



## *The Lord's Prayer* - Matthew 6:5-15

Much can be unpacked from the text of the Lord's Prayer, yet for our purposes here, it may be more productive to focus on the context in which we find this prayer of our Lord within the larger Sermon on the Mount. Once again Jesus is pushing back on those who would use the practice of their faith in God as a performance for others.

This may come as good news for many Christians for whom public prayer is utterly

nerve-racking. While there is nothing wrong with leading prayer in public, doing so in order to be admired or as a performance of your own personal righteousness confuses the heart of what prayer is all about. Corporate prayer seeks to unite those joining together in prayer with one another and their Creator.

Not only does Jesus recommend that our prayer life be primarily a private matter, but He goes on to provide a blueprint that we can utilize. The Lord's Prayer is in many ways a simple prayer, though certainly not a simplistic prayer. There are both great depths in the petitions of the Lord's Prayer that take a true lifetime to mine, yet to Jesus' point in verse 7, the prayer does not heap up empty phrases for the purpose of sounding spiritual. The Lord's Prayer is a model of an intimate prayer to our God. In the words of this prayer, Jesus instructs us on those things in which we ought to seek alignment with our Heavenly Father. In the petitions of this prayer, we are often called upon to allow God to manifest His will and kingdom in our lives. As much as we are asking things of God, there is greater wisdom in focusing more on what God is doing in us through this prayer, than in the "things" we are asking God for.

As a model prayer, the Lord's Prayer is both helpful to pray corporately with the very words of Jesus, as well as adapting the content of the prayer privately to contextualize the petitions to our own lives.

## *Thoughts for Reflection*

How has the Lord's Prayer been a part of your discipleship journey both corporately and privately?

5 "And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 6 But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

7 "And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.