

Section One: The Characteristics of Prayer

Lesson One: Prayer is Genuine

One cold morning in the winter of 1990, I (Alice) had an encounter with the Lord in prayer that was new and different to me. As I nestled into my prayer closet with coffee in hand, I sensed the Lord inviting me to lay a world atlas out on the floor. This impression from God settled deep in my spirit, so I quickly obeyed.

This particular day I was alone in the house. The children were in school, Eddie was at the church, and I was able to dedicate my time to the Lord. I was excited to have a full day with Him.

My heart beat faster as I pulled the atlas onto the floor. Kneeling down beside the maps, I first noticed the Soviet Union. Without any expectations of what God was up to, I was shocked as I began to weep loudly for the people in the Soviet Union. I knew the burden had lifted when my spirit felt released and my tears dried up. But just as I thought my prayer time was over, the Lord whispered another nation to my heart. Hours passed as I interceded for peoples around the world. I cried out to God in prayer, as His spiritual partner, for lost souls in nation after nation.

Then an amazing thing happened. It has never happened before or since. As I entered into a very deep burden for Israel, I could audibly hear a voice crying over my right shoulder. Startled, I looked—fully expecting to see the Lord Jesus. No one was there. But the room was filled with the glory of God. I was experiencing a divine visitation that can hardly be described. I will forever remember Jesus' cry for His people Israel. Famous radio commentator Paul Harvey has a daily program called *The Rest of the Story*. Here is the rest of the story. I had no way of knowing that day in intercession that God was preparing me to take a prayer journey to the Holy Land one year later to pray on site the very same prayers I had prayed from my prayer closet in Houston, Texas.

Praying is life's highest privilege! Why? Because it is prayer that allows us to draw near to the heart of God. In prayer we commune with our awesome heavenly Father. Prayer gives us access to the ear of God, enabling us to fulfill His purposes in the earth! And in prayer, He actually shares His deepest desires and purposes with us.

Let's take a closer look at prayer—exciting, engaging prayer that gets God's attention and cooperates with Him to accomplish His kingdom purposes. We can discover the characteristics of such prayer, and learn to transform our prayer lives into power encounters with our powerful God.

Genuine, sincere prayer gets God's attention.

The parents of four-year-old Johnny overheard this bedtime prayer: "And God bless Mommy and God bless Daddy and God bless my dog. And God, take care of Yourself, 'cuz if something ever happens to You we're all gonna be in a mess." Now, Johnny expressed genuine prayer.

When we talk about prayer in this book, we are not talking about a religious rite. To some, prayer may be little more than a ritual. But for true Christians, prayer is about relating with the living God.

We are not going to teach you how to pray the boring, churchy, starchy prayers you may have heard before. As a matter of fact, unless you are six hundred years old, it's about time you discard the "thees" and "thous" of fifteenth-century Elizabethan English. Let's be done with puny, powerless, whiny prayers that seem to rise no higher than the ceiling. Can we hear an amen?

Question: Take a moment to reflect on your prayer life.

1. How often do you pray? 2. What kinds of things do you pray about? 3. When do you pray?

From now on when you pray, we want you to get real with God. Stop performing. Forget about impressing Him. And certainly forget about impressing others. Don't worry about saying the right words. Prayer should be a normal, sincere, genuine conversation between you and your heavenly Daddy.

See ya next week! Eddie and Alice "America's prayer coaches"

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Intercessors, like "spiritual defense attorneys," plead the cases of others in prayer before God's throne. Eddie and Alice present their readers fresh insights into effective intercessory prayer as they view it through "another lense." *Spiritual Advocates: How to plead for justice, stand in the gap, and make a difference in the world by praying for others*, may be their most unique book yet! For more info, or to order goto: <http://bit.ly/spiritualadvo>

Enroll in this free 52Week School of Prayer at www.TeachMeToPray.com It's based on Eddie and Alice's book, *Drawing Closer to God's Heart: A Totally Practical Non-Religious Guide to Prayer*. It's offered with generous permission from Strang Communications, the publisher. For more information or to order the book visit: <http://bit.ly/drawingclose>