

The Sermon on the Mount #10

Summary Rules for Effective Praying (6:5-15)

Introduction:

1. As in the previous chapter (5:1-48), Jesus Christ preached righteousness far superior to that of the Pharisees.
2. Having corrected five popular doctrinal errors, Jesus Christ now condemned their hypocrisy in practice.
3. Having condemned evil abuses of the Law of Moses, Jesus Christ now taught worshipping God in truth.
4. In each of the three acts of worship of this chapter (6:1-18), Jesus compares true worshippers with hypocrites.
5. In each of the three cases, our Lord Jesus Christ promises the Father's rewarding of the truly righteous.
6. You may know this subject thoroughly, but that is not the issue. What are you doing about this subject?!

The Text Explained

- A. Prayer is not done for public honor or praise of men, or God will not hear it in heaven (Matt 6:5-6).
 1. There was a profane error in Israel of those with dead hearts praying in public to be seen of men.
 2. Neither standing while praying nor public prayer is condemned here, since holy men under both testaments stood in public for prayer (I Kings 8:22; Neh 8:5-6; John 11:41; Acts 27:35).
 3. Prayer must show the right motive – to be seen and heard of God, not men for their approval.
 4. Jesus specifically condemned any motive or manner of praying to be thought holy by other men.
 5. The only answer for such praying is the praise of men, which is nothing if God does not hear.
 6. The prayer of a hypocrite shall not be answered, since he is not diligently seeking God.
 7. The proper method of praying is to do it only in private to worship and beseech God for Himself.
 8. The closet is no more a literal requirement than keeping your two hands ignorant of each other!
 9. God is not hindered in the least by private prayer, and He will reward such noble souls openly.
- B. Prayer is not done with empty repetitions or memorization as if it is a sound or exercise (Matt 6:7-8).
 1. The heathen have chanting rituals where they make a repetitive noise that is purely superstitious.
 2. The prophets of Baal and worshippers of Diana used vain repetitions (I Kgs 18:26; Acts 19:34).
 3. Paul taught that we should pray with the spirit and with the understanding (I Cor 14:15).
 4. Muslims read and pray with ritualistic chanting that is not based on supplications and entreaties.
 5. Roman Catholics are the most repetitive prayers, by using the Rosary beads to count them.
 6. They show their superstitious vanity by praying 10 prayers to some Mary for every 1 to God.
 7. A memorized prayer is vain by itself; but a memorized prayer repeated *ad infinitum* is profane!
 8. The much speaking that Jesus Christ condemned was the much speaking of repetitive quantity, which is exactly what Catholics do when they count their heathen Rosary beads for penance.
 9. God already knows what you need before you pray, so you do not inform Him by quantity.
 10. This does not condemn praying for the same matter over time (Luke 18:1-8; II Cor 12:8).
 11. Jesus condemned the much praying of repetition, not much praying in sincerity (Luke 6:12).
 12. We pray not to inform God, but to obey God, praise God, and acknowledge our dependence.
- C. The Lord kindly gave a pattern to follow in prayer to guide our thoughts in doing it (Matt 6:9-13).
 1. This prayer instructs us in the manner of praying; it does not provide words for memorization.
 2. This prayer instructs us with an outline for prayer; it does not provide words for memorization.
 3. We never find this prayer repeated elsewhere, and Jesus gave another version of it (Luke 11:1-4).
 4. Roman Catholics, Bob Jones University, and many others repeat its words as if it were magical.
 5. Quoting the prayer as a form is no more an act of worship than is ritualistically kissing the Bible.
 6. The prayer uses plural pronouns, as if for public prayer, as opposed to some (Luke 18:9-14).
- D. We address God the Father and acknowledge His present position in the highest heaven above us.
 1. The Father is usually addressed, but not exclusively (Acts 7:59; 9:14; I Cor 1:2; Rev 22:20).
 2. We appeal to Him as Father by our gracious adoption in Jesus Christ (Gal 4:4-7; Heb 10:19-22).
 3. We appeal to Him as Father for His compassionate regard for us (Psalm 103:13-18; Matt 7:9-11).

4. We appeal to Him as Father to remember the reverence we owe Him (Malachi 1:6; Heb 12:9).
5. Remembering He is heaven will limit our words and get our priorities right (Eccl 5:2; Col 3:1-2).
- E. We bless and worship His holiness, which is the beautifying attribute of our God (Is 6:3; Rev 4:8).
 1. God's name only is hallowed, which condemns the hypocrite's prayer (Luke 18:9-12; I Sam 2:2).
 2. God's name only is hallowed, which condemns prayer in any other name i.e. Mary or St. Anne.
 3. God's name only is hallowed, but He wants to be worshipped in the beauty of holiness (Ps 29:2).
 4. God's name only is hallowed, which reminds us of our duty to holiness (I Peter 1:15-16; 3:15).
- F. We seek for the increase of His kingdom; we pray for universal submission to His glorious will.
 1. The disciples were obviously seeking the yet future coming of Christ's kingdom in power.
 2. We ourselves may pray for the coming of Christ's everlasting kingdom at His soon appearing.
 3. We acknowledge that God's secret will is done in heaven and earth without any resistance.
 4. We should desire the saints to keep God's will, as do the holy angels (Psalm 103:20-21).
 5. We should humble ourselves to His sovereign and revealed wills by invoking this thought.
- G. We show our dependence on Him by praying for insignificant things for which we greatly labor.
 1. Though we work hard for our daily bread, the Lord must bless our feeble efforts (Ps 127:1).
 2. We ask for daily bread or bread day by day: we do not ask for riches to forget God (Pr 30:7-9).
 3. We ask for daily bread or bread day by day: patiently confessing our dependence on Him.
- H. We confess our sins and acknowledge our integrity and justice in forgiving others their sins.
 1. Confession of sins is an essential part of effectual prayer (Psalm 66:18; Pr 28:13; I John 1:9).
 2. This petition is a constant reminder of our duty to show mercy to others (Ps 18:25; Jas 2:13).
- I. We pray for delivery from temptation, thus owning our vulnerability and dependence on God.
 1. God has promised not to tempt us above our ability (I Cor 10:13), but we ask for mercy in it.
 2. Rightfully knowing our hearts, we will beg God for preserving strength (Romans 7:15-25).
 3. How can we possibly pray to be led away from temptation and then enter it ourselves, either by playing with sinful lusts or by creating unnecessary hardship by foolish choices in our lives?!
 4. Temptation and evil here are not only lusts to sin but rather trials and tribulations (I Chr 4:10).
- J. We may conclude our prayers with a doxology of praise of God's glory, kingdom, and power.
 1. We hereby acknowledge that God has the authority, the ability, and the honor of responding.
 2. The reason we have prayed – the reason we have prayed to our God – is that only He can help!
 3. Having submitted all to God, we close our prayers by affirming truth and agreement by "Amen."
- K. Prayer is not done without having treated others as we ourselves desire to be treated (Matt 6:14-15).
 1. The forgiveness we receive from God depends on our mercifulness toward others (Psalm 18:25)!
 2. The importance of this rule cannot be overstated. Forgive others, and then appeal to God by it.
 3. James taught the very same principle (James 2:13), and Hezekiah practiced it (Isaiah 38:1-6).
 4. If you receive no comfort from confession of sin, search your own heart for mercy to others.
 5. We have been forgiven much; be kind and quick to forgive others (Matt 18:23-35; Eph 4:32).

The Text Applied

- A. Be very cautious about volunteering for public prayer for the wrong reason – to be thought holy.
- B. Be very cautious when praying in public lest you think of your human audience more than of God.
- C. A more common error is the reluctance to pray in public, which is the fear of man in the face of God.
- D. Take simple precautions not to be seen in private prayer, and especially avoid any desire to be seen.
- E. Make sure you spend greater time in private prayer than with your family or others or in assemblies.
- F. Praying with the understanding warns against habitual prayers and memorized prayers (I Cor 14:15).
- G. There is a whole field of study in the Bible of holy reasoning in prayer by example (Gen 18:23-33).
- H. Paul made mention of things in prayer in order to pray for more objects; detailed explanations of circumstances is totally unnecessary: He knows (Rom 1:9; Eph 1:15-16; I Thess 1:2; Philemon 1:4)!
- I. Elaborating in detail about requests implies that you are speaking to your audience or informing God of the circumstances, but He wants you to know that He is already aware of them (Matt 6:8,32).

- J. The basic components of effectual prayer can be memorized and applied in general in each prayer.
1. Praise God. Prayer should include effort to ascribe greatness to our God, His Son, and His works.
 2. Confess sins. Prayer should include free and open confession of our sinfulness and specific sins.
 3. Thank God. Prayer should include thanksgiving for all God has done and prayers answered.
 4. Petition God. Prayer should include a humble request for those things that we need and desire.
 5. Acknowledge Christ. Prayer should include an appeal and trust in Jesus Christ's merit and name.
- K. The rules of effectual prayer summarize requirements for prayer to be effectual in the sight of God.
1. Pray obediently. Be righteous in conduct and fear God (James 5:16; Psalm 84:11; I John 3:22).
 2. Pray gloriously. Be quick to delight and glory in God (Psalm 37:4; Isaiah 58:14; Job 22:21).
 3. Pray boldly. Be aggressive with God as His dear children (Heb 4:16; Gen 18:27; II Kings 9:9).
 4. Pray fervently. Be sincere and very earnest in prayer (Luke 22:44; I Cor 7:5; Exodus 32:32).
 5. Pray faithfully. Be fully persuaded in God's ability (Hebrews 11:6; James 1:6-8; Matt 21:22).
 6. Pray persistently. Be patient and diligent to continue in prayer (I Thess 5:17; Luke 18:1-8).
 7. Pray intelligently. Be ready to reason and remind God (I Cor 14:13; Num 14:17-20; Jer 18:20).
 8. Pray submissively. Be submissive to God's will against yours (Matt 26:39; II Sam 12:22-23).
 9. Pray spiritually. Be in the Spirit and use scriptural prayers (Eph 6:18; Rom 8:26-27; Is 63:10).
 10. Pray actively. Be ready and willing to help yourself (Luke 4:12; Matt 7:7-8; II Samuel 15:31).

Conclusion:

1. Godly praying is not complex or difficult: the Spirit prays for those sincerely seeking God (Romans 8:26-27).
2. Godly praying is not complex or difficult: it is the primary action and exercise in our warfare (Eph 6:10-18).
3. Godly praying is not complex or difficult: it is the means of power for accomplishing great things (Jas 5:16).
4. The greater issue than how you pray is how often you pray, for everything is against you praying at all!
5. We have designated 2005 as a year to emphasize prayer, but we are already in May. Are you praying more?
6. Do you remember the sermons you heard at the beginning of this year about effectual prayer by several men?

For Further Study:

1. The sermon outline, "Effectual Prayer," is an extensive printed outline detailing many aspects of godly praying.
2. The sermon outline, "[Introduction to Effectual Prayer](#)," emphasizes the importance and value of personal prayer.
3. The sermon outline, "[Prayer Is a Priority](#)," teaches the importance of prayer as private spiritual communion with God.
4. The outline, "[Bible Guidelines for Effectual Prayer](#)," reviews ten rules for effective prayer with Bible examples.
5. The sermon outline, "[I Thessalonians 5:17](#)," emphasizes persistence and importunity in prayer.