**Prayer Week 4: Don’t Pray Wrong | Matthew 6:5-8**

Why listen? Prayer is our power. God is the source, prayer is the method. If you’re praying wrong, you’re missing out on the best possible life God has for you: a life full of joy, hope, peace, comfort, identity, value, purpose, direction, satisfaction, and love.

***James 4:3*** *- When you ask, you do not receive, because* ***you ask with wrong motives****, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.*

We’ve already established **WHAT** prayer is and **WHY** we should pray over the last few weeks and now we get to establish **HOW** we should pray by learning how we shouldn’t pray.

**Prayer Defined:** Talking to God with intention and purpose; as His own child, according to His word.

**Prayer Purposed:** God allows prayer to be the method of causing things.

If we can learn how we shouldn’t pray, then we’ll better know how to actually pray.

In this passage, Jesus is explaining how we shouldn’t **GIVE, PRAY** and **FAST.** JESUS masterfully uses the Gentiles and the Hypocrites (Religious Leaders) as examples.

***Psalm 109:7*** *- When he is tried, let him come forth guilty; let his prayer be counted as sin!*

***Proverbs 28:9*** *- If one turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination.*

Prayers are abominations at times and not accepted.

***Isaiah 45:20*** *- Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, you survivors of the nations! They have no knowledge who carry about their wooden idols, and keep on praying to a god that cannot save.*

***Isaiah 44:17*** *- And the rest of it he makes into a god, his idol, and falls down to it and worships it. He prays to it and says, “Deliver me, for you are my god!”*

Prayer can be done towards false gods and idols, or any object.

1. **Don’t Pray Like The Pretenders (Hypocrites) | Verse 5-6** 
   1. Don’t Pray To Impress People & Don’t Pretend To Be Spiritual

***The Practice:*** *This is what I’m trying to get you guys to avoid. Don’t pray like this. Don’t let yourself become distracted by the opinions of the people around you. Don’t let your mind wander into the realm of projecting thoughts onto what people would love to hear you pray and then pray that.*

*Public prayer is fine, just don’t get wrapped up in the public. If you’re gonna pray in public, pray as if you’re in private, and its just God.Picture yourself sitting before God Himself in His throne room, face to face, cuz no one else would matter if you saw that.*

* 1. Don’t Use Prayer To Get Worldly Gain

*Luke 18:10* - *Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.*

1. **Don’t Pray Like The Pagans (Unbelievers) Verse 7-8**
   1. Don’t Pray Superstitious Incantations

Don’t use prayer like it’s some impersonal, protective charm.

Don’t pray repetitious, superstitious prayers. Unlike the pagan Gentiles, we don’t need to repeat ourselves to get God’s attention.

* 1. Don’t Trust In Your Words You Say, But The God Who hears

Their prayer were repetitive, because there was this common belief that if they could pray the same thing enough, they were more likely to get the gods’ attention and and answer.

Their prayers put more emphasis on the impressiveness, clarity, and spirituality of the words and not on the character of God.

***The Practice:*** *Don’t pray mindless prayers. See, sometimes we just repeat the same night time prayers our mama taught us as kids. We mindlessly repeat the same morning prayer, and we don’t even realize what we’re saying, because we’ve prayed it for so long. You know how we do it. “Dear God, thank you for this day” or “thank you for this food” but are you really thankful for this day or the food, or are you just saying that because you always have? “God, bless this day.” Ya, but in what way do you mean? Do you really think He will?*

*Don’t pray super focused on how you’re sounding or how clear you are. Pray in response to the character of God, where you trust in the One you’re praying to*

The lie is this: My prayers will be answered cuz of the words I’m using, cuz of how clear I am, cuz of how spiritual my prayers sounded, not cuz of the God I’m praying to

**III. Pray Like Christ: In Faith And Confidence | Verse 8**

* 1. Prayer Is To Be Done In Faith (Trust) | Not Doubt

What is our faith in? Faith means trust so we’re trusting in something that motivates us to have confidence for what we’re praying. We trust in the character of God, not our words, or our performance, or even our own.

***Mark 11:24*** *- Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer,* ***believe*** *that you have received it, and it will be yours.*

***Matthew 21:22*** *- And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you* ***have faith.”***

***James 1:5-6*** *- If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him* ***ask in faith, with no doubting****, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.*

* 1. Prayer Is To Be Done Confidently | Not Arrogant, Presumptuous, or Entitled

God doesn’t tell us to pray half-heartedly, sheepishly, timidly, or doubting but confidently

***Hebrews 10:19-22*** *- Therefore, brothers, since* ***we have confidence*** *to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God,**let us draw near with a true heart* ***in full assurance of faith****, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.*

***Ephesians 2:18*** *- For through him we both* ***have access*** *in one Spirit to the Father.*

***Hebrews 4:16*** *- Let us then* ***with confidence draw near*** *to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

**IV. Conclusion: Model Your Prayer Life After Jesus**

1. Pray Like Only God’s Opinion Matters | Not Like The Hypocrites
2. Pray Like He Knows Before You Ask | Not Like The Unbelievers
3. Pray Like You Trust God | Not Your Words
4. Pray In Faith And Confidence That’s Rooted In God’s Character