those today.

Philippians 4:6–7

Turn to Philippians 4:6–7 in your Bibles. Pay attention. Let's see what we can learn about prayer. *Choose students to read the verses. Philippians 4:6–7.*

EXAMINE THE WORD

Here we go! Let's talk about what these verses have to say about prayer.

Observe the Text

- ? Philippians 4:6 starts off with a command for us. What is that? *Philippians 4:6. Do not be anxious.*

- ? What does anxious mean? *Allow discussion.*

Anxious means worried, or nervous, or afraid! This verse says we are not to be anxious!

- ? How many of you have been worried or anxious before? *Allow discussion.*

- ? Who can share with us about a time you were worried? *Allow discussion.*

I am pretty sure that everyone gets anxious or worried about things. But this verse says we are not to be anxious. It also gives us a way to get rid of the worry we often feel.

Someone read Philippians 4:6 again. *Choose a reader.*

- ? What are we to do instead of being anxious? *Philippians 4:6. Pray!*
- ? Who are we to pray to? Look at the end of Philippians 4:6. *To God.*
- ? What should we pray about? We are still in Philippians 4:6. *Philippians 4:6. In everything pray.*
- ? This verse says “by prayer and supplication.” What does supplication mean? Does anyone know? *Allow discussion.*

Supplication means to request or ask for something. So, the Bible says in everything we should pray and ask God to help!

- ? But how should we ask Him? We aren’t supposed to be worried or anxious right? We are to always pray with a certain attitude. It is in Philippians 4:6. What is it we are always to pray with? *Philippians 4:6. With thanksgiving!*
- ? OK. So Philippians 4:6 teaches us something about how to pray. Philippians 4:7 tells us what happens when we pray the way God wants us to. Will someone read Philippians 4:7 again? *Philippians 4:7. Choose a reader.*
- ? What will believers get if they pray the way God wants them to pray? *Philippians 4:7. The peace of God.*
- ? What will this peace of God do for us as we pray the way God wants us to? What will it guard? *Philippians 4:7. Our hearts and minds.*

► Share with your students a time you were anxious about something and what it was. This may encourage them to share their experiences.

Supplication:
A request.

Discover the Truth

We started off talking about being anxious. Philippians 4:6 says, “Do not be anxious.” Then the Bible tells us in Philippians 4:7 that we can have the peace of God to guard our hearts and our minds.

- ? Do you think that anyone who has God’s peace guarding his heart could spend time being anxious? *Allow discussion.*

I don’t think so. Because peace is the opposite of anxiety or worry! And if we have God’s peace we certainly won’t be worried about our troubles. If we can learn to pray to God according to Philippians 4:6, with thanksgiving and without any worry, then the peace of God will guard our hearts and minds. That is a wonderful promise about prayer! Praying to God includes not being anxious, being thankful, and making our requests known to God!

- ? Let’s go to the class notes to review. How will you answer #1 on the class notes? Who can read that? What is the answer? *Assign a reader. Worry. Have students complete #1.*

? OK. Now what about #2? What attitude should we have when we pray?
Assign a reader. Thanks. Have students complete #2.

? And what about #3? What will God give us as we learn
to pray the way His Word tells us? *Assign a reader. Peace. Have
students complete #3.*



READ THE WORD

OK. Let's move on! The Bible gives examples of different prayers. We can use the word ACTS to help us remember them. This word ACTS can tell us something about the different types of prayers we see in the Bible.

Psalm 146:1–2

? Look at Psalm 146:1–2 on your class notes please. Will someone read that? *Choose students to read the verses. Psalm 146:1–2.*

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

? What is the person who wrote this verse doing? *Psalm 146:1–2. Praising God!*

? How many times are the words praise or praises used? *Psalm 146:1–2. Four!*

These verses give us a great example of adoring God—and praising Him. This is a prayer of Adoration—giving praises to God for who He is!

? Now, look at #4 on your class notes. What does the A in ACTS stand for? How will you complete that? Will someone read it for us? *Assign a reader. Adoration. Praising. Have students complete #4.*

? Next look at 1 John 1:9 on your class notes. This is another type of prayer we are to pray. Will someone read that for us? *Choose a reader. 1 John 1:9.*

? What is this verse telling us we should do? *Allow discussion.*

This is talking about confessing our sins to God. When we confess our sins, it is a prayer of Confession. That's what the C in ACTS stands for.

? What do we ask God for when we confess our sins? Look in 1 John 1:9. *Forgiveness.*

We should say prayers of confession every day. God wants us to come to Him and ask Him to forgive our sins.

? Will God forgive our sins if we are really sorry for disobeying? The answer is in 1 John 1:9. *Yes.*

He will forgive us if we come humbly and ask for His forgiveness in a prayer of confession.

? Will someone read #5 for us on the class notes? How will you answer that? *Assign a reader. Confession. Sins. Have students complete #5.*

Adoration:
Giving praises
to God for who
He is!

1 John 1:9

Confession:
Asking
forgiveness for
our sins.

OK. So we have the A and the C in our prayer word of “ACTS.” That is Adoration and Confession.

? Will someone read Psalm 95:2? Let’s see what type of prayer this is. *Assign a reader.*

? What type of prayer is this? What is this writer doing in the presence of God? *Thanking Him.*

Yes! This would be a Thanksgiving prayer. We have so much to thank God for that thanksgiving should always be on our hearts! Remember, we spoke earlier that we are to thank God in EVERYTHING! That was in Philippians 4:6.

? What are some of the things you can thank God for in your life? *Encourage students to think about things they can be thankful for.*

? OK. Look at #6 on your class notes. How will you complete it? *Assign a reader. Thanksgiving. God. Have students complete #6.*

We will talk about one more type of prayer.

? Look at the last verse on your class notes—Matthew 6:11. Will someone read that for us? *Choose a reader. Matthew 6:11.*

? This verse is something Jesus said as He was teaching His disciples how to pray. What did Jesus say we should ask God for in this verse? *Our daily bread.*

? What does that mean? *Matthew 6:11. Allow discussion.*

It means to pray for the food you need each day to live. We see in this verse that God cares about all the things in our life. And everything we have comes from Him— even our daily bread!

Prayers of supplication include asking God for things in our own lives and also asking for things for other people.

? What are some prayers of supplication you might pray for yourself or someone you know? *Allow discussion. Answers can include many things. Health, jobs for parent, grades at school, position on the team, a new dress, etc.*

? OK. Now take a look at #7. Will someone read that with the answers? *Assign a reader. Supplication. Asking. Have students complete #7.*

Discover the Truth

Remember, if we are believers, if we are children of God, God wants us to pray to Him. We GET to pray to Him. And He will listen to our prayers! There are many different types of prayers! And we can see examples of them all through the Bible. Think of the word ACTS to remember four types of prayers. Look again at your class notes. We talked about prayers of Adoration—a prayer that worships God and adores Him. And prayers of Confession—when we tell God we are sorry for sinning against Him.

Psalm 95:2

Thanksgiving:
Thanking God
for what He has
done.

Matthew 6:11

Supplication:
Asking God
for things for
ourselves and
others.

➤ Share some things you have been asking God for on your own behalf and also on behalf of others, so the students will better understand prayers of supplication.

We should also pray prayers of Thanksgiving—and tell God thanks for blessing us in so many ways! And we are to say prayers of Supplication—when we ask God for things, things we need or things our friends or our families need.

If time allows, assign students to re-read the points on the class notes as a review and briefly discuss them.



Learning to Pray

MATERIALS

- Three Learning to Pray Scripts from the Resource DVD-ROM

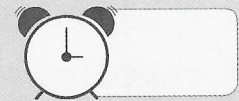
INSTRUCTIONS

Assign two students to play the characters. Encourage the actors to speak up and play their roles with enthusiasm.

Today we get to watch a skit about prayer! In this skit we will hear about prayer as Dave explains to Ray that there are different types of prayer and he can pray anytime and anywhere. *Have students perform the short skit.*

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

Ray had a problem. And his friend Dave knew what to do about it. First Dave explained a little about prayer—but more importantly, he stopped and prayed for his friend right then, at school, when the two boys were talking about Ray's problem. God's Word says that we are to pray without ceasing! And that means, when a problem comes up you take it to God—right then!



Applying God's Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

Refer to Lesson Theme Poster. God has given His children an amazing privilege. We can come to Him at any time in prayer! God's Word gives some guidelines on how to pray. Today we learned that we are not to be anxious or worried about things. We are to pray with thanksgiving to God always remembering what He has done for us. And we are to ask God plainly and honestly for what we want.

God's Word gives many examples of different types of prayer. We used the four letters of the word ACTS to help us remember some ways to pray.

- ? Who can tell me what the A stands for? *Adoration.*
- ? Right. That's praising God for who He is and what He's done. What about the C and T? *Confession and thanksgiving.*
- Good. We are to confess our sins and thank God for our many blessings.
- ? And the last letter S. What kind of prayer does that stand for? *Supplication.*
- That's right! God wants us to bring our needs and the needs of others to Him.

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

Refer to the Memory Verse Poster. The apostle Paul told the Thessalonians to pray without ceasing in 1 Thessalonians 5:17.

- ? That's our memory verse! Would someone please read it from our Memory Verse Poster or say it from memory if you know it? *Have a student say the 1 Thessalonians 5:16–17 memory verse.*

God cares about our every need. He wants us to come to Him in prayer with whatever is on our mind. But part of praying to God is also trusting God! And part of praying to God is asking for things that we know will be pleasing to Him. Our requests to God should be according to His will—and not always about what will make us happier and more comfortable.

We can't tell God how to answer us. But we can trust that as our loving Father—He will answer our prayers. And His answer—whether it be yes, no, or wait—is always what is best for us at the time, even if the answer doesn't make sense to us.



➤ Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind the students to practice the memory verse this week.



MEMORY VERSE

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.



GROUP PRAYER TIME

- Praise God that as children of God, we can come to Him with all our prayers.
- Ask God to give us the desire to pray in all things and to trust His sovereign will and every answer He brings to our prayers.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no text or other markings on the paper.