



YOU CAN TALK TO GOD

GETTING CONNECTED

TRY JESUS COURSE BOOK 09

“FRIENDS WITHOUT BORDERS”

“Just six years after Harvard undergraduate Mark Zuckerberg helped found Facebook in his dorm room... the company has joined the ranks of the Web’s great superpowers.”

(Time May 31, 2010)

SOCIAL CHANGE

09 – YOU CAN TALK TO GOD



We are living through a major social transition in the way we connect with one another.

Facebook's inventor **Mark Zuckerberg** is at the center of this change. With nearly 600 million users, Facebook is the connective tissue for nearly a tenth of the planet, with more information about its members than any government.

About a billion new pieces of content are posted each day. Every 60 seconds nearly 2 billion actions are performed. It houses the world's largest photo collection, with nearly 1 billion added each week.

For this reason Zuckerberg was awarded *Time's* **Person of the Year for 2010**, and in May of that year Facebook featured as a *Time* cover article.

“The mission of the company is to make the world more open and connected,” says Zuckerberg.

The power of social media is seen in the part it played in popular protest for democracy in Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen and other Middle East countries.

While membership is free Facebook makes its money from advertising, estimated to be \$1 to 2 billion in 2010. According to one researcher, Facebook flashed more than 176 billion banner ads at users in a three months period.

“The more updates Facebook gets you to share and the more preferences it entreats you to make pub-

lic, the more data it's able to pool for advertisers.”

When Facebook users click a 'Like button' next to content they like on the Web (movies, CDs, ads, etc.), it's automatically filed on the website and on their Facebook profile. Their preference is then available to all their friends. The result is that advertisers are able to target users on a very specific level.

When Facebook changes its privacy controls it tends to automatically set users' preferences to **maximum exposure** and then put the onus on users to dial them back.

Despite Facebook's privacy settings the Wall Street Journal reported that it had found ten of the most popular Facebook applications - Farmville, Quiz Maker, etc. - have shared tens of millions of users' personal information to third-party advertisers.

Time says, **“It's still nearly impossible to know how our data might be used in other places, such as Facebook applications or elsewhere on the Web.”**

While we need to be careful about what information we share on Facebook, its phenomenal growth illustrates that human beings are social creatures. We like to connect with each other. God, who is personal, made us as personal beings, to connect with Him and each other.

We connect with God through the Bible and Prayer. When we share personal information with God in prayer we can be sure it will be kept private.

SHAUN'S ANSWER TO PRAYER

Shaun Hart, top Australian Football League player, is connected with God. His team, the Brisbane Lions was host to the St Kilda Saints in front of a massive home crowd.

Nearing full-time, though, the Lions' head trainer, running onto the ground to assist injured players, collapsed - the victim of a major heart attack. Shaun, one of the first there, knelt beside his trainer, grabbed his hand and started praying, while tens of thousands of spectators looked on.

The medics pronounced the trainer dead. But Shaun kept praying until he came round. The trainer, who

was dead for about six minutes, couldn't remember a thing. But Shaun could. He was emotionally torn up by the magnitude of the situation that day. Team chaplain **Dean Davis** said, "It was the most touching period of time and expression of God at work I've ever seen. And Shaun is an awesome ambassador for the kingdom."

The head trainer later underwent a triple bypass. He has a letter, which he treasures. The doctor testified how amazed and deeply moved he was by the fact the trainer came back to life. Again, Shaun isn't at all amazed. He knows the power of the One he serves. (Adapted from Ric Chapman, "Shaun Hart: More Than Football," *Signs of the Times*.)

shutterstock.com



shutterstock.com

Prayer is Talking to God as a Friend

1. How do we know that God will listen to our prayers? Jeremiah 29:11-13 (page 558 in NIV Bible: International Bible Society, 00195)

Then you will call upon me and come and _____ to me, and I will _____ to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with _____.

Notice what Jesus says about how willing God is to hear and answer our prayers.

ASK and it will be given to you; SEEK and you will find; KNOCK and the door will be opened to you.... If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, HOW MUCH MORE WILL YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN GIVE GOOD GIFTS TO THOSE WHO ASK HIM! Matthew 7:7-11 (page 685)

The story is told of a man who asked **Alexander the Great** (King of Greece, 336-323 BC) for a huge sum of money in exchange for his daughter's hand in marriage. The ruler consented and told him to request of

his treasurer whatever he wanted. When he asked for the enormous amount the keeper to the funds was startled and said he couldn't give him that much without a direct order.

Going to Alexander, the treasurer argued that even a small fraction of the money requested would more than serve the purpose. "No," replied Alexander, "let him have it all. I like that fellow. He does me honour. He treats me like a king and proves by what he asks that he believes me to be both rich and generous."

In the same way, we should talk with confidence to God in prayer and present requests that express high views of God's love and generosity!

2. How often should we pray and for what should we be thankful? 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (page 837)

Be joyful always; pray _____; give thanks in _____, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

This doesn't mean we should be on our knees in church praying all the time. It means we can talk to God at any time and in any place. No time or place is inappropriate. One Christian writer has said:

"In the crowds of the street, in the midst of a business engagement, we may send up a petition to God and plead for divine guidance... We should have the door of the heart open continually and our invitation going up that Jesus may come and abide as a heavenly guest in the soul." (Steps to Christ, page 99)

Promises Concerning Prayer

3. What is the best evidence that the apostle Paul gives for God's willingness to hear and answer our prayers?

Romans 8:32 (page 801)

He who _____, but gave him up for us all - how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

4. What promise did Jesus give concerning prayer? Mark 11:24 (page 717)

Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, _____ that you have _____ it, and it will be _____.

5. What did James say we should ask God for? James 1:5-8 (page 854)

If any of you lacks _____, he should ask God, who gives _____ to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.

How and When to Pray

How should we talk to God? Jesus gave us a model prayer that is commonly called "The Lord's Prayer." He said, "This, then, is how you should pray":

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed [holy] be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." Matthew 6:9-13 (page 685)

It's meant as a guide as to how to address God and what to include in our prayers. It is not intended to be something repeated mindlessly.



6. What kind of prayers should be avoided? Matthew 6:5, 7 (page 684)

And when you pray, do not keep on _____ like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their _____.

7. In whose name should we pray? John 14:14 (page 764)

You may ask me for _____ in _____, and I will do it.

To pray in the name of Jesus means more than to merely mention that name at the beginning and end of a prayer. It means to pray in harmony with His will. "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us." (1 John 5:14, page 864)

8. In addition to being able to talk to God at any time, what did Jesus say about having a special place for private prayer? Matthew 6:6 (page 684)

But when you pray, go into _____, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in _____, will reward you.

9. Is there also a place for public prayer? Matthew 18:20 (page 695)


For where _____ come together in my name, _____.

10. What should we pray about and what should our attitude be? Philippians 4:6 (page 832)

Do not be anxious about anything, but in _____, by prayer and petition, with _____, present your requests to God.

11. What example of submissive prayer did Jesus give us? Matthew 26:36-46 (page 703)

My Father, if it is possible, may this _____ be taken from me. Yet _____, but _____.



Secrets of Answered Prayer

FEEL OUR NEED OF GOD

1 What does David say God will do when we feel our need and call to Him in our troubles? Psalm 107:19 (page 432)

Then they CRIED to the Lord in their TROUBLE, and he SAVED them from their distress.

On the TV program Kids Say, **Bill Cosby** asked a little boy what he wanted to be when he grew up. “A pilot”, answered the boy. “What would you do if the engine stopped?” Immediately the boy began to pray: “Our Father which art in heaven ...”

It's often said that during the war many an atheist learned to pray in foxholes.

After the 1998 Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race, where tragically six people died, one of the competitors who fell overboard and survived said in a TV interview that while he wasn't a religious person, he did a lot of “talking” when he was in the water.

“Keep your wants, your joys, your sorrows, your cares, and your fears before God. You cannot burden Him; you cannot weary Him... Take to Him everything that perplexes the mind. Nothing is too great for Him to bear, for He holds up worlds, He rules over all the affairs of the universe. Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for Him to notice.

“There is no chapter in our experience too dark for Him to read; there is no perplexity too difficult for Him to unravel. No calamity can befall the least of His children, no anxiety harass the soul, no joy cheer, no sincere prayer escape the lips, of which our heavenly Father is unobservant, or in which He takes no immediate interest.”

(Steps to Christ, page 100)

HAVE FAITH IN GOD

2 What must we have to please God and what must we believe when we pray? Hebrews 11:6 (page 851)

And without FAITH it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must BELIEVE that he EXISTS and that he REWARDS those who earnestly seek him.



OBEY GOD

3 What must we do if we expect God to answer our prayers? 1 John 3:21-23 (page 863)

We have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we OBEY his commands and do what PLEASES him.

DON'T KNOWINGLY CHERISH SIN

4 What reason does David (the writer of most of Psalms) give for God not hearing our prayers? Psalm 66:18 (page 411)

If I had CHERISHED SIN in my heart, the Lord would not have LISTENED.

What is the reason why some prayers are not answered? James 4:3 (page 855)

When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with WRONG MOTIVES, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

The comedian Woody Allen well illustrates the way some people pray. He says, "If only God would give me some clear sign! Like making a large deposit in my name at a Swiss bank." (*Without Feathers*)

SPIRIT OF LOVE AND FORGIVENESS

5 What should we do if we have anything against anyone? Mark 11:25 (page 717)

If you hold anything against anyone, FORGIVE HIM, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.

A child wrote a letter to God: Dear God, I bet it is very hard for you to love everybody in the whole world. There are only four people in our family and I can never do it. -Nan

It's not always easy to have a forgiving spirit toward some people. But the debt we owe God is far greater than what anyone owes us—and He has forgiven us.

NEVER GIVE UP PRAYING

6 How does Paul indicate that we should persevere in prayer? Colossians 4:2 (page 835)

DEVOTE yourselves to prayer, being WATCHFUL and THANKFUL.

The Bible Society's Contemporary English Version translates this verse: "Never give up praying. And when you pray, keep alert and be thankful."

Closer than a Phone Call

A woman telephoned the manager of a large opera house and told him she had lost a valuable diamond pin the night before at the concert. The man asked her to hold the line. A search was made and the brooch was found; but when he got back to the phone, the woman had hung up.

He waited for her to call again, and even put a notice in the paper, but he heard nothing further.

What a strange and foolish person, we say, but isn't this the way some of us pray? We tell God all about our needs, but then fail to "hold the line." As a result, we miss the joy of answered prayer and the thrill and reward of a persistent faith.

God always answers sincere prayer: sometimes He says "Yes"; sometimes He says "No"; sometimes He

says "Wait a while."

A study at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Centre found that one of the best predictors of survival among 232 heart-surgery patients was the degree to which the patients said they drew comfort and strength from religious faith. Those who did not have a religious faith had more than three times the death rate of those who did.

A woman was talking on the telephone to a friend, who asked for prayer. Her five-year-old daughter, Amy, came bouncing into the room, stood still for a moment to listen, and heard her mother praying. "Is that God on the phone?"

Amy asked excitedly. "I need to talk to Him, too!"

(Christian Herald)



shutterstock.com

God is closer
than a phone call

You'll be pleased to know that God is closer than a phone call away! Have you started to talk to God in prayer?

- Yes.
 I have been praying to God for some time now

Do you find any difficulties with prayer?

What do you feel when you think about God, the Creator of the universe, wanting to talk with you as a Friend?

Scripture taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION ©. Copyright
Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used
by permission of International Bible Society. (NIBMIN 00195)

Copyright © Errol Webster 2011

Published by: The Seventh Day Adventist Church, South Pacific Division Design

and Layout: DEC Creatives, Bonnells Bay, New South Wales, Australian Cover

Image: shutterstock.com