

August 25, 2024

Matthew 6:5-15 NIV

5 “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. 6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door, and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. 7 And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. 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 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.’ 14 For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”



**Following Jesus: Praying to Our Heavenly Father
Matthew 6:5-15**

BIG IDEA: Being a disciple of Jesus involves learning how to pray to our Father in the manner in which Jesus taught us.

OUTLINE

1. Introduction

- Pray in secret
- Pray sincerely
- Pray in God's will

2. How We Should Pray

- Praise
- Purpose
- Provision
- Pardon
- Protection

SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These “Sermon Discussion Questions” are designed for study during the week for believers in a wide variety of ages & stages in their walk with Christ.

1. Read Matthew 6:5-18. The focus of the passage is prayer. How did you learn to pray; did someone teach you?
2. What does it say about a God who has given a way for His children to talk with Him? Who are some believers to pray for you?
3. Have you been tempted to think that God is too busy or indifferent to hear your prayers? Is God too busy and indifferent, or are you?
4. Read Matthew 6:8, Luke 5:11-13 and Romans 8:26. Prayer is a gift from God. He knows your needs before you pray, and Jesus is praying for you. Can you conclude that you don't need to pray? The fact that God knows your needs can establish a baseline for prayers. How can this knowledge redirect the focus of prayer from yourself to God?
5. Read 5:9-13. Jesus taught his disciples to pray—the first three petitions of the prayer focus on God, and the second three on our needs. What are the aspects of the focus on God? From the second set of petitions, what aspects of our needs are essential to Jesus? Discuss why the prayer begins with focusing on God.

Praise to Jesus. In your prayer time this week, dedicate the time to praise. Praise the Lord, who answers prayer because He loves you. Praise the Lord because He wants you to bring every need to Him. Praise Him for daily bread; He provides all that you need. Praise Him for forgiveness. Praise Him for His redeeming Son, who meets your need for forgiveness when you turn to Him by faith. Praise Him for delivering you from evil. Praise the Holy Spirit, who meets your moral needs by leading you away from temptation.

Repentance through Jesus. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you in a time of confession. Ask Him to show you any sinful thoughts or approaches to prayer. Confess when you don't pray because you think God is too busy or indifferent. Confess when you don't think God is interested in your needs.

Consecration for Jesus. Your Father in Heaven loves you! Head to your prayer place and pray. Determine to pour out your needs to Him because you trust him and know He will answer you. Commune with God, not to extract benefits from him, but to know Him.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Matters of the heart. In Matthew 6 and 7, Jesus sets forth principles for spirituality in religious life (6:1–18), everyday life (6:19–34), and community relationships (7:1–12). Jesus gives examples of hypocritical expressions of faith when giving to the needy, praying, and fasting. Public acts of obedience are valuable, honorable, and unavoidable. Prayers that are performed for public recognition; God will not reward them. Hypocrites originally referred to Greek actors who wore different masks to play various roles. Jesus criticizes the religious leaders, most notably the Pharisees, for a particular form of hypocrisy: doing the right things for the wrong reasons.

Prayer was a pillar of Jewish piety. Public prayer, said aloud in the morning, afternoon, and evening, was expected. At the set time of prayer, pious Jews would stop what they were doing and pray, some discreetly, but others with pretentious display. Jesus did not condemn all public prayer, as indicated by his own prayers in public. One's internal motivation is the central concern. Daniel Doriani writes, "Public prayer has the distractions of a public situation and the influence of an audience. In private prayer, we can stumble, correct ourselves, and admit that we do not know how to pray. We can pause to think or leave a thought unfinished. But these things are not suitable for public prayer."

- adapted from the ESV Study Bible

FOR FAMILIES AND YOUNG CHILDREN

These questions are written to aid parents in leading family devotions with their children.

1. What is prayer? What types of things should we say in prayer?
2. What does Jesus teach about the kind of prayer to avoid and the kind we should do in verses 5-8? (The kind of prayer to avoid is the kind where we try to draw attention to ourselves. Also, Jesus wants us to avoid praying in a way in which we use a lot of words to get what we want from God. The type of prayer we are to do is that kind centered on God that does not seek the focus to be on us.)
3. What does Jesus teach us about the way to pray in verse 9? (The first half of the Lord's Prayer is God-centered, and the second is centered on our dependence on Him for all our needs. In verse 9, Jesus teaches us to address prayer to "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name." This is a reminder of the good news that God has adopted us in Christ as His children, and He is our Father. By including "in heaven," we are reminded that God is all-powerful. And to "hallow" God's name is to honor God's name and to set it apart as special since God's name is tied in with His nature.)
4. What does it mean to pray, "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven"? (It means that we want God as King to set His redemptive rule over all things. We are praying for people to come to faith in Him and to grow in faith. This part of the prayer would also include us praying to follow God's will in our lives.)
5. What does it mean to pray for God to "Give us this day our daily bread"? (This prayer shows us our total dependence on God for our daily needs. Talk with your children about where our food comes from and how that is all guided by God through the means of people. Our daily bread can include our spiritual needs but is primarily referring to our physical needs.)
6. What does verse 12 teach us to include in prayer? (Jesus teaches us that we need to regularly pray for forgiveness from our sins. Jesus also ties in how we are to forgive those who sin against us. Jesus is not teaching that we are only forgiven when we forgive others. The gospel reminds us that our salvation, including our forgiveness, is a gift. We are saved by God's grace and mercy, therefore not earned or deserved. This reminds us that when we are forgiven by God, we will have hearts that offer forgiveness to others.)
7. What does it mean to pray for God to "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"? (This teaches us that we need God's power and strength to withstand temptation and sin. We are praying for God to not allow temptation and sin to overcome us. We need the Spirit to strengthen us for our battle with sin and the evil one, Satan.)

Scriptures for further study:

Exodus 20:7

Proverbs 30:7-9

Ephesians 2:8-10

Romans 8:9-17

James 1:13-15

1 Corinthians 10:13

Ephesians 6:10-20

Westminster Shorter Catechism Q&Q 98-107

FOR STUDENTS

Scriptures for further study:

Exodus 3:14-15

Malachi 1:11

Romans 8:26

Philippians 4:6

1. In Matthew 6:5, Jesus is addressing those who "stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners; that they may be seen by others." He says that these people have already "received their reward." What is the reward that Jesus is referring to?

2. There are times when we might be tempted to try and make our prayers sound impressive by "heaping up empty phrases" (v.7) because God might be more inclined to hear our prayers if we make them "sound better." Why is this the wrong way to approach prayer?

3. In verse 8, Jesus says that our Father already knows what we need before we even ask Him. If this is true, then what is the point of prayer?

4. In verse 9, Jesus tells us to open our prayers by saying, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name." Notice that the very first request made in this entire prayer is that God's name would be "hallowed" (or be made Holy). What do you think is the significance of that?

5. All throughout Matthew 6, Jesus is vocalizing his displeasure in those who do "righteous" things with the sole purpose of being seen and recognized by others (giving to the poor (v.2), praying (v.5), fasting (v.16)) How can we avoid falling into this same category?

FOR SEEKERS AND NEW BELIEVERS

1. The most important prayer you could ever offer is to confess your sins, acknowledge Jesus Christ as Savior, and pray that He would be the King and ruler of your life. Are you prepared to pray this prayer now? If you need encouragement, please seek out a Christian believer you trust to help you with this eternally life-changing step!

2. Only a person who is adopted can refer to God as “heavenly Father.” When you become a believer, you receive the highest privilege of becoming a son or daughter of the King! Would you desire this kind of privileged status and relationship?

3. Do you find prayer to be challenging at times? If so, what are the biggest impediments you face? How do you think you might overcome these?

4. How might it help you to think about prayer as simply carrying on a conversation with someone you love and trust?

5. Why is it good to keep in mind that God is both Father and at the same time one who is King?

6. Spend some time in prayer...

- Praising God for who He is and what amazing blessings He has given us
- Asking Him for more of His rule over you and that your life will have the singular purpose of glorifying Him.
- Praying with childlike trust that He will provide all your basic and essential needs today.
- Confessing your own sins and, by the grace of God, releasing others of whatever debts (sins) they may have committed against you.
- Asking that God protect you from the Enemy, prevent you from falling into temptation, and allow any testing you may experience would make you stronger.

Following Jesus: Finding Fulfillment and Faith in the One Who is Greater



*Raphael, School of Athens, 1509-1511, fresco
(Stanza della Segnatura, Palazzi Pontifici, Vatican)*

About the artwork.

What is the connection between an eighteen-by-twenty-five-foot wall decoration of ancient men in robes and the Gospel of Matthew?

Raphael, the rock star of the Renaissance, organized his painting of fifty-three of the most outstanding scientists, mathematicians, philosophers, poets, and artists of all time thematically into five groups. Each group contains a leader(s) and those following him/them. Matthew tells the good news of Jesus in a way that highlights the theme and invitation from Jesus to “follow me.” In addition, Matthew organizes his Gospel around five sermons: Kingdom Law, Kingdom Mission, Kingdom Nature, Kingdom Authority, and Kingdom Judgement.

Front and center in Raphael’s painting are the Greek philosophers, Plato and Aristotle. Raphael placed Plato and Aristotle in the center to show that they represent the pinnacle of human philosophy. They were the “prophets” of their day. Plato pointing up and Aristotle pointing down. Matthew shows us that Jesus is the true and greater prophet who unites knowledge of heaven, truths known and experienced only through him, with earthly ephemeral realities that can be experienced and described empirically but understood through him.

Raphael chose a forum from ancient Rome as the setting. The architecture in the painting represents well the Roman arch, which was a symbol of victory. Matthew is known and loved by millions, though his life’s ambition was to follow Jesus. He told the good news that in Jesus Christ, we have victory and kingship because he is the greater son of David, the Messiah.

Introduction to the Gospel of Matthew.

Before he met Jesus, a Jewish man named Levi, who lived in Capernaum, worked in a booth collecting taxes for the Roman Empire. Because of his profession, Levi was the most hated man in town until Jesus walked by and said to him, "Follow me." About thirty years after Jesus was crucified and resurrected, Levi, whom Jesus renamed Matthew, was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write down his version of Jesus's life, the Gospel of Matthew.

Matthew presents Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah, King, Prophet, Son of David, and Son of God. Jesus ushers in and establishes the Kingdom of Heaven, which is the rule and reign of God here on earth. Jesus calls his citizens to embrace Him as king through faith, teaches them about this "new world order" as a prophet, and then calls them to follow Him as the redeemer by going out into the world to tell the nations. Because Jesus is King, he has all authority; as Prophet, what he says is true, and as Savior, only he can offer redemption.

Read or listen to Matthew's gospel. Look for King Jesus exerting his authority over the natural world through healing and the supernatural by casting out demons. Pay attention to what the crowds say about him. Listen to Prophet Jesus as he teaches, rebukes, and tells about who he is. See him as Savior life and the way to the coming Kingdom.

Each of the four gospels uniquely depicts the story of Jesus. The story is so vast that it takes four Holy Spirit-inspired men to attempt to capture it. Matthew organized his story around five of Jesus' discourses, teachings, and sermons. The sermon series walks through the discourses.

1st Matthew 5-7 Kingdom Law

2nd Matthew 10 Kingdom Mission

3rd Matthew 13 Kingdom Nature

4th Matthew 18 Kingdom Authority

5th Matthew 23-25 Kingdom Judgement

According to Pastor Bill, the big idea of Matthew's gospel is, "Come to Jesus and learn about the kingdom of God, then go into the world to advance His kingdom by following Him in faith." May you, like Matthew and countless others, come to Jesus, follow Him in faith, experience heart transformation, and advance His Kingdom in your home, work, neighborhood, and the world!