

Bible Stories for Adults

Jesus Teaches Us to Pray

Matthew 6:1-18

Opening

Gathering: Describe what makes a good prayer.

Today's Focus: Jesus taught us how to pray in God's will.

Key Verses: *This, then, is how you should pray...* Matthew 6:9

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. Matthew 7:7

Opening Prayer

Lesson

Sermon on the Mount (*Matthew 5-7*)

Why are these chapters called the *Sermon on the Mount*?

Matthew 5:1-2; 7:28-29

Did Jesus simply reinforce the wisdom of society, or did He contradict common sense?

Matthew 5:43-44

How did He define God's standards for His chosen people?

Matthew 5:20, 48

Was Jesus saying that life would be better for us if we live as He described?

Matthew 5:11-12

Then why should we live as Jesus described?

Matthew 6:19-21

But we still need to worry about necessities like what we will eat or drink or wear. Right?

Matthew 6:31-33

Praise From Men (*John 12:43*)

What Jewish group worked their hardest to be righteous by keeping every dot of the law – and then some?

Acts 26:5

What problem did Jesus find with their efforts?

Luke 16:13-15

But what was wrong with working to keep God's law?

Amos 4:4-5

How was it later proved that their motive was to receive praise from men?

John 12:42-43 (5:41-44)

Jewish Righteousness (*Luke 18:9-14*)

What parable did Jesus tell to make this point?

Luke 18:9-10

What three pillars of a righteous Jewish life did this Pharisee exhibit?

Luke 18:11-12

What did Jesus say God really wants?

Luke 18:13-14

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Acts of Righteousness (*Matthew 6:1*)

What did Jesus warn about the ways we try to be righteous?

Matthew 6:1

So was Jesus saying we shouldn't try to do good things?

Ephesians 2:10

So then, is He saying it is wrong to do good deeds if someone sees or finds out about them?

Matthew 5:16

What is Jesus then saying about the good deeds we do?

1 Peter 4:11 (1 Corinthians 10:31)

Giving Alms (*Matthew 6:2-4*)

Tzedakah

Why was giving to the poor such a key part of a righteous Jewish life?

Deuteronomy 15:7-8, 10-11

What warning did Jesus have about giving to the needy?

Matthew 6:2

Hypocrite

What does Jesus say about giving to make you proud of yourself?

Matthew 6:3-4

What, then, should be our motivation for giving to others?

Colossians 3:17

Fasting (*Matthew 6:16-18*)

Were the Jews required to fast by any of their laws?

Leviticus 16:29-31

What were some of the reasons the Jews fasted?

1 Samuel 7:6

2 Samuel 12:16

Judges 20:26-27a

Isaiah 58:2-3a

What was one of the problems with the ways the Jews fasted?

Isaiah 58:3b-5

What is God's purpose for fasting?

Isaiah 58:6-7 (6-10)

What other problem did some Jews have with fasting?

Zechariah 7:4-6

How was this being done in Jesus' day?

Matthew 6:16

How did Jesus address this problem? Did He say we shouldn't fast?

Matthew 6:17-18

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Prayer (*Matthew 6:5-8*)

What was the third key part of a devout Jew's life?

Psalm 32:6a

Problems with Jewish habits of prayer:

Deuteronomy 6:4-6

Isaiah 1:13-15

Acts 3:1

2 Chronicles 6:40

Mark 12:40

Nehemiah 1:6a

What other problem did Jesus address?

Matthew 6:5

What instructions does Jesus give us for when we pray?

Matthew 6:6

Does this mean we shouldn't pray in public?

Matthew 18:19-20 (1 Timothy 2:1,8)

What other prayer problem did Jesus warn against?

Matthew 6:7

But what if a short prayer cannot include all the details of what we need?

Matthew 6:8

Since God already knows our prayer, do we even need to pray?

Matthew 7:7-8

What if it God doesn't seem to answer?

Luke 18:1

How do we know if we are praying for what we should?

John 15:7

What if we don't know how to verbalize what we really want to say?

Romans 8:26-27

A Guide for Prayer (*Matthew 6:9-13*)

What format did Jesus give that can guide our prayers to God?

Matthew 6:9-13

Why does He address the prayer to *Our Father who art in heaven*?

Matthew 7:11

What does this mean? Here God encourages us to believe that He is truly our Father & we are His children.

We therefore are to pray to Him with complete confidence just as children speak to their loving father.

Why do we place God's name above all names with the phrase *Hallowed be Thy name*?

Psalm 138:2

What does this mean? God's name certainly is holy in itself, but we ask in this prayer that we may keep it holy.

When does this happen? God's name is hallowed whenever His Word is taught in its truth and purity and we as children of God live in harmony with it. Help us to do this, heavenly Father! But anyone who teaches or lives contrary to the Word of God dishonors God's name among us. Keep us from doing this, heavenly Father!

How do we look for our lives to change by the request *Thy kingdom come*?

Romans 14:17

What does this mean? God's kingdom comes indeed without our praying for it, but we ask in this prayer that it may come also to us.

When does this happen? God's kingdom comes when our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by his grace we believe His holy Word and live a godly life on earth now and in heaven forever.

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A Guide for Prayer (*Matthew 6:9-13*)

How are we blessed by asking to be included as *Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven*?

Romans 8:31-32

What does this mean? The good and gracious will of God is surely done without our prayer, but we ask in this prayer that it may be done also among us.

When does this happen? God's will is done when He hinders and defeats every evil scheme and purpose of the devil, the world, and our sinful self, which would prevent us from keeping His name holy and would oppose the coming of His kingdom. And His will is done when He strengthens our faith and keeps us firm in His Word as long as we live. This is His gracious and good will.

Why should we not worry and trust God to *Give us this day our daily bread*?

Matthew 6:25-33

What does this mean? God gives daily bread, even without our prayer, to all people, though sinful, but we ask in this prayer that He will help us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanks.

What is meant by "daily bread"? Daily bread includes everything needed for this life, such as food and clothing, home and property, work and income, a devoted family, an orderly community, good government, favorable weather, peace and health, a good name, and true friends and neighbors.

What is our part in *And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us*?

Matthew 6:14-15

What does this mean? We ask in this prayer that our Father in heaven would not hold our sins against us and because of them refuse to hear our prayer. And we pray that He would give us everything by grace, for we sin every day and deserve nothing but punishment. So we on our part will heartily forgive and gladly do good to those who sin against us.

How do we ask for God's help in avoiding temptations with *And lead us not into temptation*?

James 1:12-15

What does this mean? God tempts no one to sin, but we ask in this prayer that God would watch over us and keep us so that the devil, the world, and our sinful self may not deceive us and draw us into false belief, despair, and other great and shameful sins. And we pray that even though we are so tempted we may still win the victory.

What event are we looking towards with *But deliver us from evil*?

John 12:31-32

What does this mean? We ask in this prayer that our heavenly Father would save us from every evil to body and soul, and at our last hour would mercifully take us from the troubles of this world to Himself in heaven.

How does God's Word close with *For Thine is the kingdom & the power & the glory forever & ever*?

Revelation 1:5b-6

What does "Amen" mean? Amen means Yes, it shall be so. We say Amen because we are certain that such petitions are pleasing to our Father in heaven and are heard by Him. For He Himself has commanded us to pray in this way and has promised to hear us.

Closing Prayer

Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. When have I done acts of righteousness in order to impress others?
(*Matthew 6:1; 23:5-7; 1 Sam. 15:30; Isaiah 64:6; Amos 4:4-5; Luke 16:15; John 5:41-44; 12:42-43*)
2. Do I give to others out of love or to impress others or to get a tax deduction?
(*Matthew 6:2-4; 10:8; Proverbs 14:21; 2 Corinthians 8:1-15; 9:6-15; 1 Timothy 6:18*)
3. What special ways have I expressed my devotion and dedication to God?
(*Matthew 6:16-18; Exodus 28:40-41; Numbers 6; Nehemiah 9:1-3, 38; Acts 14:23; 1 Peter 4:19*)
4. When have I felt uncomfortable praying in a group because I didn't feel that my prayer would be good enough?
(*Matthew 6:5-8; Deuteronomy 4:7; Luke 18:10-14; Acts 1:14; Romans 8:26-27; Ephesians 6:18*)
5. How often are my prayers meaningless ritual instead of from the heart? (*Matthew 6:9-13; 7:7-8; 1 Chronicles 5:20; Isaiah 1:13-15; Mark 12:40; Luke 18:1; Philippians 4:6-7; 1 Thessalonians 5:17*)