

CHAPTER 8 – THE PRACTICE OF PRAYER

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

Be joyful always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

(1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 NIV)

BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONS

Matthew 6: 5–15

Jesus begins his teaching on prayer with correctives and then moves on to directives. Paying attention to both is essential for a healthy prayer life. Please read Matthew 6:5–15.

1. In his first corrective, Jesus warns against praying for public effect (vv. 5–6). What's wrong with praying to impress others?

2. Jesus also warns against repetitive and wordy prayer (v. 7). Why do you think some people feel a need to use a lot of words in repeated patterns when they pray?

3. What patterns and habits of prayer in your life might Jesus correct?

4. Since giving God new information is not the purpose of prayer (v. 8), how does this insight affect the way you should pray?

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5. God knows our needs before we ask, but evidently he wants us to ask anyway. How is asking for your needs good for you?

6. The Lord's Prayer divides neatly in half, verses 9–10 and 11–13. The first half addresses the purpose, place, and character of God. In what ways are prayer (and your life) altered when God and his purposes are placed first on our prayer list?

7. Jesus invites us to address his Father as “our Father” (v. 9). How does praying to God as Jesus’ Father enrich your prayers?

8. The word *heaven* is the only noun repeated twice in the prayer (vv. 9–10). How might the way we pray be enriched by our consciousness of heaven?

9. The second half of Jesus' prayer addresses our personal earthly needs: forgiveness, provision, and protection (vv. 11–13). In what way does this prayer cultivate a sense of dignity, humility, and vulnerability?

10. This prayer is not only something that we should pray, but a guideline on how we should pray. How will it be a helpful guideline for you?
