

## Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

### Second Quarter 2026: *Growing in a Relationship With God*

#### Lesson 7 “Practical Prayer”

#### Read for this week’s study

1 Kings 19:1–18; Matthew 6:5–8; Luke 11:2–4; Matthew 6:5–15; Daniel 9:4–19; Romans 8:26, 27.

#### Memory Text

“Trust in Him at all times, you people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us” (Psalm 62:8, NKJV).

#### Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Elijah—Praying in Crisis
- III. When Prayers Seem Unanswered
- IV. Jesus Teaches Us How to Pray
- V. Praise, Confession, Requests, Thanksgiving
- VI. Other Questions About Prayer
- VII. Further Study

#### Questions and Notes for Consideration

##### Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. The lesson this week continues the theme of prayer, looking at examples from the stories in the Bible of people who prayed. Often our prayers revolve around praise and requests. What other types of prayer should we consider including? (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. Elijah is another biblical character renowned for his prayers. Read 1 Kings 18:36-39. What does Elijah pray for and what is the result? Read 1 Kings 18:42-45. What position does Elijah take for this prayer and what is the result? Read 1 Kings 19:1-8. What does Elijah pray for this time, and how does God answer? Read 1 Kings 19:9-18. Would you consider this conversation between Elijah and God a prayer? How is God’s response different from the one Elijah got on Mount Carmel? How do the changes in Elijah’s emotional state relate to his repeated prayers? (Sunday’s Lesson)

3. Many people have prayed about some things for years and it feels as if God has not heard or answered their prayers. The Bible says, “ask, and it will be given to you” (Matt 7:7). What is your understanding of Jesus’ promise? (Monday’s Lesson)
4. Read 1 Samuel 1:10-17. Hannah is an example of a woman who prayed for something very specific. At first it seemed that God didn’t answer her prayer, but she persisted, and in time God did answer. Why do you think God delayed in her case, or in any case? (Monday’s Lesson)
5. Read Matthew 6:5-8. What was Jesus’ reaction to the long and carefully worked-out prayers typical of Jesus’ day? What was His core issue with that type of prayer? What alternative for prayer does He offer in Matthew 6:9-15? What elements of prayer can you distinguish in this model prayer? As you think about your own life situation, what prevents you from praying more often and more effectively? (Tuesday’s Lesson)
6. One of the longest and most effective prayers in the Bible is found in Daniel 9. Read Daniel 9:4-19. What are the key elements in this prayer and what kind of model does it present for us today? (Wednesday’s Lesson)
7. In general, what are the main components of biblical prayers? List at least four and be prepared to describe them and why they are important. As you think of these various components of biblical prayer which is the greatest need in your life right now? How can we learn to include more thankfulness in our prayers? (Wednesday’s Lesson)
8. Some questions to consider regarding prayer: 1) Why pray when God already knows everything you plan to talk about? 2) Why pray when things are going pretty well? 3) What is the role of faith or trust in prayer? 4) How does solo prayer differ from prayer in a group, as in a family? Which of the two is more important? 5) How can we listen to God as well as talk to Him? Which of these questions do you consider the most challenging? (Thursday’s Lesson)
9. What is the role of fasting alongside prayer? (Friday’s Lesson)

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

So now, imagine that the Father appears visibly among us here at Loma Linda this evening. How would we speak to Him? Or to make it more personal, let us say that He is willing to meet us in the fellowship room. As many of us as could, would go over there and gather around Him, just as the crowds did around Jesus; and Mary loved to sit there at His feet. Supposing we should have the inestimable privilege of talking there freely with God the Father for a whole hour. Would it be appropriate at the end for someone among us to arise and say, “This has been such a special occasion, don’t you think we ought to close this meeting with a word of prayer?” Or would it be correct to understand that talking, conversing, having conversation with our God as

with a friend for that whole hour actually is real prayer, and we have been praying the whole hour long? . . .

Now God is seated there, and we are gathered around Him. What should we say? Should we be the first to speak? Once we have started speaking, would we talk all the time? Or would we let God speak for a while? Normally, when we pray we do all the talking, don't we? And then we say "Amen" and go about our business, or go to sleep. It would be like meeting in the room with our heavenly Father, and talking to Him incessantly for several minutes, and then saying, "Amen, thank you very much," and then going home. It wouldn't make sense, would it? It certainly wouldn't be conversation as with a friend.

Conversation means at least two people speaking. But how do we converse with God when we can't see Him just now, because of the present emergency? We all understand that emergency and why in mercy He does not reveal Himself visibly to us at this moment. And so, the Bible is called the Word of God—God speaking to us. If we wish to hear God speak, except in most extraordinary occasions, God speaks to us through the Bible. We speak to Him in prayer. Truly, as someone has said, "We commune with God through the study of the Scriptures." . . .

So, what language would you use? Then how would we address Him? Jesus addressed His Father as "*Abba*, Father." *Abba* is Aramaic for father. So it is almost like saying, "Father, Father," although it is a term of endearment. Some versions translate "*Abba*, Father" as "Dear Father," the way some of us like to start our public prayers and private too, Dear Father. You remember Paul in Romans and Galatians invites us to do precisely that. He says that when the Spirit of truth dwells within us, we will address the Father as "Dear Father."

But most important, what would we talk about? Could you on such a precious occasion say, "Thank you, God, for today's groceries and here is my list for tomorrow, amen," and then go on about your business? Or more seriously, right there with the Father, might you say, "Bless the missionaries as they carry the truth to the far-flung corners of the earth." The Lord might say, "How sweet. How is it that you only think of these things when you are at the time of prayer?" Of course, if you are the mother of a missionary, how appropriate for you to talk to God about your loved ones. And missionaries, above all people, deserve and need our prayers. But if we are not thinking about them the rest of the time, just that when we talk to God, we feel that we should only mention the most lofty themes and not the things we have been really thinking about all day?

You see, for some of us, those well-worn phrases about the missionaries and other sorts of things we understand we *ought* to mention when we pray, might seem rather empty when we are talking face to face with God as with a friend. Or, if we should leave the meeting and walk through a garden in the community, wouldn't it be natural, walking with God, to comment with admiration on the beauty and fragrance of a rose, and the beautiful sounds of the

mockingbirds? Aren't they magnificent right now? And then that lovely, lonely sound of the mourning dove. Why couldn't we tell Him how beautiful it was to create things that way? Or walking through the garden, would we simply say, "We thank thee, Lord, for the beauties of nature that surround us," and move on to some other topic? We do have well-worn phrases to cover these things. It seems to me that if God really were our Friend, we would take time to talk about these things and to be more specific about them, as we would with other members of the family. We might even venture to ask Him about the thorns on the rose. "Did you put them there? If so, why?"

Or is it all right to ask questions of our God? Job did, and he honored God with his confidence. You remember how boldly, but reverently, Job agonized with God—to the consternation of his friends. They worried that God would surely smite Job for daring to talk to the Father like this. The whole book of Job is on this subject. I have picked just one place. Look at Job 29:2-4 and 30:20. Job cries to God:

If only my life could once again be as it was when God watched over me. God was always with me then. . . . and the friendship of God protected my home. . . . [But now] I call to you, O God, but you never answer, and when I pray, you pay no attention. (GNT)

How that worried Job's friends! But was God offended? No, look at our next verse, Job 42:7. God said to the three friends, who were so worried: "You did not speak the truth about me the way my servant Job did." (GNT) You see, Job knew God, and He honored God with those cries. God was not talking to him just then. And Job was deeply upset because their friendship seemed to be at an end. So what upset the friends complemented God, and spoke well of their relationship. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #15, "Talking to God as a Friend" recorded May 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/15MMCAG>*

Lou: There's another phrase in here that raises questions many times. I've wondered about this myself. When we pray, "Lead us not into temptation," what are we really praying? Does that imply, have you ever wondered about this, "God, be careful; please don't get me into temptation?" That God would really want to do that?

Graham: Well one thing that helps is, the word "temptation" means trial or testing. Some versions have, "Lead us not into hard testing." The idea that God would tempt is unthinkable as our heavenly Father. Remember James deals with this. That when we're tempted, don't even blame the devil. He says, "You are led away by your own lusts and enticements." Certainly don't blame God. He wouldn't do any such thing. So "Lead us not into temptation" cannot mean, "Please, don't You tempt us" but, "Lead us not into testing," Jesus prayed that in Gethsemane. He said, "Remove this cup from Me, if possible." I don't think we should pray, "Lord, I'm ready

for it. Bring on the trials; I feel very strong today.” I believe we should say, “Lord, in all humility, I mean bring me not into trial; nevertheless, Thy will be done.”

I think, “Lead us not into testing” must be coupled with, “Nevertheless, Thy will be done.” Jesus did it in Gethsemane, and we do it in the Lord’s Prayer. You know, the Lord’s Prayer and the prayer in Gethsemane are very similar in a number of respects. “Lead us not into testing, remove this cup from Me. Nevertheless, Thy will be done.” So I think the prayer in Gethsemane helps understand the Lord’s Prayer. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #15 with Lou Venden, “Talking to God as a Friend” recorded May 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/15MMCAG>*

I believe that to pray in Jesus’ name is simply a grateful recognition that if the Son had not come to reveal the truth about His Father we wouldn’t know how to approach the Father. We’d be afraid to. Might not even want to. So to pray in His name is an acknowledgment of all that the Son has done, and the Father through Him, to make us even want to pray, and to approach the throne with confidence, and so on. So it has to be meaningfully done, or it’s almost an insult just to mean “I’m nearly done, God,” when up in heaven the Father hears you say, “For we ask this in Jesus’ name”, He knows you’re nearly through, and when you say “Amen” He knows you’re done and He can start listening to another one. It seems sad, but often down here “Amen” means it’s time for the choir to begin the response. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon, recorded May 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/71MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/72MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

But you know, Balaam had learned that you should persevere in prayer, and so he prayed some more and he said, “God, please let me go and curse Israel.” And God said, “No, certainly not.” But he persevered still further in prayer. And God said, “Yes.” “Good,” said Balaam, “at last I have an answer to my prayer.” You know, we don’t think we get an answer until we get a yes, or we get protection from an accident. It’s a pity that, like in the *Review and Herald*, for example, most of the stories of answered prayer are yes answers. And that suggests that if we don’t get what we’re asking for, God is not answering our prayers. And that can be misleading though it’s very difficult for the editors to know how many of the others to put in. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, PUC Teacher’s Conference, #9 “Praying To God As A Friend”, recorded April 1974, Angwin, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/9MMPUCTEACH>*

## Further Study with Ellen White

Could our spiritual vision be quickened, we should see souls bowed under oppression and burdened with grief, pressed as a cart beneath sheaves, and ready to die in discouragement. We should see angels flying quickly to the aid of these tempted ones, forcing back the hosts of evil that encompass them, and placing their feet on the sure foundation. The battles waging between the two armies are as real as those fought by the armies of this world, and on the issue of the spiritual conflict eternal destinies depend. {PK 175.3}

We are to live only one day at a time. We do not have to do the work of a lifetime in a few hours. We need not look into the future with anxiety; for God has made it possible for us to be overcomers every day. {FLB 249.4}

God always rewards the confidence of His people. The way to the throne of mercy is always open. God sees the wants of His people as clearly in the darkness of midnight which surrounds them as in the splendor of noonday. To look to God for help at all times, this is our safety. {TDG 199.2}

If you ask the help of God, you will not ask in vain. The Lord is at work in many ways to win your hearty confidence. In nothing does He take more delight than to have you unburden, come to Him for light and strength, and He has promised that you shall find rest to your soul. If you will find heart and voice to pray, He will be sure to hear, and an arm will be reached down to save you. There is a God that hears prayer, and when all other resources fail, He is your refuge, a very present help in time of trouble. . . . {TDG 184.4}

The Lord is our helper, our defense. God has provided that no soul that trusts in Him shall be overcome by the enemy. {CTr 47.4}

That prayer of Christ embraces all His followers to the close of time. Our Saviour foresaw the trials and dangers of His people; He is not unmindful of the dissensions and divisions that distract and weaken His church. He is looking upon us with deeper interest and more tender compassion than moves an earthly parent's heart toward a wayward, afflicted child. He bids us learn of Him. He invites our confidence. He bids us open our hearts to receive His love. He has pledged Himself to be our helper. {5T 237.2}

But in heaven, service is not rendered in the spirit of legality. When Satan rebelled against the law of Jehovah, the thought that there was a law came to the angels almost as an awakening to something unthought of. In their ministry the angels are not as servants, but as sons. There is perfect unity between them and their Creator. Obedience is to them no drudgery. Love for God makes their service a joy. So in every soul wherein Christ, the hope of glory, dwells, His words are re-echoed, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart." Psalm 40:8. {MB 109.2}

In the vision of the prophet Ezekiel there was the appearance of a hand beneath the wings of the cherubim. This is to teach His servants that it is divine power which gives them success. Those whom God employs as His messengers are not to feel that His work is dependent upon them. Finite beings are not left to carry this burden of responsibility. He who slumbers not, who is continually at work for the accomplishment of His designs, will carry forward His own work. He will thwart the purposes of wicked men, and will bring to confusion the counsels of those who plot mischief against His people. He who is the King, the Lord of hosts, sitteth between the cherubim, and amid the strife and tumult of nations He guards His children still. He who ruleth in the heavens is our Saviour. He measures every trial, He watches the furnace fire that must test every soul. When the strongholds of kings shall be overthrown, when the arrows of wrath shall strike through the hearts of His enemies, His people will be safe in His hands. {MB 121.1}

In the creation of man was manifest the agency of a personal God. When God had made man in His image, the human form was perfect in all its arrangements, but it was without life. Then a personal, self-existing God breathed into that form the breath of life, and man became a living, intelligent being. All parts of the human organism were set in action. The heart, the arteries, the veins, the tongue, the hands, the feet, the senses, the faculties of the mind, all began their work, and all were placed under law. Man became a living soul. Through Christ the Word, a personal God created man and endowed him with intelligence and power. {MH 415.1}

No tongue can express, no finite mind can conceive, the blessing that results from appreciating the goodness and love of God. Even on earth we may have joy as a wellspring, never failing, because fed by the streams that flow from the throne of God. {SD 122.4}

It is for our own benefit to keep every gift of God fresh in our memory. By this means faith is strengthened to claim and to receive more and more. There is greater encouragement for us in the least blessing we ourselves receive from God than in all the accounts we can read of the faith and experience of others. The soul that responds to the grace of God shall be like a watered garden. His health shall spring forth speedily; his light shall rise in obscurity, and the glory of the Lord shall be seen upon him. {MH 100.3}

It is that men may understand the joy of forgiveness, the peace of God, that Christ draws them through the manifestation of His love. If they respond to His drawing, yielding their hearts to His grace, He will lead them on step by step, to a full knowledge of Himself, and this is life eternal. {1SM 323.2}

God accepts your broken, contrite heart. He offers you free pardon. He offers to adopt you into His family, with His grace to help your weakness, and the dear Jesus will lead you on step by step if you will only put your hand in His and let Him guide you.— Lt 38, 1887. {2MCP 451.3}

Jesus knows the circumstances of every soul. You may say, I am sinful, very sinful. You may be; but the worse you are, the more you need Jesus. He turns no weeping, contrite one away. He

does not tell to any all that He might reveal, but He bids every trembling soul take courage. Freely will He pardon all who come to Him for forgiveness and restoration. {DA 568.3}

Prayer is a heaven-ordained means of success. Appeals, petitions, entreaties, between man and man, move men and act a part in controlling the affairs of nations. But prayer moves heaven. That power alone that comes in answer to prayer will make men wise in the wisdom of heaven and enable them to work in the unity of the Spirit, joined together by the bonds of peace. Prayer, faith, confidence in God, bring a divine power that sets human calculations at their real worth—nothingness. . . . He who places himself where God can enlighten him, advances, as it were, from the partial obscurity of dawn to the full radiance of noonday. {HP 75.6}

Jesus gives the Holy Spirit in large measure for great emergencies, to help our infirmities, to give us strong consolation, to illuminate our minds, and purify and ennoble our hearts. Christ becomes unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. {RC 103.5}