

God-Centered Praying

“And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. 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.”

Matthew 6:5-8

Application Questions

1. Why do we pray? Do you love to pray? What is your motive for praying?
2. What is meant by the statement: “the problem even in right religion is wrong motives”?
3. Was Jesus speaking against praying in public or before other people when He said, “For [hypocrites] love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners” (consider Isaiah 56:7; 2 Chronicles 7:14-16; Psalm 42:4; 1 Chronicles 29:10-19; Luke 1:10; Matthew 11:25; Mark 6:41; John 11:41-42; Luke 11:1; Acts 3:1; 4:24; 1 Timothy 2:8)?
4. Is it wrong to stand while praying (1 Samuel 1:26; Mark 11:25; Luke 18:11, 13)?
5. Why did the hypocrites that Jesus was referring to love to pray? What is meant by the statements: “prayer is not immune to pride” and “sin defiles our deepest devotion”?
6. When Jesus says, “when you pray, go into your room and shut the door,” is He saying that the important thing is where you pray? What is the meaning of “your room” (same word as in Luke 12:3)? What is the main point of this statement?
7. What is the essence of true prayer (Psalm 27:8)?
8. Was Jesus strictly speaking against repetition in prayer (Psalm 118; Matthew 26:44)?
9. Is prayer to inform God (Isaiah 65:24; Matthew 6:8)?
10. What are some observations from the text that point to God-centeredness as the key to prayer? .
11. What is our ultimate reward in praying to God?
12. Do you find prayer easy? What hinders your prayer life? When you pray, how do you picture God? Does that help or hinder you?