

**WHEN YOU PRAY**  
**Finding God**  
**Matthew 6:5-8**

We need this series. I need this series! We are in such a unique season at CHC right now, and nothing is more important to us as a body or as individuals than PRAYER. Prayer is our relational LINK to our Father. Prayer is the primary way that we invite God into our daily lives and the way that we DISCOVER what God is already doing in our daily lives. **Helping people to FIND and FOLLOW Jesus Christ.**

I want us to take prayer from what is CURRENTLY is in our lives to what JESUS taught that it COULD BE in our lives! I want to DISPEL some MYTHS about prayer that make it LESS than it should be. I also want to help us to NOT REDUCE prayer to our level of experience [Feelings/Impressions/Coincidences]. It can always be MORE than any previous experience! It is not a STATIC practice. And we are ALL GROWING. So, let's grow with regard to our PRAYER LIFE. Do you HAVE a prayer life? Many do not. Oh, what we are missing out on!

Jesus gave us some very specific teaching about prayer, because prayer is our IMMEDIATE MEANS OF ACCESS to God . . . THROUGH JESUS CHRIST. Jesus made it possible for all people to FIND GOD in prayer. **Matthew 6:5-6 NIV**  
**5 "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.**

**Prayer should be PERSONAL!**

**\*Prayer should be a RELATIONAL interaction with your HEAVENLY FATHER!**

-Is God YOUR Father? [Gospel Presentation][Creator vs. Father]

\*Jesus told some religious leaders: "God is NOT your father, you are of your father – the DEVIL!"

\*"Don't be like the HYPOCRITES . . ." They see MEN but not GOD.

[Hypocrites=Pretender, Actor, Stage Player]

\*How AWESOME is that if God IS your Father! [Audience with the King!]

-God LOVES for us to talk to him in prayer. [Jesus's instructions were to his own disciples!]

\*He EXPECTS us to pray. "WHEN YOU PRAY . . ."

\*He WAITS for us to pray.

\*He ACTS in RESPONSE to our prayers.

In fact, prayer is important first because it is the only way for God to become PERSONAL in our lives. If God did not require us to come to him in prayer, then we would just expect him to PROVIDE what we need without any need for INTERACTION with him (though he does this for us before we know him!) and we would never experience him as our loving heavenly Father!

This is also why Jesus did not simply REMAIN here after his resurrection. He OPENED the way to God (because he IS the Way) and then he returned to sit at the right hand of the Father to intercede for us (we will study that later) and he sent the Holy Spirit to DWELL within us so that we could have IMMEDIATE ACCESS to God at ALL TIMES and in ALL PLACES. There is NO LIMIT on the amount, place, time, or setting of prayer!

**\*Prayer should be a PRIVATE act of conversation with God.**

-Public prayers are APPROPRIATE, but they must not be the SUM TOTAL of your prayer life!

\*If your prayers are only a PERFORMANCE for men, then your reward for prayer will be their PRAISE for your prayer. Don't expect an answer!  
[Do you want to be HEARD by God, or SEEN by men?]

-Public prayers should never be more intimate than your private prayers.

[\[Compare to the conversations I have with Lisa at home vs. in public.\]](#)

[Telling my men's group that Lisa and I talk all the way to group!]

[\[Tom Ellif – Pray, pray, pray! That is the REAL WORK!\]](#)

~RELATIONSHIPS ARE WORK!

-God dwells in a SECRET PLACE. **[Why does God play HIDE and SEEK?]**

-God promises to be FOUND by all who SEEK him.

-If he did not HIDE, then we would never really desire to FIND him. We would PRESUME upon his providence and power rather than his person!

\*Finding him implies DEEPER KNOWLEDGE of him.

\*Encounters like this offer more than a simple ANSWER to prayer.

We cannot too strongly emphasize this fact, that *to keep in close touch with God in the secret chamber of His presence is the great fundamental underlying purpose of prayer.* To speak with God is a priceless privilege; but what shall be said of having and hearing Him speak with us! We can tell Him nothing He does not know; but He can tell us what we do not know, no imagination has ever conceived, no research ever unveiled. The highest of all possible attainments is the knowledge of God, and this is the practical mode of His revelation of Himself. Even His holy Word needs to be read in the light of His own presence if it is to be understood. The praying soul hears God speak. "And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with Him, then *he heard the voice of One speaking unto him* from off the mercy seat that was upon the ark of testimony—from between the two cherubim, and He spake unto him" (Numbers 7:89).

**[REVEREND A.T. PIERSON – Divine Efficacy of Prayer](#)**

**God dwells in a SECRET place!** He HIDES himself from those who are not looking for him! But he REVEALS himself to those who truly seek him. He does this by REWARDING them openly. God is known by his response to prayer.

-God is a SPIRIT

-The glory of God is to CONCEAL a matter! **Proverbs 25:2 NASB**

**2 It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the glory of kings is to search out a matter.**

**\*Prayer should be a PROTECTED context of your life!**

- Go into an INNER CHAMBER. [Jesus always found time to be ALONE with God]
  - \*My struggle with alone time vs. study time. One is NOT the other.
- SHUT your door! [[Phone/TV/Computer off, Bible, Ears, and Mouth open](#)]
  - \*In the QUIETNESS of that place, God gets your UNINTERRUPTED attention!
  - [When was the last time God had your uninterrupted attention?]**
  - [Normally, this requires CRISIS! God does not want your prayer life to be relegated to times of crisis or desperation only! He wants relationship!]

God's great corrective for this most disastrous inversion and perversion of the true relation of things is prayer. "Enter into thy closet." There all is silence, secrecy, solitude, seclusion. Within that holy of holies the disciple is left alone—all others shut out, that the suppliant may be shut in—with *God*. The silence is in order to the hearing of the still, small voice that is drowned in worldly clamor, and which even a human voice may cause to be unheard or indistinct. The secrecy is in order to a meeting with Him who seeth in secret and is best seen in secret. The solitude is for the purpose of being alone with One who can fully impress with His presence only when there is no other presence to divert thought. The place of seclusion with God is the one school where we learn that He is, and is the rewarder of those that diligently seek Him [[Hebrews 11:6](#)].

[A.T. PIERSON – Divine Efficacy of Prayer](#)

- WAIT for God to respond to your prayer with an EXPECTANT heart!
  - \*God PROMISES to REWARD our prayers.
  - [[King David: In the morning I will pray and will LOOK UP.](#)]

Prayer must not only be PERSONAL. It must also reflect the reality of your faith in another key manner. Jesus went on to say: **Matthew 6:7-8 NIV**  
**7 And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.**

**Prayer should be PRECISE!**

- \*Prayer is the practice of ASKING for what you NEED!
  - God KNOWS what you need, so he knows if you are not being honest!
    - \*Specific requests are a sign of SIMPLE FAITH!
  - If you do not ask SPECIFIC things, it is a sign of a LACK of faith.
  - If you do not ask specific things, you can never know if it gets answered!
    - \*So, what does it mean if you don't GET what you are praying FOR?
- \*Prayer must not be focused on FANCY words.
  - ~You must not get caught up in using spiritual words in prayer!
  - ~Prayer is simply a conversation with God; no "Thou's" or "Thee's" needed!
  - ~You do not need a BIBLE DEGREE in order to pray effectively.

[\[Tell the story of the man who CORRECTED his wife's grammar in prayer!\]](#)

\*Prayer must not be measured by its LENGTH, but by its DEPTH. [Most Bible prayers are SHORT!][Lord's Prayer]

- Are you truly laying your HEART before the Lord?
- How long does it really take to get REAL with God?

\*The MODEL PRAYER was meant to be a PRAYER STRUCTURE, not a prayer that Jesus wanted us to pray! It is the BONES that we have to put MEAT upon!

- [HAIL MARY'S and RECITING the Model Prayer.]
- [Some of us only throw Hail Mary prayers to God!]

-Jesus wanted us to understand HOW we can approach God properly.

\*So it is good that we have memorized the Model Prayer!

-But, now we need to UNPACK what Jesus MEANT in this MODEL PRAYER.

WE WILL STUDY THE MODEL PRAYER NEXT WEEK!

For now, I want to ask you some questions: Are you satisfied with your prayer life? Do you want more than just a "Now I lay me down to sleep" type of prayer life? It will not get FORCED on you. You have to DEVELOP your prayer life through PRACTICE! And prayer will CHANGE YOU. Are you ready?

Let's PRAY.