**Spurgeon, Charles**
The Practice of Powerful and Effective Prayer

# 13. How to Converse with God

A sermon by Spurgeon on Job 13:22 ("Call thou, and I will answer: or let me speak, and answer thou me"). Spurgeon lifts Job's words out of their original courtroom setting — Job wrongfully accused, ready to plead his case before God — and reapplies them to prayer as a two-way conversation. He warns we cannot use Job's language to justify ourselves before God's judgment seat; we come only covered in Christ's righteousness. The real subject is communion: how God speaks to us and how we speak back.

## Key takeaways

- Communion with God is a genuine two-way conversation, not a monologue. The picture is the African convert who read a verse (God speaks), then looked up and prayed (he speaks), keeping up "a holy talk."
- First method: God speaks and we answer. He speaks through the written Word and its preaching, in many tones — awakening, instruction, command, rebuke, comfort, and invitation to intimate communion. Our job is to listen and respond at once.

- "If we will not be taught we shall not be heard." A disobedient or inattentive ear closes off answered prayer.
- Second method: we speak and God answers. We come with adoration, gratitude, confession of sin, petition, resolution, and intimate love-language.
- Both must be combined. Prayer without hearing the Word goes flat and dry; reading without praying is lame. Vary the order as needed — when you cannot pray, let Scripture speak first and give you matter to pray (Spurgeon cites George Müller).
- Both sides must be real, never a dead form. Rushing through the Bible or reciting heartless prayers insults God; Scripture needs digging and meditation.
- The whole conversation is fulfilled in Christ. Jesus is our complete answer to God (satisfying justice and holiness) and God's complete answer to us (for salvation, assurance, love, and our future glory).

## Passages worth keeping

> *"An obedient heart is needful if there is to be any happy converse between God and the soul."*

The sermon's thesis: obedience is the precondition of real communion.

> *"I look down to the book, and God speaks to me, and then I look up in prayer, and speak to the Lord, and in this way we keep up a holy talk with each other."*

The African convert's words — Spurgeon's model of two-way fellowship.

## How it connects

The chapter turns a legal complaint into a template for daily devotion, and grounds the whole exchange in Christ, who is both our answer to God's justice and God's answer to our every need.

## Scripture referenced

- **Job 13:22** -- The text: the two directions of converse with God.
- **Job 13:15** -- "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him" — Job's confidence in appealing to God.
- **Romans 8:32-34** -- No one can condemn God's elect; used to redirect Job's self-defense into gospel assurance.
- **1 Samuel 3:10** -- "Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth" — God calling first, the servant answering.
- **Revelation 3:20** -- "Behold I stand at the door and knock" — God's awakening voice at a closed heart.
- **John 15:10** -- "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love" — obedience as the ground of communion.