



Life Is Complicated. We Can Help.

Prayer

#nplifeiscomplicated

Week 16

December 27, 2020

Bottom Line: Prayer is about aligning with God, not getting God to align with me.

Icebreaker: Did you have any special prayers you learned as a child? Can you still say them? Did you pray at home? If so, who usually prayed?

Key Verse: *The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.* James 5:16

It's interesting to think about what you would ask Jesus to teach you if He were here in the flesh. The disciples had that opportunity, and they insightfully asked Him to teach them to pray. Maybe you thought that prayer is just talking to God or asking for things from God. Jesus said it is much more than that. Prayer strengthens our relationship with God, aligns our perspective with His, and increases our faith. Matthew 6 records that Jesus told His disciples to go to a private place, and don't beg or try to convince God with manipulative words. Then He gave them a pattern for prayer. This was not a magic wand or formula but an outline for how God-touching prayer should go. First, **ADDRESS GOD AS FATHER (9a)**. He's not distant or far off. He is our Father. Think about whom you are talking to. He's trustworthy, worthy of ultimate respect, tender and intimate, but also the authority. **DECLARE GOD'S GREATNESS (9b)**. This is worship. Stay focused on who He is until you get a good grip of how amazing God is in every aspect of life, seeing His immense greatness and power. **SURRENDER YOUR WILL (10)**. Surrender is literally giving up all control. It is telling God that we are not big enough to deal with our worries, and He must take over. It is saying, "I want You to know that I am more committed to Your will than my will. I am here to find out what You want and align my will with Your will." This is likely where you need to spend the majority of your time. **ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR NEED: FOR GOD'S PROVISION (11)**. Never forget where your Source is. He is a good Father who loves to give good gifts to His children. **FOR GOD'S PARDON (12)**. We are forgiven in order to forgive. We are to give grace at the pace we experience it. This may force some of us to stay here longer because it is easier to receive forgiveness than give it. **FOR GOD'S PROTECTION (13a)**. You are declaring you do not want to sin against God. You are acknowledging your dependency on God and asking Him to deliver you from the power of Satan—from His half-truths and deception and fear. Don't pray it unless you are tired of sinning. You want Him to protect you from anything that would destroy your potential for Him or others. **Your Father has the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever.** The prayer of a righteous person to this mighty God is powerful and effective. Great and wonderful things will happen. PRAY!

THINK IT OVER >>>

What was your most significant takeaway from today's message?

How would you rate (1-5) your satisfaction with your prayer pattern and power? Why?

Jesus said sometimes our prayers are hypocritical, only for us, and we have "received our reward." Explain what you believe He meant.

We tend to think that what is done in public is the most important thing. However, it's what we do in secret that God is most concerned about. Whatever you do in your private life will determine your true influence in your public life. Reflect and discuss.

How does God reward earnest prayer in secret?

Since Jesus told us God already knows what we need before we ask, prayer is actually aligning my will with His. Discuss how that is different than we assume.

LOOK IT OVER <<<

How does knowing and addressing God as your Father change your approach and attitude to prayer?

How can you practically "worship" in prayer, declaring His worth and reminding yourself of Whom you are speaking to? How does it help you?

Until I come to the place where I am willing to surrender my will to God's will, there's not any point in going further. Reflect and discuss. Have you ever gotten stuck here? Share.

What makes it easy for you to forget your Source?

We were forgiven to forgive. We experience grace at the pace we give it. Why is this so hard?

When you say, "...lead us not into temptation," you are saying, "I don't want to sin." You are setting your heart to obey God. Reflect and discuss. How and why is it hard to pray this honestly?

NEXT STEPS

1. Consider using this outline as your pattern.
2. Earnestly pray in your own words the meanings behind the words Jesus gave as an outline.
3. Sign up at newpointe.org/21days for the 21 Days of Prayer & Fasting that begins on January 11.

EVALUATION/ACTION

Realizing and reaching your full potential in Christ

Bottom Line: Prayer is about aligning with God, not getting God to align with me.

Rate yourself from 1 to 10 1 (never), 10 (always)	1	2	3	4		6	7	8	9	10
Why did you give yourself this rating?										
What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?										
Do you know someone who demonstrates this bottom line well? What do you admire about that person?										
What specific action can you put into practice to raise your rating?										
At the end of this week, reflect - where did you see the bottom line show up in your actions throughout the week?										

PRAYER

List group members and their prayer requests for this week:

DAILY STUDY

Want to dig deeper? Check out **The Daily** this week at newpointe.org/daily:

Monday: Luke 18:1

Tuesday: Matthew 7:11

Wednesday: Luke 6:46-49

Thursday: Luke 6:12-13

Friday: Philippians 4:6-7

Don't let the conversation stop here. Keep talking it over with others throughout the week.

(Don't forget to bring this paper to your next small group meeting)