

CONNECTING WITH GOD

SEVEN ESSENTIALS OF PRAYER

Given to us by our Savior in The Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:5-13

by

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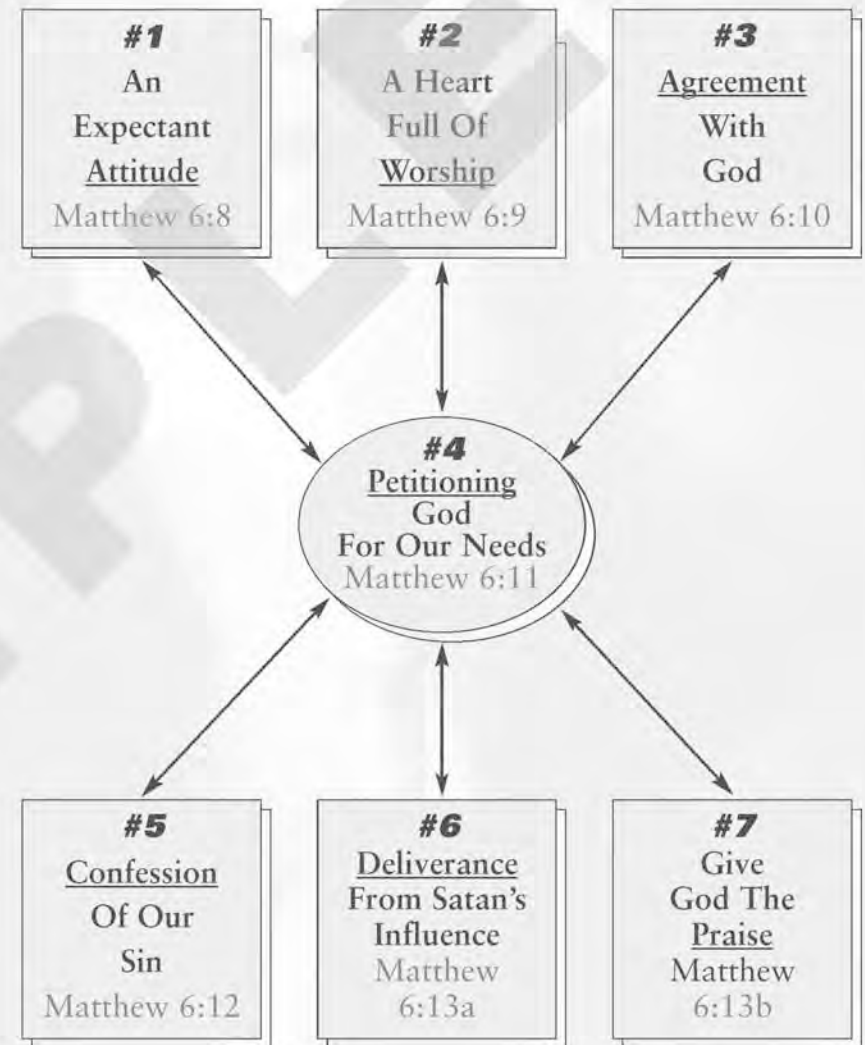
THE SEVEN ESSENTIALS OF PRAYER

Deep within every Christian's heart there needs to be a burning desire to learn how to pray effectively. Our spirits know that our greatest weakness is in our inability to pray with power. Even the disciples felt this need one day as they heard Jesus pray; they were convicted of the deficiency of their own shallow prayers. They said, "Lord, teach us to pray..." (Luke 11:1). Jesus taught them the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:5-13. As I studied this Scripture, I found that Jesus gave us seven essential ingredients of prayer.

Look at the first three essentials of prayer (opposite page). You will need to prepare your heart for a time of intense prayer by having an expectant attitude, a heart full of worship, and complete agreement with God. You need to do this before you begin to petition the Lord for your needs.

Notice that six essentials are related to your relationship with the Lord and only one essential, petitioning, has to do with your personal needs and wants. Developing your spiritual life and desiring to be closer to God is a vital part of prayer.

Think about your prayer life. Is the majority of your time spent in asking for what you want? Do you spend enough time building a worshipful relationship with the King in your prayer time?



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PREFACE

Have you found that you sometimes neglect prayer because you are too busy—even though you are actively doing the work of the Lord? We too often neglect the God of the work, while doing the work of God. Prayer is crucial to the Kingdom of God, and it is here that we know God in a more meaningful way.

Martin Lloyd-Jones said: “The ultimate test of my understanding of the scriptural teaching is the amount of time I spend in prayer. As theology is ultimately the knowledge of God, the more theology I know, the more it should drive me to seek to know God. Not to know ‘about’ him! The whole object of salvation is to bring me to knowledge of God...If all my knowledge does not lead me to prayer, there is something wrong somewhere.”

Fervent, meaningful prayer is a missing ingredient in our daily walk with God. Prayer must not be neglected, but must be woven into every area of our lives. J. I. Packer wrote: “We must learn to measure ourselves, not by our knowledge about God, not by our gifts and responsibilities in the church, but by how we pray and what goes on in our hearts. Many of us, I suspect, have no idea how impoverished we are at this level. Let us ask the Lord to show us.”

This booklet will help you to know, love, and worship God through prayer.

AN EXPECTANT ATTITUDE

MEMORY VERSE: MATTHEW 6:8

The right attitude is essential when accomplishing anything in life, and prayer is no exception. Prayer requires us to have the right heart attitude. In Matthew 6:5-7, Jesus gives us two ways people pray: one is with the wrong attitude and one is with the right attitude. Let's look at the wrong attitude first.

Jesus says you are not to pray like a hypocrite (Matthew 6:5). In Jesus' day men would stand openly in the synagogues and pray to God. They didn't pray because they wanted to talk to God; they prayed because they wanted others to see them pray. The only prayer life they had was public; they never talked to God in their hearts or in private. These men have no relationship with God because their prayers have only one purpose—to impress others. Knowing the right words to say and “sounding spiritual” does not impress God (Matthew 6:7). God is seeking men and women who will pour out their hearts to Him in earnest expectation that their heavenly Father has the answer.

1. Where is your “closet” or special prayer place?

office bedroom outdoors car

don't have one yet other _____

2. Can you think of a time when you experienced God through prayer? Share that time here: _____

3. Matthew 6:7 refers to speaking foolishly or making vows that you don't intend to keep when you pray. Can you share a time when you prayed like this? _____

4. If you pray insincerely, Jesus calls you a hypocrite (literally “play actor” or “pretender”). What are some ways that you could be more sincere in the way that you talk to God? _____

God reminds all of us what the right attitude concerning prayer is in Matthew 6:8. Because God knows your needs before you even tell Him about them, you should pray with an expectant attitude. Having this kind of attitude is vital to your prayer life.

Oswald Chambers said the following concerning prayer: “Jesus never mentioned unanswered prayer; He had the boundless certainty that prayer is always answered. Have we by the Spirit the unspeakable certainty that Jesus had about prayer, or do we think of the times when God does not seem to have answered prayer? God answers prayer in the

MEMORY VERSE: MATTHEW 6:9

Worshipping God is an act. It is motivated by love and admiration for God, which in turn leads to an obedient life. Worship is the second essential ingredient of a powerful prayer life. Before we begin our prayer, we must remind ourselves to whom we are speaking. We must realize that we are approaching the throne of God. God is the Creator of life; He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. We must comprehend this and come before Him with a worshipful attitude, worthy of our Savior.

The Bible offers us countless glimpses into who God really is. Before we can fully worship God, we must truly know who He is. He exists in three persons—God the Father, God the Son—Jesus, and God the Holy Spirit. We will examine all three, starting with God the Father.

1. Look up the following verses in Psalms. Write the description of who God is next to each reference.

Psalms 18:2, 31 _____

Psalms 9:9; 14:6 _____

Psalms 23:1; 80:1 _____

Psalms 44:3; 90:8 _____

2. Look up the following verses in Proverbs. Write the description of who God is next to each reference.

Proverbs 16:33; 21:30 _____

Proverbs 18:10 _____

Proverbs 11:8, 21 _____

Proverbs 22:22-23 _____

3. God revealed Himself in other parts of Scripture as well. Write the description of who God is next to each reference.

Isaiah 28:16 _____

Isaiah 64:8 _____

2 Chronicles 13:12 _____

2 Timothy 4:8 _____

Revelation 19:11 _____

4. Look up the following verses about God the Son—Jesus. Write the description of who Jesus is next to each reference.

John 6:35 _____

John 10:11 _____

John 14:6 _____

best way, not sometimes, but every time....Do we expect God to answer prayer?"

You must come to God realizing that it is His desire to grant your request. Over and over again God encourages you to ask and receive. Matthew 7:7 says if you ask, you will receive, if you seek, you will find, and if you knock, it will be opened. That's a promise from God! Even though you know that God wants to answer your prayers, sometimes you might come to Him thinking that He answers other people's prayers, but not yours. It is not enough to believe that God answers prayer; you must expect an answer with certainty.

Look up the following promises God made concerning prayer:

Isaiah 65:24

Matthew 21:22

Ephesians 3:20

Hebrews 4:16

According to these verses, is God holding back? Is God only willing to bless and meet the needs of a select few? The answer is no. These promises are open and ready for you to grasp with an expectant attitude.

5. Hebrews 4:16 urges us to approach Jesus with confidence—to approach boldly, fearlessly, without wavering, and without hesitation. Verses 14 and 15 will give you insight into why you should approach Jesus with this attitude. In your own words, write the reason you can have confidence in the fact that Jesus will hear and answer your prayers. _____

6. Pray right now. Tell God how you feel about Him and how you feel about what He has done for you recently. Remember God's promises and pray with confidence.
7. In the space below, write down some of the needs and concerns that are on your heart. Pray for an answer from God.

5. Look up the following verses. Write the description of who the Holy Spirit is next to each reference.

John 1:32 _____

John 16:7 _____

John 16:13-14 _____

According to the verses you just read, you have many reasons to worship God. The more that you know about God, the better you are able to worship Him!

When you attempt to communicate with God without a worshipful attitude, you are not communicating with Him effectively. Matthew 6:9 offers three truths concerning the importance of praying with a worshipful heart.

Truth #1. We cannot truly worship God in prayer unless we know Him as our Father. Jesus said to begin with, "...Our Father." Jesus made it clear that not everyone is a child of God (John 8:37-44). However, those who have accepted Christ as their Savior have been adopted and are now "sons" of God (Romans 8:14-15). That brings us to the second truth offered in Matthew 6:9.

Truth #2. We now have the privilege of worshiping God the Father through prayer. Matthew 6:9 tells us to worship our Father in heaven. Jesus addressed God as "Father" every time He prayed except one (Matthew 27:46). We are to look to God as our Father. He supplies our needs, and wants to know our fears, concerns, and desires. God the Father wants us to look to Him as a child looks to his father for comfort and support. Are you letting the weaknesses of your earthly father cloud your view of

your divine, heavenly Father? Remember that God the Father is perfect and will never let you down.

Truth #3. Because God the Father's name is so holy, we need to worship Him with adoration when we pray. The word *hallowed* in Matthew 6:9 means "holy." We must come before God conscious of His great holiness. Read the following verses about the holiness of God's name. Next to each reference write how we are to worship His name.

Malachi 1:11 _____

Psalm 100:4 _____

Psalm 115:1 _____

THE NAMES OF GOD

I have three names: Thomas Edgar Ward. Some people even have four or five names, but God is so complex and magnificent that it takes a multitude of names to describe His glory and holiness. The following names appeared in the original languages of the Bible. Each name has a different meaning. Look at just a few of His wonderful names:

ELOHIM: the strong one, keeps His covenant Genesis 1:1-4

JEHOVAH (LORD): the one who is above all else holy, the one who reveals Himself, the one who loves us according to our righteousness
Isaiah 12; Jeremiah 1:4, 7, 9

EL-SHADDAI: God Almighty Genesis 17:1-5

ADONAI: the sovereign one, signifies ownership or Lordship	Genesis 15:1-6
JEHOVAH-JIREH: the Lord will provide	Genesis 22:1-14
JEHOVAH-ROPHE: the Lord who heals	Exodus 15:22-26
JEHOVAH-NISSI: the Lord our banner	Exodus 17:8-16
JEHOVAH-M'KADDESH: the Lord who sanctifies	Leviticus 20:1-8
ASAH: Maker	Isaiah 45:5-12
PISTOS: Faithful	Revelation 19:11-21
JEHOVAH-SHALOM: the Lord is peace	Judges 6:1-24
JEHOVAH-TSIDKENU: the Lord our righteousness	Jeremiah 23:1-6
YASHA: Savior	Isaiah 45:15-22
JEHOVAH-ROHI: the Lord my shepherd	Psalm 23
JEHOVAH-SHAMMAH: the Lord is present	Ezekiel 48:30-35
ALPHA AND OMEGA: the first and the last	Revelation 1:1-11
EL OLAM: the Everlasting God	Genesis 21:22-33
SUR OR PETRA: Rock	Psalm 61
EL ROI: the Strong One Who Sees	Genesis 16:1-13
PARACLETE: the Comforter	John 14:15-27

1. Which of God's names means the most to you? Why? _____

2. Can the name of God you've chosen affect your prayer life? In what way? _____

When you have a specific need, pray to God using one of these names. For example, a couple in my church wanted to have a baby. After years of trying, they were terribly disappointed to hear that they were unable to conceive. They began praying to God using the name El-Shaddai, which means "God Almighty" and the one who make us fruitful (Genesis 28:3; 35:11; 48:3-4). Today they are the proud parents of twins and triplets. The Lord does provide!

Seeing that God has diverse characteristics and names to go along with those characteristics is comforting. You can approach Him with any situation and trust that He will hear you when you call His name. Before you pray each day, prepare your heart by worshiping His name. This important step lays the foundation for the other essentials of prayer you will learn about.