



Southwest Indian Ministries Camps

Teen Devotional

Answer the questions and return to SIMCamps | 14202 N 73rd Ave. | Peoria, AZ 85381. Please print legibly.

First and Last Name: _____ Age: _____

E-mail Address: _____ Text Number: _____

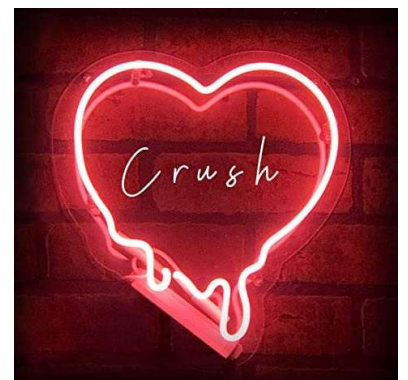
Prayer:

Does it even make a difference?

- Have you ever felt intimidated to talk with someone (celebrity, teacher or boss, that guy/girl you had a crush on)?
- How did the conversation go?
- What would have made it easier?
- If you could say anything to God right now, what would you say?

WHAT THE BIBLE HAS TO SAY ABOUT IT:

If you want to follow Christ, you really should spend some intentional time talking and listening to him. How can you be in a relationship with someone if you never talk to them? Or picture this: you have a giant crush on someone, so you go on a mission to find out more about this person and get to know them better. You ask that person's friends what he or she's like, you look at the pictures they post, and you even listen especially close whenever they talk in class. You end up finding out bits and pieces of information, but nothing earth-shattering. Meanwhile, your giant crush is growing, but you've never even talked to this person. Is that a good relationship? Is that really what you were hoping for when you went on a mission to learn more about them?



The same thing is often true about our relationship with God. Sure, we can find out more about him by reading stuff, or asking others who know him what he's like. But to really be in a relationship, to really follow God, you're going to have to talk to him, listen to him, ask him questions, and tell him what's on your mind. Jesus knew how important it was to slip away and find time to pray. He got up before sunrise and sacrificed some sleep to create time for prayer. Mark 1:35 says this: "And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, [Jesus] departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed." And Jesus knew God the Father at a pretty deep level. Are you willing to go out of your way to make prayer an important part of your life?

The reading below has one of Jesus' best-known teachings on prayer and includes a model of prayer for us: The Lord's Prayer. Jesus reminds his followers that prayer is not about going through the motions, looking a certain way, or saying a bunch of empty words. Instead, prayer is all about what's going on inside you. It's about making a deep connection with God.

Matthew 6:1–16

Giving to the Needy

6 “Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

2 “So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 3 But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,⁴ so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Prayer

5 “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. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.⁶ But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. 7 And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

9 “This, then, is how you should pray:

“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,

¹⁰ your kingdom come,
your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ Give us today our daily bread.

¹² And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ And lead us not into temptation,^[a]
but deliver us from the evil one.^[b]

¹⁴ For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.¹⁵ But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Fasting

¹⁶ “When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.

Questions:

- What does Jesus include in his model prayer? Read it through again and think about what Jesus chose to include (and what he didn't include).
- Do you know what all the lines of the Lord's Prayer mean? Are there any lines that don't make sense? Which ones?

- Are there any lines of Jesus' prayer that stand out to you? Why?
- Jesus explains that praying isn't about saying a bunch of words. What is it about?
- Is there such a thing as a bad prayer?

A SECOND LOOK:

Richard was trapped in his own body. His motorcycle hit a car, and he was thrown 20 feet from the wreck. Richard could still think, hear, and feel things, but he was paralyzed, unable to move or speak. Imagine being buried alive, with no way to interact with other people, always trapped in one place. That's what Richard had to deal with every single day. So, his parents had to make a difficult decision. They remembered Richard saying, years before the crash, that if he was ever completely paralyzed, he wouldn't want to live anymore. They told the doctors to take him off life support and let him die. There was just one problem: now that he actually was in that state, Richard didn't want to be taken off life support. He wanted to live. But he couldn't speak or move his arms, so he had no way to tell anyone.



Amazingly, one of Richard's doctors discovered that Richard could still blink on command. After working with him for a few weeks, the doctor asked Richard if he wanted to stay alive. Richard blinked twice: "Yes." The doctor asked two more times, just to be sure. Each time Richard said "yes" just by blinking his eyes. So, his family left him on life support. Eventually, he learned to move his head an inch in either direction and to smile (which he does every time his daughters come to visit him). In Richard's case, being unable to communicate wasn't just annoying, it could have killed him.

Now imagine that the God of the universe who created you didn't make a way for you to communicate with him. Like Richard, we'd be "locked in," unable to speak to God about the most important things in life. Thankfully, God gave us a way to communicate with him, and it's far more useful than eye blinks. We have an open channel of dialogue, a phone line directly connected to God that never hangs up. We can speak with him whenever we want, just by praying.

Questions:

- What do you think it would be like to be "locked in" and unable to communicate?
- Why do you think so many people choose not to speak with God?
- Do you carve out space and time in your day for prayer?
- Ask yourself: Do I really pray as if prayer works? Why or why not?

RATE IT:

Give yourself a 1 to 5 rating. How would you describe your prayer life?



LIVE IT OUT: ACTS Prayer

There are many different ways to pray, but one easy-to-use option is the ACTS method. Take a look at the prayer page on the next page, and spend the next 10 minutes practicing the ACTS method and writing out a prayer to God.

Extra Challenge: One great way to grow in the practice of prayer is to keep a prayer journal. A prayer journal doesn't mean that you write out every word, sentence by sentence. Just make bullet points or short notes of what you want to say to God. It's a guide to help you stay focused and grow in prayer. It's also a great way to look back on previous days' entries to see how God has answered your prayers. Consider starting a prayer journal using the ACTS prayer method by simply writing ACTS down the left side of the page and filling in the specifics to the right.

APPLY IT:

Write down one way you are going to apply what you now know about prayer.

Think of something you can do this week to grow in prayer.

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 SIMCamp Devotional,
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Be specific:

- What are you going to do?
- When are you going to do it?
- Is there someone who can keep you accountable?

THINK ABOUT IT:

- "Is prayer your steering wheel or your spare tire?" – Corrie Ten Boom
- "[Prayer should not be regarded] as a duty which must be performed, but rather as a privilege which is to be enjoyed, a rare delight that is always revealing some new beauty." – E.M. Bounds

LIVE IT OUT: ACTS Prayer

The ACTS prayer method is a tool to guide you in the process of prayer, rather than the common wish list of things you want from God. Prayer is not just a list of wants. It is a way to build an eternal relationship with God. A prayer method is important because it keeps in your head the true purpose of prayer. Here's what ACTS stands for:

Adoration: Praising God by reflecting on and speaking about who he is. (This is not thanking God for what he's done—yet.) This part of prayer might cover things like God's holiness, awesomeness, grace, and love.

Confession: Once we recognize who God is, we come face to face with who we are: sinners. We confess our sins because God is holy, just, and forgiving. This is where we tell God what we're sorry for.

Thanksgiving: God has done some truly astounding things, and we should thank him for what he's done. We just finished confessing our sins, so we no longer carry that guilt around. Now we can approach God with grateful hearts, thanking him for his great work in our lives.

Supplication: Now that our perspective is clear about who God is, who we are, and why we are thankful, we can come to God with our needs and requests.

Now take some time to practice praying with the ACTS method.

Adoration: *God, I praise you because...*

Confession: *God, I'm sorry for...*

Thanksgiving: *God, thank you for...*

Supplication: *Lord, please help with...*