

The Practice of Prayer
Matthew 6:5-14 / Luke 11:1-13
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There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem. (Luke 2:36-38)

Then people brought little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. (Matthew 19:13a)

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. (Mark 1:35)

My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me... “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.” (John 17:20-21, 24)

But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed. (Luke 5:16)

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

On reaching the place, he said to them, “Pray that you will not fall into temptation.” He withdrew about a stone’s throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.” An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

When he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, he found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow. “Why are you sleeping?” he asked them. “Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation.” (Luke 22:40-46)

Prayer helps us keep a proper perspective.

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.” (Luke 11:1)

I. There are pitfalls to avoid when practicing prayer.

a. Praying to impress others. (Matthew 6:5-6)

b. Praying with rote repetition. (Matthew 6:7)

“These people honor me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me.
They worship me in vain;
their teachings are merely human rules.’ (Matthew 15:8-9)

c. Praying to “inform” God (or worse, other people) (Mt. 6:8)

d. Praying with wrong motivations. (James 4:1-3)

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don’t get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. (James 4:1-3)

**II. Jesus gives us guidelines to remind us of the appropriate components of prayer.
(Matthew 6:9-13)**

“Our –

Father

in heaven,

hallowed be

“...in your hearts set Christ apart as Lord...” (1 Peter 3:15)

Your name,

“Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what shall I tell them?”
God said to Moses, “I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I am has sent me to you.’” (Exodus 3:13-14)

... the Lord came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the Lord. And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished... (Exodus 34:5-7)

Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Keep falsehood and lies far from me;
give me neither poverty nor riches,
but give me only my daily bread.
Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, ‘Who is the Lord?’
Or I may become poor and steal,
and so dishonor the name of my God. (Proverbs 30:8-9)

Forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. The commandments, “Do not commit adultery,” “Do not murder,” “Do not steal,” “Do not covet,” and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” (Romans 13:8-9)

The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. (1 Peter 4:7-8)

And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil (or better: the evil one).

When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. (James 1:13-14)

So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall! No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. (1 Corinthians 10:12-13)

Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. (Hebrews 2:18)

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. (Hebrews 4:15)

Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. (1 Peter 5:8)

Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. (James 1:12)

III. God rewards those who persistently seek Him with the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Luke 11:5-13)