

Lesson 8

Prayer Is Talking To God!

One of the things we do as Christians is talk to our heavenly father. This is not any different from earthly fathers who enjoy having their children talk to them. We have a special relationship with God in that we are now His children (**1 John 3:1-2**). So as a part of that special relationship we are to talk to our heavenly father. Talking to God is "praying." Our Lord taught us about praying in **Matthew 6:5-15; 7:7-11**. So now we will look at the where, how, what and the why of prayer.

WHERE TO PRAY?

Our Lord spoke of hypocrites who loved to stand in a public place and pray so people would see how holy they were. It is not wrong to pray in public, but it is wrong to pray for the purpose of putting on a show. So our Lord taught us to pray in private, to go into a room with the door shut.

HOW TO PRAY?

Our Lord then taught that we are not to use "meaningless repetition" when we pray. This means that we do not chant or repeat one phrase. In other words, when we talk to our father we talk to him from the heart as if we were talking to a friend.

WHAT TO PRAY?

In this same account, as it is given in **Luke 11**, we see the disciples had asked the Lord to teach them to pray. Our Lord then taught them the prayer we also have recorded here in **Matthew 6**. It may seem strange that after our Lord has just taught us not to pray a memorized prayer that He would then teach us a prayer to memorize. But this is not the case. In those days the Rabbis or teachers would teach an index prayer. This is like an outline a person could follow when he prayed and he could fill it in any way he needed to. So the outline our Lord gave has seven index's or points to follow. The first four points have to do with God, the next three points have to do with man.

The first point is, "Our Father who art in heaven." This reminds us of two things. First, God is our Father and second, He is in heaven. Not only is He in heaven but He is everywhere at the same time. So as we pray we can begin by thanking Him that He is the sovereign God who is everywhere and that there is no place we can go where He is not present. In other words, He is always with us no matter where we are. So we can fill in the follow things under this first point.

The second point is, "hallowed be Thy name." This means that the name of God is holy. We are to treat His name with respect and dignity. We never use the name of the Lord in vain, which is to use it as a cuss word. So as we pray we could fill in under this point how we respect the name of the Lord and how much He means to us. We might want to tell Him how much we love Him and how thankful we are for all that He has done for us.

The third point is, "Thy kingdom come." We are looking forward to the day in which our Lord will come to this earth and set up His kingdom so that He will rule over all things. This is the victory that we look forward to as Christians. Therefore, as we pray we might say how we are looking forward to the time when our Lord will reign over the earth and how that will be much better than the way things are now.

The fourth point is, "Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." This is a real important point because it reminds us of how everything we do in our lives should be done according to the will of the Lord. So before we ask Him for things we want to tell Him that we want His will to be done in our lives.

The fifth point is where we begin to ask Him for things, "Give us this day our daily bread." This is the place where we ask for the things we need. We need food, clothing, housing, transportation, health and many things that come up in our lives. He wants us to ask for these things as we see in **Matthew 7:7-11**. There He tells us to ask, seek, and knock. Then, as a good father, it is His pleasure to give us what we ask. We must keep in mind that this is all to be done within the will of God as in point number four. Sometimes we will ask for things and He will say no. Just as there are times when an earthly father has to say no to his children because he knows what is best for them.

The sixth point is where we ask Him to forgive our debts, "And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." We need to notice that the Lord wants us to forgive others just as we want Him to forgive us. When we sin against God then we ask Him to forgive us and He will (**1 John 1:8,9**). But at the same time He wants us to forgive those who sin against us.

The seventh point is, "And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil." We are asking the Lord to keep us pure and to keep us on the narrow road of a life that is pleasing to the Lord. So we might pray here for things that we need to change or improve upon in our lives.

WHY PRAY?

We pray because the Scriptures tell us it is better to pray than to be anxious (**Philippians 4:6-7**). Therefore, we are to pray without ceasing

(**1 Thessalonians 5:17**). Our Lord is always with us no matter where we are, so we can pray anywhere, at any time and He will hear our prayer and will answer in working all things together for our good (**Romans 8:28**).

Bible Reading: Matthew 6:5-15; 7:7-11



Questions for Review:

1. What is prayer?
2. Why is it better to pray in private?
3. What kind of words should we use when we pray?
4. How can the prayer our Lord taught His disciples be of help to us when we pray?
5. Why is it important to remember our Father is in heaven?
6. How can we keep the name of the Lord holy?
7. When we say, "Thy will be done," what are we saying?
8. Is it all right to ask for the things we need? Why or why not?
9. Why is it important for us to forgive others who have sinned against us'?
10. Why would you want to spend time in prayer?