

Prayer: Critical Conversations – Week 1

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IN A NUTSHELL

In Week One of *Prayer: Critical Conversations*, Pastors Todd and Shaun talk about how to pray in conversation with God. They teach us to talk to God authentically, often, and about everything we can think of and then to listen. The Lord changes our circumstances and us when we pray!

TALK IT OUT

1. How would you explain the act and purpose of “prayer” to someone who has never prayed before? What often keeps a person from praying?
2. Read and discuss the following scriptures:
 - Psalm 142 – What was your initial reaction to David’s bold expression of prayer before God? Was his honesty and emotion ‘out of line’? Why or why not?
 - John 9:31 – In order for our prayers to be heard by God, what three things are required of us?
3. In this message we were encouraged to talk authentically, talk often, talk about everything and talk then listen. Which of these is the most difficult for you to do and why?
4. Why is *listening* an essential key of communication? According to John 16:13, what does it look like to listen while we pray?
 - How does listening to God change our circumstances and transform our lives?
 - Knowing this, what changes do you intend to make to your prayer life?
5. Choose ONE and respond:
 - a. Read James 5:16. Share a time when prayer changed your circumstances.
 - b. Read Romans 12:2. Share a time when prayer changed your heart or perspective on something you were facing in life.

LIVE IT OUT

1. Form a prayer group that lasts the duration of this 3-week series on prayer by inviting at least one other family or friend to discuss the messages in this series with you. Go to www.goChristFellowship.com and enter the key word: “iMax” to get to our iMax webpage. Read that page, download the resources, and maximize the message in your life through conversations and application!
2. Matthew 6:6-7 speaks to how we need to find a quiet place for purposeful prayer. Choose a time and a place for daily prayer following the acronym A.C.T.S.: **A**doration, **C**onfession, **T**hanksgiving, **S**upplication. Start with a short length of time and increase it. Focus on doing this up to Easter then share the story of how God changes you and your circumstances on the iMax webpage.

DRAW IT OUT

The present-day economic crisis has created a ripple effect that’s impacting almost everyone on some level. This has resulted in many people feeling anxious about their current and future financial situation. God does not want us to worry or be anxious. Rather, God wants us to experience His peace consistently!

In Philippians 4:6-7, we are actually commanded to *not* be anxious about anything, but to pray and petition God with thanksgiving about everything. When we are faithful to approach God in this way, we receive *His* PEACE, which is associated with God and His relationship to His people throughout the Scriptures.

God is the God of peace (Phil 4:9) who dwells in total *shalom* (wholeness, well-being) and who gives this *shalom* to his people. Such peace transcends all understanding and anxiety. As you apply the biblical truths from this message to your prayer life, God’s peace will be the “garrison” (a striking military metaphor) around your heart when anxiety threatens. His peace also guards your “thoughts” – those very thoughts that lead to fear and distress and that keep one from trusting prayer.