

# Learning to Pray

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*Mt 6:5-13*

## I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. Poem, “Never Found Time,” *Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations*, #9583.
- B. Jesus expects his disciples to pray.
  - 1. Notice that he begins this section by saying, “When you pray,” not “If you pray.”
  - 2. We Christians should be steadfast in our prayer lives.
    - a. Col 4:2.
    - b. 1 Thess 5:17.
  - 3. Are you praying?

## II. HOW NOT TO PRAY, vv 5-8.

- A. We are not to pray to be seen, v 5.
  - 1. The hypocrites loved to stand in the synagogues & on the street corners to be seen.
  - 2. These individuals did not pray to commune with God, but they prayed to be seen.
  - 3. The basic problem with the hypocrites was their pride.
    - a. They wanted everyone to know how pious they were.
    - b. We are to do nothing from pride (Rm 12:16; Prov 16:18).
  - 4. They had their reward—Being seen by others was the only reward they would receive.
- B. When we pray, we are to go into our room & shut the door, v 6.
  - 1. The word “room” here refers to a store-room where one might keep his treasures.
    - a. The implication could be that there are treasures waiting for us in prayer.
    - b. There are treasures that await us in prayer.
      - 1) In prayer, we are able to commune with the living God.
      - 2) In prayer, we are able to give our concerns to God (1 Pt 5:7).
  - 2. We should shut the door when we pray.
    - a. Prayer should not be a matter of public display.
    - b. Prayer is to be a matter of the heart.
  - 3. We are to pray to the Father in the secret place.
    - a. The Father is said to be in the secret place, for he is invisible.
    - b. Because the Father is in the “secret place,” we should pray in secret—Prayer is to be communication between us & God.
  - 4. Our Father will reward us—He will bless us.
- C. We are not to pray using vain repetitions like the heathen do, v 7.
  - 1. Repetition in prayer is not sinful—When Jesus was in the Garden, he “prayed the third time, saying the same words” (Mt 26:44).
  - 2. What is sinful is repeating the same words over & over without any thought to the words.
    - a. When Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal, they cried out from morning until noon, saying, “O Baal, hear us!” (1 Ki 18:26).
    - b. Pagans had prayers they were to pray.
    - c. We must never just haphazardly pray using the same words & phrases.
  - 3. The heathen believed they would be heard because of their many words.
- D. We do not need to use the same phrases over & over, for God knows what we need before we ask, v 8.

### III. HOW WE SHOULD PRAY, vv 9-13.

- A. Jesus gives his disciples a model prayer to teach them how to pray.
  - 1. In Luke's account of the model prayer, one of Jesus' disciples asks Jesus to teach them to pray (Lk 11:1).
  - 2. Because Jesus spent so much time in prayer, he was qualified to teach his disciples to pray.
    - a. Mk 1:35.
    - b. Lk 5:16.
- B. We are to pray to our Father in heaven, v 9.
  - 1. This excludes praying to saints or other gods.
  - 2. Only the true God is worthy of prayer.
- C. We are to glorify God in prayer, v 9.
  - 1. Jesus prayed for God's name to be hallowed.
  - 2. "Hallowed" means to be counted as holy, to be treated as holy.
  - 3. When we pray, we must praise God.
    - a. Many of the psalms praise God & hallow his name (e.g., Ps 8:1; Ps 145:1).
    - b. We need to incorporate such language into our prayers.
- D. Jesus prayed for the kingdom to come, v 10.
  - 1. Jesus' basic message was, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mt 4:17).
  - 2. That kingdom, the church, is here.
  - 3. We should no longer pray for the kingdom to come, but we should pray for the kingdom to spread.
- E. Jesus prayed for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven, v 10.
  - 1. God's will is done in heaven.
  - 2. We should pray for God's will to be done on earth.
    - a. Not praying for God's will to be done is the epitome of pride—Such prayer treats God as though he were a cosmic Santa Claus who constantly gives us what we want.
    - b. Praying for God's will to be done places us in submission to God; we must submit ourselves to God (Mt 26:39; Js 4:7).
- F. Jesus prayed for our daily bread, v 11.
  - 1. Many are troubled by this statement.
    - a. These writers believe that making this to be physical food causes Jesus to pray for mundane things.
    - b. However, Jesus said that the Father is concerned about our physical needs (Mt 6:25-26).
  - 2. There is nothing wrong in asking God to provide our food.
- G. Jesus prayed for forgiveness, v 12.
  - 1. Since Jesus was without sin (1 Pt 2:22), this obviously does not refer to him.
  - 2. However, since all others do sin (Rm 3:23), this should be an important part of prayer.
  - 3. God has promised to forgive those sins we confess (1 Jn 1:7).
  - 4. Are you confessing your sins to God?
- H. Jesus asked God to forgive us as we forgive our debtors.
  - 1. The clear implication here is that unless we forgive others, God will not forgive us.
    - a. Mt 6:15.
    - b. Jesus told the parable of the unforgiving servant to make this point (Mt 18:23-35).
      - 1) A man who owed a large sum of money was brought before the king, and the king forgave him his debt.

- 2) Upon being released that man found another man who owed him some money.
  - 3) The servant who had been forgiven threw the other servant in prison until he could pay all of his debt.
  - 4) When the king heard what had happened, he threw the forgiven servant in prison.
2. Are you forgiving those who have sinned against you?
- I. Jesus prayed that we would not be thrown into temptation, v 13.
    1. God himself tempts no one (Js 1:13), & he will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we can bear (1 Cor 10:13).
    2. “Temptation” here might best be understood as trial, hardship—Jesus asked God to deliver us from trials & hardships.
  - J. Jesus prayed that we would be delivered from the evil one, v 13.
    1. The “evil one” clearly refers to Satan.
    2. This tells us we need help in overcoming Satan.
      - a. Satan walks around like a “roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pt 5:8).
      - b. We wrestle against Satanic forces (Eph 6:12).
    3. Do you pray to be delivered from Satan?

#### IV. CONCLUSION.

- A. We need to be a praying people.
- B. Yet, if there is sin in our lives, God will not hear our prayers.
  1. Mic 3:4.
  2. Is 59:2.
- C. Does God hear your prayers?