



# Basic Principles of Prayer

*Matthew 6:5-13*

Prayer is essential to our daily Christian life. This is the vehicle that connects our spirit into the presence of God where we received strengthening, encouragement, and power for living. But we have to understand that even though all prayers are therapeutic in nature, the only prayer that is effective and acceptable to God is the prayer prayed in a biblical framework. To help us pray in a Biblical Perspective, it is very important that we should explore the prayers that Jesus taught His Disciples in Matthew 6:5-13 (***Read the Text***).

When Jesus taught His Disciples this prayer, He did not tell them that they should memorize and use it every time they pray. Jesus is not teaching us here a pattern of prayer. Nowhere in the Bible could we find that Jesus taught us a pattern of Prayer.

There are many prayers in the Bible prayed by different individuals including Jesus Christ. Yet none of the prayers followed a certain universal pattern. Every prayer is unique in its own. Let's take for example two prayers prayed by Jesus Christ. The first one is in the book of **Matthew 26**, which covered just two verses (**39, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."** **42 "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done."**), and the second one is in the book of **John 17** covering the whole chapter where Jesus prayed for himself for His disciples and for those who will accept the teachings of his Disciples. We can see in these two prayers, that one is a very short prayer while the other one is a very long prayer. Yet both prayers are very touching, heart-warming, intense, and effective. These prayers are not born out of a pattern but out of the need of the hour.

***The prayer in Matthew 6:5-13 that Jesus taught his Disciples is not design to teach them a certain pattern of prayer but is designed to teach them the principles that embody a real biblical and godly prayer. These principles are foundational to a clear understanding of what is prayer so that every Christian will no only be motivated to pray without ceasing but to enjoy it as well in the process.***

*There are seven principles I discovered from this text.*

**I. PRAYER IS PRIVACY WITH GOD.**

It is our private moment with God and God's private moment with us, vice versa. The best venue we have as far as our privacy with God is concerned is our heart. That is why it is essential that we hid God's word in our hearts to keep every idol out so that we will always have a meaningful private moment with God every time we pray.

**II. PRAYER IS PRIVACY WITH GOD.**

It is a dialogue not monologue. When we pray we are engage in a two-way communication with God not a one-way recital. We express to Him what's in our hearts and we take in from Him what's in His word. That is why the Word of God is indispensable in prayer because it is the only one that can give substance to our prayers. The Bible is the center point of our interaction with God.

**III. PRAYER IS STARTS WITH GOD AND ENDS WITH GOD (v. 9a)**

Prayer is God's Idea. When you pray, you pray to God the Father through the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit in the Name of Jesus. This is the biblical structure of prayer.

**IV. PRAYER IS INTIMACY WITH GOD. (v.9)**

... "Our Father" Prayer is the only way you can express and experience real intimacy with God there is no other way. Prayer is an affair of the heart. When we pray our heart is engaged with the heart of God to a high level of closeness that can never be experienced elsewhere. Listen to this, regardless of dimension, whether it is physical, psychological, or spiritual, **extreme pleasure** is always and will always be the result of intimacy. It is through prayer and prayer alone that we can experience a divine, godly, and pure extreme spiritual pleasure.

The men and women of God in the bible and outside the bible discovered this secret early on in their spiritual lives that is why these people loved to pray. Intimacy is the reason King David, early in the morning, throughout the day until evening uses every spare moment to commune with God. This is the same reason why Jesus when He is not teaching and healing He is somewhere else spending time with the Father, because intimacy with God is too good to miss.

I guarantee you the moment you experience an intimacy with God you can only say what king David said in **Psalm 27:4** *One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple.*

## **V. PRAYER IS RECOGNITION OF THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD (v 9b -10a)**

God is sovereign. He is All-powerful, All-knowing, All-present God. He is the God who created everything out of nothing. He is the God who protected Noah's Arch against shipwreck from the worst flood in the world. He is the God who made the dried and barren womb of Sarah to produce an heir to Abraham. He is the God who accompanied Joseph from the wilderness of Canaan to the dungeons of Egypt until he became the most powerful ruler of that land. He is the God who parted the red sea when the people of Israel cried out for deliverance from Pharaoh's army. He is the God in whom nothing is impossible because to Him all things are possible. He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our Bible. He is the God who conquered death when He raised Jesus from the grave. He is the God whom Jesus Called Abba Father, the God whom we call Father in our prayers.

He is the God who has the power to turn every problem into opportunity, every dead end into a fresh start, every failure into fruitfulness, and every defeat into victory. He is the only living and loving God yesterday today and forever. And He is only a prayer away.

Every time we pray we are recognizing the Sovereignty of God. Jesus said when you pray, "**Our Father who art in heaven hallowed be thy Name, Thy kingdom come.**"

There are three expressions in this segment of this prayer that denotes God's sovereignty over everything.

- The first one is “Who art in heaven” this speaks of the sovereignty of God’s abode over everything.
- The second one is “Hallowed be Thy Name” this speaks of the sovereignty and sanctity of God’s name. Therefore it is a must that we should respect and honor His Name and never use His name in vain.
- The third one is “Your kingdom come” this speaks of the reality that the Kingdom of God is coming to be established in this world and every time we pray we prepare the way of the coming of that superior and sovereign rule of God.

There are two aspects in this coming of God’s rule:

- The first one is the imminence of its coming. Imminence means unstoppable. The coming of the Kingdom of God is absolute and nobody can stop it.
- The second aspect is the immanence of its coming. Immanence means when it comes, it is staying and nobody can push it around it will remain in place whether the world likes it or not.

If you are listening to the news everyday, you will get the impression that the governments of the world seem helpless in dealing with the problems that threatened not only human existence, but also the very existence of the planet itself. The world has been struggling with the problems of wars, terrorism, poverty, and diseases; this is compounded by the worsening problem of global warming.

Furthermore, if you look back in history up to this point of time the possibility of living in a nice and peaceful world is almost in the threshold of impossibility in spite of the efforts of the world leaders and hundreds of billions of dollars spent every year to correct the problem.

If you look at the future through these facts, you can only say that the future of this earth is bleak and its heading towards the road of no return.

But, if you look at the future through the TRUTH of the Word of God, in particular the coming of the Kingdom of God, you cannot help but rejoice in the midst of sufferings, and you can shout halleluiah in the midst of hopelessness and pain because the kingdom of God is coming and its coming is imminent and immanent that means its unstoppable and it is going to stay and nobody.... nobody can push it away because the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords Jesus Himself will bring

that kingdom down with all its power and He will reign with His righteous right hand. And the sweetest part of this for us is the promise that we will reign with Him. **2 Timothy 2:12** *if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us;*

The coming of the Kingdom of God restores peace and order, restores unity, and restores beauty. Every time we pray we are not only expressing our hearts to God we are also acknowledging His sovereignty over our lives and over everything. And we are preparing the way for the coming of the Kingdom of God.

## **VI. PRAYER IS SUBMISSION TO THE WILL OF GOD. [v.10b ]**

Jesus said: “When you pray, Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name, Your kingdom come, **“Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”** This segment of the Lord’s prayer, expresses that the will of God is supreme both in heaven and in earth.

Yet despite of the fact that His will is supreme because we are under the dispensation of His grace, God will never enforce His will on earth without our permission. God will never use His supreme will to intrude into the affairs of men unless we let Him. The Will of God will not intervene in our lives unless we asked Him. That is why Jesus said when you pray **“your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.** He is making it very clear to us that the fulfillment of the Will of God is contingent on the prayers of His people. The will of God will not happen apart from prayer because prayer is a go signal for God to go ahead and do His Will that He has heaven to be fulfilled on earth.

That is why it is essential for us to pray continually because prayer is our gesture of submission to the Will of God. It is important that our will, be in submission to the Will of God, because, it is only in this manner that the good and perfect will of God in our lives and on earth will be fulfilled in us and through us.

The night before Jesus was arrested, falsely accused and crucified, He was at the Garden of Gethsemane spending time in prayer. His prayers were very short yet profound and it expresses His absolute submission to the will of the Father.

*Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.*-**Matthew 26:39**

*“My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.”* **Matthew 26:42**

In this prayer, Jesus is expressing the superiority of the Will of God over His desire to skip suffering. In this prayer, Jesus is expressing that the Will of God should come first and His will second. In this prayer, Jesus is recognizing that the Will of God is perfect not only for Himself but also for the purpose by which He came to the world. In this prayer, Jesus knew that the only way for the Will of God to be fulfilled is by subjecting His will to the perfect Will of the Father. Jesus knew that it is only through His willingness to go through the horror of death that He can save the world and destroy the power of the enemy that is why He said, *My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.*”

Indeed the Will of God was done because Jesus prayed for it to be done. He was arrested, tortured, and crucified. Yet on the third day He rose again from the dead, dealing the irreversible defeat of death and the devil. Giving us the best gift ever that we could ever have and that is the Gift of Eternal Life in Christ Jesus.

We have our own will in every aspect of our lives. God also has His Will over every aspect of our lives. Our will is good but God’s will is the best. And it is only through prayer that we receive the Will of God. That is why it is a must that we should devote ourselves to prayer.

## **VII. PRAYER IS THE PIPELINE THAT CONNECTS US TO THE PROVISION OF GOD. [v.11-13]**

*“Give us this day our daily bread, Forgive us our sins as we forgave those who sinned against us, And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil”*

In This segment of the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus is stating very clearly the four basic things that we need daily. They are...

- “Give us this day our daily bread” reveals our need for our daily material and financial subsistence.
- “Forgive us our sins” reveals our need for our spiritual subsistence.
- “And lead us not into temptation” reveals our need for the power of God to stand against all kinds of temptation
- “Deliver us from evil” reveals our need for God’s total protection against harm, danger, and the evil one as well as evil influences.

As I ponder upon this segment of the Lord’s Prayer it is made clear to me that only God has the power and the resources to provide these things for us in a continuous and consistent manner. Otherwise Jesus will not teach us to include these things in our prayers.

These needs being expressed by Jesus within the context of prayer, made it easy for me to believe that Prayer is the channel by which God release His provision to meet our needs. And I am convinced more than ever before that prayer is the pipeline that connects us to God’s abundant provisions. I believe that this is the reason why Jesus Christ wanted us to be consistent and persistent with our prayer life. Listen to what He said in....

**Matt. 7:7** "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. <sup>8</sup> For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. <sup>9</sup> "Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? <sup>10</sup> Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? <sup>11</sup> If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

Base on this challenge that Jesus gave, I am confident to state that the more we spend time in prayer, the more Divine provisions flow into our lives from the reservoir of God’s abundant provision.

Therefore, prayer should not be the last resort in our lives. It should be the main ingredient in our every desire, plan, execution, goal, decision. We need to make prayer our utmost priority in life. We need to value prayer

more than any precious jewel. We need to guard our prayer life more than life itself because there is no amount of success that can compensate our failure in prayer.

It's been overdue that we should not take our prayer life for granted the cost is too high our survival is at stake let us be prayerful because Prayerfulness multiplies the little that we have to abundantly supply all that we need and even desires. On the other hand Prayerlessness shrinks the many that we have so that we would not even have enough to cover our needs.

In the Body of Christ, there is no shortage of men and women in with talents, gifts, even abilities. Yet we failed over and over again to make a difference in the market place and in the workplace. We failed to make a difference in the lives of our non-believing family, relatives, and friends. Not because of the lack of opportunity, not because of the lack of resources, not because of the lack of boldness or courage, but because of the lack of prayer resulting to a malnourished and anemic spiritual life due to a lame and crippled prayer life.

Remember this, the distance of our progress and prosperity cannot go beyond the distance of our prayers. The amount of blessings we receive is always in the same amount of prayers we offered.

## Conclusion

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Note that Prayer has no side effects. The more you pray the better your life would become. Never plan to pray, just pray. Don't wait for the right time to pray because it will never come. Don't hesitate to pray it will become a habit. Don't wait, don't hesitate, by all means just do it, pray when you wake up in the morning, pray during the day, pray before you go to bed, and even when you are in bed pray, even in sleep ask God to engage your spirit in a communion with Him so that even in your dreams you are praying.

**Prayerfulness** is obedience to God. **Prayerlessness** is rebellion against God.

It is a must then that we have to keep our prayer life healthy by consistently incorporating these seven Basic Principles of prayers in our daily prayers, so that our prayers will become meaningful, fulfilling, delightful, and enjoyable. In this way we can fulfill the Scripture that says, "pray without ceasing".