

LESSON ESSENTIALS

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORLDVIEW

LESSON 7: HOW TO PRAY

Jesus set a great example in living a righteous life. Looking closely at His life we can see that Jesus took time to pray. One of the things that He taught His disciple is how to pray, and we can learn from His teaching and examples also.

As we read further in the lesson, we will be gaining more insights about prayer and how Jesus taught the disciples to pray. We will also learn how to approach God the Almighty through prayer and what we can pray for.

Prayer is an essential part of a Christian's life. It is a constant fellowship with God the Father. Prayer gives us an unhindered access to commune with our creator. In this lesson we will look at the significance of prayer in a believer's life

As Jesus taught, we have to enter the presence of an Almighty God with an attitude of worship.

Though we can approach God through Jesus Christ, we should not forget to enter his presence with humility, awe, and reverence.

Through Christ all our needs can be met by our God just as the promise in Philippians 4:19 says “And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

Will our God the Father hesitate to provide his children with their daily needs?

When we begin our walk with God, , we long to know more about our Father in heaven. One way we can do this is to spend time reading His Word and talking with Him in prayer. When the disciples saw Jesus praying to His Father, they too desired to pray. In Matthew 6: 9-13, Jesus teaches His disciples how to pray what is known as the ‘Lord’s Prayer’. This prayer serves to be a model on which we must structure our prayers as well.

Jesus tells the disciples to commence the prayer with “Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be your name.” The significance of this is that we have to enter into God’s presence with an attitude of worship. By saying this, we acknowledge that God the Father took interest in us and chose to save us from our sins, though we do not deserve His mercy and grace. We cannot but marvel at the grandeur and glory of our God in His presence.

Jesus continues His prayer saying “your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven” These are words of surrender to the Lordship of our God the Father.. By praying in this manner, we acknowledge the sovereign control of God the Father in our lives. Submission to the will of God will align our purposes with His. We should not only desire God’s will in our lives but also desire His will on the earth that we live in.

Our Father in heaven understands that we have needs that should be taken care of. Our God, who is loving and caring, will listen to our requests. In fact, He can grant us much more than we can ask for (Ephesians 3:20). Such is the love of our Father in Heaven. We can place our needs before Him through prayer, in the way that Jesus taught us by saying, “Give us this day our daily bread”. We trust God to provide us with our daily needs when we call on His name. When we trust in Him for our needs, we acknowledge that our Lord is our Father and we are His children.

“Forgive our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.” This is the subsequent line in the Lord’s Prayer that Jesus teaches the disciples to include in their prayer. Through this we learn that we need to ask for forgiveness of our sins so that we can be clean in the presence of our Lord. Interestingly, as we read in the Prayer, we realize that God’s forgiveness reflects with our forgiveness towards our neighbors. In Matthew 18: 21 – 35, Jesus highlights this point through the parable of an unforgiving servant. The head servant could not forgive the debt of his fellow servant even though his master did not hold charges against him for his debt. Sometimes we can also find ourselves in the same position as the head servant. We

ask forgiveness for our sins from our Lord but hold resentment towards others. God will consider our plea for forgiveness when we consider and forgive others around us.

Finally, in the line “lead us not into the temptation but deliver us from the evil”, Jesus teaches us to pray for protection and deliverance from evil. Our walk with the Lord is a constant battle between us and the devil. We can easily tread away from the path of righteousness. We are vulnerable to trials, temptations, and sickness very often, as we live in this fallen world. We have to ask for God’s protective watch over us, and to protect us from the devil’s evil ways.

We, who are imperfect and full of sin, serve and worship a Holy God. God detests impurity. It is through Jesus Christ that we are granted access to the Holy throne. In the Holy temple, only the high priest was allowed to go beyond the temple veil once a year, to enter into the Holy of Holies. This signified that we were separated from God because of our sins (Isaiah 59:1-2). After Jesus died for our sins the temple veil was torn down from top to bottom (Mark.15:38). The death of Jesus removed all restrictions to approach the Holy of Holies. We can address God as our Father only because of His son Jesus Christ’s sacrifice. Jesus said, “Whatever you ask my father in my name, it will be given to you”. Isn’t it wonderful news that we can approach God with our requests and our cares at any point in the day? While we fill our day with talking to God, be sure to also set aside time for regular more intense prayer. Some believers like to keep note of what they have prayed about, and list items to pray for. This can become a helpful habit, and also allow you to praise God when you see answers to your prayers. Through our prayer God changes our hearts and lives. Why don’t you spend some time in prayer with your heavenly Father right now?

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IN REVIEW

- Jesus teaches us to enter the presence of our Lord with an attitude of admiration and exaltation for Him.
- The Lord's Prayer teaches us to worship God, to surrender to His will, and to trust in Him for our needs.
- In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus makes it clear to us that it is necessary to forgive others so that we may be forgiven by our Lord.
- We need to remember that we have an enemy. We cannot fight the devil without God's protection. We must seek God's help to steer clear of temptations so that we may be pleasing and acceptable to our Father.

HAVE YOUR SAY

- Do you desire to pray like the disciples did? Do you take time to pray in the same way that Jesus did? Do you hold any grudges against anyone? If so, are you willing to forgive them?

- Do you trust God to provide for your needs? Can you remember a moment where God provided for your need when you took it to the Lord in prayer?

- Spend some time talking to God about your prayer life. Ask Him to help you set aside time regularly for prayer, and to pray His will. What are some things you can pray for today?

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