

BE WITH JESUS

TALKING WITH GOD

Weaving conversations with God into the fabric of my everyday life and schedule. Enjoying God's continual presence.

- Welcome, Review
- Group Check-In
- Message
- Group Study
- Practice the Practice
- Closing Prayer

This Week's Key Verse to Think About, Soak in, and Memorize:

*Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18***

More Resources to Explore!

See the Spiritual Growth Section of the Twin Cities Church website:

www.twincities.church/spiritual-growth-be1

Click on the "Talking With God" picture to find many helpful resources.

TALKING WITH GOD

Prayer is something most people are familiar with. We hear it mentioned in movies, television, and music. Many people grew up saying bedtime prayers like, “Now I lay me down to sleep...” or they offered a quick prayer before meals. Some prayers are familiar phrases we recite or a wish list of things that we hope God will give us.

At times, prayer can feel confusing or frustrating. Sometimes we pray and see clear answers, while at other times it feels like God is silent. And there are moments when we desperately want God to intervene, but things don’t turn out the way we hoped. These experiences can leave us wondering if God is even listening.

Over time, many followers of Jesus discover something deeper about prayer. Prayer is not primarily about getting God to do what we want. Instead, prayer is about talking with God and sharing life with Him. It’s an ongoing relationship with a loving Father who invites us to walk with Him through every part of life.

Talking with God is both wonderfully simple and deeply profound. Like any relationship, it grows over time through communication, trust, and shared experiences. Jesus invited His followers into this kind of relationship with the Father, and He is eager to teach us how to pray.

What the Bible Says About Talking With God

Scripture invites us into a life of prayer - an open and ongoing conversation with God.

• **Luke 11:1** *“One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.’”*

The disciples had prayed since they were young boys, yet when they watched Jesus pray they realized there was something deeper about His relationship with the Father. They asked Him to teach them how to pray.

• **Matthew 6:5–8** (Jesus) *“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others... But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen... And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.”*

Jesus makes it clear that prayer is not about impressing others, performing religious rituals, or using the right words. Prayer is about connecting with God. Listen to this prayer by Jesus:

John 17:25-26 *“Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”*

Jesus addresses God as Father and encourages us to call Him Father too. In this prayer Jesus emphasizes that He wants us to know God intimately, sense His presence and His love for us, and to be deeply connected to Him. Our relationship grows as we learn to talk with God.

A Biblical Example - Learning to Hear God

The story of the boy Samuel illustrates how people learn to recognize God's voice over time.

1 Samuel 3:8–9 *“A third time the LORD called, ‘Samuel!’ And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, ‘Here I am; you called me.’ Then Eli realized that the LORD was calling the boy. So Eli told Samuel, ‘Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, “Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.””*

Samuel didn't immediately recognize God's voice. It took time, guidance, and repeated experiences before he understood that the Lord was speaking to him. In the same way, learning to talk with God and recognize His voice is a process. It grows gradually as we spend time with Him. God is very patient as we learn. He delights in our desire to seek Him and know His voice.

Why Talking With God Matters

Prayer is the primary way we nurture our relationship with God. Through prayer we share our joys, fears, struggles, questions, and gratitude with Him. Instead of carrying life alone, we learn to walk through it with God. Over time, prayer starts to change us. As we talk with God regularly, our trust in Him deepens and our hearts become more attentive to His presence and guidance.

When Jesus was about to leave the earth and return to the Father, He told His followers this:

John 14:16–20 *“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth... I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”*

Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus remains present with His followers. The Spirit lives within us, guiding us, strengthening us, and helping us remain connected to Christ. Prayer becomes the way we live in that relationship with Him every day. As we practice talking with God, our lives become more aligned with His heart, and we experience deeper intimacy with Him.

What It Looks Like to Practice Talking With God

Learning to talk with God is a journey. It's normal to feel uncertain at times. There may be moments when prayer feels awkward or you wonder if you are simply hearing your own thoughts. This is part of the learning process. The goal is not perfection – it's relationship.

You can begin by simply including Jesus in your daily life. Talk with Him throughout the day. Share what you are thinking and feeling. Ask for His help, wisdom, and guidance.

When you read Scripture, pause and reflect on what you are reading. Ask God what He might want to show you through His Word. When you notice something, respond with gratitude.

Over time, you may start to notice ways that God responds to you. He might bring a Scripture to mind, give you a thought or insight, or remind you of His presence and peace. As you lean in and practice, you will grow more familiar with His voice and guidance.

This week we will practice **Talking With God**. Like any relationship, it takes time and patience, but the rewards are deeply meaningful. Imagine what it will look like as you grow to discover that God is closer than you realize, and He delights in sharing life with you.

GROUP STUDY: Talking With God

Begin with Prayer and Silence

As a group say a quick prayer to invite the Holy Spirit to guide your time together. Then spend a moment in silence, expressing a desire to hear from God.

Explore the Scriptures

1. Let's read Exodus 33:10-17. This is an amazing dialogue that Moses had with God, like talking with a friend. What do you imagine this was like for Moses? Does the idea of talking with God intimidate, frighten, or excite you?
2. In the first couple chapters of Genesis, we see God interact with Adam and Eve. He walks and talks with them. This is the relationship we were designed for. Do you think God still wants to communicate with us today? Why or why not?
3. Jesus talked with His followers while He was on earth. When He returned to heaven, do you think Jesus continued to communicate with them? How? Do you think He communicates with us today in the same way? Let's read John 10:14-16. What are some ways Jesus might communicate with us based on examples in the Bible?

Read Through the Practice Together

Read through the practice on the next page together, and then answer these questions:

- Do you feel you understand the practice? Do you have any questions about it?
- How do you feel about practicing this, any concerns?

Share Your Personal Action Plan with the Group

Jesus replied, "...blessed are all who hear the word of God and put it into practice." - Luke 11:28

I will practice Talking With God on (day and time) _____

in this place (location) _____

Close in Prayer

PRACTICE: Talking With God

The practice of 'Talking With God' is about learning to interact with God in your everyday life. It's the practice of recognizing God's voice and sharing life with Him throughout your day.

FIRST STEP: Conversational Prayer

Begin with silence. Pause, breathe, and quiet your mind before speaking. This helps you tune in to God's presence. Then start to interact with God naturally throughout the day.

Talking out loud can help. Perhaps start your day with: *"Good morning, Lord!"*

Notice moments in your day to thank Him:

"Lord, the sky is beautiful today—thank You!" "Thank You for friends who show Your love."

Bring your needs, fears, and concerns to Him. *"Lord, I need your help. I'm stressed today."*

As your comfort grows, begin to ask the Lord questions: *"Is there something you want me to know today?" "How can I be like you in this situation?"* Then listen. Be open to the idea that the Lord might give you a thought, a verse, or a sense of His presence. Be patient as you practice.

End your conversations with gratitude. Thank Him for loving you and wanting you to know Him.

SECOND STEP: Immanuel Journaling

Immanuel Journaling is a great way to help you learn God's voice by giving the Lord space to talk to you. Find a piece of paper or a small journal and grab a pen. The first thing you are going to do is write out a paragraph or two to the Lord. Write it like a personal letter. List things that you are grateful for that God has given you, and times when He has shown up in your life.

(example) "Lord, I am so grateful for the conversation I had with you today. I really sensed that you were listening, and I felt your presence with me. Thank you for watching over my family and helping us meet our budget. I'm so grateful that you love me, and that you are always with me..."

After you have done this, pause for a moment and ask the Holy Spirit to help you write out what you sense God might be saying back to you. This might feel awkward, but by practicing this you are giving God room and space to answer you. Like learning to ride a bike, you are taking first steps to learn His voice. Trust the Holy Spirit will guide you as you practice. In the beginning, 95% of what you write will probably be you and 5% is from God... but over time, and with practice, you will begin to notice - more and more the Holy Spirit is guiding you as you write.

(example) "I'm so grateful for our time together too. I love spending time with you, and I see your heart growing in love as you spend time with me. Know that I'm listening, and I am always with you! Your family is precious to me, I love them even more than you do, and I am watching over them. You are my joy. I love you. Let's walk through this day together."

Know that God will always be consistent with His Word. He will encourage, instruct, and inform – but not condemn or criticize you. Any other voice is not Him. Pray, trust, rely on God, and listen.

