

## Starting Scriptures

**Hebrews 10:19-22** Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

## Reflection

Because of our faith in Jesus, we have access to the very presence of God. As we confidently enter God's presence, we can draw near to Him with full assurance and a clear conscience. We can pray with the confidence that God hears us and has an answer for us. However, we must remember that the key to praying with confidence is to ask according to His will. We find the will of God in the Word of God.

In Matthew 6:9-13, known as the Lord's prayer, Jesus teaches us the outline for a confident prayer: worship, agreement and alignment with God's will, specific requests, confession, protection from sin and the evil one, and worship. We worship at both the beginning and end of the prayer because we are acknowledging the divine character of God – His holiness, kingship, power, and glory. We also recognize in our prayer that God is our father, the importance of seeking and submitting to His will, His desire to hear our individual desires and our need to be forgiven and forgive others. We can pray with confidence when we follow this outline because we're making our prayer completely about God's identity and His will for our lives.

## Discussion Questions

1. What is one of your biggest answers to prayer and what is one of your most recent answers to prayer?
2. Has anyone taught you or modeled for you how to pray? What did you learn from him/her?

3. How would you describe your prayer life? Does it change depending on your life circumstances? Do you have a location or time you prefer to pray?
4. Has the way you pray changed over the years? Do you find yourself praying in a different way/style or about different things than you did before?
5. How would you describe your confidence when you pray? Do you avoid praying for certain things out of fear God will say no? What changes do you need to make to your thinking to pray with more confidence?

## Going Deeper

Duke University's Harold G. Koenig, M.D has openly spoken about the power of prayer being backed by reputable studies. "Studies have shown prayer can prevent people from getting sick — and when they do get sick, prayer can help them get better faster." After analyzing over 1,500 medical studies, Dr. Koenig explained, those who "...pray more have better mental and physical health...There's a lot of evidence out there."

Dr. Koenig went on to say that people who are involved in a faith community live a more positive and healthy life. "In general, they cope with stress better, they experience greater well-being because they have more hope, they're more optimistic, they experience less depression, less anxiety, and they commit suicide less often...They have stronger immune systems, lower blood pressure, and probably better cardiovascular functioning." As the director of Duke's Center for Spirituality, Theology and Health, he has authored several books on faith and healing.<sup>1</sup>

## Additional Scriptures

**John 5:14-15** 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.

**Matthew 6:9-13** 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 And 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.'"

**Hebrews 4:16** Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.newsmax.com/Health/Headline/prayer-health-faith-medicine/2015/03/31/id/635623/>



