

Jesus, Teach Us to Pray Matthew 6:5-13

Introduction:

1. Most believers are insecure about their prayer lives. Why is this? It is very simple. Most of us haven't spent much time with other believers who really understand prayer and actually pray!
 - In other words, we haven't been discipled and taught in this area, and we haven't spent much time hearing the prayers of mature believers.
2. Prayer is something that must be **taught** and it is also **caught** as we listen to others pray. This is what we learn in Luke 11:1.
3. Jesus was always praying to the Father. He would get up early and go away from the other disciples to pray. Sometimes, He would be up in the middle of the night praying. In our text, the disciples catch Jesus praying.
4. They said to Jesus, "*teach us to pray as John also taught his disciples*" (**Luke 11:1**). This is so helpful and encouraging. As Christians, we know we need to pray. We know it makes a difference, yet we struggle. So, where do we start? This is encouraging because prayer is something that can be learned. It is not a gift or talent that you either have or don't have. Every person can pray!
5. When they asked Jesus this, He didn't scold them and say, "You guys should already know this. It's simple. Just do it." No, He begins to teach them **how** to pray.
6. Matthew 6 is another account of this story, and it gives even more detail as to what Jesus told His disciples in response to their question. In verse 5 He says, "*And when you pray...*" Jesus is very practical. How do we pray? These principles will help us immensely if we apply them.

First, pray secretly. vs. 5-6

1. Jesus is teaching us that prayer is not a "spectator sport;" it's not something we engage in to impress others.
2. When you pray, Jesus said to go into your closet, shut the door, and talk to God. What's the concept He is trying to convey? Find a private place away from the hustle and bustle of life, and talk to God.

- It can be a certain room, the porch, an office, a workshop, a storage shed, or anywhere else that is private.
3. Please understand that there is a time to pray with others. Jesus clearly taught this, and we see it modeled. Acts 1:14; 20:36
 4. But most of your prayer time should be in private – alone with God. Why is this? A private place ensures minimal distractions.
 5. Distractions are deadly when it comes to making connection with God (music, TV, voices, a ringing phone, kids, animals, computers, etc.). It can cause you to lose your concentration.
 - **Illustration:** Ever been distracted from singing and focusing on God in church because of your phone?
 6. Also, a private place allows you to just be yourself.
 7. This is so important. You don't have to be self-conscious when you are talking to God. You can be real and transparent with God; with Him, you can show your true emotions.
 8. Jesus told the disciples not to pray like the hypocrites. What is a hypocrite? It is somebody who pretends to be something they are not.
 9. When you pray, just get alone with God and be honest.

Second, pray sincerely. vs. 7

1. Sometimes we sin and mess up. Therefore, we don't pray because we feel like a hypocrite if we do. There is no need to stop praying. Just be honest with God about your wrong attitudes or actions. Be honest about your struggles or your doubts. Be sincere. vs. 12
2. Jesus uses an illustration in verse 7. In Jesus' day, heathen, pagan people would repeat certain phrases or certain religious incantations in an effort to get their god's attention or to appease their god.
 - They believed, if they used the right words and exercised the right formula, repeatedly, they would get the desired result from their gods.
3. The use of repetitious words or formulaic phrases is a "heathen" or "pagan" practice and should not be part of Christian prayer.
4. When we pray, we are talking with God and worshipping Him. It is a conversation that comes from the heart.
5. Many religions today have rote prayers that they advise repeating over and over again. Some Christian churches even go so far as to require their members to recite a certain prayer a specific number of times in order to be absolved of sin.

6. Many times, the prayers are sincere and simply doing what their religious leaders have said to do, but such formulaic prayers are “vain repetitions.”
7. It’s easy to get caught up in vain repetitions and repeat the same words in our prayers, instead of thinking about our words or letting them come from the heart. God wants us to simply focus on Him and honor Him in our hearts as we pray (Psalm 51:6).
8. We should teach our children at an early age to pray in a natural, conversational manner, with reverence for the One they are addressing.
9. So is it wrong to pray for the same thing more than once? Of course not (2 Corinthians 12:8). Being persistent in prayer is not the same as using vain repetitions. But it’s understood that our prayers are from the heart, often spontaneous, and honoring to God. We shouldn’t be repeating, over and over, the words, heard or written by someone else.

Third, pray specifically. vs. 9-13

1. Now Jesus is going to teach them by praying. He gives them an example. Like we said earlier, so much in the Christian life is taught, but then it is caught as we watch other believers.
2. This prayer was never meant to be some sort of magical incantation that we simply repeat over and over again. It is a model for the twelve and geared toward where they were in the program of God at that time. In other words, there is a context to this prayer.
3. My purpose in this message is not to break this prayer down and examine each part of it, but rather I want us to simply notice how specific it is.
 - It begins by bragging on God and who He is and His character.
 - There is prayer for God’s will to be accomplished, for daily needs to be met by God, an acknowledgement of sin in our lives, the need to forgive those who have wronged us, and the need for help in areas of temptation.
 - Then it closes by once again praising and exalting God.
4. What is the point? God wants us to pray specific prayers, not just reciting a prayer or praying in broad generalities (i.e. “Lord, thank you for your blessings, bless me today, bless my wife, bless my kids, and be with us. Amen.”).
5. You can take this model prayer and make it personal. Your needs are different than mine, your sins are different than mine, your struggles

and temptations are different than those of your spouse. Your blessings and the things you will thank God for are different than your neighbor's blessings.

6. What are your needs? Tell God. What do you want to see God do? Tell Him, and ask Him. Prayer is what gets God involved in any situation.
7. God is interested in you, your needs, your struggles, and your daily issues that you face (Philippians 4:6).
8. God is capable of doing anything, but not if we don't pray. He has invited us to pray. He longs to hear from you.
9. Jesus, teach us to pray. Jesus taught them to pray secretly, pray sincerely, and pray specifically. We have learned much about prayer this morning, but now it's time to what? Pray! There comes a point where you have to get alone and do it.