

The Science of Prayer

The ABC's

By Glenn and Ethel Coon

Name: _____

Date: _____

INTRODUCTORY LESSON

The Problem Solver

Introduction:

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" Luke 11:13.

A minister lived in Boston, Massachusetts, in the dead of winter. He and his family were in the midst of a blizzard. Their little 18-month-old daughter came down with a fever. For days the fever raged inside while the blizzard stormed outside. Coincidentally, when the blizzard abated the fever did also. But the little girl had eaten nothing for days. Now her hunger returned. Her weakened body called for nourishment.

Edging herself out of bed, she wobbled over to where Mother sat. Looking up into Mother's eyes she painted her picture of need in one word, "Apple?" Mother knew there was not an apple in the house. Mother turned and looked in the direction of Daddy. The little girl followed Mother's eyes and started in Daddy's direction. Placing one hand on one knee and the other on Daddy's other knee; she looked pitifully up into Daddy's face and spoke the one word, "Apple?"

But Daddy knew there was not an apple in the house. He knew the blizzard had left the snow waist deep. You cannot walk through snow that deep. Nor even wade. You must wallow on all fours.

But she was his daughter. He was her daddy. He clothed himself with warm winter attire and went into the snow. He wallowed on all fours through the deep snow. On and on he went. Finally he secured an apple. He then returned to his home and daughter. He placed in her hands an apple. Why did he go through all this painful effort to get one apple? We parents know that it was because he was her daddy.

Will you pause right now and look up into the heavens and think of God as your eager Father? Of all the religions on earth, not one thinks of God as Father except Christianity.

We have observed that multitudes of professed Christians approach God, but most of them in the wrong attitude. They think they must overcome God's reluctance. They have no picture of God's character of love. They have never yet seen God as eager to answer prayer. Their words testify to this misunderstanding of God. Their countenances reflect this negativism. The words they use in prayer bespeak a definite doubt of His willingness to do what He has promised. It is the purpose of this introductory lesson to change any such attitudes.

We are horrified at the way the jungle woman approaches her god. She throws her baby into the mouth of the crocodile. Thus she hopes to overcome her god's reluctance to answer her prayer. Yet, so few of

us professing Christians see the true God, the living God, as He really is. Let us look at Him in this introductory lesson as He truly is. Jesus himself stated a great truth. He declared, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." John 17:3. It is impossible to understand any spiritual truth unless that truth is studied in the light of our Lord's character. Paul declared, "I say the truth in Christ. ..." Romans 9: 1. Truth takes on a real meaning when we study it in Jesus Christ, His attitudes, and the character of our great heavenly Father.

1. Think of God looking for someone to aid.

"For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect [or, sincerely fixed] toward him." 2 Chronicles 16:9.

2. Let us look to Calvary and capture the true picture of God.

"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Romans 8:32.

Let us repeat a parable we have often told. It is not true, praise God, except as the lesson is true, though sad.

It is a beautiful Sunday afternoon. We are picnicking with Pastor and Mrs. Brown and their son, Jim. Our son, Jack, is with us. He and Jim are plunging into the swift flowing river as the parents chat casually together on the bank nearby. A large oak tree supplies the shade on this warm day. The river in time of flood has washed away the soil from under part of the root system of the tree. The long, large roots still protrude into the river, creating a danger to those who dive. One might dive between roots only to be held fast. And, alas, this is what happens to our Jack. Jim is a lifeguard. He is expert at lifesaving. He looks to his father, and in a word explains the situation. A look of horror passes over the father's countenance, but he nods assent. Jim now dives into the waters. With almost lightning-like movements he extricates Jack from the clutches of those roots.

But Jim is weakening under the water without oxygen. He is able, however, to lift our son, Jack, upwards. With an almost superhuman stretch of his arm, he places our son's limp hand in ours. We reach also for Jim's hand, but miss it by inches. Jim slips back into the water and goes [Page 4] under. While we are resuscitating Jack, Jim's parents work frantically to reach him. But the swift-flowing river carries his body far down where it is finally caught by some bushes. It is too late to save Jim. He dies to save my son, Jack.

A sad funeral service takes place three days later. Jack and we stand with tearstained cheeks beside Pastor and Mrs. Brown as we look upon the lifeless form of Jim. There he is in the casket with the flowers all around in profusion. But flowers and tears cannot bring Jim back again.

Our son, Jack, speaks as we stand there together. He is conversing solemnly with Pastor Brown. "I can never, never forget what you did for me." Jack cannot restrain the tears of sympathy and appreciation. There is a big hot tear on Pastor Brown's cheek as he answers back with a love-light in his eyes, "Jack, you know now how much we think of you."

With deep emotion Jack replies in one word, "Absolutely!"

At the graveside, our son and we stand again next to Pastor and Mrs. Brown. "The amazing rescue by your son will never be forgotten," our son says solemnly, but emotionally. And he adds, "Your willingness to let him perish for me is almost beyond comprehension."

Science of Prayer

As the committal service ends, my son once again in inexpressible emotion speaks to Pastor Brown, "I will never forget, as long as life shall last, what your love did for me."

A few weeks later my wife and I are called out of town suddenly. We leave our son, Jack, in charge of our large house. He reads and works about the place. He prepares some important papers for class the next day in school. In his concentrated study he has forgotten, all day, to eat. As he thinks of the mailbox outside, he slips through the door. Forgetful of the key, he locks himself out of the house.

He tries every door to the house. Alas, every one is locked. His keys are inside. So also is his billfold and change purse. He suddenly realizes his weariness, and his hunger. Night shadows are gathering and he is outside his own home. "How foolish I was!" Jack exclaims in self reproachfulness.

Hysterically he tries the doors again. Then the windows. All is in vain. He is doomed to sleep out in the frost without so much as a jacket, or a hot cup of milk. Then his thoughts remind him that Pastor Brown and his wife live just down the street a few houses. A happy thought brings him relief. He will go to the Brown's home for the night.

But on his way down the sidewalk fear grips him. Doubt fills his heart. When Pastor Brown answers the doorbell, Jack bursts into tears. He begins something like this: "Pastor Brown, I am in trouble." Pastor Brown tries to speak a word of comfort, but in vain. "Pastor Brown," Jack starts again, "I am in great trouble. But I do not know whether you would be willing to help me or not." Pastor Brown looks on in amazement.

Our son continues, "For several hours I have been thinking of you, and have wondered whether you really love me or not." Before Pastor Brown can get a word in edgewise, our son continues. "Pastor Brown, I have locked myself out of my own home and I feel that I am imposing on you. I am not sure to what extent you are interested in me." Pastor Brown can scarcely credit his ears. Surely he must be hearing wrongly.

But as our son Jack continues, Pastor Brown is convinced that he has heard rightly. Yes, our son is in great trouble, but also in great doubt. He actually doubts the willingness of Pastor Brown to help him, the willingness of a man who only three weeks before gave his son to die for Jack.

Pastor Brown can scarcely find words to express his amazement at Jack's misunderstanding. Finally he is able to speak. It is with inexpressible sadness and shock. "Jack," he begins tenderly and reprovingly, "have you already forgotten the river?"

"O forgive me," Jack replies. "It completely slipped my mind."

When my wife and I return the next day we are chagrined to hear what happened. "Jack, why did you question Pastor Brown's willingness to give you a place to sleep? Why did you for a single moment doubt that he would gladly give you a nice warm supper?"

Our son replies sheepishly, "Dad, I forgot the river."

Dear student, do we need to draw a parallel? When we doubt our heavenly Father's willingness to come to our rescue, have we forgotten a hill called Calvary?

3. Think of God as often giving us something better than we ask.

"I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known; ... and not forsake them." Isaiah 42:16.

We often repeat the story of our daughter, Juanita. This experience took place when she was only a tiny tot. We walked into the front room of our home and beheld a terrifying sight. She was in the process of

placing a safety razor blade in her mouth. God gave us quickness of thought. We smiled, hoping she would imitate us. She did, and never closed her mouth on the blade. We walked slowly toward her, smiling continually.

We quietly repeated the words, "Nita, Nita." This kept her attention on us so she never closed her mouth. She continued to smile broadly. We moved our thumb and point finger in place. We reached into her mouth, still wide with smiles, picked out the razor blade and set her free. Then we spoke commandingly, "Juanita, that blade would have cut your mouth up."

We then supplied her need for food. But not by giving her what she thought was food--razor blades. We knew the better way. God always answers the prayer of sincere faith. But he reserves the right to answer that prayer the very best way--the way we would wish, could we fully understand all the circumstances.

A friend of ours, Mr. Stan Chinn, related an interesting experience of his with a beggar on the street. This man asked Mr. Chinn for a quarter, to which Mr. Chinn replied, "No". As the beggar was turning to speak to the next person on the street, Mr. Chinn called to him, "Sir, I am not going to give you a quarter. I am going to give you a dollar." And he did just that.

Picture that beggar returning home. He tells his family that a man said "No" to his request for a quarter. Had the beggar stopped there in his story, he would have been guilty of two things: (1) a misstatement of the facts; (2) misrepresenting Mr. Chinn.

So for us to picture God as saying, "No, period!" is misrepresenting Him. God never says to His believing child, "No, period." He may sometimes say, "No, comma," meaning, "You are not asking for one quarter as much as I want to give you!"

"Now unto him that is able to do *exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think*, according to the power that worketh in us," Ephesians 3:20. Here we see a picture of God as being eager to do so much more for us than we ask, that our asking appears pitifully short of what He wants to give us.

4. Think of God as truthful.

"God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" Numbers 23:19.

A minister, who read the Old Testament Scriptures through 69 times and the New Testament Scriptures 71 [Page 8] times, discovered at least 3,573 promises there. Others claim to have found more--even up to 7,000 or 8,000.

A minister was approached by a woman who said she had a problem. It was forgiveness. The minister pointed her to the promise of 1 John 1:9. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

The minister pointed out that the condition to this promise is that she confess her sins. She explained to the minister that she had confessed her sins hundreds of times for forty years. He then suggested that they fall on their knees and claim the promise. This they did. The minister arose with strong assurance in his face that the lady was forgiven completely. But her response was still one of grave doubts. The minister said, assuringly, "You are now forgiven, aren't you?"

"That is what I'm afraid to say," the lady replied, her countenance clouded with doubt. The minister asked her if she believed the Bible. Her reply was a positive "Yes." He asked her if she believed the Bible promises. The answer again was a firm "Yes." Then he asked her if she believed this particular promise (1 John 1:9). She still gave a firm "Yes." The minister, just to be sure, asked her once more if she had

confessed all her sins. She replied she had confessed all she was aware of. The Holy Spirit then seemed to impress him to ask a searching question: "If the Holy Spirit should point out one sin you have not confessed, would you be willing to confess that sin also?"

The lady unhesitatingly replied with a fervent, "Yes, I surely would!"

"What about the sin brought to view in 1 John 5:10 in the middle of the verse?" the minister asked. It says, "He that believeth not God hath made him a liar." "What about confessing this sin you have committed for 40 years?" The minister spoke so kindly and his face registered such Christ-like tenderness that the reproof went like a dart straight to her heart. She saw that she had been committing a very great sin in not believing God. She had been making God a liar.

"Let us get down on our knees!" she cried. And there she confessed her sin of making God out a liar for 40 years. Then she asked the minister to claim God's promise for her. She sobbed out her joyful confidence that she was now forgiven. As they rose to their feet she exclaimed, "Just think of it, Pastor, I could have had complete forgiveness and cleansing 40 years ago had I but believed God."

Hebrews 6:18 declares that it is "impossible for God to lie."

5. Think of God as powerful enough to bring solutions.

"By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. . . For he spake, and it was." Psalm 33:6,9.

"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God. ..." Hebrews 11:3.

When the authors of these lessons were learning the new kind of prayer, two texts of Scripture came alive in an amazing floodlight of revelation. They are (1) Romans 4:17, "God, . . . calleth those things which be not as though they were." (2) Psalm 33:9, "He spake, and it was." Putting the two passages of Scripture together, it says, in effect, that anything that does not exist, does exist the moment God's creative word names it. This is our creator God.

6. God requires of us childlike faith.

"Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 18:3.

How does childlike faith express itself? We have given the experience of two little girls in another work. We review it briefly here. They were very little children, discussing a point on which they disagreed, when one said, "It is so."

The other replied, "It tain't so."

The first girl in order to give weight to her statement replied, "Yes, it is so because Mother said it is so."

But the other little girl did not know her friend's mother, so she spoke with a shrug of the shoulder, "It still tain't so."

This fully aroused the first girl, who replied with great earnestness and conviction, "It is so, too, because what Mother says is so EVEN IF IT TAIN'T SO." This is childlike faith.

7. We are to visualize the solution.

Jesus taught us to offer a prayer that asks, believes, and then actually receives, or claims, the solution without doubting, because what God says is so, even though our own minds cannot comprehend it all.

Science of Prayer

Jesus commands us to:

ASK-Matthew 7:7, "Ask, and it shall be given you."

BELIEVE-Mark 11:24, "Believe that ye receive ... and ye shall have."

RECEIVE, or CLAIM-Matthew 21:22, "All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." (We use the words receive and claim interchangeably because when we go to the airport baggage claim, for instance, we claim our baggage when we receive it.)

8. Claiming God's creative promises.

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." 2 Peter 1:4.

"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51:10.

"Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." John 15:3.

Assignment

We recommend to you, our student, a review of this introductory lesson. You will receive much benefit thereby. This is what we do with important lessons or sermons. We review them several times. We even drill ourselves on the principles taught. Try doing this. The second, third, or fourth review will do more for you than the first reading. We suggest that when in a prayer circle with a few friends, you discuss the lesson together. Each one present will discuss what was particularly helpful to him (her). By repetition the mind holds the truths presented.

A PERSONAL MESSAGE

Dear Student:

As you enter upon the study of these lessons, you will find a great urge to share with others. This is perfectly normal. There are two classes of individuals with whom you will want to share:

1. Those who are eager to listen.
2. Those who are turned off when you talk. For those who are eager to listen, we suggest that you form a little home ABC prayer group. (See instructions in Appendix.)

For those who are turned off when you speak, we suggest you follow carefully our 'Personal Message to You' section following each lesson. Experience has taught us that in almost every instance they are turned on again by following the seven secrets of communication.

We wish to share these secrets with you. They tell us how to converse, how to communicate, how to just plain talk. They tell us what to talk about as we converse with a person who is turned off, or who has never been turned on.

May we suggest first of all that until you start reading these Personal Messages to You, you merely listen to others. And, if they ask, refrain from overtalking. Remember it is not the amount of talking that helps. It is rather the quality of what you say that determines its effectiveness.

Cordially yours,

Glenn Coon, Sr. Glenn Coon, Jr.

QUIZ ON INTRODUCTORY LESSON

1. We should think of God as a very good _____ Luke 11:13.
2. We do well to try to visualize God's _____ running to and fro to see some one who needs help and will ask Him. 2 Chronicles 16:9.
3. Romans 8:32 tells us that God _____ gives us all things.
4. God brings us by a way we know _____ Isaiah 42:16.
5. Our Lord wants to give us abundantly above all we can ask or _____ Ephesians 3:20.
6. The worlds were framed by the _____ of God. Hebrews 11:3.
7. God requires _____ faith. Matthew 18:3.

Correct Answers on Answer Sheet.