

When You Pray

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[0 : 00] Would you stand with me as we honor the reading of God's Word together?

Matthew chapter 6, verses 5 through 15. Jesus is preaching the Sermon on the Mount, and He says here, Pray then like this, Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive you your trespasses.

May God add a blessing to the reading of His Word. Would you please be seated? I'll tell you at the forefront here that we're going to be looking, this is like a 30,000 foot view of what Jesus preached about concerning prayer in this sermon.

[2 : 08] Easily we could go through the scriptures that we just read, and I could preach four or five sermons on just these verses about prayer. But today we're going to take a bigger view to capture all of what Jesus had to tell us, what He wants us to understand about prayer.

One day, two men were debating about who was more religious. The first man said to the second, The second man said, The first man couldn't believe what he had heard, and he reached into his pocket and he pulled out that \$10 and he said, Man, I didn't think you could do it.

That's not the Lord's Prayer. That prayer actually isn't in the Bible at all. And what we call the Lord's Prayer isn't truly the Lord's Prayer.

Jesus didn't call it that. The Lord's Prayer is a template. It's an outline. It's an example that Jesus gives to us, His disciples, to teach us how to pray.

It's kind of like those algebraic formulas that we learned in school and never used in real life. Some of you might. I don't.

[3 : 49] Students, don't go to school, please, and tell your teacher that the formulas they're teaching you don't matter because they will, at least for your grade. They're worth learning, but the Lord's Prayer is even more worth learning.

In fact, it's truly worth learning because the Bible continually stresses to us the importance of prayer. The Apostle Paul instructs the Christians in 1 Thessalonians 5.16 to pray without ceasing and to pray at all times in Ephesians 6.18.

He tells Christians in Philippians 4.6 to not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.

Paul urged Timothy, a young pastor, to consistently incorporate prayer for all people when the church gathered together for worship. In 1 Timothy 2.1, Jesus often sought desolate and secluded places like the mountains or gardens, and he would go there by himself.

He would go to these places in the morning, early in the morning, and late at night, and he would pray there alone for hours. The gospel records many other instances where Jesus prayed.

[5 : 14] He prayed in public. He prayed with his disciples. He prayed on the cross that God would forgive those who had crucified him. Jesus prayed.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, prayed a lot, and the Bible commands us to pray. It commands you to pray a lot. The Bible also tells us that there is a right way to pray and there's a wrong way to pray, and that's what Jesus, I believe, is really getting at here in Matthew 6, verses 5 through 15, and the main idea that emerges from this text is that Jesus urges us to modify the way we pray.

Jesus urges us to modify the way we pray. Now, what we probably, the question we need to answer first before digging much deeper is to answer the question of why we should pray.

God created human beings in his image. He created them uniquely, unlike any other creature, with the ability to communicate with him on a personal level, to have a personal relationship with. From the very beginning of the Bible, we learn that God desires to dwell with his people. Even after the effects of the fall and sin, God continued to make efforts to dwell with his people in the tabernacle, in the temple, and ultimately in the incarnation of his son, Jesus Christ, who is God with us.

[6 : 49] And the Bible says that God is moving all things towards the culmination that he desires, the end that he desires. And we read about that in Revelations chapter 21, verses 1 through 3.

There we read, Then I saw, and this is John receiving a vision of the future, of the things to come, the end of times, and the beginning of new things. Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride, adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man.

He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. Prayer is a means through which God communicates and dwells with his people today.

Some of you remember the old Batman TV show with Adam West? Remember each show? If you haven't seen it, I'm sure you can find it somewhere.

[8 : 05] Anyhow, each show began with a dastardly villain who was wreaking havoc on Gotham City. Remember that? And in a panic, Commissioner Gordon would reach for the red bat phone.

That was under a glass case. He'd pull it out, and he'd pick up that red phone, and it had a direct line to Batman, who would come and save the day.

When God saves us, by his grace through faith in Jesus Christ, he gives us a direct line of access to him through Jesus.

Hebrews 10, 9 through 22, talks about that very thing. 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 high 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.

In Jesus, we have direct access to God the Father who wants you to pray.

[9 : 28] He wants to be in continual communication with you. However, I guess that for many of you, if you took an inventory of your time and yourself, you would probably admit that you don't pray much.

Your prayerlessness could be simply a matter of just time management. It's not making enough time. But, it may be a theological issue.

You know that the Bible says that God is sovereign, that God is in total control of all things, and he's moving all things to the end that he has predetermined.

And so for some of you, you might be of the mind, you might think that, well, why pray? God will do. What God will do, and my prayers won't change any of that.

Well, the Bible does repeatedly affirm that God is absolutely sovereign, and praise God for that truth. But the Bible also repeatedly commands us to be persistent in prayer as we seek God's help, as we seek God's help, his guidance, his provision, his protection, his forgiveness, and many other things.

[11 : 09] Jesus told his disciples in Mark 11, 23 through 24, encouraging them to pray, truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, be taken up and thrown into the sea, and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him.

Therefore, I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. James, the brother of Jesus, encourages Christians to pray, and he stresses the power of prayer in James chapter 5, verse 16.

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

God is sovereign. God uses prayer. The Bible upholds both of these truths. God is totally sovereign over all things.

And the passionate prayers of godly people accomplish great things for God's glory. Both these things are true. And the Bible holds them in this kind of mysterious tension.

[12 : 33] The bottom line is, you should pray, you should pray a lot, and you should pray following the formula, the example that Jesus gives in our text today without being formulaic.

Our culture is very different from the culture of Jesus' time. But we share many of the same problems when it comes to prayer, specifically when it concerns our attitudes in prayer and our approach to God in prayer.

So we need to make the same modifications to our prayers that Jesus urges his original audience to make in this portion of his sermon on the mount.

And I would ask you, Christian, don't you want to be the kind of prayer warrior that James describes in chapter 5, verse 16?

If so, then you'll need to make the modifications that Jesus urges us to make, prescribes for us to make in our text today.

[13 : 49] Maybe you're here this morning, you're listening to this sermon and you don't believe. You don't and haven't trust in Jesus Christ for your salvation.

And I want to tell you from my heart that I am glad that you are here. You're going to hear the gospel and I hope that you will be saved because God desires to restore you.

He desires to reconcile you to himself through Jesus Christ, his son. And I'm sure that even though you don't believe that you have still at time prayed, prayed.

Whenever tragedy strikes on a personal level for you or on a global scale, people who don't believe often still will turn to prayer.

Maybe you're here this morning because tragedy or some difficulty has reminded you of a truth that you would rather avoid.

[14 : 50] And that truth is that you need God. You need his help. And friend, that help will come to you through Jesus Christ.

And so I hope today that you will hear this good news about him. I've prayed for you and I hope that today you will be saved and know the hope and the fellowship and the communion that we have unbroken with God now and forever.

Jesus urges all of us this morning through his word to modify our prayers. He urges us to make three modifications to the way we pray so that our prayers will be rewarded.

The first modification that he mentions comes in verses five through six. Modify your motive for prayer. Modify your motive for prayer.

Five through eight follow the same structure. Jesus first shows us what not to do when we pray and then he presents us with the modification that we need to make in our prayers.

[16 : 11] And the first modification concerns our motive for praying. Look again with me at verse five. Jesus says, 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. So the first thing I want you to notice here is what Jesus says at the very beginning. He says when you pray Jesus was speaking to a primarily Jewish audience.

These people prayed a lot. The Jews were God's chosen people. He often spoke directly to them. No other people as a race or a nation has ever been as favored by God or as blessed by God to receive direct communication from him.

And so these people should have known how to pray but many of them didn't. In large part due to the bad influence of the scribes and the Pharisees their religious teachers and instructors.

After the events in the Old Testament recorded in Ezra and Nehemiah when the Jews had returned from exile they implemented a national time of prayer.

[17 : 35] Three times a day a devout Jew would pray. 9 a.m. noon and 3 p.m. No matter where they were no matter what they were doing at 9 noon and 3 they stopped to pray.

Whether they were working in the field whether they were worshipping in the synagogue cooking buying selling trading visiting friends going on a journey at 9 noon and 3 they dropped everything to pray.

A devout Jew prayed then at least three times a day and often in public. Now we live in a culture that doesn't value praying in public.

Our culture strongly discourages it as a matter of fact. So on the surface when we think about that these are good things to have three times of prayer national prayer and in a way we could wish also that our nation would do the same.

however by Jesus' time these prayers had morphed into something very formulaic and ritualistic. The Jews recited the same prayers over and over and over.

[18 : 57] Some had memorized them so well that they got to the point that they could rush through them and just get it over so they continue with their day. Kind of like another prayer that we're familiar with before we eat.

God is good. God is great. God we thank you for this food. Amen. Say it as fast as you can because we're ready to eat. So it had gotten to that point for them where they just I'm going to say this as quick as I can.

I don't really care about praying. I feel like I have to but I'm really more concerned about what I have to do the rest of my day. But not all Jews did that. The scribes and the Pharisees saw these times of prayer as opportunities to showcase their prayers with meticulous execution.

Perfectly articulating every syllable and every word hoping to be seen and to be heard. Just as Jesus unmasked them for their hypocritical giving in the text before this one, so here he unmasked their hypocrisy when it came to the way that they prayed.

And as I noted last week, hypocrite is a word with roots to the theater. It was a word used to describe an actor who wore different masks as they played different parts in the hope that they would perform well enough that they would receive the applause of their audience.

[20 : 27] The scribes and the Pharisees had the same motivation when they prayed. They sought public places to pray so that they would be seen by others.

Jesus mentions that one of those places was on the street corner. And here, it's interesting that he uses a different word for street than the one that he used in verse 2.

In verse 2, the Greek word for street, chapter 6, verse 2, is they're more like side streets. But here in verse 5, the word for street in Greek describes a major road.

A major road. So for us, it would be like Frank Phillips or Adams Boulevard or Washington Boulevard where our church rests.

These major kinds of streets. These are the places these hypocrites sought out. They planned their day to arrive at these street corners on these major streets during these times when the Jews stopped to pray at 9, noon, and 3.

[21 : 35] And they did that so that more people would see them and more people would hear them and be impressed by them in their prayers.

Have you ever done that? Have you ever arranged your day to make it seem like you just so happened to arrive at a place when really it was your plan all along? Before I dated Danny in college, I realized that she had a class before mine in the same building as mine.

And she would get out of her class upstairs and she would come down the stairs and she would exit out the doors that I would enter into. And I noticed that. And the next day I parked myself, I planted myself in the lobby and I put myself in a position where she would see me.

And my hope was that in seeing me she would come over and talk to me. And guess what happened? It worked. It worked. She came over and she talked to me but I hadn't rehearsed anything to say.

And so after a couple of minutes of me being really awkward, I excused myself to go to class which she knew was out of character for me.

[22 : 48] But anyhow, she married me eventually so praise the Lord for that. But the idea that I want to get across is that this is what these hypocritical Pharisees and scribes were doing. They were planning their day to arrive at these places.

They were plotting their path to get to these places at these times of day so that they would be noticed by other people. Matthew also uses a different word in verse 5 from the one he used for be seen in verse 1.

The word here that he uses, phano, appears several other times in his gospel and he uses it to describe things that have a shiny appearance. appearance. So for example, Matthew uses that same term whenever he describes the appearance of the angels in chapter 2 verse 1 and verses 7 and 14.

He uses that word to ascribe the appearance of the star that the wise men followed in chapter 2 verse 13. Jesus used that word when he compared the scribes and the Pharisees, their outward appearance, to white, washed, sparkling, shiny tombs, though they were full of dead men's bones.

And Jesus also used that word whenever he was talking about his second coming and how it would appear like a flash of lightning in the sky. And so we would use this word today, I think, to describe someone who craves the spotlight, who wants to be seen, who craves the spotlight.

[24 : 22] The scribes and the Pharisees used prayer to shine the spotlight on themselves. You know, thinking in their minds probably, look at my large phylacteries, look at my long tassels, listen to me, pray, listen to how eloquent my words are, I know God better than you, aren't you impressed with me?

It wasn't, and it isn't, wrong to be seen praying, but it is wrong to pray so that you'll be seen.

Our culture may be, again, different from that, very different from that of a first-century Jew, but our prayers can also be wrongly motivated. Take the church, for example, our synagogue.

I think a lot of times when people pray in the church, whether that's in service or in a Sunday school class or any other gathering, that when they pray, they're more aware or they're most aware of who is listening to them pray than who they are praying to.

And some are ashamed or they feel ashamed to pray because they don't want to seem less spiritual and say something silly that would make them look less righteous before others in the church.

[25 : 57] And what does that basically boil down to? I think it's caring too much about what other people think of you and wanting to impress them. Or it can be the opposite in the church.

Some people are eager to pray publicly because to them it gives them an opportunity to demonstrate how much they know.

Some prayers in the church sound more like a sermon. I've been guilty of that a time or two. Like the scribes and Pharisees, such prayer and such people, they're more concerned with impressing their audience than they are praying to God.

Not always, but sometimes. And the same can be said with altar calls. For some people, to them, that's an opportunity for them to shine.

Not always, but sometimes. We don't know, but God does know. We can compare the street corners Jesus talked about to the public places where people gather today.

[27 : 06] Now, again, if someone in our culture went out to a street corner in one of these major streets that I mentioned and they started praying in public, people would not admire their righteousness.

They would think that they were crazy and they'd probably call the police on them. But some public situations give us as believers opportunity to pray. you may have a neighbor or a coworker and you know that they're going through something difficult and that person knows that you are a Christian and so you tell them, I'll be praying for you.

But you don't. You don't end up praying for them. Why not? It could be as a simple thing as just you forgetting or it could be that maybe you want to appear spiritual in their eyes because you feel like, well, that's what I should say at this point in time.

I think we see a lot of spotlight shining on social media as Christians. I'm friends with a lot of pastors on Facebook and some of them will post about a church or a place where they've been asked to preach and before they do that, they'll make that post and they'll ask for people to be praying for them.

And you know what? I think in a lot of cases, they're sincere and I don't really know. They could be very sincere, but maybe what they really want is for people to see them doing good things, being used by God.

[28 : 48] We also see people do this especially on social media when it comes to social issues. You know, it's whatever the world is caring about. We can feel pressure as believers that we want to feel relevant.

We want to feel like, you know, we want them to think that we care. And so we will try to be relevant by offering some kind of prayer or some kind of statement on Facebook when our motivation is really to gain the applause in that case of the world, especially when it comes to things that contradict God's word as sinful.

Students, some of you have a Christian teacher maybe or a coach and you can be tempted to use prayer to get on their good side. Asking to pray for them or before a class or before a game or after a game whatever it might be.

Maybe there's someone in the youth group that you want to impress. I've spent time working in youth ministry and I can tell you that I've seen a lot of young men suddenly become very spiritual around a pretty girl that they want to impress.

God knows your motives. He knows why you're praying. He knows who you're truly praying to. And people who pray to be seen and heard are really truly just praying to themselves and they're praying for themselves and Jesus says there's no reward in that.

[30 : 24] So he showed us the wrong motive now he shows us the right motive in verse six. But when you pray go into your room and shut the door and pray to your father who is in secret will reward you.

In verse six Jesus moves from the plural form of you in verse five to the singular! form of you and it's like here he is pointing his finger at us at you and he's saying to us you when you pray you go and go is an imperative that's a command you go to a quiet place where you won't be seen by anyone or heard by anyone why?

well I think on the one hand it's because some things are only for God to hear from you on the other hand especially if it's an issue with you struggling with wanting to pray publicly to be seen it gets you away from all of that and gets you alone with God in prayer so that he can be at work in you does this mean that we shouldn't pray publicly no Jesus prayed publicly in corporate prayer is a good thing for us to do especially or really only when our motives are pure so how can you know if your motive for praying is pure in this case well I think you can ask yourself two simple questions to evaluate your motive One do I pray longer in public than

I do in private and two do I pray differently in public than I do in private and maybe three do I only pray in public and never in private again some things are only for God to hear but whether you pray in public or in private God is always your audience we don't pray to people we don't pray for their praise we pray to God for his help for fellowship because we love him we pray for people we don't pray to people so it's your motive Second what we need to modify is your method of prayer in verses 7 and 8 verse 7 again Jesus says and when you pray do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do for they think they will be heard for their many words Gentiles in the Bible refers to all non Jewish people and the major Gentile groups at this time were the Romans and the Greeks who worshipped a pantheon many different gods a Roman or a Greek worshipper used prayer to secure specific blessings from whatever God they sought those blessings from and so their prayers were designed as kind of like a contract not a conversation so if you've ever purchased a car or a house there's a lot of fine print in that contract isn't there there's a lot of boxes to check out off a lot of initialing that needs to be done there's a lot of fine print also in Gentile prayers so say you are a

[34 : 11] Roman farmer living at this time and you wanted to have a good crop if that was the case then Saturn not the planet but the deity the God was the person that you needed to pursue in prayer but Romans and Greeks believed that their gods basically didn't care about them that they were pretty much indifferent to whatever was happening amongst lower beings like people and so they didn't care really about you and so if you wanted to get their attention to get their help you had to seek them out which often meant that you had to go on a journey to their temple to wherever their statue where their avatar was to gain an audience with them and then once there you had to introduce yourself to them and convince them that they should care about you and to do that you would present them with some kind of sacrifice to secure their ear and as you did that you would lavish all kinds of praises upon them oh

Saturn there's no one like you Saturn you're better than all the other gods blah blah blah blah blah once the sacrifice and the praises were given then it came time to persuade the deity that they had the ability to do the thing that you were asking them to do after that was done then it became time to bargain and it would go something like this if you will do this for me then I will do this for you but the Romans and the Greeks also viewed their gods as untrustworthy deities they were tricksters and so they had to be really careful when they prayed they had to use a lot of repetition and they had to use a lot of words they had to be very particular with those words because they wanted to close any loopholes that would prevent them from being tricked and all this bargaining all this reasoning all this flattering and sometimes threatening took a lot of words and it took a lot of time and apparently the Jews admired this kind of long winded style of prayer and they began to incorporate it in their prayers going on and on and on using prayer as if it was a contract have you ever done that have you ever done that do you bargain with

God like that when you pray I know I did a lot when I was a kid God what I really need and I need it is a new bike and God if you give me that new bike I promise that I'll be careful and not only that I'll go to church I'll pray in church I'll do whatever you want just give me that bike as a teenager I remember praying prayers!

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me and I would use that especially excuse me in sports God I want to strike this guy out I want to hit a home run and I'll do it if you'll strengthen me and I'll give you the glory for it and sometimes I would try to like prime the pump of that blessing by doing something silly like crossing myself at the plate because I saw all the great major leaguers do it and they hit home run so maybe that'll work God will get my attention and I'll give him the glory for the success after I cross home plate as adults we do this too God if you make me successful in my career if I get that promotion I'll tithe more I'll go to church more I'll sin less I won't be so bad sometimes in church we're tempted to incorporate methods of prayer that aren't biblical lighting candles going on whatever these things called a prayer labyrinth or a prayer maze or something like that whatever they are some will use a rosary a lot of different things and we think that these physical things that we're doing somehow are making our prayers more powerful and that in doing these things that God will somehow pay more attention to us and somehow that will gain his attention and enhance our prayers but Jesus says

God isn't interested in any of that there's a bettered method and it doesn't concern what you do it concerns what you know and what you know about God specifically in verse 8 Jesus says do not be like them for your father knows what you need before you ask and so Jesus draws a contrast here between the gods of the pagans as well as the relationship between those followers and their gods and the God who is real the God who is true the one true and only God that there is who desires a personal relationship with his people the true God the only God is omniscient meaning he knows everything everything that's happened everything that's happening everything that will ever happen and yes still we go to him with our specific things in prayer knowing that he knows all things and we do that because we know that he loves us and he cares about us and he wants to hear from us and he wants to use us in our prayers to accomplish his will we don't have to beg for his attention in Christ we don't have to plead for

[40 : 40] God to pay attention to us because in Christ the Bible says that we've been adopted we've been made his children and God is a loving heavenly father who loves his kids and who wants to hear from his children and who wants to act for their good on their behalf so we don't need to drone on with a lot of unnecessary and heartless and meaningless words and repetition or actions that's not necessary one place we see this is in 1 Kings chapter 18 if you remember this is about Elijah and the prophets of Baal in the northern kingdom ruled by Ahab and his wife Jezebel they had instituted the worship of Baal or Baal however you want to say it this pagan god who wasn't the one true god and was leading people to do really bad things and leading them away from the truth in the

Lord and so Elijah said well let's have a contest we'll go up on Mount Carmel you have your sacrifice I'll have mine and we'll see we'll pray and we'll see whose God answers and the prophets of Baal and there are many of them they are doing what what Gentiles do and pray they're they're they're screaming and they're crying out oh Baal show yourself today show yourself that you are mighty show yourself to these people that you are the one who should be worshipped and nothing happened and so they got more desperate they got louder and they started cutting themselves with jagged things showing their blood to Baal look at us won't you hear us don't we have your attention and all the while for hours they're doing this Elijah's over there kind of mocking them because he knows the truth and he says well maybe he's using the bathroom like literally that's what he says maybe he's busy doing something like that you just then it's

Elijah's turn and Elijah what I want you to see here is how few his words are in 1 Kings 18 36 through 39 and at the time of the offering he also had doused his offering three times with water so much so that a trench was full of water and again the challenge was for fire to come down and consume!

Elijah the prophet came near and said O Lord God of fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust and licked up the water that was in the trench and when all people saw it they fell on their face and they said the Lord he is God the Lord he is God what I want you to see there is that the right method of prayer is simple it's a conversation not a contract it's humble it's personal it's knowing

God as father who cares about little old you and he loves you who wants to hear from you and he's never too busy to make time for his children and he's never surprised by what you have to ask so now we get to the third modification it's your model of prayer modify your model of prayer so your mode of your method now your model and here's where we could spend a whole lot of time maybe some other time but I want you to see some of the things that Jesus highlights here in verse 9 Jesus tells us to model our prayers by starting with the heavenly father and saying our father in heaven hallowed be your name Jesus says to start our prayers with an acknowledgement of who God is that he is a loving father and though he is transcendent though he is holy though he is awfully infinitely big he's not too big and he's not too busy to care about you personally and you know what we should honor a

[45 : 35] God who loves and who cares about us like that then in verse 10 Jesus says we're to pray again focusing on God and who he is your kingdom come your will be done on earth as it is in heaven and here we express our desire that God will exercise his authority upon our fallen world that in this world cursed by sin that his kingdom will advance that sinners will be saved that those who live in darkness will see the marvelous light of Jesus Christ his son so often our prayers focus primarily on our little kingdom and what we want to happen in our little kingdom and Jesus says don't think about that little thing think about the great big picture that Jesus is a much better king than you are and you want his rule you want his reign in your life in your church in your house in your place of work and in this world praying this way reminds us of things that we easily forget if you follow this model beginning with

God in this way what happens is that your vision expands God helps you to see the big picture and your purpose in that big picture to advance his kingdom to share the gospel to pray for yourself and to pray for other Christians and to pray for unbelievers that they would be saved to pray that ground will be reclaimed ground will be seized away from the father of lies for our heavenly father this reminds us that God's kingdom in its fullness will come and God will have what he desires in the end which is for our good so the first part of this model prayer helps us to see the big picture and once we've seen the big picture we have a better frame of reference when it comes to our personal requests which

Jesus says we are to ask for our daily bread I think that means both our physical needs that we have to survive as well as our spiritual needs that we need to be sanctified and become more like Jesus he goes on we're also to ask God to forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors as we have also forgotten or forgiven our debts or he has forgiven our debts and so here again seeing the big picture we know that God has forgiven me God has forgiven me of all of my sins in Christ and so I must forgive as well these much smaller debts than the one Jesus has taken away from me and then in verses 14 and 15 Jesus continues to hit this point for if you forgive others their trespasses your heavenly father will also forgive you but if you do not forgive others their trespasses neither will your father forgive your trespasses here it's important that we use scripture to interpret scripture this is not a matter of losing your salvation this is more of like a need to wash your hands rather than your whole body

God will discipline us like a good parent disciplines their children when we fail to reflect his character and in that we bring dishonor to his name God wants to release us of the bitterness and the grudges and the internal anguish that we often feel when we do not forgive others Jesus says we must let such things go and then in verse 13 he tells us that we should pray lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil brother sister friend the bible describes satan as a roaring lion who is constantly on the prowl looking for someone to devour so we ask

God every day Lord help us to be alert help my eyes to see the schemes of the evil one help me Lord to resist his attack and at sometimes to know when I need to just flee that attack or that situation each day we are bombarded with lies and deceptions and temptations and so each day we need to arm ourselves as soon as we get out of bed maybe even I would say as soon as you wake up because I don't know if the same is true as it is for me the mornings are hard and the morning as soon as I wake up it's like all these things that I know that are supposed to happen this day rush upon me and I feel anxious and in those moments what we need to do is to seek God in prayer in his peace asking for his help and his promises that he'll give it we must be consistent and consistently

[51 : 26] I should say in communication with our Lord all throughout the day and so how should we adjust our lives according to what we've heard well we bring it all together pray sorry not an M pray

with the same motivation and method that Jesus modeled pray with the same motivation and method that Jesus modeled put it into action here's some things that you can do today that are easy for you to do you know don't hear this and think well I need to go I need to go I gotta start praying for like five hours that's great if you have the time to do it but start small pray pray for five to ten minutes every day pray when you get up and then try to find the time of prayer wherever it is in your time of day that works for you I think mornings are best but just pray for five or ten minutes and I think what you'll see is that if you do that you'll be praying a lot longer before too long too long here's another thing that I think is helpful carry a journal or carry some kind of small notebook or just use your phone and whenever you in your day you have prayer requests or you know something that's going on in the life of a friend a classmate a co-worker a neighbor write it down because

I think a lot of times we do mean that we are going to pray! for a journal of sorts and add to it and look over that and pray over it and get updates from those who you're praying for and they'll be blessed by that along those same lines too instead of telling someone that you'll be praying for them pray for them right then and I'll tell you in the times that I've asked people to do that a lot of unbelievers people who don't go to church people who seem hostile to the gospel and I've said in those moments do you mind if I pray for you I've never once had anybody tell me no more often than not they're very thankful for it and it builds a relationship so don't just tell them do it pray for them right then and right there students

I'd encourage you to pray you know in your classroom when you get into class pray for your teacher pray for your classmates do that every class doesn't have to be long but I encourage you to do that we as adults we can't go into the places that you can and so I encourage you to do that be praying be praying a lot now look Satan does not want Christians to pray and Jesus is I think two of his most difficult times on this earth in the wilderness for 40 days where he was fasting before he started his public ministry and in the garden of Gethsemane when he prayed for God's will to be done though he asked that the cup of his wrath be passed if possible in both of those situations Satan attacks Satan doesn't view prayer as being something off limits and

I think that should reinforce the point to us that what Satan wants us to do is to not pray so please pray please pray and unbeliever understand this that Satan doesn't only not want you to pray he doesn't want you to know Jesus and all that he's all that you've heard today he's eager he's waiting he's ready to snatch it up the truth is this all of us have sinned all of us and all of us fall short of the perfect standard of God and none of us by our good works none of us through our prayers are saved by any of those things what saves us is faith in Jesus Christ the son of God who emptied himself of all the privileges of heaven to come down and to become one of us

God with us dwelling amongst us tabernacling amongst us living the sinless life that we could not live purposely coming to die on the cross to atone for our sins and look you can come down an aisle you can pray a prayer but most importantly those things won't save you what saves you is knowing that truth and turning to Jesus and asking him will you forgive me and he will and he'll change and he'll transform your life and I hope that you'll turn to him today look we need to pray you need to pray our nation needs God's people to pray will you pray will you pray let's pray right now Lord thank you for teaching us how to pray

[57 : 13] Lord thank you for reminding us of your desire to dwell amongst us ultimately proven and demonstrated by your sinless life your death your resurrection on the third day making all things possible or making I should say Lord impossible for us to dwell with you now and eternally Lord forgive me forgive us that so often we don't prioritize prayer for whatever reason God forgive us that often our motives and our methods of prayer aren't any different from the scribes and the Pharisees that we just read about but Lord we've heard your word and Holy Spirit we pray that you would cause us to make these modifications that Lord we would seek you in prayer that we would pray without ceasing and that Lord we would continually seek you during those times knowing

Lord that you used them to make us like Jesus and so God I pray for each one of us that will be committed to do that today committed to obey what you've urged us to do this morning in your word and we pray that you would be glorified by all of it and we ask these things in Jesus name Amen I'll see you next time.