

Prayer: What so that God may answer?

When you examine Jesus' prayers, they are comprised of both praises and petitions to God His Father. As you carefully observe Jesus' instruction on prayer, understand the context of what to pray for.

1. Just as He used Jewish religious leaders as an example of how not to pray, Jesus uses Gentiles to point out another practice to avoid. What interpretation do you draw from the observations you make of the text? What do you observe in the Parable of the Persistent Widow (Luke 18:1-8)?

“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. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.” (Matt 6:7-8, ESV)

And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. He said, “In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, ‘Give me justice against my adversary.’ For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, ‘Though I neither fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.’” And the Lord said, “Hear what the unrighteous judge says. And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?” (Luke 18:1-8, ESV)

2. Jesus provides a model prayer for His disciples to follow. Complete the chart with your observations and meaning of the various parts of the prayer. What does Jesus pray for?

Pray then like this, “Our Father who art in heaven,

Hallowed be your name,	
Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.	
Give us this day your daily bread,	
And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors,	
And lead us not into temptation,	
But deliver us from evil. (Matt 6:9-13, ESV)	

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Teacher Notes

When you examine Jesus' prayers, they are comprised of both praises and petitions to God His Father. As you carefully observe Jesus' instruction on prayer, understand the context of what to pray for.

1. Just as He used Jewish religious leaders as an example of how not to pray, Jesus uses Gentiles to point out another practice to avoid. What interpretation do you draw from the observations you make of the text? What do you observe in the Parable of the Persistent Widow (Luke 18:1-8)?

"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. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him." (Matt 6:7-8, ESV)

Teach the student: when you use a lexicon, like Blueletterbible.org, and look up the phrase "heap up empty phrases," the Greek word means to "stammer, babble, and prat."

Ask the student: what are the Gentiles doing when they pray in a manner of babbling? What is Jesus telling us to avoid?

Jesus is discouraging prayers of meaningless repetition on the mistaken belief that repetition will cause God to answer. There is no need to convince God of your petition, because God already knows what you need.

Ask the student: if God already knows what we need before we ask Him, why do we need to pray? Discuss!

When Jesus speaks to God, it is a reflection of a real relationship with His Father. When we ask of God, it reflects our dependence on God and the loving relationship we have with our heavenly Father.

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Ask the student: what is Jesus saying with the Parable of the Persistent Widow? Is this about meaningless repetitive prayer? Share your observations.

The widow repeatedly asks the judge on several occasions – not repeatedly in one instance. The parable is about praying persistently. This is not the same as babbling meaningless repetition during one prayer.

2. Jesus provides a model prayer for His disciples to follow. Complete the chart with your observations and meaning of the various parts of the prayer. What does Jesus pray for?

Pray then like this, "Our Father who art in heaven,

Hallowed be your name,	"Hallowed" is the verb form of holy. "Holy is your name" is a recognition and praise that God is separate and apart from sin. Jesus begins the prayer with praise . In light of our sinful state, we humbly approach the Lord and King. He gave us the right to pray.
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<p>Your kingdom come,</p> <p>Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.</p>	<p>When Jesus started His ministry, He called out, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (Matt 4:17, ESV) Jesus’ call was for human submission to God – obey and submit.</p> <p>With our prayer, we come in submission to do God’s will.</p>
<p>Give us this day your daily bread,</p>	<p>“Bread” represents all food; but, why daily bread?</p> <p>We pray for provision of daily nutrition. It is a prayer for our needs – not greed – one day at a time.</p>
<p>And forgive us our debts,</p> <p>as we also have forgiven our debtors,</p>	<p>“Debts” refer to our sins (Luke 11:4). We ask God to forgive us of our sins that we commit each day: a prayer of pardon. What merits God’s forgiveness? Simple remorse or a real change in...?</p> <p>What attitude is required of us to forgive a debtor? When you experience the unfathomable love God demonstrated by sacrificing His only Son for you, you realize the immensity of your sins. Whatever sins others have done to you pale in comparison.</p>
<p>And lead us not into temptation,</p>	<p>Does God tempt us to sin?</p> <p>Jesus is saying, “don’t test our love for You Father.” As seen in one example, Abraham’s love for God was tested against his love for his son Isaac.</p>
<p>But deliver us from evil. (Matt 6:9-13, ESV)</p>	<p>“Deliver us” is a reference to salvation. It can be salvation from physical or spiritual danger / threats.</p>

Ask the student: can you summarize what Jesus says what we should pray for? Did you notice what Jesus was implying about our hearts and attitudes behind what we should pray for?

Jesus prays with simplicity, without meaningless repetition, yet with persistence. This reflects our dependence on God.

Jesus prays in praise. This reflects the sovereign authority of God and, in light of our sinful state, we approach God humbly in submission and obedience. He gave us the right to pray.

Jesus prays for daily provision. This reflects our daily need to communicate with God – we pray for our needs one day at a time.

Jesus prays for pardon. This acknowledges our daily struggle with salvation from the power of sin. When you experience the unfathomable love God demonstrated by sacrificing His only Son for you, you realize the immensity of your sins. Whatever sins others have done to you pale in comparison.

Jesus prays for salvation. We cannot deliver ourselves from evil by our own power; we acknowledge the need for God.