

Back to the Basics of Prayer

“There was a husband named Joe who was not a very romantic person, but he was willing to learn. So he wanted to impress his wife of his eagerness to try to be romantic, so he took her out for an anniversary dinner and watched the couples around them, following their leads.

In the restaurant everyone, including Joe and his wife, was served with a hot beverage. So Joe watched the couple next to him and heard the man lovingly say to his wife, “Pass the sugar, Sugar?”

Well Joe thought this was great and so he continued to listen around the dining room.

Another table over Joe observed how this husband romantically asked his wife, “Pass the honey, honey?”

Again Joe thought this was good stuff.

Finally, he decided to try this technique for himself and so he looked at his wife and said, “Pass the tea Bag.”

Now folks, how many of you guys would say that ol’ Joe there just messed up his relationship? Uh huh, slightly! I mean, praise God he was trying to make it better, but his behavior was messing it up, right? And folks, believe it or not, I see this same kind of thing happening to Christians all the time. And it’s not in their earthly marriage, but it’s in their spiritual marriage with Jesus Christ! And it’s not when we say, “Pass the tea bag.” It’s when we consider spending time with God a “**real drag.**”

And so the question is, “How in the world did it ever get that way? How did it ever become a drudgery to spend time with God, the Creator of the Universe? I mean, it didn’t start off that way, right? When we first got saved, we couldn’t wait to spend time with God, we longed for God, we really loved God, right? And so that’s the question is, “How did it ever get like that?” Well hey, thanks for asking! It works well with my notes. It’s simply this, this is what I’ve learned over the years. It’s when we **lose sight** of what we have in Jesus Christ and that is this...**a beautiful loving intimate personal relationship with the Creator of the Universe.**

And folks, I’m telling you, when we lose sight of that, all of a sudden, just like that, overnight, your once loving vibrant walk with Jesus Christ, just turned into dry, stale, stupid, boring, man-made religion called Churchianity. Not Christianity...Churchianity! You ever been there? Uh huh? It’s deadly folks! And the next thing you know you start crying out one of two things. “Help! I’m a Christian and I can’t grow up!” or “Help! I’m a Christian and I’m dead as a stump!” You ever been there? Yeah, it happens all the time, **unfortunately!**

Therefore, to stave off this deadly horrible disease called Churchianity, we’re going to begin a new study called, **Back to the Basics**. And what we’re going to do is **get back** to the real deal called Christianity,

you know, a beautiful loving intimate personal relationship with the Creator of the Universe! And so what we're going to do is **revisit all the Basics of Christianity** but this time, we're going to do it **through the eyes of a relationship**. And so hopefully we can recapture the **right motive** this time and **stay there**. So we'll never ever go back to Churchianity, that dry, stale, stupid, boring man-made religion! Amen? So let's get started.

The **first basic thing** of Christianity that we need to get reacquainted with through the eyes of a relationship is **The Basics of Prayer**. But don't take my word for it. Let's listen to God's.

Matthew 6:5-13 “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, Who is unseen. Then your Father, Who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

This, then, is how you should pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”

Now folks, right there according to our text, Jesus not only **assumed** we **would be praying** with the phrase there, when not if, but He also told us **how to pray** with both the positive and the negative. And the **first way** He

told us **not** to pray, the negative form, was like the religious hypocrites of His day that we're doing it only for show to impress other people. Or **two** like the pagans who were just babbling on and on and on thinking they were actually impressing God! Okay? He said no! Don't do that! **Why?** Because that's not a personal relationship with the Father. That's dry, stale, stupid, boring man-made religion and He didn't come for that? He did not die on the cross for a dumb boring religion! He died on the cross for a beautiful intimate relationship with His children.

And that's why He told us **secondly how to pray**. He said you're to do it as something intimate, and personal between you and the Father, **and** to be straight to the point and honest about it, right? You know, like it's a **relationship**? Hey, what a concept! But folks, let's be honest. For most of us, when it comes to prayer, we're always looking for the shortcut or flat out just have somebody else do it. Or if we have to do it, just hurry up and get it over with. Punch in our time clock and get on with life, right? That's what we think about prayer. But people, that's not what it is. Jesus said it's all about having a beautiful intimate form of communication with the Father, right? Why would you want to shortcut that!

Therefore, let's get **Back to Basics!** Let's revisit the topic of prayer, **but this time** through the eyes of a beautiful intimate loving personal

relationship with the Creator of the Universe! And let's dispel once for all this goofball thing called Churchianity!

And the **first basic question** we need to ask ourselves if we're going to dispel this goofball Churchianity stuff is, "**Why Do We Pray?**" Let's take a look.

Psalm 8:1,3-4 "O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him."

Now folks, can I simply translate what I believe the Psalmist is trying to say here in response to the question, "Why should we pray to God?" Let me see if I can be as blunt as I can. BECAUSE WHO IN THE WORLD WOULDN'T WANT TO! **Are you crazy!** Folks, when we consider the heavens and the work of God's fingers and how big He is, and how complex the universe is, who in the world wouldn't want to talk to Him, right? I mean, think about it, when we are praying to God Who in the world are we talking to? Not some rock star! Not some president! **But the Creator of the Universe!** Hello! And the fact that He's even mindful of us, let alone wants to spend time with us, isn't that mind-blowing? And that's what I think the Psalmist is trying to say! And since we don't get the full impact of what he's trying to say, let's put ourselves back in his position. Let's see just how big God is and the universe He made! This is incredible!

If a person were able to travel at the speed of light it would take them 8 ½ minutes just to reach the sun which is 93 millions miles away. But if they wanted to reach the nearest star it would take them 4 ½ years traveling at the speed of light. But that's nothing. If a person wanted to just make it across our galaxy, the Milky Way, it would take them 100,000 light years. That's just one galaxy! But even if they could travel at the speed of light, he'd still never make it because as you approach the speed of light, mass increases outwardly into infinity. Or in other words, you would physically begin to spread out and get bigger and bigger. And that's why one guy said that, "This is why you shouldn't let anyone call you fat. Just tell them you're traveling too fast!"

People, even if we wanted to try, it would still be **impossible to reach God!** But here's the great news. The Bible says that if we want to reach God then we don't need to go shooting off in a rocket to Him. No! We simply repent of our sins and He comes shooting down to us, **into our hearts.** And I have the privilege to speak to that God, the Creator of the Universe, as big as He is, Who at the same time not only upholds and sustains it, but He intimately knows every single hair on my head? And to think that He not only **died for me**, but **He loves me**, but He wants to **spend time with...me?**

What is man that You are mindful of him? Who in the world wouldn't want to pray to God, right?

And folks, I'm telling you, once you realize the full-impact of what it means to have a beautiful loving intimate personal relationship with the Creator of the Universe, it's kind of hard to be religious at that point, you know what I'm saying? I mean, who wants to hurry **that** conversation up, right? Who wants to make excuses for **that**? Who wants to look for shortcuts on **that** one, right? Are you kidding me? This is one-on-one time with the Creator of the Universe! And He wants to hear from **me!** That's what gets rid of this goofball Churchianity stuff!

But that's not all. The **second basic question** we need to ask ourselves if we're going to dispel this goofball Churchianity stuff is, "**What is Prayer?**"

Luke 6:12 "One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God."

Now folks, let's be honest. How many of us have ever done that? You know, spent a whole night praying to God? I mean, let's be honest, it sounds impossible doesn't it? Exactly! If you're suffering from Churchianity! But **not** if you understand what true prayer is. Folks, the word "prayer" comes from a couple of Greek words "euchomai" and "deesis." And if you put them together it means simply this, "to pray or ask for, to call

to one's aid." Or to put it in even simpler terms, **it's simply communication with God.** That's it! Nothing more, nothing less! You're just talking to God, letting Him know you're likes, your dislikes, your needs, etc. And you're doing it in high times, low times, whatever time it is, you're just talking to God in an open and honest communication, right? You know, like in a **normal conversation.**

And people, that's precisely the problem. Here's where this Churchianity stuff kicks in! For some reason, when we think of prayer, we think it's some mysterious religious thing that only the "super duper spiritual people" know how to do, over years and years of practice! Are you kidding me? That not what I see Jesus doing there. I don't see any indication in that text that He was engaged in some secret mysterious religious technique that He Alone had mastered with the Father over the years and too bad we didn't know! No! He simply **communicated** to God the Father, all night long, expressing his desires and thoughts, right? And folks, I'm telling you, in a nutshell that's what prayer is. Nothing more, Nothing less! It's just having a normal heartfelt conversation, just like you'd have with a friend, only your audience this time is with God! It's not that hard to figure out.

For instance, how many of you can talk? I mean, **really** talk? Now husbands, those of you who just looked at your wife, you're in big trouble

when you go home! Trust me! But seriously, if you can talk, guess what? You know how to pray! That's all it is folks! And as far as **staying up all night**...How many of you guys have ever stayed up most of the night with a good friend you haven't seen in awhile talking about old times? Well guess what? You got the ability to pray God all night long like Jesus did whether not you realize it or not.

But it goes even a step further. You see, I can **pray or communicate** with God whenever and wherever I go because He's with me wherever we go. And that's why the Bible says I can do this.

1 Thessalonians 5:17 “Pray continually.”

Now folks, let's be honest. This is another passage that is seemingly impossible, right? Not just praying **all night long** but now praying **all along**? Non-stop, all the time, continually? I mean how do you do that right? Well folks again, it's not that hard to understand if you understand what true prayer is. Remember, it's just simply communication with God whenever and wherever we go just like in a natural normal conversation. So that means, if I'm **at home** I can talk with Him. If I'm **driving down the road**, I can talk with Him. If I'm **at work**, I can talk with Him about anything and everything because He's with me wherever I go, right? And it's nothing **forced or phony**. It a natural and spontaneous conversation just like in a

normal relationship. You just talk about things in the natural course of the day as they naturally arise. It's spontaneous! That's praying continually! There's nothing mystical or magical about it at all!

In fact, when you understand what true prayer is, other passages of Scripture also start making sense!

Matthew 6:8 “Do not be like them, (i.e. don't pray like the pagans) for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.”

Now folks again, let's be honest. How many of you guys have ever asked yourself the question, “Wait a second. If God already knows what I need before I even ask Him, then **why do I need to pray to Him**,” right? Exactly! Well again folks, it's not that hard to understand if you understand what true prayer is. Remember, it's just simply communicating with God like in a normal relationship. **And here's the point.** Why do I need to pray to God is He already knows what I need before I even ask Him? Because you need communication for a healthy relationship, right? For instance, how would you guys **feel** if your spouse rarely or virtually never talked to you, like this guy?

“A husband and wife had recently had a huge argument and ended up not talking to each other for days. Finally, on the third day, the husband asked where one of his shirts was.

‘Oh,’ the wife said, ‘now you're speaking to me.’

The husband looked confused and then said, ‘What are you talking about?’

And his wife challenged him by saying, ‘Haven’t you noticed I haven’t spoken to you for three days?’

The husband replied, ‘No, I just thought we were getting along.’”

Now how many of you men can identify with that guy there? Uh huh! And ladies, how many of you can identify with that woman there? This seems to be a common scenario, right? **But here’s the point.** This silent business **is not good** for your relationship, is it? No! Of course not! So here’s the point. How much more damaging is this **silent treatment** to our relationship with God? This a lack of prayer? Because that’s all it is, communicating with God, right? I mean, think about it. If your spouse rarely if ever talked to you, how horrible would that make you feel? Then people, how horrible does it make **God feel** when we rarely talk to Him in prayer? Remember its a relationship. Or what if my wife considered it a **duty** to spend time with me and I knew it. What if I constantly heard her sarcastically say, “Oh boy, I have to spend time with him again” and I was aware of this. How would that make me feel? Then people, how does it make **God feel** when we do the same thing to Him?

“Why do we pray to God even though He already knows everything?” Because it’s all part of developing a **normal healthy relationship** just like in real marriage. And isn’t that what we’re supposed to have with God? And

when you realize this, it finally gets rid of this goofball Churchianity stuff, amen?

But that's not all. The **third basic question** we need to ask ourselves if we're going to dispel this goofball Churchianity stuff is "**How Do We Pray?**" Well, let's find out by going to our opening text again.

Matthew 6:5-13 "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

This, then, is how you should pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

Now folks, once again as we saw earlier, Jesus not only **assumed** we would be praying with the phrase there, when not if, but He also told us **how** to pray **effectively** and **intimately**, unlike the hypocrites and the pagans, right? So let's look at **how we're supposed to pray** by looking at how we're **not to pray**.

And the **first way** we **do not** pray to God is by **A Bunch of Flowery Words**. For instance, what if I were to communicate to my wife Brandie with a bunch a flowery words like these.

“Oh Brandeth, I loveth youeth. Thou arteth the cooleth wifeth I could ever haveth.”

Or how about these.

“Hail Brandie, full of grace. Wife of Billy, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among wives.”

Now folks, that was pretty goofy, wasn’t it? But people, how goofy is it when we do that in prayer to God? I mean, do we actually think we can impress God by **a bunch of flowery words**? In fact, didn’t Jesus say **to NOT do that?**

Matthew 6:5 “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men.”

In other words, **stop using flowery words** to impress people, let alone God! Why? Because that’s not prayer to God! That’s a bunch of dry, stale, stupid, boring religion stuff! And besides, if I really did speak to my wife like that, it would kind of inhibit our relationship, wouldn’t it? Therefore, here’s the point. How much more is it going to inhibit our relationship with God?

But that's not all. The **second way** we **do not** pray to God is by **A Rapid Marathon of Words**. For instance, what if I were to speak to my wife like this as fast as I can. Ready, go!

"Hi-Brandie-I'm-glad-to-be-home-it's-great-to-see-you-and-I-just-wanted-to-let-you-know-that-you-are-the-most-incredible-women-in-the-world-and-I-can-never-even-think-of-living-a-day-with-out-you-and-oh-by-the-way-what's-for-supper?"

Now folks, that was pretty goofy, wasn't it? But people, how goofy is it when we do that in prayer to God? I mean, do we actually think we can impress God by our **fast and furious words**, our rapid fire? And besides, if I only spoke to my wife by cramming in as many words as fast as I can in the shortest amount of time, then wouldn't this be saying that she's not important enough to take **quality time** to speak with her? Then people, what kind of a message are we sending to God when we do that to Him in prayer? Especially after Jesus said **to NOT to!**

Matthew 6:7 "And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words."

Folks, when we cram in as many words as fast as possible in the shortest amount of time with God, what in the world do you think we're doing? We're babbling on and on and on with God, just like the pagans! And that's bad enough that we're going on and on and on, but half the time it's completely mindless! We don't even know what we're saying. And as John

MacArthur says, you need to realize that, “**Mindless prayer is offensive to God!**” Why? Because we have a relationship with God and how would you like somebody to talk like that to you?

But that’s not all. The **third way we do not pray to God** is by **A List or Formula of Words**. For instance, what if I were to communicate to my wife like this. Hit it!

“Oh Brandie, I adore you. You are the greatest wife in the world.”

Okay, step two. “Oh Brandie, I confess that I’m an unworthy husband. How you could love me is beyond my comprehension.”

Um, oh yeah. “Oh Brandie, I thank you for all that you have done and for being the best wife ever.”

Uh, step four. “Oh Brandie, I humbly ask that you would provide a morsel of cow for me. And lead me not unto temptation, but deliver me from chicken!”

Now folks, that was pretty crazy, wasn’t it? But people, how much more crazy is it when we do that in prayer to God? I mean, do we actually think we can impress God by our **religious formulas** and spiritual lists? Especially when Jesus taught us to **pray like this!**

Matthew 6:9-13 “This, then, is how you should pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”

Now folks, have you ever noticed the **length** of that prayer? It’s really not that long is it? Just a couple of verses? Short and straight to the point,

right? Now isn't it funny how we will take this short and straight to the point prayer from Jesus and then turn it around into a giant lengthy formula that we can now only pray back to Jesus? That's crazy, isn't it? And besides, if I we're to actually speak to my wife that way, with a formula, step-by-step, totally rehearsed, that would kind of ruin the spontaneity in our relationship, right? So therefore, how much more is it going to ruin our spontaneity in our relationship with God? You starting to get the picture? People have we forgotten we have a relationship with God?

You see folks, the words we may be using when praying to God may be valid, but the **form of communication** can be very shallow, impersonal, dry, stale, stupid, boring, and we wonder why we suffer from Churchianity? Folks, it's high time we get back to personal, loving, intimate prayer, with God. Why? Because I don't think it's by chance that the world considers Christianity, "just another religion on the planet." How can they arrive at this faulty assumption? Maybe it's because we in the Church are treating it like one in how we pray. And maybe this is why revival's not coming to our land. Maybe it's not just **a lack of prayer**, maybe it's a lack of **personal prayer from the heart**. Oh, that we would get **Back to Basics** and pray to God like we really should, like what Jesus Christ really came and died on the

cross for. **A beautiful loving intimate personal relationship with the Creator of the Universe.**

And people that's why I've got good news for you today. If you're reading this and you're suffering from this horrible wretched disease called Churchianity and prayer to you has become something dry, stale, stupid, and boring, it doesn't have to be this way! You see, sometimes before you can move forward in your walk with Jesus Christ, you just need to get **Back to the Basics, the Basics of Real Prayer.** A beautiful loving intimate personal conversation with God, the Creator of the Universe! Nothing more. Nothing less. Amen?

To find the way to God, to understand the *truth* of God's Word, and to received the gift of eternal *life*, begin by repentance and faith through a prayer like this:

“Dear God, I understand that I have broken Your Law and sinned against You. Please forgive my sins. Thank You that Jesus suffered on the cross in my place. I now place my trust in Him as My Savior and Lord. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.”
