

Intro: There are right ways to pray...and Wrong Ways! Take a look at this and maybe it will shed some light!
VIDEO

As we finish our study this am on the Lord's Prayer, I want to look with you at a couple more DON'TS!
Again, while the bible has a LOT to say about prayer, for our purposes today we are going to focus on what Jesus had to say
Matthew 6:5-15 Pg 685

1. Don't Neglect Prayer Waiting For the Right Time, Words or Issue. Mt 6:5 (When)

The first thing I want you to notice is that both the disciples and Jesus understood the need for prayer!

- Disciples: Luke 11 John taught his disciples...will you teach us?
- Jesus: Mt 6 WHEN you pray! Jesus ASSUMES that we are going to be doing that!

All too often we overlook the most important part of our spiritual life for a variety of different

Important: Very First thing we see God doing with mankind (Adam and Eve) is communing with them! In garden
~We don't pray because we don't think we have the right words Rom 8:26 (Spirit)
~We don't pray because we don't think we have the right time Jesus did it EVERYWHERE!
~We don't pray because we don't think we have the right issue Mt 6:26 (Birds)

2. Don't Pray To People, Pray To God! Mt 6:5

- To be seen by others (Not to God...but men!) *Production*
- To be heard by people rather than God (Pastor closing sermon)
- To impress others with your spirituality Tax Collector/Sinner Lk 18:10

Prayer at its very core is your heart to heart communication with God

When we step outside of that and make it something else...then we are praying for people...and not for God!

3. Don't Pray Prayers That Are Empty Repetition. Mt 6:7

Now, I believe there are two parts to this.

- First, the mindless, empty repetition of words that some religions practice
Illus: When I was in China, walked into a Buddhist temple, saw a woman praying to wooden statue, empty syllables!
Onomatopoeic: Babble, Murmur You will be heard and answered if you say it enough!
- Second is more likely for you and I!
Simply repeating the words of a prayer, with no true connection with our heart or mind!
Illus: Table Grace: You SAY the words...but they aren't truly connected...
Some people do this with the Lord's Pray, or many other prayers.
There is nothing wrong with MEMORIZING a prayer and using it...But it needs to be connected.
Not just empty words

Illus: Some memorized prayers can be very helpful...Done right and used when they truly connect!

In fact, there is a specific form of prayer that flows from a memorized prayer

When you have an issue of overwhelming anxiety, or concern, something that captures and "owns" your heart

- Create a prayer that is perfectly designed to help you deal with your concern
- Memorize it
- 5-7 words...
- Every word is incredibly meaningful.
Ex: "Lord Jesus, Help me trust your goodness." (All things work together for good)

Illus:

Even Jesus prayed the same prayer at least 3X once! So, it's clear that He isn't against it!

Mt 26:44 *For the third time He went back and prayed the same words!*

So, it's pretty clear that what is being taught here is praying in a way that is MEANINGLESS!

4. Don't Stop Praying Too Early! Luke 18:1; Mt 7:7

How long should you pray any particular prayer?

I believe you are looking for a couple of things to let you know when it's time to stop

- When Circumstances change and it is no longer relevant Time Out
- When God says yes When He answers in a positive way Says Yes
- When God says no! Clear that it is not the will of God Says No

Illus: Just this year I had a conversation that was the answer to a prayer of at least 30 years!

Stop and think about that for a moment would you.

30 years! Most of us will give up after a hot minute!

But, the faithfulness of someone that prayed over and over and over again...Knocking on heaven's door...

5. Don't Pray Arrogantly!

Luke 18:10

There is a strand of Christianity out there where they take the biblical truth of God loving and providing for His children And they take it to such an extreme that it becomes unbiblical.

You can tell when you hear them pray!

Illus: God I am your child...and Your Word says...And I claim it...and Because you said ... then it is mine!

Piece of truth there...God honors His word. But...Here is the key

When you have a child, You don't give them everything they want, EVEN when they think it is good for them

- We can't demand from God. We can ASK.
- We can pray His word back to Him
- We can pray in faith..
- But we CANT pray arrogantly...Acting as if we KNOW what His will is

6. Don't Be Dishonest With God.

Mt 26:39

We sometimes think and act and PRAY like God isn't big enough to handle our thoughts and prayers and emotions Go to the Psalms, Prophets and the rest of the OT and look at the prayers there.

- Moses *"I can't do that!"*
- Jacob *"I will not let you go until you bless me!"*
- Gideon *God: If you are afraid..."I'm on my way to the camp!"*
- David *"Break out the teeth of my enemies" "How long oh God will the wicked prosper?"*

Every single one of those men prayed prayers that were honest...and straightforward...and sometimes RAW!

Jesus shared EXACTLY what was on His heart...

God if there is ANY OTHER WAY! (Was it wrong for Him to pray that? No it was Human!)

Is 55:8 *"My ways are not your ways...My thoughts are not your thoughts!"*

CONCL:

How are YOU Praying?

Be sure today that:

- *You aren't neglecting to pray! WHEN*
- *You are talking to God, not people*
- *When you pray...your head and your heart are connected*
- *You don't give up too soon*
- *Not being arrogant*
- *Are being Honest with Him*