

THE PRAYER

Matthew 6 (NIV)

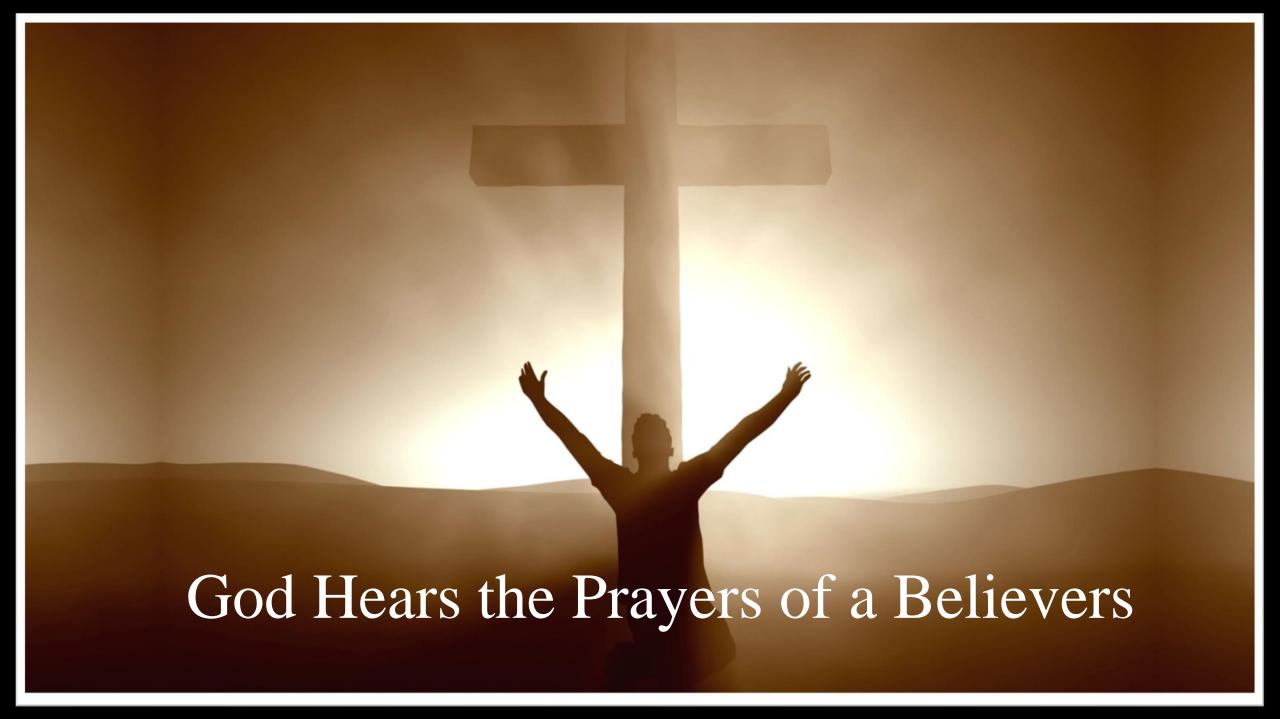
5 "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. 7 And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words."

Matthew 6 (NIV)

8 "Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. 9 This, then, is how you should pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, 10 your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us today our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

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14 "For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."



God Hears the Prayers of Believers

 God promises to grant the prayers of believers when we ask according to His will

"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him" (1 John 5:14-15)

- Praying according to God's will is praying for things that honor & glorify God and/or praying for what the Bible clearly reveals God's will to be
- The better we understand God's Word, the better we will know what to pray for
 - 7 If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

 (John 15:7 ESV)

- The better we know what to pray for, the more often God will answer "yes" to our requests
- If we pray for something that is not honoring to God or not God's will for our lives, God will not give what we ask for
- Sometimes this means that God answers "no" or "wait"

- God gives this answer to believers' prayers because they
 - Have personal & selfish motives (James 4:3)
 - Have sin in their hearts (Psalm 66:18)
 - Offer unworthy service to God
 - Reject God's call (Proverbs 1:24-25, 28)
 - Do not heed God's law (Zechariah 7:11-13)

- God gives this answer to believers' prayers because they (cont.)
 - Turn a deaf ear to the cry of the poor (Prov. 21:13)
 - Are violent (Isaiah 1:15)
 - Worship idols (Jeremiah 11:11-14)
 - Are living in hypocrisy (Luke 12:1)
 - Are proud of heart (James 4:6)

- God does not respond to unbelievers' prayers because they
 - Reject God's call (Proverbs 1:24-25, 28)
 - Forsake God (Jeremiah 14:10-12)
 - Do not heed God's law (Zechariah 7:11-13)
 - Are self-righteous (Luke 18:11-14)
 - Mistreat God's people (Psalm 18:40-41)
- We can safely say that, in general, God does not answer the prayers of an unbeliever



- Many people misunderstand the Lord's Prayer to be a prayer we are supposed to recite word for word
- Some people treat the Lord's Prayer as a magic formula, as if the words themselves have some specific power or influence with God
- God is far more interested in our hearts when we pray than He is in our words

• In prayer, we are to pour out our hearts to God, not simply recite memorized words to God

6 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7 ESV)

- The Lord's Prayer should be understood as an example, a pattern, of how to pray
- It gives us the "ingredients" that should go into prayer
- "Our Father in heaven" is teaching us whom to address our prayers to the Father
- "Hallowed be your name" is telling us to worship God, and to praise Him for who He is

- The phrase "your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" is a reminder to us that we are to pray for God's plan in our lives and the world, not our own plan
- We are encouraged to ask God for the things we need in "give us today our daily bread"

- "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors" reminds us to confess our sins to God & to turn from them, and also to forgive others as God has forgiven us
- The conclusion of the Lord's Prayer, "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one" is a plea for help in achieving victory over sin & a request for protection from the attacks of the devil

 Remember, in prayer, God is far more interested in our communicating with Him & speaking from our hearts than He is in the specific words we use

Main Idea

Jesus gave us, as believers the Lord's Prayer to use as a model when we confidently approach our Father with the desires of our heart knowing that He will answer us.

Question?

Do your heartfelt daily prayers honor your Father and reflect a humble submission to His will?

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