

The Christian, if he wishes to maintain his faith, *must* be a student of the Scriptures. The Holy Spirit works through the Bible to bring about transformation and development of life. The Christian who neglects Bible study is on the way to committing spiritual suicide. Explain the relation between Bible study and Christian growth.

II. Prayer

One of the greatest satisfactions in life is talking with those we love. But communication between close friends is not limited to talking. There is the letter, the glance, the almost unconscious sensing of each other's thought that grows out of close fellowship and high regard. The greatest privilege and pleasure in Christian living is similar communication and fellowship with God in prayer.

"Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend."—*Steps to Christ*, page 93:2. It is two-way, rather than one-way, communication. Waiting for God to speak either by prompting one's mind or through previously written instruction is an essential part of prayer.² Study the following groups of texts. Organize them and any others you may add to make the clearest and simplest presentation of each phase of the topic. Select one or two texts from each group to form a brief Bible study.

1. The need for prayer.

*Mark 14:38	Luke 21:34-36	Colossians 4:2, 3
	*Philippians 4:6, 7	

2. Conditions for answered prayer.

*Jeremiah 29:12, 13	*Matthew 26:39, 42, 44	Romans 12:12
*Matthew 6:12	*Mark 11:24	*1 John 3:22, 23
Matthew 7:7, 8	John 14:13, 14	Jude 20, 21

3. Hindrances to answered prayer.

Exodus 14:10, 13-15	*Psalm 66:18	*James 1:6, 7
Ezekiel 14:4	Matthew 6:5	James 4:3
	*Luke 18:1	

4. The nature of prayer. What characteristics of prayer are stated or implied in these passages?

² See *Steps to Christ*, pages 93-104.
Christ's Object Lessons, pages 139-149.
Selected Messages, b. 2, pp. 311-316.

*1 Samuel 12:23	Nehemiah 1:6, 7	*Matthew 15:25
*1 Kings 8:44-50	*Psalm 95:1-6	1 Timothy 2:1
	Daniel 9:16-19	

5. Examples of prayer. The following is a list of Bible prayers. In each one note who prayed, the circumstances, his request, the results, and, if discernible, the reasons why the Lord responded as He did.

*Genesis 18:22-32	*1 Kings 18:36-45	*Luke 23:42
Genesis 32:9-12	Jonah 2	John 17

6. Find one or more texts that give at least a partial answer to each of the following questions:

- (1) Who should be addressed in prayer?
- (2) When is a proper time for prayer?
- (3) From what place should we pray?
- (4) What is the proper posture during prayer?
- (5) Who may pray?
- (6) What promises cause us to believe God is as interested in answering our prayers today as He was in Bible times?

III. Fellowship and Witnessing

Christian fellowship and Christian witnessing are mentioned in this chapter because they are vital in Christian living. Every Christian needs the association and encouragement of fellow Christians. No true Christian can refrain from bearing witness for his Saviour, and his witnessing causes him to grow. Each of these will be dealt with rather fully in Part 9, "The Last-Day Church."

TOPICS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. What are the reasons for the principle stated in the following quotation? "None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict."—*The Great Controversy*, page 593:2.

2. Explain why "as a means of intellectual training, the Bible is more effective than any other book, or all other books combined."—*Education*, page 124:2.

3. To what extent can we depend on others to study and explain the Scriptures for us?

4. Can Bible study ever be injurious? Explain.

5. How much progress can be made in the Christian life without prayer? Explain.

6. Why is it necessary for us to pray when God already knows our needs and wants to supply them?

7. How can our prayers bring benefit to someone else?

8. How can God answer conflicting prayers of different persons?

Christian Stewardship

“The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.” Psalm 24:1. Since the beginning God has shared the use of His possessions with men, but He retains His title to absolute ownership of this world, its inhabitants, and its goods. He has appointed us to serve as managers, administrators, or supervisors over portions of His possessions. The Bible term for such responsibility is “stewardship.” Recognizing God’s ownership and our privilege in using His possessions is the very beginning of Christian stewardship. And this recognition should lead us to determine to use everything entrusted to us in a way that will please the true owner. All of life is a sacred trust—a stewardship.¹

I. Steward of Life

Each individual is first of all steward over his own being—his body and mind. These belong to God, whose ownership is doubly established

¹ “God has laid His hand upon all things, both man and his possessions; for all belong to Him. He says, I am the owner of the world; the universe is Mine, and I require you to consecrate to My service the first fruits of all that I, through My blessing, have caused to come into your hands. God’s word declares, ‘Thou shalt not delay to offer the first of thy ripe fruits.’ ‘Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase.’ This tribute He demands as a token of our loyalty to Him.

“We belong to God; we are His sons and daughters,—His by creation, and His by the gift of His only-begotten Son for our redemption. ‘Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.’ The mind, the heart, the will, and the affections belong to God; the money that we handle is the Lord’s. Every good that we receive and enjoy is the result of divine benevolence. God is the bountiful giver of all good, and He desires that there shall be an acknowledgment, on the part of the receiver, of these gifts that provide for every necessity of the body and the soul. God demands only His own. The primary portion is the Lord’s, and must be used as His entrusted treasure. The heart that is divested of selfishness will awaken to a sense of God’s goodness and love, and be moved to a hearty acknowledgment of His righteous requirements.”—*Counsels on Stewardship*, page 72:1, 2 (*Review and Herald*, Dec. 8, 1896).

See *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 246:1-3.