

Back to the Basics - Prayer

Matthew 6:5-15

Introduction

If I were to ask you about your prayer life, I suspect there would be two likely responses – either that you feel like you are doing pretty well; you have a decent, active prayer life, or you daily recognize that your prayer life is not what you want it to be.

In preparation for new years and the default time when we all take steps to improve our lives in areas where we feel we're not doing well, I want us to talk about prayer. We will first establish clearly that it's what we should be doing and the positive impact it would have on our lives, and then talk about how we can improve our prayer lives.

Bible Passage

⁵“And **when** you pray, you are not to be as the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners, in order to be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. ⁶But you, **when** you pray, go into your inner room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret **will repay you**. ⁷And **when** you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition, as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. ⁸Therefore do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need, before you ask Him.

⁹“Pray, then, in this way: **Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. ¹⁰Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹Give us this day our daily bread. ¹²And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.** ¹⁴For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

Bible Study

Expectation – Jesus expected us to pray

In the context of “practicing your righteousness.”

Note the number of times you see “**when** you pray”. Jesus expected us to pray.

Secret place. Where do you pray? What is the payment? – v6

Lord's Prayer – **Starts and ends with a major focus on God and His greatness. Then a focus on God's will. We need to know what it is. Prayer is the way.**

Then “prayer requests.” Then a focus on relationships – make sure we're right with others. **Then that we stay out of tempting situations. (Internal and external)**

Example - Jesus

Jesus prayed often

Why?

1 Thess. 5:16-18 - ¹⁶Rejoice always; ¹⁷pray without ceasing; ¹⁸in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

End Result - Change

James 4:2 - You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. And you are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. **You do not have because you do not ask.**

Why pray? God already knows what you need.

We can worship God. **We can learn God's will.**

God says that our **prayer will change things** – 2 Chron. 7:13-14:

¹³“If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among My people, ¹⁴and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

You don't have because you don't ask. Pray **so you can receive** what God has for you. Ask, seek, knock.

Practical Application

When do you pray? Where do you pray?

How do you teach your children to pray?

If you were talking to a new Christian about the importance of prayer, what would you say?

Conclusion:

There are two possible outcomes of this lesson: either we can just feel guilty or we can really get serious with God and His desire for time with us.

Why do we not have a desire to pray? God's going to do His will anyway. We do not know the power of prayer. Why did Jesus pray?