

Week #1 – Let’s Begin at the Beginning

As we journey together for the next several weeks, let’s start by dropping some of the presumptions we have about what it means to talk to God. The first thing that we need to understand is that we were designed to communicate (pray) with our Creator. We have a natural need for relationships, a built-in longing for connection and intimacy, including a connection with God. Like any relationship, to have intimacy, you need to be in conversation, hearing AND listening.

Having a conversation with God can take many forms, but one of the most original is our response to times when the world around us is bigger than we can understand or explain—for good or for bad. Those sunrises of breathtaking beauty that drive us to a deep sense of appreciation and gratitude (even if we might not know to whom it is directed) are moments of prayer. In the same way, those times of utter despair and tragedy when we call out for help or ask why—they too are moments of prayer. Regardless of our background, we are naturally driven to pray—to seek a connection, understanding or explanation for these things that are beyond us. It is an inseparable part of who we are.

We are made to pray; everyone does it, even if they don’t know to whom they are praying.

You’re made to pray, but how do you do it? Like conversations we have with family and friends, prayers are not dependent on special words or special places. Talking with Jesus can be exactly that—talking. Just ordinary, everyday conversation—no special words or phrases required.

Peter offers a simple, direct command, *“Give all your worries and cares to God, because he cares for you.”* 1 Peter 5:7. He is saying that our relationship with God enables us to have complete openness and transparency with him. It opens the door for us to share the burdens and concerns that weigh us down. Yet it doesn’t have to stop there. Jesus invites us to share not just the bad, but also the whole of our lives with him, to simply talk with Him.

This is where prayer begins—an actual conversation with God.

Thought to Ponder:

- *What is your reaction if someone says, “We’re going to spend some time in prayer?”*

This Week’s Action Step:

This week, your challenge is simple, but not easy. Take three to five minutes every day and talk to Jesus. Don’t “pray,” just talk. Tell Him what you feel, what you’re worried about, what you thought about the game last night (he watched it too), or anything else. The important thing is learning to have a conversation with God.

Prayer Activator:

If you’ve never prayed before, there is an easy model you can try, called the P-R-A-Y model.

- **P:** Praise God, for the beauty in nature, fun-size Twix, your mom—whatever comes to mind.
- **R:** Repent. Admit your sins (things you have done that are against God’s character) and commit to turning away from them.
- **A:** Ask. This is where you can ask God for requests, such as to show you more of Him, or to be with your friend who is ill.
- **Y:** Yield. Spend time hearing what God has to say to you. Set timer for 2 minutes and listen for God to speak.