

The Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:5–15

MPSeries Jesus teaches Christ-followers to pray as the source of all life with God, for intimacy, peace and power.

SERIES INTRO

Today I begin a study of the Lord's Prayer.

LP's "to PRAY" campaign was a powerful season for LifePoint, but we have not yet seen the full extent of all God has been doing among us. Now is the time for what we learned of prayer to take hold of our lives and live by it every day.

Over the next weeks we will walk through the Lord's Prayer phrase-by-phrase to deepen our practice of daily, practical prayer that changes our lives, and impacts the world by God's power. I want us to strive toward what I believe to be Jesus' aim in His teaching, to make our prayers real & relational, divinely powerful, spiritually personal & practical, daily & continual, redemptive for our lives & impactful in the world.

Jesus teaches Christ-followers to pray as the source of all life with God, for intimacy, peace and power.

True Prayer

Matt 6:5-8

MPS True Christian prayer flows from relationship with God, not from hollow religion or worldly motives.

OBJ Every person can practice faithful praying by guarding against two warnings with two correction.

TRANS Today, we begin by making prayer real and personal.

Matthew 6:5-15

5"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. 6But 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.

7"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. 8Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. 9Pray then like this:

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

10Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

11Give us this day our daily bread,

12and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

13And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil

14For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, 15but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

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OBJ: Jesus introduces his instruction on prayer with **Two Dangers** to guard against and **Two Corrections** to practice.

Warning #1: Hypocritical Praying. .5

Jesus warns that when we pray, we must not be like hypocrites. Hypocritical praying means we profess belief that actually hides our true belief or feeling. It means that what we say does not agree or align with how we truly feel or believe. Jesus' warning addresses our motivation, that we seek to impress others with our prayers.



There are **two aspects of hypocrisy** in our praying. The first is when we pray “to be seen by others.” We try to make people think we are more spiritual than we know ourselves to be. It is important to understand, though, that just because you are seen praying does NOT mean you are praying so that you will be seen by them. [The point is NOT what people see you doing, but what you aim to achieve by them seeing you.](#)

The second aspect of hypocrisy in our praying is trying to impress others. This is when we try to make people think something about us that we do not believe about ourselves. In this it is also important for us to understand that this can occur in the presence of others or alone. [When we seek to fulfill the expectations of others in our practice, whether they are present or not, hypocrisy remains.](#)

Both of these aspects are expressions of hypocritical praying because our actions claim we are communicating with God, when in reality we are acting to impress other people. Both aspects seek one reward, to glory of people.

When we pray to impress other people, Jesus says THAT IS are our reward. **And what is that true reward?** The reward of being seen comes from two different kinds of people. Religious people - “in the synagogue” – will only disdain you, because religious people live by comparison that you either falsely reinforce, or, usually, become the focus of their jealousy. And all the while, smiling in approval. Disdain in our first reward of hypocritical praying. The second reward comes from irreligious people – “in the streets”. These people are always unimpressed and uninterested because they don’t care. But a greater damage is done here. They can only be deceived because they think “knowing God” means “being religious”. [Hypocrisy fuels prayer that focuses all attention on self and strives after glory from man, all while claiming to communicate with God, focus on Him and seek His glory.](#)

The point in all our praying is that we must guard our hearts! Prayers are never about impressing others but communicating with God and entering into His divine work! Jesus warns of hypocrisy in our praying because we deceive ourselves by our own practice, claiming one thing in practice but pursuing another reward in our heart motive. The more we “practice hypocrisy”, the more we believe it is our true expression with God, and the more we grow disgruntled and dis-illusioned with God. [Jesus’ point is simply to get to the heart of the matter of what is going on in our heart!](#)

TRANS Jesus corrects His first warning by directing us to a change of posture.

Correction of Posture: Get alone with God and seek His reward. .6

Jesus says that we should go before God “*in secret*”. Jesus is not simply referring to a physical place or space, though this is surely a direct application. He’s teaching us to get alone with God. He’s not advising what we sometimes think of as a “secret”, living unknown by others. We must put away the expectations of others that build up simply from being around and hearing them. When Jesus teaches us to run into the secret place, He is telling us to “keep it real!” [We must remove and rid ourselves from the distractions and dissonance of the world that tempt and threaten to deceive us.](#)

We must get alone with God because, prayer flows from relationship with Jesus, to build, strengthen and deepen our relationship (intimacy) with Him. There is no falsehood before God. He will never deceive us. [True Christian prayer is intimacy with God.](#)

In your prayers, move to a place of personal communion with God. This mostly occurs with no one else around, but may occur where you can be seen. You need to be in a place where you can get real with God about who you are, what you think, how you feel, what is going on and how you are responding to it. Getting “real” with God is not to inform Him, but for you, to get real about you in honest assessment, and to seek more of Him as your only true help.

TRANS This can be so hard for people because they’ve lived so long and in so many ways to be seen by and impress others, they’ve almost lost any real sense of their own true feelings and thinking. **Have you experienced this?**



Hypocrisy is the thief of identity, stealing our true thoughts and feelings by covering them with layers of pretense and perversion. Intimacy with God is the only *vaccine* for hypocrisy, that brings us back to a true and real understanding of self by bringing a true picture of God in Jesus Christ. [Prayer builds intimacy with God that strengthens our heart against any threat, attack or temptation.](#)

By God's grace, we can look to the cross of Jesus Christ. This is the most true and real revelation of ourselves to us by a true and real revelation of God for us. We are sinners who deserve death because of our sin. God loves us and came and died to save us. God welcomes us when we humble ourselves and come to Him through Jesus Christ.

TRANS IF trying to impress people with our prayers is useless, then imagine trying to impress God with them! Jesus gives a second warning.

“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.

Warning #2: Heaping up empty words / phrases to impress God. .7

Jesus warns against two things, using a lot of words (meaningless chatter), and using words that have no meaning to us. What we say is not as important as that what we say aligns with what we are thinking and feeling. When we pray with many or big words that are meaningless to us, God is not impressed, and we are not helped. [The point of prayer is not to show God anything, but to commune with God and to receive from Him.](#)

God does NOT grade your prayers. God receives our prayers on two bases. First, He considers how true they are to what we really think / feel. In essence, how well do we understand ourselves and how honest are we being with ourselves. If they do not agree, see Jesus' first warning. God will not hear words in prayers that do not align with a heart humbled before Him. Second, God considers how true our prayers are to His Word. Again, in essence, God regards how well our prayers align with His Word, whether we know it, believe (trust) it and desire to live by His truth. [God will not consider our prayers when our prayers are inconsiderate of His Word.](#)

Have you ever found yourself in a “rut” of just saying the same things in every prayer? So often, words can become so common that you just speed right through the words so you can move on to what is next on your schedule.

Jesus teaches that praying with many or meaningless words is our attempt to impress God. It is never possible for us to impress God. We must know this, though, that just because we use words in an empty way does not mean they are empty words. Common words or phrases that we regularly use can help structure and guide our prayers, but they can also become a trap for us. On familiar example is when we conclude “In Jesus' Name”. This is always right and true, but we can recite it in a way that becomes meaningless to us. [We must always remember that praying is not about the words, but the One to whom we pray and through whom we have access to approach His throne.](#)

TRANS Instead, Jess invites us to be confident NOT in our prayers but in God.

Correction of Confidence: Confident in God, not our words. .8

Jesus reminds us that the Father knows what we need before we even ask. Remembering this, our confidence is not in our ability to pray but in God's complete and perfect understanding of us and our need.

When we remember God's perfect knowledge of our life, we can walk confident in Him with this in your mind and heart. God wants and awaits you to commune with Him in Prayer! Philippians reminds us,

The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Phil 4:5b-7



God sent Jesus to die in your place for your sin so you can come freely to Him. Our confidence is only in Jesus for us. Again Philippians states,

For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh— Phil 3:3

We place NO confidence in the flesh, in our ability, but only in the finished work of Jesus Christ our Lord.

When we remember God's perfect knowledge of our life, we can walk confident that God will tell us what and how to pray. He will even pray for you when you don't know what to pray!

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. 27And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. Romans 8:26-27

APPL One helpful practice that I often use is simply to pause before I speak and ask Holy Spirit to speak guide me. Then, listen to Him to lead me in prayer.

Impressing others does NOTHING to strengthen or legitimize our prayers. And there's nothing we can do to impress God. Praise God, we do not have to do either.

True Christian prayer flows from relationship with God, not from hollow religion or worldly motives.

THIS WEEK

- Pay attention to the posture of your heart as you begin to pray. What motives are driving you?
- Don't simply speak words, but speak to the Father, to Jesus the Son, to Holy Spirit.
- Pause every time and ask Holy Spirit to guide you. Then listen and follow as He guides and leads.

CLOSE

Friend – do you know Jesus in a personal relationship? He came and died so you could go to the Father fully accepted and welcomed at any and all times. If you have never repented of your sin and put your faith in Jesus, do that right now. He waits to receive you, to forgive and cleanse you, and welcome you into His Kingdom.

LifePoint – the world does not need any more of it than it already has; neither hype nor hysteria. But there is One that it needs much more of, more JESUS. The best means for more Jesus in this world begins in prayer.

Before you...

- ...let the storm of "Breaking News" break you, bow before the Father.
- ...you talk to anyone about all that is going on in the world this week – talk to the Father about those that are going through it in the world this week.

Let's *pray...together* as watch God do great and mighty works that He wants to do in this world.

