

# Discipleship: Prayer

## Matthew 6:5-15

God speaks to us through the Scriptures, and we speak to Him through prayer. Like reading the Bible, prayer is simple, intuitive and delightful so long as we do it the way Jesus commanded. The Lord's Prayer could be called the disciples' prayer, because it is given to us to use (v5; Lk. 11:1).

### **Private & Short**

Prayer is the practice of approaching God because we need something from Him. It's hypocrisy to pray to God in order to get something from people (v5). Those who do so truly have their reward (cf. 6:2). Instead, shut the door and pray where only God hears and He will reward you openly (v6). Praying alone eliminates temptation to care about what others will think, and ensures God's blessing. We should be wary of praying in public, and praying a lot. The Gentiles heap up phrases, thinking God favors a high word count (v7). He already knows what we need, which doesn't mean we shouldn't pray, just that we should keep it short (v8). Jesus discourages our 24-hour prayer scrum at the flagpole, but then teaches us the right way to pray.

### *The Lord's Prayer*

*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name* – God is our Father because He has adopted us as sons (Gal. 4:3-7). You pray to God as His son in Jesus, and He either hears you or denies Himself (**Jn. 11:41-42**). We call on God to make His name holy.

*Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven* – The kingdom of God is not secret or hidden like spiritual carbon monoxide. It comes when we pray and the effects are visible (Matt. 12:28). Notice how prayer so far is all about God. It's thinking His thoughts after Him. We go Him because He is sovereign.

*Give us this day our daily bread* – Our heavenly Father provides all of our earthly needs. We learn contentment, gratitude and confidence in God's provision.

*And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors* – The Christian is given the privilege of confessing, and in same breath asks God to forgive him as he forgives others. We should see this is as God's promise to provide us with the grace necessary to do so.

*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil* – We plan to trust God our whole lives and want Him to guide us across the finish line. This prayer prepares us for faithfulness in spiritual graduate school.

*for yours is the kingdom and power and glory forever. Amen.* – However we struggle and waver, we acknowledge God is working everything out for His glory and our good. *Amen* is our covenant agreement.

### **Forgiven and Forgiving**

**Jesus gives this striking commentary on prayer: if you forgive others, God will forgive you, but if you don't, neither will God forgive your trespasses (vv14-15). We know that salvation is by grace through faith alone and isn't conditional based on any of our good works. Jesus isn't contradicting this, but He is saying that if we cannot and will not forgive others, we can conclude our sins are not forgiven. He illustrates this later with the parable of the unforgiving servant (Matt. 18:21-35). One man is forgiven an amount equaling 160,000 years of income, and then chokes someone who owes him 100 days' worth. Jesus says it is impossible to receive grace like this from God and then withhold it from others. You can stunt your prayers by how you treat people. Husbands are told to dwell with their wives with understanding and honor them lest their prayers be hindered (1 Pet. 3:7). This means that every Christian who prays humbly is independently wealthy with grace. Prayer is the not an individualistic Zen exercise. God hears, answers, acts and equips us to love Him and others.**

## NOTES FOR LITTLE SAINTS

### Today's Passage: Matthew 6:5-15

5 *And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.* 6 *But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.* 7 *And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.* 8 *Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.* 9 *In this manner, therefore, 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 this day our daily bread.* 12 *And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.* 13 *And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.* 14 *For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.* 15 *But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*

1. How do the hypocrites pray, and how does Jesus say to pray (verses 5-7)?
2. Do you take time to pray every day? Jesus gives us this prayer to use because God loves it when we pray and bring our concerns, desires and gratitude to Him.
3. Jesus says there's something we need to do if God is going to forgive our sins. What is it (verses 14-15)?
4. Draw a picture of friends playing in fellowship together.

### Memory Verse to Recite Next Week:

*But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. —Matthew 6:6*