

The Gospel of Matthew

Title: Instructions on Prayer - Part 1

Text: Matthew 6:9-13

Proposition: Jesus gives us five areas we are to pray for in our prayer life.

THE IMPERATIVE TO PRAY (Vs. 9). The imperative isn't a light command or suggestion. It's a verb that is a command of what to do or not to do. And in this case it's to pray. An Indicative on the other hand, is a verb that asserts something or presents a certainty. But we are commanded to pray. It's also a command that's modified by the adverb "*this way*" and there's the conduction "*then*" which connects both the command to pray and then how to pray.

Some have suggested that since God knows what we need (vs. 8) that why should we even pray. The answer is simple, because Jesus commands us to pray. He spent time to share how not to pray as the hypocrites do, but to pray sincerely, privately and with a pure heart to YOUR Father. So why would we even consider not praying when It's God who designed prayer. It was God who sought communion with Adam in the Garden, not the other way around. But as with all things, we humans tend to mess up God's design. And even prayer had become a pragmatic, repetitious, do it to get it done attitude. In fact, prayer is mentioned 146X in the NT.

Just for an example in 1 Thessalonians 1:2; 3:10; 5:17,25 "**We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers**", "**as we night and day keep praying most earnestly that we may see your face**", "**pray without ceasing**", "**Brethren, pray for us.**" In fact, the words "pray without ceasing" is in the Greek as "*without ceasing, pray*". Literally means "without intermission". Obviously in context, it doesn't mean we are to be on our knees or praying out loud without ever stopping. But its meaning is we should always be in a prayerful state of mind.

We don't just pray for the "big" things. Our lives should be saturated in prayer for every single obstacle, trial, difficulty and decisions we face every day. If it's work, play, school, family, service, whatever. Paul mentioned to the Thessalonians in closing to pray for him. Prayer isn't just a public set time of prayer. As Jesus told us to pray in our most intimate, closet of prayer, we seek Him to help us, guide us, and give us what we need in our moments in life.

Application: We are commanded to pray. We must pray. We pray about everything. Small. Big.

Jesus gives us how to pray, when He says "pray like this". And we have 5 clear points on areas to pray in. Keep in mind, of course, we aren't commanded to pray exactly like this every time, but it's a wonderful outline of areas to pray in and why.

Vs. 9A - HOW TO ADDRESS AND TO WHOM WE ADDRESS OUR PRAYERS. Our Father, is a personal, family, child to Father address. In vs. 6 Jesus uses this term "**Your Father**" indicating we aren't praying to a distant, fictitious statue in a far away place. Nor are we praying to someone we don't

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know. Pagans of the time had a fear of their deity. They didn't want to make him mad or upset him or approach him the wrong way. But we can go to God as a child goes to his father. This gives us hope. He's not unapproachable. In Matthew 7:11 Jesus said, "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!" We have the security of God that He is ours and we are His. John 10:29 "My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father's hand." That's what a father does. He provides, protects, cares and loves his children. We were a far off, distant, slaves to sin, now we are slaves to Christ, under the protection of God our Father.

Vs. 9B - HE IS HOLY AND HIS NAME IS HALLOWED. The ancient word for hallowed literally means "to make holy." His name is holy. When you speak His name, do so in a way that brings holiness to the name of God. It's a name above every other name. Exodus 20:7 "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain." And using the Lord's name in vain in a slang way is a violation of this command.

To hallow God's name is to is to revere, honor, glorify, and obey Him as singular perfect.¹ How we act, live and walk is a reflection of who God is. In 1 Peter 3:15 "but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence." The word sanctify is a from of the word used for hallowed. When we speak, we bring hallowed reverence to God's name. To truly hallow His name is to consciously draw Him into every daily thought, every daily word, and every daily action.² This is played out in our daily lives. As Christians, why aren't we doing everything in our lives to hallow God's name, to bring glory to His name? 1 Corinthians 10:31 "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." In our study of Matthew we also learned in Matthew 5:16 this application, "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." It's interesting to note, that the word glorify in that verse means "to think, suppose, be of opinion." Thus, we hallow God's name by our works, our walk, or deeds.

Application: This is the first and foremost of the model prayer we are to consider. Our lives should reflect a Holy God, who has ransomed men from the depths of hell, and all that we do should glorify God. When we sanctify God in our hearts we also sanctify Him in our lives. To truly hallow His name is to consciously draw Him into every daily thought, every daily word, and every daily action.³ Before we go about our daily activities in this world we should have the mindset of David in Psalms 16:8 "I have set the Lord continually before me."

¹ The John MacArthur New Testament Commentary; pp. 378

² The John MacArthur New Testament Commentary; pp. 378

³ The John MacArthur New Testament Commentary; pp. 378

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Vs. 10A - YOUR KINGDOM COME! The word kingdom does not primarily refer to a geographical area but to sovereignty and dominion. There will be a new heaven and new earth (Revelation 21:1) and our prayer is not only to hallow His name but to pray for His kingdom to come! It will be a kingdom on earth, but not a worldly kingdom. Our prayer is for God's kingdom to come soon. For His return. For Him to establish His perfect rule, where He is King! Why aren't you praying for this? Maybe it's because you're too attracted to this world. You think this world has your hope, your peace? 1 John 2:17 *"The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever."* There's nothing here in this world worth eternal value.

Yes, we live in this world, we operate in this world, the world system, we vote, pay taxes, buy things. But this world isn't our home. It holds no eternal value. You should vote and pray for leaders who are godly and will not persecute you or limit your beliefs in the Word of God. But at the end of the day, this world is wicked, evil, immoral and anti-God. Remember in John 18:36 when Jesus said to Pilate *"My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm."* This is why we don't try to advance God's kingdom by who's in the White House, State House or Mayor. God's kingdom isn't coming through some political party. God's kingdom isn't coming through woke thought, the CRT implementation or some other radical, wordy, ideological nonsense.

This is what we should be praying for. That His kingdom will come soon. He will reign. He will rule. He will be the light. He will be King.

Vs. 10B - YOUR WILL BE DONE. Thayer's dictionary defines will as *"what one wishes or has determined shall be done."* Understanding God's will is often a dilemma. We pray for certain things and they don't come about the way we desire. We then resolve that it wasn't God's will. And that is true in and of itself. Some have said, why pray then? Well because as we have seen we are commanded to pray. *Our responsibility is not to solve the dilemma but to believe and act on God's truths, whether some of them seem to conflict or not.*⁴ Whenever we pray for *"your will be done"* we are praying that God's will becomes our will. We are praying His will is all over the earth as it is in heaven. And we are praying to be conformed to His will not our own.

We believe God is sovereign, yet we shouldn't pray as a duty not believing God to answer our prayers. We shouldn't pray as if *"what will be will be"* diminishes our trust and faith in God. He is in every detail of our lives. He knows our hearts. And prayer is that communion with Him, even though we know He will do and accomplish what is best for us. We do not pray to bend God's will towards ours. God isn't a cosmic vending machine that is dispensing whatever you want and how you want it. Believe me, I know I prayed for specific results, needs and they weren't answered the way I wanted. Doesn't mean I didn't pray hard enough. It's hard, I often didn't understand, but I know my Father, He knows best.

⁴ The John MacArthur New Testament Commentary; pp. 382

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When we pray for God's will to be done here on earth as it is in heaven, we are rebelling against a worldly system that defines truth as to whatever man desires it to be. We aren't of the world. We pray for men, leaders, and the like to be saved and conformed to God. Romans 12:1-2 defines this well, *"Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."*

In closing, we see an imperative to pray. It's not a suggestion, and we are to pray and ask and seek God daily. We are to pray to OUR FATHER. Not a statue, or symbol or some distant deity. He is our Father, we are His children. We are to pray His name is hallowed, honored and glorified. We are to pray for His kingdom to come. For Him to rule, reign and defeat death finally. And we are to pray for His will to be done here. Conform our family, us as it is in heaven. This is the substance of our prayer. This is what we should be praying for. Do you?