

LIVING BY FAITH



BEGINNING YOUR WALK
AS A NEW BELIEVER

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The following sample is from the print version of Living by Faith.

Who are the heathen?

Why do they use vain repetitions in prayer?

Often Jesus referred to the Pharisees as hypocrites in the Bible. We see in these verses once again that they were seeking to glorify themselves by being seen praying in front of others. They wanted others to see how holy they thought that they were. God says that they have their reward meaning that they are not rewarded by Him but by the feeling they had toward self in their actions.

The Bible tells us that we are to enter into our closet when we pray to the Father. We are to pray to the Father to spend time with Him alone. This does not mean that we should not pray with others. We simply should not be praying to be “seen” by others. God will hear our prayer and reward us for spending time alone with Him.

These verses bring up a very important aspect of prayer that is often misunderstood. Some religious groups believe that it is necessary to say a particular prayer or saying it over and over again in order for God to hear them. We see that God refers to the heathen and their vain repetitions. The heathen refers to those that have not heard the Gospel and accepted Christ. We were once in this group but are not their betters. We know that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

The Guidelines for Prayer

Read Matthew 6:9-15 and John 16:23-24.

This section of the book of Matthew is a wonderful guideline that Jesus gives us on how we are to pray. It is not a specific prayer for us to pray but the format in which we should address Him. We know this by reading the beginning of Matthew 6:9 (Words of Jesus):

After this "manner" therefore pray ye

Let's break down the components of prayer according to our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. We acknowledge God with reverence of His position in our lives.

...Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. - Matthew 6:9

2. We praise Him for bringing Jesus Christ into our lives. There will be a time when Jesus will come again and establish his kingdom on earth.

Thy kingdom come... - Matthew 6:10

3. It is important for us to understand and pray that God's will be done in our lives. God is the one who is in control and He knows what is best for us.

...Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. - Matthew 6:10

4. Although God is aware of our needs, we are to ask Him to supply our needs. We should also give thanks for all that He has provided for us.

Give us this day our daily bread. - Matthew 6:11

5. If we have done anything displeasing unto the Lord, we are to ask for His forgiveness. It is required that we also forgive others that have done wrong to us for the Lord to forgive us.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. - Matthew 6:12

For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. - Matthew 6:14-15.

6. God is our protector and He can keep us away from temptation and sin. We are to ask for His help to live our daily lives acceptable in His eyes. This also allows others to see Christ in us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:... - Matthew 6:13

7. Jesus tells us that we are to praise the Father again as we close our prayer.

...For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.-
Matthew 6:13

8. There is one final requirement to the closing of your prayer as seen in the book of John. Jesus tells us that we are to ask the Father in His name. For instance, you could say, "I ask these things in Jesus name. Amen."

...Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. - John 16:23-24

Do not be overwhelmed by these guidelines. It can be simply broken down into the following components:

- Praise for God
- Thanks to God
- Seeking forgiveness from God
- Asking for our needs and those of others
- Asking in Jesus' name

Body Posture for Prayer

Another confusing aspect of prayer to a new believer is how we are to hold our hands or bow before God when we talk with Him. We have seen in this chapter that the publican bowed his head down when He spoke with God in Luke 18:13.

When we go to God privately in prayer, we can take our direction from the actions of Jesus.

Read Luke 22:39-42.

In this passage of Scripture we see that Jesus separated himself from his disciples to go pray alone. He kneeled before God in prayer. Kneeling is a form of giving God reverence. We can also stand when we pray as Jesus tells us in the book of Mark.

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