

“How to Talk with God”

“Sincere and Simple”

Matthew 6:5-8

Intro:

Over the next few weeks, we will go verse by verse through one of the most famous passages of scripture, the **‘Lord’s prayer’**. We will unpack the Lord’s Prayer as a guide Jesus taught the early disciples —and us today —on how to talk with God.

*“And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. “And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.” **Matthew 6:5-8***

Main Idea: Jesus Teaches that Prayer is Not Complicated, but Simple and Sincere

Prop: Jesus shares two important truths about prayer in Matthew 6:5-8

1. Sincere Prayer is to God and God Alone

And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and

*pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” **Matthew 6:5-6***

“What he says of the hypocrites sounds fine at first: ‘They love...to pray.’ But unfortunately it is not prayer which they love, nor the God they are supposed to be praying to. No, they love themselves and the opportunity which public praying gives them to parade themselves.”

John Stott

Sincere prayer is not about who’s around, but about who you are talking to —and that’s God!

God can see past our actions and look directly at our hearts and motives. *“But the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.’ **1 Samuel 16:7***

Sincere prayer is to God and God alone, not the people around us, which is why Jesus tells us to **“go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”**

Eliminate all distractions and seek the face of God, enjoying true intimacy with Him.

*“You have said, ‘Seek my face.’ My heart says to you, “Your face, LORD, do I seek.” **Psalms 27:8***

John Stott notes that the word **‘room’** used by Jesus in this passage can be interpreted as a **‘store-room where treasures might be kept’**, suggesting that treasures are waiting for us when we pray to God and God alone.

Main Idea: Jesus Teaches that Prayer is Not Complicated, but Simple and Sincere

2. Simple Prayer is Easy and Earnest

And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him."

Matthew 6:7-8"

Gentiles at this time often engaged in pagan-style worship, so they used petitions and, through the chanting of words and phrases as a form of prayer, hoping to get their 'god's attention and favor.

We pray to a God who knows us, is near to us, and understands our needs!

"what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? Psalms 4:8

Brothers and Sisters, empty chants and words won't get us anywhere; we have direct access to God because of Jesus.

"Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." Hebrews 4:16

Throughout the gospels, we see direct, straightforward prayer requests to Christ himself, and he answers them!

- Peter to Jesus walking on water: **"Lord, save me!"** (Matthew 14:22-33) **Rescued from drowning**

- Thief on the cross: **"Remember me..."** (Luke 23:42-43) **The lord saved him.**
- Father of a sick child: **"I believe; help my unbelief!"** (Mark 9:24). **Child Healed**

It's not about the length, it's about the heart knowing God hears you and trusts He will provide!

Let us never use empty phrases; let our prayers always be genuine! Because we have a God who knows our needs before we ask, and yet still invites us to ask him! *"...for your Father knows what you need before you ask him."* **Matthew 6:8b**

"God knows our needs, but he has also chosen to grant some things only when his people pray." **Craig Blomberg**

We pray to a God that listens, knows our needs, and answers prayers!

Conclusion:

"And they took the bull that was given them, and they prepared it and called upon the name of Baal from morning until noon, saying 'O Baal, answer us!' But there was no voice, and no one answered. And they limped around the altar that they had made...and they cried aloud and cut themselves after their custom with swords and lances, until the blood gushed out upon them. And as midday passed, they raved on until the time of the offering of the oblation, but there was no voice. No one answered; no one paid attention." 1 Kings 18:26, 28-29

"Elijah the prophet came near and said, 'O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your word. Answer me, O LORD, answer me, that this people may know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back.'" 1 Kings 18:36-37

“Then the fire of the LORD fell & consumed the burnt offering & the wood & the stones & the dust, & licked up the water that was in the trench.” 1 Kings 18:38

Invitation: Don’t fall for the lie, thinking you can earn God’s love and attention; Because of what Jesus has done for us on the cross, you and I can be saved, turn to Jesus!

Guided Prayer Time: Sincere and Simple Prayer...

- **One Thing to Tell God:** “...your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” **Matthew 6:6b**
 - **One Thing to Ask God:** “...your Father knows what you need before you ask him.” **Matthew 6:8b**
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Sources and Further Reading Opportunities

- *ESV Study Bible* – Crossway (2008)
- *The Bible Exposition Commentary* – Warren Wiersbe (1996)
- *Holman Concise Bible Commentary* – David S. Dockery (1998)
- *New Bible Commentary* – D.A. Carson (1994)
- *The Sermon on the Mount* – R. Kent Hughes (2001)
- *Baker Commentary of the Bible-Walter A. Elwell* (1989)
- *The Message of the Sermon on the Mount* – John Stott (1985)
- *New American Commentary: Matthew* – Craig Bloomberg (1992)