



PRAYING THE LORD'S PRAYER

READ MATTHEW 6:5-13

In this passage of Scripture, Jesus is instructing His followers on how to pray. He begins by referencing some of the common practices of the day in which people were praying to get noticed. Prayer was being used as a sign of one's status before God instead of as a pathway to connect with God. In verses 9-13, Jesus offers His followers—and us—a model for how to pray when we come before God.

Worship (vv. 9-10)

Begin your prayer with a recognition of who God is. God is holy, set apart, and unique. God is the Creator, the sustainer of life, and the one in whom we find salvation. By starting with a recognition of who God is, we avoid the danger of our prayers becoming self-centered and self-righteous. When we give praise and glory to God first, we also begin to see how great and powerful God is compared to the situations and circumstances we are facing. Ultimately, we are inviting God to enter into our lives so we can see His will and His plan for them.

Petition (v. 11)

After giving praise and honor to God, we should express our immediate needs. Tell God what is most pressing for you today. What are the things that are making you anxious, fearful, or concerned? What are some situations others are facing that you

want to bring to God? Knowing how great and mighty God is, we should not be afraid of trusting that God can handle any situation or circumstance we are facing. There is no need to be scared or ashamed of our problems because God already knows our needs.

Confession and Forgiveness (v. 12)

Once we have placed our immediate needs in God's hands, we should examine our own lives for any sins or transgressions that we have committed toward others. Our time of prayer and vertical connection with God should always move us to consider our horizontal relationships with others. What have we done to break relationship with God, and what have we done to hinder our relationship with others? In addition, is there someone we should forgive who has hurt or wounded us?

Perseverance (v. 13)

Now that we have expressed our needs, confessed our sin, and forgiven others, we should ask God for the perseverance to continue walking in faith. We must be reliant on God for the strength to resist temptation and the privilege of watching as God overcomes evil. As we come before God and recognize His power, we should be convinced that we are reliant on that power to sustain us each and every day.