

“The Precautions of Prayer”

Matthew 6:5-8

Introduction

Prayer, simply put, is communicating with God. It is an essential component to the Christian life. Although prayer is an act of faith that draws us closer to God, many believers struggle with this spiritual discipline because we do not know what prayer is, how it works, or how to do it. Effective praying was a challenge for the disciples as well.

When Jesus taught His disciples how to pray, He first spent time instructing them how not to pray. Sometimes, before we can really understand how to do something important, we first need to understand how not to do it. Jesus instructs us in verse 5, “*And when you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites.*” These people had an improper approach to communicating with God. They prayed to be seen and heard by men; they prayed with wrong motives; and they prayed to appear to be holier than others. As Christians, the way we prevent ourselves from falling victim to improperly praying is by praying regularly, praying sincerely, praying secretly, and praying thoughtfully.

If we desire to develop a stronger prayer life, we must heed the precautions Jesus lays out in Matthew 6: 5-8 and adopt the proper manner of communicating with God. Our prayers should be directed to an audience of one. Prayer should be God-focused and God-centered. The primary goal for our prayers should be to glorify the Lord. Believers who grasp this biblical concept will develop a more effective prayer life.

Getting Started

1. Is there a person in your life that you admire because of the way they pray? If yes, Why do you admire their prayer life? If no, What do believe are some key components for developing an effective prayer life?
2. How did this week’s sermon impact the way you now view prayer?

Let’s Get Personal

1. Share with your group some of the obstacles you often encounter in your personal prayer life?
 2. Has there ever been a time in your life that you were guilty of praying like those described in Matthew 6:5-8? If so, please explain.
 3. Dr. Evans emphasized the importance of praying regularly, sincerely, secretly, and thoughtfully. Which of these areas does your prayer life need to grow the most?
 4. Discuss with your circle or group the key components you often incorporate in your private prayer time.
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Take the Next Step

1. What steps can you take this week to deepen your communication with God?
2. Spend time this week seeking God for renewed strength and a fresh desire to be faithful in prayer.
3. Want to go deeper? Take a look at the following passages: 1 Thess. 5:17; Rom. 8:26-28; Col. 4:2; Phil. 4:6-7

Renew Your Mind

*Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.
Matthew 7:7*
