



GETTING STARTED

> *As your group time begins, use this section for very brief review prior to showing the video to help get the conversation going.*

Let's do life together!/Opening Discussion: Welcome to your LIFEgroup; share about how your family celebrated Thanksgiving. How did you thank God this Thanksgiving?

Our Subject Today: This week, we continue our sermon series, CHRISTIAN(ESE), and will be looking at the doctrine of **PRAYER**. We will learn how to PRAY and understand the meaning.

VIDEO NOTES/QUESTIONS

INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY / OBSERVATION: Matthew emphasized the King of the kingdom of heaven. The Lord's prayer describes how Kingdom people pray.

INTERPRETATION: See Commentary on pages 5-6

APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

- 1) Let's begin our study time with sharing how you spend time in prayer. What is your normal practice, where do you go, do you use a prayer list, how do you pray?

SUGGESTED ANSWERS / DIGGING DEEPER: As a LIFEgroup leader, if you missed the sermon this may be one you need to watch, it will help you prepare for the group time. Please be prepared to share (maybe your spouse too, if they are in the group) how you spend time in prayer. This will help get your group talking about their prayer time, or lack there of.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS (cont.)**Read Genesis 3:8-9**

2) What do you think it was like for God to walk and talk to Adam in the garden? If it wasn't for "the Fall", what could it be like today?

SUGGESTED ANSWERS / DIGGING DEEPER: God created us to communicate with Him, but Satan interrupted our communication with God when he tempted man to sin (The Fall) and confused our communication with God. We see this in *Genesis 3:8-9* "Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?" Man did not want to talk to God.

Deeper question: How does Satan interrupt your prayer life?

3) Divide up the following verses about prayer with your LIFEgroup and have someone read each one. How do we apply these verses to our lives?

- *Mark 1:35*
- *Psalms 55:17*
- *Daniel 6:10*
- *1 Thessalonians 5:17*

SUGGESTED ANSWERS / DIGGING DEEPER: All of these verses are a challenge to us all on when to pray at different times throughout the day. Encourage your group to start every day with a time of prayer. Deeper verses: "In the morning, O LORD, You will hear my voice; In the morning I will order my prayer to You and eagerly watch." (*Psalms 5:3*). Encourage your group to spend daily with the Lord and watch for God to answer your prayer.

Read Matthew 6:9-10

4) - List some things we can praise God for: (Someone lead us in prayer)

- List some things we can thank God for: (Someone lead us in prayer)

- List some ways you can pray for God's kingdom to come: (Someone lead us in prayer)

SUGGESTED ANSWERS / DIGGING DEEPER: You may want to stop and discuss *1 Timothy 2:5* "For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." Some dominations believe there are many ways to communicate with the Father. Roman Catholics believe that you can pray to Mary and saints, there is no Scripture to back that up, only their tradition. People of the Word believe there is only one mediator who takes our prayers to the Father, Jesus Christ!

APPLICATION QUESTIONS (cont.)**Read Matthew 6:11-12**

5) - List some people we can intercede for: (Someone lead us in prayer)

- List some ways we can pray for each other: (Someone lead us in prayer)

- List some things we can ask forgiveness for: (Someone lead us in prayer)

SUGGESTED ANSWERS / DIGGING DEEPER: As we ask God to forgive us you may want to read: *1 John 1:9* - "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness". And *Matthew 6:14-15* - "For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."

Read Matthew 6:13

6) - List some things we can ask God to protect us from: (Now someone lead us in prayer)

- List some ways satan can attack us: (Now someone lead us in prayer)

- List some things we can praise God for as we end our prayer time: (Now someone lead us in prayer)

SUGGESTED ANSWERS / DIGGING DEEPER: This would be a great time to encourage your group to have a daily time in prayer "But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you." - *Matthew 6:6*. **You go secret, God will go public**, people will be able to tell you have been with Jesus. "Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus." - *Acts 4:13*.

SUMMARY (My Take-Away for This Week)**POSSIBLE SUMMARY/TAKE-AWAY:**

- I need to get serious about my prayer life
- I need to block out time each day to spend with Jesus
- I need to ask Jesus to help me get my prayer life more organized

WORK OUT (This Week's Assignments)

- I will pray daily for those in my LIFEgroup
- I will discuss with my group how we can serve others
- I will help plan a LIFEgroup Christmas party

MY NEXT STEPS FROM THE WEEKEND WORSHIP

1. This week, I will start by planning a time of prayer.
2. This week, I will pray through the Lord's Prayer daily
3. This week, I will join with my spouse, friend, my children and pray together
4. This week, I will memorize the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) to use as an outline to pray

HOW MY GROUP CAN PRAY FOR ME THIS WEEK

[> Record Group Prayer Request Here:](#)

COMMENTARY

Prayer: Dialogue between God and people, especially His covenant partners.

Old Testament Israel is a nation born of prayer. Abraham heard God's call (Gen. 12:1-3), and God heard the cries of the Hebrew children (Exod. 3:7). Moses conversed with God (Exod. 3:1-4:17) and interceded for Israel (Exod. 32:11-13; Num. 11:11-15). The book of Psalms teaches that variety and honesty in prayer are permissible; the psalms proclaim praise, ask pardon, seek such things as communion (63), protection (57), vindication (107), and healing (6).

New Testament Jesus' example and teaching inspire prayer. Jesus displayed a regular and intense prayer life (Matt. 6:5; 14:23; Mark 1:35).

The Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4) is taught to disciples who realize the kingdom is present but still to come in all its fullness. Significantly the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray after watching Him pray (Luke 11:1). The prayer also provides a contrast to hypocritical prayers (Matt. 6:5). Although it is permissible to repeat this prayer, it may be well to remember Jesus was emphasizing how to pray, not what to pray.

The ironies of prayer are evident: God knows our needs, yet we must ask; God is ready to answer, yet we must patiently persist. Children of the kingdom will have their requests heard (Matt. 6:8; 7:7-11; 21:22; John 14:13; 15:7, 16; 16:23; cp. 1 John 3:22; 5:14; James 1:5), particularly believers gathered in Jesus' name (Matt. 18:19).

Answered Prayers—Unanswered Petitions Not every petition is granted. Job's demand for answers from God was eclipsed by the awesome privilege of encountering Him (Job 38-41). Modern believers must also cherish communion with the Father more than their petitions.

Jesus, with His soul sorrowful to the point of death, prayed three times that His cup of suffering might pass, but He was nevertheless submissive to God's will (Matt. 26:38-39, 42, 45). Both the boldness of the petition to alter God's will and the submission to this "hard" path of suffering are significant. Paul asked three times for deliverance from his "thorn in the flesh." God's answer to Paul directed him to find comfort in God's sufficient grace.

Faith is a condition for answered petitions (Mark 11:24). Two extremes must be avoided concerning faith. (1) With Jesus' example in mind we must not think that faith will always cause our wishes to be granted. (2) We must not go through the motions of prayer without faith. Believers do not receive what they pray for because they pray from selfish motives (James 4:2-3). Prayers are also hindered by corrupted character (James 4:7) or injured relationships (Matt. 5:23-24; 1 Pet. 3:7).

Theological Insights Dialogue is what is essential to prayer. Prayer makes a difference in what happens (James 4:2). Our understanding of prayer will correspond to our understanding of God. When God is seen as desiring to bless (James 1:5) and sovereignly free to respond to persons (Jon. 3:9), then prayer will be seen as dialogue with God. God will respond when we faithfully pursue this dialogue. Prayer will lead to a greater communion with God and a greater understanding of His will (Randy Hatchett, "[Prayer](#)," ed. Chad Brand et al., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* [Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003]).

Genesis 3:8-9. The anthropomorphic description of God "walking" in the garden suggests the enjoyment of fellowship between him and our first parents. "Walked with God" is a favorite expression in Genesis, depicting the righteous conduct of Israel's heroes, including Enoch, Noah, and Abraham. Yet now the man and the woman are hiding from God in fear. God's presence is also noted by his "walking" in the camp and sanctuary of Israel. Later Israel recognized that God demanded holiness and obedience if he were to continue to "walk" among his people. It was part of the sad deception that the man and woman who wanted so much to be "like God," rather than obtaining the stature of deity, are afraid even to commune with him. The language of the verse, "the man and his wife," imitates the description of the couple when in their innocence they had lived without shame (2:25). Now they have lost their innocence, their childlike trust in the goodness of God. They are pictured in the narrative like children hiding in fearful shame from their father.

God is depicted as a gentle father seeking out his own. The means of uncovering their deed (like the serpent's means of entrapment) is interrogation rather than charge and denunciation. The effect is pedagogical and permits the guilty to witness against themselves by their own admissions. Adam explains that he hid out of fear because he realized his nakedness (3:10). Actually his fear was his response to the presence of God in the garden; he did not want to appear before God in his nakedness (K. A. Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, vol. 1A, *The New American Commentary* [Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996]).

COMMENTARY

Matthew 6:9-13. In this prayer our Lord shows His disciples how an infinite variety of wants and requests can be compressed into a few humble petitions. It embodies every possible desire of a praying heart, a whole world of spiritual requirements, yet all in the most simple, condensed, and humble form, resembling in this respect a pearl on which the light of heaven plays. It expresses and combines, in the best order, every Divine promise, every human sorrow and want, and every Christian aspiration for the good of others. In the opening address we have Theism in its purest manifestation, which ever owns and recognizes the God of heaven as our Father. From the three first petitions, in their relation to the succeeding ones, we learn that man must not be bent on entreating God merely for that which affects himself, but that his spiritual well-being will be promoted by self-surrender to God, and by primarily seeking that which pertains to His kingdom.

Viewed as a whole, the prayer contains only one idea, even deep longing after the kingdom of God, which forms the substance of all the prayers of the children of God (for whose behoove Christ here gives us a model). But this one idea is set forth under a twofold aspect. In the first three petitions it is presented to us in the light of God's relation to men, exhibiting the kingdom of God absolutely and in its perfectness,—the final aim of God being always the burden of the believer's desire. The four succeeding petitions on the other hand, bear reference to the obstacles in the way of the kingdom of heaven, and present this spiritual longing of the children of God in the light of the existing relation between man and God. Hence it is that in the first part of the Lord's Prayer the infinite riches of God are unfolded:—Hallowed be *Thy* name; *Thy* kingdom come; *Thy* will be done; while in the second part, the poverty of men is brought to view: Give *us* this day our daily bread; Forgive *us* our debts; Lead *us* not into temptation; Deliver *us* from evil.

Lastly, the rich doxology expresses the certain hope that our prayers shall be heard, in view of the character of God, who, being Himself the highest good, will also bring to pass the highest good, even His own kingdom. The Lord's Prayer is, at the same time, the utterance of the desires of individual believers, although the plural number in the petitions indicates their feeling of fellowship with others, and that of the aspirations of mankind generally. Expressing as it does the inmost feelings and wants of humanity, and the relation between God and sinful man, it both meets the requirements of all, and satisfies the desires of the individual, provided his be a life of faith. In the first three petitions, the soul rises directly to God; in the three following, we have the hindrances to these aspirations—from a feeling of dependence upon what is earthly, and from a conflict with sin; while the last petition sets before us the solution of all these difficulties (John Peter Lange and Philip Schaff, *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Matthew* [Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2008]).

Matthew 6:9 By commanding his disciples to pray like this rather than simply “pray this,” Jesus demonstrated that this prayer was offered as a model rather than a mantra to be recited. The first person plural pronoun *Our* implies that Jesus intended this prayer to be a model for corporate prayer, i.e., a prayer for when disciples gather as a group. This confirms that *Mt 6:5* was not intended to prohibit disciples from praying together publicly in the synagogue or other gatherings but instead prohibited prayers that were motivated by religious showmanship. *Your name be honored as holy* suggests that Jesus expected his disciples to live righteous lives that honor rather than profane God's name (5:16; Lv 22:31-32). This is an important precondition for successful prayer (Robert H. Stein, “Differences in the Gospels.” in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax [Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017]).

Prayer: In any study of the principles, and procedure of prayer, of its activities and enterprises, first place, must, of necessity, be given to faith. It is the initial quality in the heart of any man who essays to talk to the Unseen. He must, out of sheer helplessness, stretch forth hands of faith. True godliness is just as true, steady, and persevering in the realm of faith as it is in the province of prayer. Moreover: when faith ceases to pray, it ceases to live.

Prayer projects faith on God, and God on the world. Only God can move mountains, but faith and prayer move God. Faith does not grow disheartened because prayer is not immediately honored; it takes God at His Word, and lets Him take what time He chooses in fulfilling His purposes, and in carrying on His work.

The faith which creates powerful praying is the faith which centers itself on a powerful Person. Faith in Christ's ability to *do* and to *do greatly*, is the faith which prays greatly (Edward M. Bounds, *The Necessity of Prayer* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1999).

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