

GREG'S NOTES

A NEW BEGINNING TEACHING OUTLINES

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HOW TO AND HOW NOT TO PRAY

Matthew 6

We are all looking for certain things in life. We all have things that are important to us—things that we are looking for. God is looking for some things too. He is looking for lost people, true worshippers, spiritual fruit, for someone to stand in the gap and pray, and He is looking for intercessors. We have an incredible privilege called prayer, so why would we neglect it?

In Matthew 6, Jesus uses the Lord's Prayer to tell us how to pray, but in the verses preceding the Lord's Prayer, He shows us how not to pray.

PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES

1. **Don't pray to impress others.** Jesus says in Matthew 6:5, "And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men" (NKJV). The Pharisees, the religious elite, made prayer a performance—putting on a show for others to see. But God is not impressed. You can pray without thinking of God, but He doesn't hear prayers like that.
2. **Don't use prayer as an opportunity to boast.** Sometimes people use prayer to brag about what they have done for the Lord. Some use it as an opportunity to gossip about others, to impress people around them, or to make a show in public. But these are ways that we should not pray.
3. **In prayer, we should first give honor to God.** What does "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name" mean? It means honored be Your name. Set apart is Your name. It is acknowledging the greatness of God. To pray "hallowed be Your name" is to say, "Lord I want to set You apart in my life and character. I want to live a life that honors You."
4. **"Your kingdom come; Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."** This means I want the rule and reign of Jesus Christ in my life. What is the kingdom of God? It is a relationship with God. The primary objective of prayer is to first line up my will with the will of God. If you want to see your prayers answered in the affirmative, find out what the will of God is first and start praying that way.
5. **"Give us this day our daily bread."** It's an amazing thing but God Almighty, the Creator of Heaven and earth, cares about you and He cares about me. Notice it says, "Give me this day my daily bread." He didn't teach us to pray "give me this year my yearly bread." Or "give me this month my monthly bread." Or even "give me this week my weekly bread." Give me this day my daily bread. He keeps us dependent upon Him. He gives us what we need when we need it. Not usually before. Never after.

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RELEVANT REMINDERS

- The objective of prayer is not to change God, but for God to change us. We are not informing God, but inviting Him into our lives. Into our challenges. Into the things that we are dealing with.
- Prayer keeps us in touch with God. We are getting closer to God as we talk to Him. That is why we should pray.
- The Lord's Prayer shows us how to pray, how to bring our needs before God. We have needs. We have problems. We have questions. This is why we need to pray. Because prayer, among other things, is God's appointed way for us to obtain things. James 4:2 says, "You have not because you ask not" (KJV).

APPLICABLE ACTIONS

Maybe you wonder why you are wandering through life never knowing the will of God. Question: Have you prayed about it? You have not because you ask not. *Why is it that I have this illness, I have gone to doctors, and no one has been able to help me?* Have you prayed about it? Maybe you have not because you ask not. *Why is it that I have this financial problem and I can't seem to get on top of it? I have tried everything.* Have you actually prayed about it? I am not saying God will always heal you or always give you all of the money you think you need. I am saying that there is a place for asking the Lord to provide for our needs. Pray about it.