

Sermon on the Mount
Christian Prayer
Matthew 6:7-15

God saves us for communion with Him, and one of the essential ingredients in that communion with God is prayer. Individually, we can fake religious stuff for appearances. We can read our Bibles without really thinking about the words and check the box that makes us feel good about reading our Bibles. We can go through the motions of going to church and writing tithe checks simply out of habit and routine. But do you know what you can't fake? Do you know what can never really be routine? True, Christian prayer.

1. Christian prayer to the one, true God is distinctly different from those who do not know Him.
2. Christian prayer acknowledges the sanctity of God's will, rule, and will.
3. Christian prayer demonstrates a day-to-day material, spiritual, and moral dependence on God.

Jesus took the time to teach His disciples to pray this way because it sets our mind on things above where Christ is. It helps us remember that God loves His children with the most tender affection, that He sees us in our secret places, He knows what we need before we even ask Him, and He acts on our behalf and for our good by His heavenly and kingly power. If we allow Scripture to form our view God, we will never pray with hypocrisy but always with integrity, never mechanically but always thoughtfully, which is exactly what Jesus wants of us.

Reflection

Take some time to think about your prayer life. Are there ways in which you use vain repetitions, maybe without even realizing it? It is a challenging question, but if someone were to ask you why pray when God already knows your need, what would your response be? What do you think the Lord's prayer teaches us about the nature of the God we address? Why do think Jesus uses the adjective daily when talking about bread? Most importantly, why is God's forgiveness of us dependent on our forgiving others? Can you think of anyone against whom you harbor bitterness or resentment? How do you justify that grudge in light of Matthew 6:14-15? What steps do you need to take to truly repent of a heart that is unwilling to forgive?