

“I am FBC Diana”

We are Prayerful

Intro: Prayer is one of those subjects that most everyone thinks they understand with perfect clarity and yet practice with least consistency or confidence. In fact, prayer may suffer supremely above all other topics from both assumption and confusion. The Bible says so much about prayer; it provides examples and even teaching regarding the subject. However, prayer is likely something that most Christians struggle to practice well. Jesus provides some simple and profound helps for all Christians to be the kind of participants in prayer that God has both instructed and qualified them to be.

Matthew 6:7-13

What are some things we can learn about prayer from this passage? (3 points)

1. Christ assumes that His followers will be a praying people.

A. **“when you pray...”** (v7)

- i. Pray for those who “persecute” - bully or oppress (Matt. 5:44, Luke 6:28).
- ii. Pray privately and passionately (Matt. 6:6).
- iii. Pray earnestly for Gospel workers (Matt. 9:38; Luke 10:2).
- iv. Pray that God would spare you from temptation and to keep you from it (Matt. 26:41, Mark 14:38; Luke 22:40).
- v. Pray for the forgiveness of sin – even sinful intent (Acts 8:22).
- vi. Pray that God would help you stand for truth in times of testing (2 Cor. 13:7).
- vii. Pray with gratitude that God saves and glorifies Himself in the life transformation of sinners (Col. 1:3).

2. Christ points out that the distinguishing factor is not religious forms but religious substance.

A. **“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...”** (v7-8)

- i. False prayers may be offered to false gods.
 1. Israel often turned from prayer and worship of the one true God towards prayer and worship of false gods – such as

Baal and Asheroth (Judges 3:7; 1 Sam. 12:10; 1 Kings 9:9; 2 Kings 17:7-8).

2. Those of other religions may offer devoted prayer and worship to their god(s).
 - a. There are biblical examples of this (1 Kings 18:26; 2 Kings 10:21; 1 Cor. 8:4-6), and numerous examples in our contemporary culture (Islam, Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, etc.).
 - ii. The distinction between true and false religion, prayer and worship of the one true God and that of false god(s), is not necessarily that of *what we do*... It is the substance (definition, motivation, attention, and the like) of what we are doing that counts.

3. Christ sees God's providence as reason or motivation to pray.

A. *"your Father knows what you need before you ask him"* (v8)

- i. Some may argue that God's foreknowledge and providence are reasons against prayer (among other things).
 1. One may ask, "If God already planned what will be, then why pray for anything?"
- ii. Jesus sees the opposite as true:
 1. Jesus reasons, "Because your heavenly Father knows what you need before you ask, you should be pointed with your requests and trust that He will answer."
 2. It is precisely because God is providential and sovereign that he is able to move or act on behalf of those who cry out to Him.

4. Christ exemplifies some features of prayer that may be helpful for us to notice and apply.

A. **Adoration** – *"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name"* (v9)

- i. God is both 'holy' and 'our Father,' and these juxtaposed realities should excite adoration.
 1. God is HOLY
 - a. God is distinct from and unlimited by creation.

- b. He is God!
 - c. He is the untamed, infinite, omnipotent, morally perfect, incomprehensible, and most glorious One!
2. God is OUR FATHER!
- a. This concept of the fatherhood of God is stark against all that was understood about God until the moment Jesus uttered these words.
 - i. God is holy and unapproachable by humanity
 - ii. God is perfectly just and utterly furious with sin
 - b. Jesus mediates a Covenant of Grace that welcomes sinners as sons and not slaves!

B. Confession – “*forgive us our debts*” (v12)

- i. The natural result of adoration – worship and awe towards God – is a realization of sin and guilt.
- ii. Honest admission of sin and guilt is the first and essential step toward genuine confession and forgiveness.
 - 1. Psalm 32:1-5 – “Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,’ and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.”

C. Thanksgiving – “**11 Give us** this day our daily bread, **12 and forgive us** our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. **13 And lead us** not into temptation, but **deliver us** from evil.” (v11-13)

- i. God is Giver – He is providential; He created all things, and He sustains all things at this very moment.
- ii. God is Forgiver – He is gracious, and His grace is necessary for forgiveness to be enjoyed. He is the dispenser or withholder of forgiveness.
- iii. God is Leader – God is in charge and He directs our path. He says what is right/wrong, and He will assist His children as they seek to follow His direction.

iv. God is Deliverer – His is able and does in fact deliver His children from the clutches of fleshly desires, worldly patterns, and even the devil himself.

1. For His gifts, forgiveness, leadership, and deliverance, God deserves our deepest gratitude.

A. **Supplication** – “**10 Your kingdom come, your will be done**, on earth as it is in heaven. **11 Give us this day our daily bread, 12** and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. **13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil**” (v10-13)

a. Christ shows us how we are to make supplication by directing our attention in this way:

i. “**Your kingdom come**” The establishment and expansion of God’s Kingdom on earth

1. This is certainly a cry for final redemption and the ultimate reconciliation of all things, but this too calls upon God to make the Gospel powerful and effective now.

ii. “**your will be done**” The purposes and plan of God to be realized – both personally and universally

1. God’s purposes and plans can never be thwarted, but God (for whatever reason in Himself) has decided to act in relationship with humanity.

a. If one imagines God to be powerless without our prayers, or if one imagines our prayers to be meaningless, then he/she has fallen into the trap of setting God’s sovereignty and man’s responsibility against each other.

iii. “**daily bread**” The provision of God for sufficient resources

1. The wise man/woman desires just what he/she needs from God.

a. Proverbs 30:8 – “Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food that is needful for me, lest I be full and deny you and say, ‘Who is the LORD?’ or lest I be poor and steal and profane the name of my God.”

iv. “**lead us not into temptation**” The aid and protection of God in avoiding temptation

1. Sin would have us and make us slaves once more, but we war against our temptations and plead for God's protection as we do.
- v. "*deliver us from evil*" The power of God against our adversary
 1. Just as Peter was incapable of resistance against the devil on his own (Lk. 22:31), so we are not equipped to battle this abominable foe by ourselves. We are conquerors through Christ (Rom. 8:37), but never on our own (John 15:5).
 - a. Two extremes are to be avoided here: neither should we deny the existence and power of the devil, nor should we fear to meet him under every rock and behind every tree.

Some helpful application questions:

Why should we Pray?

1. Because God is our Holy heavenly Father
2. Because God is in charge of everything and He is the only one who can do anything about everything
3. Because God listens to and moves through our prayers
4. Because Christ has commanded us to do so and told us how
5. Because we find both solace and transformation through prayer

When should we Pray?

1. Always!

For what or for whom should we Pray?

1. For those we love
2. For those who love us
3. For those who hate us
4. For those who love Christ
5. For those who hate Christ

6. For those who have authority
7. For those who are oppressed
8. For those who preach
9. For those who hear the Gospel preached
10. For our church family
11. For other church families
12. For church families we will never meet this side of glory
13. For our community
14. For our family
15. For our children
16. For our parents
17. For our holiness
18. For our submission to Christ
19. For our spiritual growth
20. For our physical healing
21. For our relational health
22. For our social influence
23. For EVERYTHING!