

STUDY GUIDE



TRANSFORMED
TRANSFORMED IN MY PRAYER
MATTHEW 6:9-15
09/18/2016

MAIN POINT

Prayer is grounded in a desire to honor God.

INTRODUCE

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What was one of the earliest prayers you learned as a kid?

What memorable prayer has God answered for you?

Perhaps the most well-known prayer is the one commonly called The Lord's Prayer. Even people with nominal faith will recite this prayer in times of distress or as an act of piety. As common as this prayer is, it may also be the most misunderstood prayer. People typically go to God simply because they need something, but the Model Prayer Jesus gave us does not begin with us and our needs; it begins with a focus on God and His glory.

WATCH THE SESSION 2 VIDEO.

READ AND REFLECT

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 6:9-10.

Who taught you what you know about prayer?

How would you define a healthy prayer life?

What do you find most difficult about the practice of prayer?

Jesus had just been teaching His disciples about the wrong way to pray in Matthew 6:5-8; then He turned to teach them about the right way to pray. Jesus began His instruction on prayer by teaching that prayer begins with a focus on the Person of God. Before we talk about our agenda, we should focus on praising God for who He is.

Where do you go when you need to pray?

How do you typically begin your prayers? What name do you most often use when you address the Lord?

Next Jesus taught us to pray about the program of God—His kingdom and His will. The kingdom of God is God's rule and reign in the hearts and lives of His people. The kingdom of God is a reality in heaven now and will be for all eternity.

What can help us keep a kingdom focus as we pray?

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 6:11-13.

What do you find yourself most often praying for?

Why do you think Jesus taught us to pray for daily bread rather than a pantry full of food?

We pray for physical needs. The phrase "daily bread" literally means we're to pray for perishable things, those things we need for that day. Jesus is not opposed to food that will keep for months, but the larger my stockpile, the easier it is for me to trust my possessions instead of the One who provided them in the first place. Forgiveness is another aspect of prayer. Confession is agreeing with God about the sin in our lives. By confessing, we're agreeing that we see the behavior as God sees it and that we are in need of His forgiveness and strength to break free from it. Finally, we pray for protection. Verse 13 is a request for protection, for the ability to stand strong in the face of temptation.

Respond to this statement: When we're centered on God's agenda, it'll change the way we pray as well as what we pray for.

How have your experiences with prayer influenced your ability to trust God?

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 6:14-15.

Given Jesus' warning in verse 15, how can we help each other grow in our ability to forgive?

The topic of forgiveness was so important to Jesus that, of all the things He taught in this Model Prayer, forgiving others was the only one He came back and explained further after the prayer ended. In verses 14-15, we're given a reason why we're to offer forgiveness to others. This doesn't mean God is unable to forgive. He is certainly willing and capable, but as long as we're unforgiving toward others, there's no room for God's forgiveness in our lives. We lack the capacity to receive His forgiveness.

Beyond just obeying God by confessing our sins to one another, what other benefits do you see this practice delivering?

What do these verses (along with verse 12) teach us about forgiveness?

When have you seen the power of forgiveness change lives?

APPLY

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How is prayer ultimately an act of trusting God? Are you trusting God, as seen in your prayer life?

What obstacles prevent you from praying every day? What will you do this week in order to remove those blockades?

For the next 21 days, intentionally begin your prayers with a focus on God and His kingdom. Do this until it becomes a habit.

PRAY

Pray silently and individually. Pray the Lord's Prayer in your heart, and entrust the Lord with the details of the rest of your week.

COMMENTARY

MATTHEW 6:9-15

6:9. By commanding His disciples to pray like this rather than simply "pray this," Jesus demonstrated that this prayer was offered as a model rather than to be recited (v. 9). Your name be honored as holy suggests that Jesus expected His disciples to live righteous lives that honor rather than profane God's name (5:16; Lev. 22:31-32). This is an important precondition for successful prayer. God is the ideal Father—all-loving, all-knowing, all-wise, all-powerful, and always present with us. At the same time, He is in heaven, which tells us He is greater than we can comprehend; so we approach Him as our Father with due reverence. Our implies that Jesus intended this prayer to be a model for prayer for when disciples gather as a group.

6:10. Your kingdom come (v. 10) could be translated "Your reign come." The kingdom has come in the hearts of all who have submitted to Jesus as Lord. It also is coming as more people yield their hearts to His reign. The kingdom will not have come fully, though, until Jesus returns and establishes it absolutely and forever. To pray for the Father to see that His will be done on earth as it is in heaven frightens some people. Heaven is the only place free of sin and its painful effects. We should daily pray for the future coming of God's rule in which He will reign fully and completely over the world.

6:11-13. In verse 11, the prayer's focus shifts from God's eternal purposes to our temporal needs. We are to request what we need to sustain life, such as daily bread. Daily may be understood as "for today" or "for tomorrow," in either case pointing to immediate need. This prayer reminds us that our Father is our Provider. As a wise father, God provides what we need, not necessarily what we want. We also are to ask for forgiveness. Debts are sins viewed as obligations to the Father. The Greek grammar indicates that the disciple prays for forgiveness from God only after having first expressed forgiveness to others. The final petition has puzzled many believers—Do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. We know God is good and does not tempt us to sin (James 1:13), so how are we to understand this? The overall meaning is obvious: the prayer is for the Father to keep us doing His will rather than being led astray by Satan.

6:14-15. These verses further exhort the kingdom servant concerning the necessity of forgiveness in human relationships if we expect God's forgiveness. These verses, and 18:21-35, explain 6:12. Receiving God's forgiveness motivates forgiveness toward others. Jesus expects us to replace this specific petition with more personalized requests for forgiveness for the specific sins in our own lives.