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# NOTES ON LESSON 4: I CAN HAVE A GREAT PRAYER LIFE

(Also see “I Can Have a Great Prayer Life” and “Answer Guide for Teachers”)

This study focuses on Christians’ communication with God. Prayer is a wonderful way to praise God and rely on His power in our daily lives. It is crucial for Christians to pray. Jesus set aside time for fervent prayer.

## Opening Questions

*Proverbs 15:8* through *James 5:16-18*. Ask students, “If you could do something to make God happy, wouldn’t you be interested in doing it?” *Proverbs 15:8* says that the prayer of the upright is God’s delight. *Hebrews 4:14-16* reminds us that Jesus understands earthly pain and disappointment; He knows what it is like to be tempted.

*James 5:16-18* shows us that we are praying to One who is able to answer. Prayer changes things!

### Question #1: Why Should You Pray?

*Matthew 6:5-9* through *1 Thessalonians 5:17*. Encourage students to make prayer a regular activity. God expects us to pray. Praying is one way we grow in our devotion to Him. Being devoted to anyone or anything involves setting priorities—setting aside time for that person or activity. In the lesson, the student is asked to rate his devotion to prayer on a scale. Before we can change or improve, we must evaluate ourselves.

### Question #2: What Are the Essentials Of Prayer?

*Hebrews 11:6* through *John 15:7*. These passages describe qualities that must be present in the hearts of those who want to approach God. We must have faith in God to come before Him. Prayer and Bible study go together; to pray according to God’s will, we must know His will. We are to pray in the name of Jesus. By His authority, Christians can approach the throne of grace with confidence.

### Question #3: For What Should You Pray?

*Matthew 5:43-45* through *Colossians 4:3, 4*. Many have said that they would pray more if they knew what to pray for. The Bible tells us how to pray. *Matthew 5* tells us to pray for our enemies. Rather than harboring resentment, we ought to pray for those who oppose us or mistreat us.

In *Matthew 6* Jesus prayed for daily bread. God

provides the necessities of life. Lack of prayer shows a lack of gratitude. Since all of us struggle with the problem of sin, we need to confess our sins to God in prayer. Sins cannot be overcome until we face them.

The apostle Paul set a wonderful example in *Romans* with his fervent prayer for the lost. He also encouraged Christians to pray for leaders, for fellow workers, and for opportunities. The Bible tells us to pray continually, and there will never be a shortage of things to pray about.

### Question #4: What Will Hinder Your Prayers?

*Psalms 66:18* through *1 John 3:22*. Some things can hinder our prayers. *Psalm 66:18* teaches that cherishing sins in our hearts is a detriment to our prayer lives. Unconfessed sins will keep our prayers from being heard.

In *Matthew 5* Jesus commanded His people to seek reconciliation with brethren before attempting to worship God. Sometimes we know what God would have us to do, yet we continue to pray about it rather than taking action. Prayer is not a substitute for obedience.

*James 4* speaks of worldliness and the quarreling that sometimes takes place among God’s people. James said that these Christians did not get what they were asking for in prayer because they prayed with selfish, worldly motives.

Failing to honor our families will also hinder our prayer lives (*1 Peter 3:7*). The Bible teaches that our relationship with God is affected by our relationships with others. Those who cannot love others cannot love God.

### Summary & Application

Take time for reflection; let students share their spiritual goals for enriching their communication with God. Suggest making prayer lists to help new Christians stay focused and enable them to look back later and recognize the good that they have experienced through past prayers.

End the study with prayer, using the A•C•T•S method found in the lesson. Emphasize the need to pray. Impress upon students the wonderful interest God has in our needs and personal growth. ❖