

Essentials.

The Biblical basis for the core beliefs of
Christianity.

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Philippians 4.20

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Here are the questions you will be able to answer:

1. Why did God make us?
2. Does it matter how we live?
3. Who is Jesus?
4. Can we trust the Bible?
5. Can we influence God?
6. Can Satan influence us?
7. What is our part in God's plan?

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5300 Patterson S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49530.

Lesson Five

Can we influence God?

The Privilege of Prayer

Here are some ideas and verses we will consider in this lesson:

- Can we influence God?
 - Yes!
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 - Bad situation? 1 Thessalonians 5.18:
 - Yearn for better days: Psalms 42.4
 - Overflow: Colossians 2.6,7
 - Supplication
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 - Cast your cares: Psalms 55.22
 - Because He cares! 1 Peter 5.7
 - Part of supplication is intercession
 - Even secular leaders: 1 Timothy 2.1-4
 - Those in ministry: Colossians 4.2-3
 - Enemies: Luke 6:27-28
 - The Spirit helps: Romans 8.26-28
 - Jesus on prayer
 - Solitude
 - Intensity: Hebrews 5.7
 - Boldness: Luke 11.5-13
 - Persistence: Luke 18.1-8
 - The Lord’s Prayer: Matthew 6.5-13
 - The High Priestly Prayer: John 17
 - Theme verses
 - Melody of thanks: Ephesians 5.19,20
 - “Abba, Father”!: Galatians 4.6
 - Cast your cares: 1 Peter 5.7

+ Can we influence God?

+ Yes, we can

+ He hears: *Psalms 66.16-20*

- 16 Come and listen, all you who fear God; let me tell you what he has done for me. 17 I cried out to him with my mouth; his praise was on my tongue. 18 If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened;
- 19 but God has surely listened and heard my voice in prayer. 20 Praise be to God, who has not rejected my prayer or withheld his love from me!

+ He acts: *Acts 12.1-10*

- 1 It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. 2 He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. 3 When he saw that this pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. This happened
- during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. 4 After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover. 5 So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was
- earnestly praying to God for him. 6 The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance. 7 Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck
- Peter on the side and woke him up. "Quick, get up!" he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists. 8 Then the angel said to him, "Put on your clothes and sandals." And Peter did so. "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me," the angel told him. 9 Peter followed him out
- of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision. 10 They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When
- they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him.

+ Unseen effects: *Daniel 10.11-14*

- 11 He said, "Daniel, you who are highly esteemed, consider carefully the words I am about to speak to you, and stand up, for I have now been sent to you." And when he said this to me, I stood up trembling. 12 Then he continued, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day
- that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. 13 But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days.
- Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. 14 Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come."

+ "Whatever you ask"

+ Believe: *Matthew 21.22*

- 22 If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."

+ Have received: *Mark 11.24*

- 24 Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

+ His words inside: *John 15.7*

- 7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.

+ Wrong motives: *James 4.2,3*

- 2 You want something but don't get it... You do not have, because you do not ask God. 3 When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

+ Obedience: *1 John 3.21,22:*

- 21 Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God 22 and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him.

+ The circle of prayer: *1 John 5.14,15*

- 14 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us--whatever we ask--we know that we have what we asked of him.

- Juvenile onset retinal epithelium macular degeneration

+ **How to pray**

+ As to a loving Father

+ Jesus cried: *Mark 14.36*

- 36 "Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."

+ We cry: *Romans 8.15*

- 15 For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."

+ The Spirit cries: *Galatians 4.6*

- 6 Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father."

+ Our strong Father: *Psalms 62.5-8*

- 5 Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him. 6 He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I shall not be shaken.
- 7 My salvation and my honour depend on God; he is my mighty rock, my refuge. 8 Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge. Selah

- + With confidence: *Hebrews 4.15,16*
 - 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin.
 - 16 Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

- + To whom should we pray?
 - *John 14.28*: "You heard me say, 'I am going away and I am coming back to you.' If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.
 - *Acts 7.59*: While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."
 - *John 16.23*: In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.
 - *Ephesians 3.14*: For this reason I kneel before the Father,
 - *Colossians 1.3*: We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you,
 - *Colossians 3.17*: And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.
 - *Ephesians 5.20*: always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- + When should we pray?
 - + Always: *Luke 18.1*
 - Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.
 - + On all occasions: *Ephesians 6.18*
 - And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.
 - + Constantly: *Acts 1.14*
 - They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.
 - + Without ceasing: *1 Thess 5.16-17*
 - 16 Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing,
 - + In every circumstance: *Philip 4.6,7*
 - Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

- + On the spur of the moment: *Nehemiah 2.1-6*
 - 1 In the month of Nisan in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was brought for him, I took the wine and gave it to the king. I had not been sad in his presence before; 2 so the king asked me, "Why does your face look so sad
 - when you are not ill? This can be nothing but sadness of heart." I was very much afraid, 3 but I said to the king, "May the king live for ever! Why should my face not look sad when the city where my fathers are buried lies in ruins,
 - and its gates have been destroyed by fire?" 4 The king said to me, "What is it you want?" Then I prayed to the God of heaven, 5 and I answered the king, "If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favour in his sight, let him send
 - me to the city in Judah where my fathers are buried so that I can rebuild it." 6 Then the king, with the queen sitting beside him, asked me, "How long will your journey take, and when will you get back?" It pleased the king to send me; so I set a time.

- + Does the physical matter?
 - + Daniel on his knees: *Daniel 6.10*
 - 10 Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened towards Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.

 - + David on his knees: *1 Kings 1.47-48*
 - 47 Also, the royal officials have come to congratulate our lord King David, saying, 'May your God make Solomon's name more famous than yours and his throne greater than yours!' And the king bowed in worship on his bed
 - 48 and said, 'Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, who has allowed my eyes to see a successor on my throne today.'

 - + Solomon on his knees: *1 Kings 8.54*
 - 54 When Solomon had finished all these prayers and supplications to the LORD, he rose from before the altar of the LORD, where he had been kneeling with his hands spread out towards heaven.

 - + Paul on his knees: *Ephesians 3.14-17*
 - 14 For this reason I kneel before the Father, 15 from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. 16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being,
 - 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith...

 - + Jesus on his knees: *Luke 22.39-42*
 - 39 Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. 40 On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation."
 - 41 He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, 42 "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."

+ David lifted hands: *Psalms 28.2*

- 2 Hear my cry for mercy as I call to you for help, as I lift up my hands towards your Most Holy Place.

+ Paul lifted hands: *1 Timothy 2.8*

- 8 I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing.

+ What to pray

+ Adoration

+ Love is the foundation: *1 John 4.19*

- 19 We love because he first loved us.

+ A near-perfect church: *Rev 2.1-5*

- 1 "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands: 2 I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance.
- I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. 3 You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.
- 4 Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. 5 Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.

+ Acknowledge who He is: *Rev 4.11*

- "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

+ White man's religion? *Revelation 5.9*

- And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

+ A man after God's own heart: *Psalms 63.1-8*

- 1 A psalm of David. When he was in the Desert of Judah. O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water. 2 I have seen you in the sanctuary
- and beheld your power and your glory. 3 Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. 4 I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands. 5 My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing
- lips my mouth will praise you. 6 On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night. 7 Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings. 8 My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me.

+ Confession

+ Be troubled! *Psalms 38.18*

- 18 I confess my iniquity; I am troubled by my sin.

+ Keeping secrets: *Psalms 32*

- 1 Of David. A maskil. Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. 2 Blessed is the man whose sin the LORD does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit. 3 When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my
- groaning all day long. 4 For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Selah 5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD" --and you
- forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah 6 Therefore let everyone who is godly pray to you while you may be found; surely when the mighty waters rise, they will not reach him. 7 You are my hiding-place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of
- deliverance. Selah 8 I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you. 9 Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you. 10 Many are the
- woes of the wicked, but the LORD's unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in him. 11 Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous; sing, all you who are upright in heart!

+ Confess: *1 John 1.9*

- 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

+ Thanksgiving

+ Learn to shout and praise: *Psalms 100.1-5*

- 1 A psalm. For giving thanks. Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. 2 Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. 3 Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.
- 4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. 5 For the LORD is good and his love endures for ever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

+ Let your heart leap and sing: *Psalms 28.7*

- 7 The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to him in song.

+ Bad situation? *1 Thessalonians 5.18*

- 18 give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

+ Yearn for better days: *Psalms 42.4*

- 4 These things I remember as I pour out my soul: how I used to go with the multitude, leading the procession to the house of God, with shouts of joy and thanksgiving among the festive throng.

+ Overflow: *Colossians 2.6,7*

- 6 So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, 7 rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

+ Supplication

+ Present requests: *Philippians 4.6-7*

- 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

+ Cast your cares: *Psalms 55.22*

- 22 Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall.

+ Because He cares! *1 Peter 5.7*

- Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

+ Part of supplication is intercession

+ Even secular leaders: *1 Timothy 2.1-4*

- 1 I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone-- 2 for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.
- 3 This is good, and pleases God our Saviour, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

+ Those in ministry: *Colossians 4.2-3*

- 2 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. 3 And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.

+ Enemies: *Luke 6:27-28*

- 27 But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who ill-treat you.

+ The Spirit helps: *Romans 8.26-28*

- 26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. 27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit,
- because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will. 28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

+ **Jesus on prayer**

+ Solitude

- *Mark 1.35*: Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.
 - *Luke 5.16*: But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.
 - *Luke 6.12*: One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.
- + Intensity: *Hebrews 5.7*
- 7 During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.
- + Boldness: *Luke 11.5-13*
- 5 Then he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, 6 because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.' 7 "Then the one inside answers,
 - 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children are with me in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.' 8 I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man's
 - boldness he will get up and give him as much as he needs. 9 "So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to
 - him who knocks, the door will be opened. 11 "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? 12 Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? 13 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 the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"
- + Persistence: *Luke 18.1-8*
- 1 ¶ Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. 2 He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. 3 And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the
 - plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.' 4 "For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, 5 yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear
 - me out with her coming!'" 6 And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. 7 And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? 8 I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly.
- + The Lord's Prayer: *Matthew 6.5-13*
- 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 men. I tell you the truth, 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 Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'

+ The High Priestly Prayer: *John 17*

- 1 After Jesus said this, he looked towards heaven and prayed: "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. 2 For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him.
- 3 Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. 4 I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. 5 And now, Father, glorify me in your
- presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. 6 "I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. 7 Now they know
- that everything you have given me comes from you. 8 For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. 9 I pray for them. I am not
- praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. 10 All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. 11 I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world,
- and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name--the name you gave me--so that they may be one as we are one. 12 While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave
- me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled. 13 "I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within
- them. 14 I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. 15 My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. 16
- They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. 17 Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. 18 As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. 19 For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified. 20 "My
- prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have
- sent me. 22 I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: 23 I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you
- have loved me. 24 "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. 25 "Righteous Father, though the world

- does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. 26 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."

+ Theme verses

+ Melody of thanks: *Ephesians 5.19,20*

- 19 Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, 20 always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

+ "Abba, Father"!: *Galatians 4.6*

- 6 Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father."

+ Cast your cares: *1 Peter 5.7*

- 7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.