
Talk to Him

Walking with God, as we saw last week, means listening to Him. This week we learn that it also means talking to Him. Jesus teaches this in a famous section of the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 6:5-15

¹⁵“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. ¹⁶But 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.

Prayer is simply talking to God, not only with our voices but with our hearts. We talk to Him as the Sovereign Lord of the universe and as our loving Father; and we talk to Him as people who are completely dependent upon Him for every good thing.

Two Correctives:

1. Jesus teaches us that our purpose must, first of all, be sincere; that is, not with the desire to impress others or even to feel better about ourselves, but rather, simply to know Him better (v. 5,6). 2. We are also taught that the value of prayer is not directly proportional to the length or “beauty” of our prayers (v. 7,8), but rather to the desire in our hearts to be with Him. Just talk to Him!

The Lord's Prayer is a prayer Jesus taught us to pray and a form of prayer that comprehends the major areas of concern in our prayers to Him. It is important to remember that the first three petitions (v. 9, 10) have to do with God's glory and fame; the latter three petitions (v. 11-13) have to do with our welfare.

"What the Church needs today is not more machinery or better, not new organizations or more and novel methods, but men whom the Holy Spirit can use—men of prayer, men mighty in prayer. The Holy Spirit does not flow through methods, but through men. He does not come on machinery, but on men. He does not anoint plans, but men—men of prayer."
E. M. Bounds (1835-1913)

Discussion Questions

- 1) In your own words, describe what prayer is.

- 2) What is difficult for you about praying?

- 3) Do you have a regular approach to prayer that has worked for you?

- 4) What kind of help do you feel you need to be more effective in prayer?

Related Resources

GUIDES ON PRAYER

A Diary of Private Prayer
by John Baillie

[*The Valley of Vision*](#)
by Arthur Bennett

TEACHING ON PRAYER

[*The Hidden Life of Prayer*](#)
by D. M. McIntyre

Prayer
by O. Hallesby

NOTES: