

# Learning to Pray

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[ 0 : 00 ] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you'll be blessed by the preaching of God's Word. Alright, take your Bible if you would and open it with me to Matthew chapter 6.

Matthew chapter 6. I'm excited to be able to open the Word of God with you today. And we're going to learn a little bit about how to pray. We'll be praying on Sunday morning for the next couple of weeks.

And we'll talk about how to learn, we're going to learn how to pray. A lot of what today is about is how not to pray. He is going to talk to them about how not to pray. Remember, in the passage of Scripture in Matthew chapter 6, He's contrasting real religion and Christ.

He's contrasting what people do when they learn to be religious and what people do when they know Him as their personal Lord and Savior. Real righteousness and false righteousness.

Being a true Christian or being a hypocrite, that's really what He's going over here. I'm not going to read the passage with you. We just got through reading it. Matthew chapter 6, verses 5 through 8. We're going to talk about prayer.

[ 1 : 02 ] There's an interesting thing about prayer in the Bible. There's kind of this tension in the Bible. There's a tension about prayer. Both of these things are taught. You remember there are a lot of truths in the Bible that are kind of like a tension.

God is a God of love, but He's a God of justice. God is a God that's sovereign, and He is Lord over everything. And yet there's free will in the Bible.

And God tells us that we're to make decisions. And they're both truths, and they're both real. And in prayer, there's this thing. One part of prayer is I need to line up with what God wants me to do.

So when I pray, it's to line up with God and understand Him, know that He's in charge, and I'm in here praying, so I can get in tune with God and His will. But on the other hand, prayer is in the Bible, God says, Hey, if you don't ask, you don't get.

And so He puts them both. They're in tension between the two of them. So prayer is tuning into God's will, but at the same time, God's waiting on us to act. God will do His will, but at the same time, He's calling us to beg Him in prayer to do many things.

[ 2 : 05 ] We're to beg Him for guidance and provision and mercy and forgiveness and protection. We do not and cannot understand all this stuff about prayer, but we can find out that we ought to obey.

And so let's learn about that if you would. Don't forget that this passage is contrasted true and false righteousness. He showed it the right way and the wrong way in giving. He said, Hey, there's these guys, and when they give, they walk down the street and they blow a horn and say, Have you ever watched me?

I'm going to give. I want everybody to see this. Everybody watch how much I give. Everybody watch how generous I am. Hey, by the way, publish a list of the greatest philanthropists in the country and make sure my name's in the top spot on that list.

I want everybody to know who I am and how much I give. And so He showed us the right way and the wrong way. He talks about fasting. Later on, we'll get to that. He talks about fasting, and He says, Hey, when they fast, some of those guys were fasting, they would mark their face.

They would make themselves look pale. They'd do everything they could to look like they've been fasting. And they wanted to appear to men to be fasting, even if they weren't fasting. And now He's going to talk about people who pray, and some want people to see it, and others don't.

[ 3 : 10 ] In Matthew 6, verse 9, you're going to find a passage of Scripture. That's the Lord's Prayer, and we won't be preaching about that today, but read that with me, if you would. Chapter 6, verse 9, the Bible says, After this manner, therefore pray ye, Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen. Now that's never meant, by the way, that's a pattern of prayer. We call it the Lord's Prayer. It's really a model prayer.

You might write that in the margin of your Bible. This is an outline of prayer, a model of prayer. It's not that I'm supposed to repeat that. I don't have to memorize it, and say it a bunch of times.

We're going to learn that, in the message that we have today. So open your Bible, to Matthew chapter 6, and verse 5. Now let's work our way, through these verses. Matthew 6, 5. Look what it says first.

[ 4 : 12 ] It says that when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as hypocrites are, but they love to pray, standing in the synagogue, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men.

Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. So if you're writing things down, number one, write this down, when you pray. When you pray. We're expected to pray, because he said when, not if.

Notice it didn't say, and if thou prayest, thou shalt not be as a hypocrite. He said now, when you pray, I know you're going to pray. I know you're going to pray. You're going to talk to God. But when you do it, there's a wrong way, to go about doing it.

He says when, but he doesn't tell you when. And some of you might be led into things like, well if you don't pray at this time, or at that time, if it's not early morning, or late at night, if it's not a lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep it.

If I die before I wake, I pray my soul he'll take, or whatever that is. And you've been taught, well I've got to pray this before I go to bed, I pray this when I get up. That's not what he says here. He says, I want you to just put a big circle around it in your Bible, and draw an arrow to it.

[ 5 : 13 ] And when you pray, put a circle around that, and when you pray. He didn't give you any prescription about when to pray. He didn't give you any prescription about when to pray. He says, when, but he doesn't tell us when.

In the Bible, God's people prayed at many different times. They had scheduled times often in the morning, and at noon, and at night. So they would pray in the early morning, again they'd pray at noon, and they'd pray in the evening.

Muslims pray five times a day. They prayed when they were in great need. They prayed, Jesus prayed when he gave out food. Jesus prayed all night long. The church met and prayed until Peter was released from prison.

God's people want to be in communication with him. If you're saved, you want to talk to God. How many of you can say that? Say amen. You want to learn how to pray, so we're going to learn what the Bible says about how to pray straight out of the Bible.

This isn't out of the Baptist book. This isn't out of what I think. This is right in your Bible. You've got your Bible open right there in front of you. So the material we're going to look at today is about how we pray since it's expected that we will pray.

[ 6 : 18 ] He's not saying when to pray. He said, I know you're going to pray, but let me tell you how to pray. And so you should make a decision today. Everybody in this room ought to make, there's several decisions I'm going to call on you to make based on the passage.

And the first decision is you're going to pray. Everybody in this room ought to say, man, I'm going to make prayer a part of my life. I'm going to try to become a praying Christian. I'm going to talk to God.

I want to make prayer a part of my life. Because he said, and when you pray, and when you pray. So he's kind of expecting us to pray. He wants us to talk to him. He wants us to spend time with him.

That's the first thing. And when you pray. So there ought to be a time that you set aside to pray to him. Didn't tell you when. Didn't tell you how long.

Didn't tell you what position. I have heard more foolishness over my lifetime. We had a meeting one time at the mission board I was in and a man got up and taught us that if when you pray you don't have both knees on the ground at the same time God won't hear your prayer.

[ 7 : 19 ] You must be on your knees. And it must be both knees. He said, I've noticed some preachers and they pray like this. And he said, that's half going to get to God. I was like, okay.

That makes a lot of sense. Verse, please. So here in the passage he just says, when you pray. The emphasis on I know you're going to pray. Let me tell you how to pray.

Second thing I want you to look at if you've got your Bible open go me to verse 5 again. And here's the big rule that's going to be talked about today. Here's the big rule about praying that he's going to talk about today.

And you need to mark it well in the verse. It says, and when thou prayest thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are. They love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets.

Underline this. Draw arrows towards it. Star it. That they may be seen of men. Underline that. That they may be seen of men.

[ 8 : 13 ] Verily I say unto you they have their reward. So what's he saying to us? The second thing is don't pray to be seen of men. You know, you've got to understand these guys love people watching them.

They loved having a religious, you know, they'd go out on the street. They'd be walking down the street and the hour of prayer would come. Like the Muslims had there five times and Jews had at least three times that they'd pray.

And so they're walking along and they called a prayer. Hey, Father in Heaven. Everybody look this way. I've come to you to pray. Won't you know I love you? Thank you.

I'm not like they are. And so they pray to be seen not to talk to God. That's the second thing you're looking at. You are going to pray but you don't ever pray so men can see you.

You pray to God. Remember the word. I wish you'd underline it in verse five. Hypocrite. The word hypocrite. That word has a different meaning maybe in our lives today.

[ 9 : 12 ] But the main idea of the word hypocrite, maybe you could draw a circle around it and put an arrow to the side and write the word actor. That's the original meaning of the word. It was an actor. It was a guy putting on a show.

It was a guy in front of everybody saying hey check me out. Watch me. They often carried in the Shakespearean plays. They'd take a stick and have it run up and they'd have this plastic. You've seen them those I guess they're not plastic.

They wouldn't have plastic back then. But it would have been whatever those molded faces were. And so a man's behind that face and he's making noises and he was an actor. He was a hypocrite. He says so when you pray don't be like an actor.

Don't be putting on a show. Don't be doing it so men can see you. So men will watch you. They're playing to an audience. They're playing. That's what a hypocrite does. He plays to an audience.

You play to an audience or you pray to an audience of one. You and I only want God to hear us. We're not praying so Father in Heaven I love you and I want this prayer to be a blessing to them because they don't know how to pray as good as I do.

[ 10 : 12 ] Whatever way you're doing it that's always going on. You're like forget them. I got a hotline. I got a direct line. We'll talk to God and they're going to hear or not. That's not important to me. By the way there's nothing wrong with standing in the synagogue.

It was common in the New Testament for those that prayed to stand. Are you ready to hear this one? There's no Bible rule about how you got to be when you're praying. You could be praying while you're sitting.

You could be praying while you're on one knee or two knees. You could be praying while you're laying in your bed. You could be praying while you're laying on your stomach. You could be praying while you're on your floor. You could be praying while you're standing up.

You could be praying any way you want. That's not the issue here. The issue is don't do it to be seen of men. So would you help me? What's the issue? Don't do it to? Say it again.

Don't do it to? We don't pray to be seen of men. That's totally not what we want. We don't pray to be seen of men. There's nothing wrong with standing to pray, but there is something wrong with praying to be seen.

[ 11 : 13 ] When the hour of prayer came, they prayed, but they were doing it to be seen. They were doing it to be seen. Now just let me stop a second and say there's a lot that goes on in Christianity that's a pure farce.

It is hypocritical. We put on a show. We're playing a game. Watch me. Put this as your favorite. Click this. Let me tweet. I am praying now.

Click. Everybody check me out as I pray. Here's my selfie as I pray. I mean, we're doing the same thing they were doing. We're doing it to be seen of men.

And he's saying, no, when you pray, I don't want you to even think about men. I want you to be talking to me. Pray not to be seen of men. The audience was people, not God.

The hour of prayer came and they prayed, but they were doing it to be seen. By praying with the wrong motive, they lost all hope of reward.

[ 12 : 13 ] They lost all hope that God would hear and bless. They lost their reward. They were rewarded of men. Look at chapter 6 and verse 5 with me. Look at what it says. And when you pray, don't be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogue and in the corners of the street that they may be seen of men.

Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward. He said, okay. They prayed to men. Men like them. Men think they're good. They got what they wanted. They weren't talking to me.

They got what they wanted and it's over. It's done. No need to ask me for anything. No need to expect that I'm going to answer any prayers because they prayed. They weren't praying to me. They weren't talking to me. They were praying to men. Before I leave the verse, I'd like to show you something real quick.

Verse 5. The emphasis you need to mark is that. That. In the verse, it's that. That word that's the key. He says, And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as hypocrites are.

For they love to say and pray. They pray standing in the synagogues and the corners of the streets that they may be seen. It wasn't the praying on the street. It wasn't the praying in the synagogue.

[ 13 : 22 ] It was the praying to be seen of men. They have their reward. This in no way means you shouldn't pray in public. Only that you are not to pray to be seen of men.

And there's so many people that take Matthew 6 so wrong. I can remember all the years I've been a pastor. I'd meet some people and they'd be like, I can't give an offering if anybody's going to see it.

If I'm going to do it, nobody can see it. Even my right hand can't know what my left hand's doing. I'm not going to put it in an offer plate. I don't want it marked. I'm not going to do anything because I don't want people to see it. That's not what the key was.

The key was, what's your intention? Are you given to be seen? Are you given to be seen? If you are, then you're wrong. Well, it's not like that. I had some people, they'd say, well, I don't want to pray at church.

When they take up the offer and they ask somebody to lead in prayer, don't ask me to pray because I don't pray for men to see me. That was never the point was that you shouldn't pray. The point was that you shouldn't pray to be seen.

[ 14 : 17 ] You could easily say, well, we go to lunch today. We get ready to eat lunch. It's time to pray a prayer before we eat. I'm not going to pray anything because I wouldn't want anybody to see me praying. That's not the point. The point was, why are you praying?

The fact is, I actually want my children to see me pray. I actually want my wife to know I pray. I want them to look at me and say, he loves Jesus. But I'm not doing it for them. I'm doing it for God. Because God wants my children to learn to pray.

They're going to learn by watching their mom and their daddy. Can you say amen right there? So the key was, that they may be seen of men. Point number two. The key is, could you say it out loud with me?

That they, okay, that was pathetic. The key to number two was, that they may be seen of men. So we don't pray to be seen of men. We don't pray to be seen of men.

So number two, if you're going to make a decision, I wish you'd write this down as a decision. Decide now that you will not pray to impress people. Decide now you will not pray to impress people.

[ 15 : 18 ] But you will pray to talk to God. How many people that won't pray? They're like, I can't pray. I'm like, really?

No, I can't. I can't pray out loud. I can't pray out loud. I can't let anybody hear me. Because you're worried about what people are going to think. The issue of the prayer here is not what you say. It's what your attitude is.

Number three, if you're writing down things. Go with me to Matthew chapter 6 and verse 6. Or excuse me, that'll be verse 6. Look at it. Do pray so that God will hear you.

Number three, pray so God will hear you. Matthew 6, 6. When thou prayest, enter into thy closet. When thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret.

And thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites. But be private about it.

[ 16 : 20 ] Now listen to me. You do not have to have a closet at your house. That's not the real. The teaching here is not that you've got to go home and build a prayer closet. And when you walk in, you open this door.

You go in and you get down and nobody sees you. If they see you going in the closet, they're going to know. He's going in that closet again. I know what he does when he goes in there. He's praying. You've been seeing them in again. You can't play those games.

It's not a matter of playing a game. I was in a pastor's study one time. And I walked in and I saw a Bible and I saw a prayer rug. And I saw this sitting over in the corner. And I walked by and I said, what's that? And he said, oh, that's just where I like to pray.

Nothing wrong with that. But the whole issue is that it wasn't about having a closet. So I can see you now. Some of you men are going to go home today. You're going to tell you, get your clothes out of that closet. I need a closet to pray in.

And you get your clothes out. I've got to have a closet so I can pray when nobody sees me. That's not the point. The point is you don't pray to be seen. I mean, you pray so God will hear you.

[ 17 : 15 ] Never pray to make a show. Never pray to make a show of it. That's what hypocrites do. Know when you pray, you're talking to the Lord Jesus. Here's the whole point.

I'm supposed to pray like you're not here. I'm supposed to pray like I'm talking to him. I'm supposed to really believe that he's up there and he's listening to me and he hears my prayer and he answers me. Pray knowing that God will reward and answer your prayers.

Here's one of my favorite verses. Hebrews 11.6. Write it in the margin of your Bible right there. H-E-B 11.6. You'll remember it that way. Hebrews 11.6. And then look at the screen with me and notice what the screen says or in your Bible if you got your Bible open.

Are you ready? It says, Here's what the clause of prayer was about.

I know that it's not about you liking me. It's about him listening to my prayer. So it's not about how well I can speak and how many fancy words I can use. There is a real God in heaven.

[ 18 : 16 ] There is a real God in heaven and he really does hear prayer and he really does answer prayer and so I'm going to pray. Got your Bible open. Hebrews 11.6. I wish you'd put a circle around. He is.

Look what it says. But without faith it's impossible to please him for he that comes to God must believe that he is. See, sometimes religious motions and hypocrites, they don't really need a real God.

They're putting on a show anyway. They're playing a game anyway. He said, So when you pray, believe that he is. Do you believe that there is a God in heaven? If you do, say amen. That needs to show when you pray.

Not to me. Because he ain't talking to me. Not to impress me. But God needs to know that you really believe he's really there and he really has power and he really answers prayer. Look at the verse. Would you read the verse out loud with me?

Ready? Everybody, and boasts of neither. United voices. Are you ready? The Bible says, But without faith it is impossible to please him. Come on. For he that cometh to God must believe that he is.

[ 19 : 16 ] And that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Now you circle he is. I want you to underline rewarder. He is a rewarder. He gives rewards to those who seek him.

There is a real God in heaven who really hears prayer. Who really answers prayer. Who just wants you to believe him. Who just wants you to come talk to him. And when you come talk to him, he says, I will answer your prayers.

I will answer your prayers. I am a God who really exists and who really can make a difference. Come. By the way, you need to make sure you underline without faith. Because without faith it is impossible to please him.

So when you talk to God, you really got to believe he really does exist. And he really does answer prayer. And he really is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. You got to work at this. You got to say, man, I believe God. You're not saying it for me.

You're saying it. So that's why you get in the closet. That's why you find a place to pray. You say, well, do I need to get on my knees? I really don't care. Do I need to get in the closet? I really don't care. But you do need to pray. And when you pray, you need to believe he is.

[ 20 : 18 ] You need to believe that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. So you're going to pray. The time isn't important. But the attitude is very important. The time you're going to pray isn't important.

But the attitude is very important. You know you're talking to God. You know that he is able to meet your needs. Look with me, if you would, at Philippians chapter 4 and verse 4.

And write that in the margin of your Bible right here about praying so you can hook it together later on when you're doing your own study. Philippians 4, 4. We're going to read down through verse 8 slowly. Look at verse 4, if you would. It says, rejoice in the Lord always.

Again, I say rejoice. So don't rejoice in what people think of you. Don't rejoice in what you're doing in public. Don't rejoice in your success. Don't rejoice in how much money you have. Don't rejoice in that. Make sure your joy is found in God.

I know him. I believe him. I trust him. He's the center of everything. Your joy is not found in how much money you got or how good your health is or how well your family is going.

[ 21 : 15 ] I mean, I'm excited. I know God. I know God. Boy, that's what gets me happy today. That's what verse 4 says. Verse 5 says, look at Philippians 4, 5. It says, let your moderation. Let your self-control.

We're not an excitable people. Did you hear this? That's what that word means. We're not an excitable people. We're not really highly depressed one day and highly excited the other day. We're just kind of moderate, man.

We're just like, hey, I know God's going to take care of things. I'm going to trust God. And so if you're one of those uppers and downers, you need this verse. Hey, don't be highly excitable. Calm down. Don't go over.

Some of y'all are like, whoo, God just really touched me today. And the next week, you're like, God wasn't even there today. Well, it really wasn't God. It was you. Be moderate. Settle down. Calm down. Talk to God.

Verse 6, if you would. Philippians 4, 6. This verse is fantastic. But be careful for nothing. Don't worry about anything. But in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.

[ 22 : 12 ] So make some requests. Type up a list. Write it down on a sheet of paper. Make a list of what you want God to do. Go to him and pray to him and ask him. Don't worry about it.

Take it to God. And then when you show to God what you're looking for, you ask him and you beg him. And before you ever get up, you say, I'll just go ahead and say thank you because I know you're going to take care of it. Now, if I walked up to Cannon here on the front row and said, hey, Cannon, I'd like you to give me a hundred bucks.

Thank you. That's a little presumptuous because he might say, I ain't going to give you. But you've got to remember Hebrews 11, 6. Without faith, it's impossible to please him. For they that come to God must believe that he is and that he's a rewarder to them until they seek him.

So I say, God, I want to ask you to do this. I'll thank you right now for doing it because I know you're going to do it. That's what he's saying. And when you take your needs to the Lord in prayer and you say, God, this is what I need.

And you say, thank you. Something amazing happens to those who really believe God. Because if you really believe him, if you really believe you're talking to him, if you really believe he's listening to you, something amazing happens.

[ 23 : 15 ] It's found in verse 7. What's amazing is you get this wonderful peace. Somehow God's going to take care of this. I do not understand, but I know he is. And I know he's a rewarder to them to diligently seek him.

And I don't have to worry about anything. I just got to let him know and say thank you. So look at verse 7. And the peace of God, which nobody can understand, will keep your hearts, will guard your heart, protect your heart and your mind through Jesus, through Christ Jesus.

And then in verse 8, you're going to control your thoughts. You're going to say, I've asked God, so I'm going to trust God. Because as soon as you get through prayer, you're going to start thinking all these negative thoughts. And the devil's going to help you think of it.

You're going to look around. It's just your nature. You're just a negative thinker. You just get up all the time thinking, I don't know if God's really going to do anything. And you begin to doubt God. But he says, no, no, no, no, no. Keep your thoughts on the trail.

Look at Philippians 4.8. Philippians 4.8, he said, Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, lovely, good report.

[ 24 : 18 ] If there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things. So when you pray, you get up and you think on the word of God. You think on Jesus. Remember, you're rejoicing in the Lord. You're rejoicing in God.

And that's where it's at. So when you go in a closet, what it amounts to when you go in the closet is you're saying, I really believe there's a God in heaven. That's what you're doing. It's not about going in a closet. You can't hide from God anywhere.

And there's no secret tunnel to God. It's not like you get in there and it's beam me up, Scotty. That's not what's going on when you go in your closet. It's just that I really believe there's a God. And I really believe he hears prayer.

And I really believe he answers prayer. And I'm really going to go talk to him. So you go talk to him. Not about, well, I pray in the chapel or I pray at the church or I pray at the altar. That's not what it's about.

You know you're talking to God. You know he's able to meet your needs. Number four. Go with me, if you would, to verse 7. Chapter 6 of verse 7. What not to say when you pray.

[ 25 : 14 ] Okay? Did you know there's some things he don't want you to say when you pray? I bet you hadn't had that lesson. Don't say these things when you pray. Look at what he says in verse 7. But when you pray.

I know you're going to. It's just a matter of when. Use not vain repetitions. As the heathen. Don't do what pagans do. Don't do what some guy does.

He gets him a prayer rug and repeats the same prayer over and over. Bumps his head on the floor. Prays again. Bumps his head on the floor. Jews are famous for it. Muslims are famous for it. Christians are famous for it. So he said don't do that.

Don't just repeat a prayer. When you pray. Use not vain repetition. As a heathen do. They think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Don't repeat a prayer just for saying a prayer.

You remember how we started out with verse 9. If you look right down below. He's going to give us the Lord's Prayer. What we call the Lord's Prayer. He didn't mean for you to repeat that. He just got through saying don't keep saying the same thing over and over. Hindus, Muslims, and Catholics.

[ 26 : 13 ] And many of you have learned to repeat prayers. And think that God hears them. Praying a certain number of times a day. Saying a certain number of things. Believing by saying those things that God will hear.

For example, this is a famous prayer. Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women. Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God.

Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen. You're not supposed to pray that. You're not supposed to pray the Lord's Prayer. You're not supposed to pray that. He said, don't be using these repetitions.

How about this one? I believe in God. The Father Almighty. Creator of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son. Our Lord. Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit. Born of the Virgin Mary. Suffered under Pontius Pilate.

Was crucified. Died and was buried. He descended into hell. And the third day arose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven. And seated at the right hand of God. The Father Almighty. From this He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

[ 27 : 14 ] I believe in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Catholic Church. The communion of the saints. The forgiveness of the sins. And the resurrection of the body. And life everlasting. Amen. Don't pray that. He said, I don't want you to say it. Can you imagine if I go into Betty.

And I'm just going to have a romantic evening. And I go in and I repeat what Joe says to Rhonda. Betty. As Joe says to Rhonda when he's been romantic. Let me repeat that to you.

Betty's going to be like. I'm not blind haired. That don't work with me. In other words. You are not going to repeat something. Nothing wrong with repeating it.

If it came from your heart on occasion. But the whole point is. He said, don't think. That saying a certain prayer. Or formula works. The Lord's Prayer. As you think it ought to be called.

Was never meant for repeating. Do you think that you have to say a lot. To get God to hear what you're asking Him to do. That's another one. So they pray. And they got little dots. And big knots.

[ 28 : 10 ] And they got little things on their finger. And the Hindus do it. And the Muslims do it. And the Jews did it. And the Catholics do it. And it's like if I say so many Hail Marys.

And I say so many Apostles Creeds. And I say. God's going to. No, no, no, no, no. He said, no. No. Don't come to me with vain repetitions. You can say. Hail Mary.

Hail Mary. Mother of Grace. Get me out of this rotten place. All you want. That's not what He wants you to pray. He said, I don't want you to say that. I want you to talk to me. I want you to talk to me.

I want you to act like I'm really alive. You must believe that I am. And that I'm a rewarder of them to diligently seek you. To seek me. We're famous for this.

We honestly. When we pray. We think we've got to say a whole lot. So we say. Dear God in heaven. Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Blah, blah, blah, blah. Blah, blah, blah. Blah, blah, blah. Blah, blah, blah. And honestly.

[ 29 : 04 ] We think that we're going to be heard for our much speaking. And if you'll look at the verse He said. Look what He said. Do. For they think they shall be heard for their much speaking.

You know Jesus prayed. It was a little bit short prayer. You can say the same thing more than one time when you pray. He said Lord. Hey if it be you will. I'd like this cup to pass for me. Got up and left. Comes back and said Lord.

If you would. I'd like this cup to pass for me. Goes. Paul said. I'd like you to take away this thorn in the flesh. He said. I prayed for it three times. It's not a matter that you can't say things. But you don't get heard.

Because you say a lot of pretty things. It's not because you know how to say flowery prayers. That God hears you. Hey you don't have to yell either. I'm in some churches.

And they're praying. Oh God in heaven. It's like. You think He's hard of hearing? Do you think He hears you because you talk a lot? You say the same thing over and over?

[ 29 : 58 ] Or you scream? That's not the point. Jesus teaches us how to pray. I've been in churches. It was almost a competition. To see who could yell the loudest when they prayed. I'm all for it.

Pray any way you want to pray. I'm just glad you're praying. But this is what Jesus said. Don't bring me vain repetitions. He said. Don't think I hear you because you talk a lot.

That's what He said in the verse. If you saw that. So decide now. That you will pray from your heart. That you'll learn to pray from your heart.

That you will take your heart. And you'll pull it out. And you'll put it up to the Lord and say. I'm here with a real need. And you're hurting this morning. You're hurting. You don't need some magical incantation.

There's not a set of certain words that God goes. That's it. If you say those. I'm bound. That's not how it works. He wants you to believe He really is up there.

[ 30 : 55 ] That He really is God. That He really does hear prayers. That He really does answer prayers. There's no magical incantation. There's no magical position. And there's no magical hour. It's not a way to do it.

Just learn to say God from my heart. I'm here to talk to you. I'm here to talk to you. You don't have to quote. Let me tell you how I love you. Let me count the ways. You don't have to memorize a bunch of Shakespeare either.

You don't have to do that. Just talk from your heart. So that's a decision you make. I'll learn to pray from my heart. I'll learn to pray from my heart.

I'll learn to believe that God is. And He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. Don't use repeated prayers. But express what's in your heart. You'll not try to use a lot of words to get Him to listen to you.

You will not believe that He is a God that needs to be convinced. He is not a God who needs to be convinced. You'll believe. You'll pray believing and expecting Him to answer. I'm going to tell you a little story real quick.

[ 31 : 56 ] I've got to rush to get through. But let me tell you a little story. When I lived in Peru for 18 years, the people would come and they won a favor of me. Often it would be they would like me to be the Godfather.

They call it the Padrino. The Godfather. I've been Godfather to everything you can imagine. Basketball games, jerseys, soccer games, football courts. I've been Godfather to everything.

What Godfather means is simply you give money and they call you Godfather. And so they would come to my house and I'd see them come in. They'd ring the doorbell and I'm like, oh boy, here we go. And they would come in and they would say, hey, how are you doing?

I'd say, great. How about you? Fine. They'd say, how's your mom? I said, I don't know. I hadn't talked to her in a while. I think she's probably all right. I hadn't heard anything bad. Okay. How's your grandma? She died a couple hundred years ago. Don't worry about her.

And they'd talk. And finally they would, after they, I mean, it's like an airplane landing. They're just circling and circling and circling. And then finally, after about 20 minutes, they'd say, well, let me get really directly to the point.

[ 32 : 52 ] I'm like, we've been real direct here. And they'd say, I just want to know if you, I wanted to honor you today and make you a Godfather. I said, well, I sure appreciate you wanting to honor me.

What's it going to cost me? Since we're getting frank, how much? And they'd say, well, \$50. Could you buy a hundred bucks? Could you buy some basketball jerseys for everybody on our team? And we're going to call you the Godfather.

I said, okay, what do you want me to do? They said, well, don't you come watch the ball game in front of everybody? We'll stop at halftime and tell you, thank you for being a Godfather. I said, I'll give you the money. You can have the jerseys. I ain't coming to the game. They said, no problem. We don't care.

Just give us the money. We'll be happy. And then they're going. So he said, when you pray to me, you don't have to circle forever. Just get to the point. Okay.

Number five. Know that God already knows what you're praying about. Did you know you never surprise God when you ask him? He just wants to be asked. Look, if you went at Matthew chapter six and verse eight, be not ye therefore like unto them for your father knows what things you have need of before you ask him.

[ 33 : 55 ] He said, look, when you're praying, you really don't have to say now, God, listen, I need some food to eat today. You understand the God. I haven't eaten in a long time and God, I need food. And I mean a ribeye, I mean a ribeye and a huge baked potato.

And my wife wants a sweet potato and some, and she wants some brown sugar to go on that thing and some butter. And, and God, he said, you don't have to come talk to me like that. I already know what you need. I just want you to talk to me.

Look at the verse. No, but, uh, verse, verse, uh, verse eight. No, but be not therefore like unto them for your father knows what things you have need of before you ask. You do not need to convince God.

He just wants you to ask in James chapter four, verse two, you might write that down. He said, you lust and have not you killed and desire to have you cannot obtain your fight in war, but you have not because you ask not.

So like God said, if you'd ask, I'd come through. You really can't twist God's arm or pull a fast one on him. I mean, that's, uh, you got to get this. You can't twist God's arm or pull a fast one on him.

[ 34 : 59 ] He's going to answer if he wants to. So it's none of that. You're going to have to pray according to his will. He answers prayers because they are according to his will. In James chapter four and verse three, the Bible said, you ask and receive not because you ask amiss.

You ask wrongly that you may consume it upon your lust. God's not in a, in a, in a, in a fulfilling vain and worthless junk. You won't, you know, God, I would like it if you would give me a Learjet and a runway right out here in front.

And when I go outside, I'd like to see that Learjet sitting there. It'll be like, what for? Well, cause I'd like to have a Learjet. Well, what else you want? Give me a seven 57 while you're at it. I mean, God's up in a center.

You haven't got any reason to be asking me that. That's a wasted prayer. I know what you need before you ever ask me. That's the beauty of prayer. You're going to walk in to talk to God. He's going to be like, I already know what you want. I'm ready.

I'm ready to hear you and answer. Do you believe me? Will you trust me? Will you look to me? So look, if you wouldn't, Matthew six, verse 32, I really want you to look at this verse. There are three beautiful things.

[ 36 : 04 ] And we'll get into this as we go through Matthew six. But in Matthew six, he tells them, don't worry about your food and your clothes and your house. Don't worry about that stuff. I'll take care of you. Don't worry about it. Don't worry about it.

Don't worry about it. And in Matthew six, 32, he uses a phrase. I want you to underline in your Bible. He says, for after all these things, do the Gentiles seek lost people, pagans are looking for the same stuff.

Underline all these things. He said, lost people are looking for the same thing. You are. They want something to eat. They want some clothes to put on. You're a heavenly father knows that you have need of all these things.

Circle the word need. You see, right now you have a need. He knows you need it. But I want you to focus on what the verse says. All these things. He said, then underline it again. All these things.

God knows you need all these things. God knows lost people look for all these things. But he said, the way I want y'all to get stuff from me is to come to me looking for me, not you. Look at Matthew 6, 33, the very next verse.

[ 37 : 03 ] Matthew 6, 33, he said, seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. And all these things shall be added unto you. There was all these things two times in the verse prior to this. Verse 32. Gentiles looking for all these things.

I know you need all these things. And if you seek me first, I'll get you all these things. That's a wild verse. All these things, I know you need them. All these things, seek me and I'll get them for you. He is a rewarder of them to diligently seek you.

When you go to God in prayer, he's not up in heaven going, I never even thought about that. It's shocking that they need a piece of money. They need money now to build their building. God's not up in heaven.

When I say God, I really would ask you to give us the money to get the building built. He's not up there going, oh, somebody remind me about that tomorrow. I keep forgetting that. That's not how it works. He knows. Say amen. He knows.

When you go ask him, he knows. So go ask him. Go with me if you would in Matthew 6, verse 8. And realize that when you pray, you're talking to your Father. Verse 8.

[ 38 : 00 ] Be not you therefore like unto them. For your Father, circle your Father, knows what things you have need of before you ask him. Your Father.

Your Father. You're not going to talk to some business executive. You're not going to some millionaire. You're not going to some really big shot and saying, I'm here to, I don't know you and you don't know me.

And you don't know what I need. You don't know what I've done. I got my curriculum. I have brought 500 years of what I've been doing. And these are 100 testimonies about what a good guy I'm in. I'm here to ask for a little bit of money.

It ain't like getting a loan from the bank. You got out at the bank. He's like, I need paperwork. God's like, I don't need paperwork. I know you. I birthed you. Amen. I got paperwork.

It's called the Bible. Amen. He said, I'm your father. Come ask. I want you to ask. I'm your dad. Abba Father. Come talk to me. It's a beautiful thing here. Prayer.

[ 38 : 55 ] How to pray. Do you have a relationship with him? You see, some people can't really get through to God because you don't even know him yet. You're not born again. That's not for you to doubt.

If you're already saved, you're saved. If you're already born again, you're born again. If you really know God, you are. But, you know, some of you never really trusted God. This is a relationship based on our father.

In fact, this is when he teaches us how to pray next week or the next, he's going to say this. When you pray, say this, our father, which art in heaven, he's our father. And if he's not your father, if you've not been born again, you're not in a family, you can't pray that way.

You know that he's your father, you're his child. Pray knowing that he wants what's best for you. He even says, we'll get to it in Matthew 7, he says, if you were to ask me for bread, you'd think I'd give you a rock.

A father doesn't do that. He's not going to do that. He wants what's best. Know that he really doesn't need to be convinced he already loves you. This thing of praying is pretty easy.

[ 39 : 53 ] Really. Because I get to go to him and I know he is. And I don't have to learn any, I don't have to memorize 900 verses. I don't have to have any flowery words. I don't have to talk a whole bunch.

I have to try to convince him. I don't have to go in there and say, hey, God, my name is Austin, William Austin Gardner. Born on August 21st, 1954. Before, hey, you know, I don't know if you know me, but May the 6th, 1962, that's when I got saved.

I don't do none of that. He's like, you don't think I know who you are? You don't think I know who you are? You don't have to try to convince me. Jesus said, man, it's a beautiful thing. Don't do like heathens do.

Get rid of all that junk and go talk to your father. Get rid of all that junk and go talk to your father. It's not a bunch of words you say. Not a bunch of things you repeat. It's not to do for a show so other people can watch you.

The decision you're making is I will pray. I won't try to impress people. I will believe that he is. I will believe that he answers prayer. And I will go to him expecting him to work in my life.

[ 40 : 49 ] I will trust God in my life. It's a beautiful thing, isn't it? You think it's a beautiful thing? Say amen. You serve a great God. Now, if you're not born again, you need to be born again. And as a Christian, if you've been thinking, well, I would pray, but I'm afraid that I don't say the right words.

You really don't have to say words. You know, I have a candy jar in the back room. And about 900 little kids line up to get candy. You know how they usually ask me?

Like this. And I'll say, what do you want? And they'll go. And some of them even go, candy.

And I'm like, if you can't say the 23rd Psalm, you can forget it. No, I just say, all right, here. And I pull it out. Some of the dads come in and say, did he say please? And I'm like, sure. Most don't.

Did he say thank you? Most don't. Trent says it's because I'm deaf. Well, it's because they're mute. They don't say thank you that much. But it's not about, to be honest, I bought the candy to give it to them.

[ 41 : 58 ] I got this one little guy. He has found the secret. He's been known to eat five to seven in one service. He'll come in and he'll just walk back here and say, hey, pastor. He knows I talk to him.

Hey, pastor. Can I have some candy? Sure. He'll come back to me and say, pastor. Can I have some more candy? Sure. That kid, his daddy came in and said, you're getting charged with a lot of diabetic bills.

But see, he just knows, there's no special codes. You don't have to go to God and say, God, I'm here. It's really me. No, he wants to hear from you. He loves you.

So get over it. Get over all the junk you've been taught. Throw away all your written prayers, unless you write them. You can write all you want, right? You say, can I write my prayers?

Of course you can. Can I type them? No, God don't like typing. They didn't have typing back in his day. Come on, get alive. Just go talk to the Lord. Can you say amen right there?

[ 42 : 55 ] Father, I love you. And I thank you for your wonderful people. But most of all, I thank you for you being so wonderful. And I thank you for your wonderful book. And I pray you'd bless your people today. Give honor to your name through our lives. This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfredo, Georgia.

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