Foundations For Your Faith – Lesson 5  Matthew 6:5-15  NIV
Foundations of Prayer

Read Matthew 6:5-15 carefully, several times, and then answer the following questions from the verses as noted.

Matthew 6:5  What group did Jesus have in mind when he spoke of “the hypocrites”?  
(See also Matt. 23:13-23 and Luke 18:9-14)

What does it mean to be a “hypocrite”?  
Explain some ways we can fall into this trap?  
Did these people enjoy praying?  Why?  
Did they get what they wanted from praying?

Matthew 6:6  Is praying out loud in public gatherings wrong?  
Did Jesus forbid public prayer?  
Why did Jesus promote “private prayer” so highly?

Matthew 6:7  What is a “pagan”? How are “pagans’ different from “hypocrites”?  
What does Jesus mean by “babblings” & many words”?  (KJV: vain repetitions)  
Explain some ways we can fall into this trap?  
How can we avoid this problem?

Summarize the two main points Jesus made in verses 5-7.  
1  
2  

Matthew 6:8  What are we to remember as we begin praying?  
If God knows what we need, and He loves us, why do we need to bother asking?  
Is asking even necessary?  James 4:2-3; 1 John 5:14-15;  Psalm 66:18  
Does God answer everyone’s prayers?  
Is God obligated to answer anyone’s prayers?

Matthew 6:9-15  Summarize the main points in this model prayer  
Should I be praying this prayer regularly?  Why or why not?  
How can I implement this prayer guide personally?
1. What 2 groups of people did Jesus single out as negative examples of how not to pray? (The words used to designate each group)

2. Describe the error Jesus described that characterized each group.

3. The term Jesus used to describe the first group he rebuked, also referred to an occupation or profession of the day. What was it, and how did it fit the prayer problem Jesus was addressing?

4. Give the three answers that God may give to us in responding to our prayers.

5. How can we be certain that God will answer “yes” to our prayers?
   1 John 5:14-15

6. List the three things that cause God to refuse to give us what we are asking, as described in the passages listed below.

   ____________________________ James 4:2-3

   ____________________________ 1 Peter 3:7

   ____________________________ Psalm 66:18
Teacher’s Guide  Foundations For Your Faith – Lesson 5  NIV
Matthew 6:5-15  Foundations of Prayer

Read Matthew 6:5-15 carefully, several times, and then answer the following questions from the verses as noted.

Matthew 6:5  What group did Jesus have in mind when he spoke of “the hypocrites”? (See also Matt. 23:13-23 and Luke 18:9-14)

Pharisees – ultra conservative religious right – very sincere, very “biblical”

*What does it mean to be a “hypocrite”?*
Someone who pretends to be something they aren’t.
φάν ἸΣΤΟΝ one who is playing a role, trying to act out a part if not real
ὑποκρίτης = actor
Hypocrite = The truth hidden under a mask; an actor.
"When you pray don’t be as the actors are."
Used today as two-faced! The word today is used in the negative.

"When you give, give discreetly; when you pray, pray privately!"
Playing a religious role, faking fervency, faking faith if covering up the real them under the mask

*Explain some ways we can fall into this trap?*

*Playing church, saying prayers, being pious at church and godless at home*
Being two faced, sounding spiritual around believers, but being profane at home.
Watching our words so we get the approval of others.
Crafting our prayers so we say what others want us to say!
Home is where the real you lives!
Let me see your daytimer, your checkbook, and talk to your kids. That’s the real you!

*Did these people enjoy praying?  Oh yes!! They loved the audience!*  
Why? To get the approval of men! “That was such a wonderful prayer!”
To attract attention and bring honor to themselves.
They wanted to put themselves on display.
Self-centered; Their prayers went no higher than the crowd. "They loved to pray."

*Did they get what they wanted from praying?  Yes! Men’s approval!*
They weren’t interested in getting God’s attention if just men’s.

Matthew 6:6  Is praying out loud in public gatherings wrong? Did Jesus forbid public prayer?  NO. But if public prayer is all we do, it is hypocritical! Public prayer is to be but the smallest part of our practice of prayer.
Why did Jesus promote “private prayer” so highly?
Jesus says, "When you pray." It is expected... Not "if" you pray.
Prayer is the result of a new birth; just as the cry is of a baby is evidence of a live birth.
Rom. 8:15 Abba = "Daddy"

Sincerity based on its secrecy—private prayer is, by nature, more sincere.

How does this contrast with the hypocrites type of praying?
Although there was nothing wrong with standing and praying in the synagogues and nothing wrong with praying in public, the hypocrites used these places because there were many people there that could see and hear them.

Jesus says find a place of private where there in no temptation to be seen and heard, and where you will not be on display.

The location was not the point here but the attitude.
Find a secluded place, shut the door, and close out all distractions so one can concentrate on God and pray to Him and Him alone.

**Focus on God and not ourselves!**

Luke 18:9-14 Pharisee talked to himself; the other to God. See also Rom.10:4
First great theological error! “I am not as other men!
Second great theological error: “My efforts make me acceptable to God”

Publican” not allowed near – an outcast, a defiled person
".... be merciful; be my propitiation; impute your righteousness to me"......

Matthew 6:7 What is a “pagan”?
- Pagans do not have the knowledge of the true God.
- They worship false gods of their own making.

**How are “pagans’ different from “hypocrites”?**
- Pagans worship false gods fervently!
- Hypocrites falsely worship the true God
- Both are using prayer as a means to a selfish end.

**Hypocrites use prayer as a means of self-glorification.**

**Pagans use prayer as a means of self-gratification.**
What does Jesus mean by “babblings” & many words”? (KJV: vain repetitions)
The mindless repetition of formal prayers. Thinking they will get God to come through if they just keep saying the right words enough times! It is possible to have the true knowledge of God and yet not be affected by that truth. Saying prayers vs. praying.

There is a difference between a conversation and an answering machine. One is a living conversation; the other a mere recording of saying words.

Jesus is not forbidding the repetition of genuine requests. Honest, properly motivated repetition of needs or praise is not wrong.

Mindless, indifferent recital of spiritual-sounding chanting of words is wrong.

Explain some ways we can fall into this trap?
Saying prayers instead of praying. Falling into the trap of memorized words and phrases that we no longer think about! Using the word “Lord” or “Father” every other word. Neglecting the heart and the focus of our faith!

How can we avoid this problem?
THINK! Think before you pray. Mean it! Pause and be sincere.

Summarize the two main points Jesus made in verses 5-7.
1 Don’t pray to be applauded by men
2 Don’t look for magic words to get God to do your thing!

Matthew 6:8 What are we to remember as we begin praying?
• God knows our needs! He doesn’t need us to inform Him!
• God cares! He doesn’t need to be coerced into action! He is your Father!

If God knows what we need, and He loves us, why do we need to bother asking?
• God’s purpose in prayer is not for us to inform or persuade Him to respond to our needs, but to open sincere and continual lines of communication with Him.
• He wants to hear and commune with us because of His love for us.
• He knows we need to remain dependent on Him or we will fail!
• He loves us wants the relationship. And relationship is only possible with time spent in communication.

Is asking even necessary? James 4:2-3; 1 John 5:14-15; Psalm 66:18
Yes. It is. God has joined His response to our prayers in some mysterious yet real way.
1) to maintain a relationship - communication is essential. **Distant**
2) to learn dependence - not have an **independent** spirit; pride; arrogance.
3) to build confidence - continual communion creates confidence to face difficult situations.
4) to recognize blessings - we then become unthankful if we do not recognize His answers

Shortest prayer in the Bible = "Lord save me!" Sincere; immediate; affirmatively. Matt. 14:30

What will keep God from answering "yes" to what we ask?
- James 4:2-3 Wrong motives
- 1Peter 3:7 Wrong relationships – wrong attitudes in my heart
- Psalm 66:18 Unconfessed and unrepented of sin
- Matt. 5:8 That which would not be for our best.

"You will have the will of God, if the will of God means everything!"
"You will have time for everything, if the will of God means everything!"

**Does God answer everyone's prayers?**

**He may – that's His prerogative.**

**But He has promised to answer the believer!**

The believer will always be answered!

Yes, No, or Wait

**Is God obligated to answer anyone's prayers?**

Yes, since He made a promise to answer the prayers of His own.

He is only self-obligated to answer our prayers because He has promised to do so!

He will answer according to His will..... I John 5:14

Spurgeon: "God's delays are not God's denials!"

It is important to ask according to His will!

God's will = Christlikeness; fruit of the Spirit...

Prayers of Paul in the epistles. Great patterns for our prayer life.

**Are there areas in our lives that we don't know the will of God?**

When it comes to morals, God has already spoken! These are known & revealed.
I do not have to pray whether to obey the moral commands, but for strength to obey.

Daily decisions that we are faced with, in areas that are not moral situations, there are principles to bring to bear on the decisions.
There are situations when it does not matter to God what coat you wear, color socks. It matters why you wear it! It needs to be modest. It needs to be for His glory. But you have freedom to exercise your own desires in areas that are not covered in commandments.

**Example: Marriage? Must be to a believer. Must be equally yoked.**
The question in marriage is not "are you choosing the right person, but are you going to be the right person." God is far more interested in you being the right mate than He is in you picking the right mate.

In the OT people did not address God as "Father."
This was not in their thinking!

Being a "child" of God was accepted in some sense, but not a personal relationship.

**Matthew 6:9-15  Summarize the main points in this model prayer**

1) **Worship** - "Our Father"
   
   There must be a personal relationship before we can worship Him.
   This indicates relationship, community, and intimacy
   "In heaven" this indicates sovereignty, omniscience, omnipotence

2) **Reverence** - "hallowed" revered, regard with respect; to stand in awe of
   Who He is and what He has done for us.

3) **Desire His kingdom with all our hearts.** All His covenant promises to us will be fulfilled.
   To be God focused, kingdom focused not self focused

4) **His will be accomplished on earth as it is being accomplished in Heaven.**
   In my life and in all that takes place on this earth; fully and willingly.
   Again i God's will is central here i not my will

   The purpose of prayer is not to get God to do my will, but for God to so work in my life that I do His will eagerly and completely

5) **Petition; bread sufficient for the day. One day! Today!** Not tomorrow, next week, next year, next decade, next generation...

6) **Requests for spiritual needs (forgiveness).**
   I must already have forgiven those who offended me, realizing that I have been forgiven.
   Eph. 4:32
   Forgiven - Positionally (standing) on the ledger
   Forgiven - Daily relationship (state) in my life
   This issue of personal forgiveness is repeated again after the prayer. This is a prayer about my relationship with God first, and also my relationships with others.

   “as I forgive” --- WOW!
As soon as, as fully as, as willingly as, as complete as, as permanently as... as I forgive!!! God is not in a box! He deals with every area of my life!

7) Recognize my spiritual weaknesses.
I am tempted, I need direction and deliverance

a. Father - relationship
b. In heaven - He rules
c. Your Name is holy - His priorities
d. Your kingdom come - His will, His promises
e. My physical needs - daily bread
f. My spiritual needs - forgiveness and being forgiven
g. Lead us not - direction - I need to follow God - I need direction
h. Into temptation - deliverance from the Evil One - I have an enemy
i. Yours is the kingdom, power and glory - confession of confidence & desire

Should I be praying this prayer regularly? Why or why not?
Not as a substitute for prayer!
But I am free to use any portion of scripture in my prayer life.
But it must not degenerate into a formal repetition of words without heart or mind involved.
Verse 7 warns: Do not pray as the pagans do. Even this could become such.

How can I implement this prayer guide personally?
It is not a substitute for our prayers; but a guide for them.
A pattern; as a structure for our prayers.
Not mentioned or repeated in the epistles. Not used by Paul as a frequent form. But the focus is still used. We should have it memorized so we can meditate on its truths as we formulate our thoughts for prayer.

This prayer is a model to give us direction to our own praise, adoration, and petitions.

Consider the relationships this prayer unfolds.....

"Our Father" - Father/child relationship

"hallowed be thy name" - Deity/worshipper

"Thy kingdom come" - Sovereign/subject

"Thy will be done" - Master/servant

"give us this day our daily bread" - Benefactor/beneficiary

"forgive us our debts" - Savior/sinner

"do not lead us into temptation" - Guide/pilgrim
Consider the attitude that unfolds in this model prayer

"Our" - unselfishness
"Father" - family connection, relationship and responsibility
"hallowed be thy name" - reverence
"Thy kingdom come" - loyalty
"Thy will be done" - submission
"give us this day our daily bread" - dependence
"forgive us our debts" - penitence
"as we forgive" - forgiveness, charity
"do not lead us into temptation" - humility
"Thine is the kingdom" - triumph
"and the glory" - exultation
"forever" - hope

_the two-fold reality of God's glory and our needs_

It also shows the three-fold purpose of prayer
- To hallow God's name,
- usher in His kingdom,
- and to do His will.

_It details…_
- _our present provision (daily bread),_
- _past pardon (forgiveness of sins),_
- _and future protection (safety from temptation)_