

# Study Guide



## The School of Prayer

Matthew 6:5-13

### Main Idea

Prayer is based on the gospel seeking God's glory which brings us joy.

### Overview

#### **I. Why Do we Pray?**

- Prayer is Expected
  - Three times (vv. 5, 6, 7) we see Jesus say, "When you pray"
  - Jesus assumes that those who follow after him pray
  - True faith is inseparable from prayer
- Prayer is Commanded
  - Prayer is expected because it is commanded – "Pray then like this..." (v. 9)
  - Prayer is not just a matter of maturity but of obedience
- Prayer is Rewarded
  - God only commands those things that are for our good
  - Because God commands prayer it is for our good
  - We are rewarded in prayer with God himself (v. 6)

#### **II. How We Should NOT Pray**

- Pridefully trying to impress others (v. 5)
- Thoughtlessly trying to manipulate God (v. 7)
  - We don't pray just to get things from God because he already knows what we need
  - Therefore, prayer must be about something other than our immediate needs

#### **II. How We Should Pray**

- By faith
  - Whereas the hypocrites pray for public gain, true disciples pray with personal piety, with faith in the Father
  - The Father is not there physically, but meets us spiritually – this is an act of faith
  - By faith in the Son of God that we might call God "Abba, Father"
  - We approach God and call him Father not based on our merit, but based on the work of Jesus for us
- The Trinity in Prayer
  - The Son and the Spirit work together to bring the prayers of God's people before God himself
  - God the Father not only welcomes my prayers, but ensures they are heard
  - He sent his Son to purchase my prayers and sent his Spirit to indwell me to shape the very words of my prayers

### III. What Should We Pray

- The Lord's Prayer is a guide to follow not a mantra to mechanically repeat (though repeating it is not bad)
- The Lord's Prayer is composed of 6 different petitions:
  - (1) Hallowed be your name; (2) Your kingdom come; (3) Your will be done; (4) Give us this day our daily bread; (5) Forgives us our debts; (6) Lead us not to temptation.
- The hallowing of God's name, the first petition, is the ultimate end in all of creation and the other 5 petitions serve this purpose.
  - God's name is hallowed as his kingdom advances and expands. God's name is hallowed as his people joyfully perform his will. God's name is hallowed as we humbly depend upon his providence to meet our daily needs. God's name is hallowed as we completely trust in his forgiving grace and mercy. God's name is hallowed as we wholly rely upon his sin defeating strength.

### IV. Conclusion

- God-size, God-centered prayer fuels your very created purpose.
- When we put ourselves at the center of our prayers, our lives shrink – self-centered prayers radically shrink our hopes, dreams, desires, and feelings down to the finite borders of our own life.
- We were made to hallow God's name – that's where we find utmost joy and how God gets ultimate glory.
- Our prayers were made to swim in the ocean of God's glory don't confine them to the fishbowl of your life.

### Questions

*Discussion Starter: How did you learn to pray? OR What are some clichés that we hear regarding prayer, maybe even some we use in our own life?*

1. Read Matthew 6:5-8. Who is Jesus talking to here (cf. Matthew 5:1). What is the significance of Jesus saying "when you pray" not "if you pray?" What does this tell us about the relationship between true faith and prayer?
2. In verse 9, Jesus commands us to pray. Because God's commands always lead to our good, in verse 6, we see that there is a reward for prayer. What is the reward NOT? What is the reward?
3. "Just as true faith produces prayer, true prayer increases faith." How does prayer increase faith?
4. According to these verses (vv. 5-8) what are the wrong motives of the heart to pray? How might these motives manifest themselves in your life?
5. Re-read verse 8. If God already knows what we need, then we do we even pray in the first place?
6. Read verses 9-13. Jesus tells us to pray to "our Father." How is it that we, sinful, finite creatures can call the holy, eternal God, "Father?"
7. Why do we pray "in the name of Jesus" (cf. John 15:16; 16:23)?
8. How do we see all the persons of the Trinity working in our prayer life? How does this transform your understanding of prayer?
9. The Lord's Prayer is made up of 6 petitions. The first one is "hallowed be your name." What does it mean to pray for God to "hallow" his name? (\*\*Remember this is not just expressive, but a petition for God to cause his name to be exalted/treasured/worshiped, etc.)
10. How do the other 5 petitions serve the first?
11. How would your prayer life be different if your prayers followed the pattern of the Lord's prayer?
12. What's the significance that the prayer does not focus on our needs until the third petition?
13. What are some practices that you have found helpful in your own prayer life?

*Discussion Starter: Based on this sermon, is there a certain aspect of your prayer life that needs to change? What is one tangible thing you can do to make your prayers more God-sized and God-centered?*