

Prayer That Changes Us Pray As Jesus Taught – Part 3

Life Church St. Louis January 18, 2026
Lead Pastor Dan Walker, PhD, MDiv

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Links

Introduction

Psalms 46:10 (ESV) Be still, and know that I am God.

John 10:27 (ESV) My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

James 1:19 (ESV) ... let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak,

1. Pray to Be Seen by the Father, Not People

Matthew 6:5 (ESV) 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.

Matthew 6:6 (ESV) But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. ...

Matthew 6:6b (ESV) And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

2. Pray with Trust, Not Empty Repetition

Matthew 6:7 (NLT) “When you pray, don’t babble on and on as the Gentiles do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again.”

Matthew 6:8 (ESV) Do not be like them. ...

Matthew 6:8b (ESV) for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

3. Pray for God’s Kingdom Before Personal Needs

Matthew 6:9 (ESV) Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.”

Matthew 6:10 (ESV) “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

Matthew 6:11 (ESV) “Give us this day our daily bread,”

4. Pray from a Heart Shaped by Forgiveness

Matthew 6:12 (ESV) “And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.”

Matthew 6:13 (ESV) “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

Matthew 6:14-15 (ESV) For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Prayer That Changes Us Study Guide

Pray As Jesus Taught – Part 3

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Introduction.

1. In what ways can prayer drift from a living relationship into a routine habit, and how have you experienced that in your own life?
2. What does being still before God look like in your prayer life, and what makes that difficult at times (Psalm 46:10)?
3. How do you recognize the voice of Jesus, and how does hearing Him shape the way you follow Him (John 10:27)?
4. Why is it important to be quick to listen and slow to speak when approaching God in prayer (James 1:19)?

1. Pray to Be Seen by the Father, Not People

1. What motives does Jesus warn against when we pray, and how can those motives subtly show up in our own prayers (Matthew 6:5)?
2. Why does Jesus emphasize praying in secret, and what does that reveal about God's desire for relationship with us (Matthew 6:6)?
3. How does knowing that the Father sees and rewards what is done in secret change your view of private prayer (Matthew 6:6)?
4. What practical steps can you take this week to develop a consistent, private prayer life that focuses on connection rather than performance?

2. Pray with Trust, Not Empty Repetition

1. What does Jesus teach us about prayers that rely on repetition rather than relationship, and why is that approach ineffective (Matthew 6:7)?
2. Why does Jesus tell us not to pray like those who repeat words to get answers, and what does this reveal about God's character (Matthew 6:8)?

3. How does believing that the Father already knows your needs affect the way you come to Him in prayer (Matthew 6:8)?
4. How can learning to listen to God before presenting requests reshape your trust in Him during times of uncertainty or waiting?

3. Pray for God's Kingdom Before Personal Needs

1. What does it mean to address God as Father and honor His name when you begin to pray (Matthew 6:9)?
2. How does praying for God's kingdom and will first help realign your priorities and perspective (Matthew 6:10)?
3. What does asking for daily bread teach us about dependence on God and the rhythm of daily prayer (Matthew 6:11)?
4. How might your prayers change if you intentionally sought God's kingdom agenda before focusing on your own needs?

4. Pray from a Heart Shaped by Forgiveness

1. Why does Jesus connect our request for forgiveness with our willingness to forgive others (Matthew 6:12)?
2. How does praying for deliverance from temptation and evil reflect our need for God's ongoing protection and strength (Matthew 6:13)?
3. What serious warning does Jesus give about unforgiveness, and how should that shape our hearts before God (Matthew 6:14–15)?
4. Who might God be inviting you to forgive, and how could obedience in this area bring freedom and healing in your relationship with Him?

Conclusion.

1. How does viewing prayer as a listening relationship rather than a list of requests challenge the way you currently pray?
2. Which aspect of Jesus' teaching on prayer do you sense God wants to deepen or change in your life right now?
3. What is one intentional step you can take this week to allow prayer to reshape your heart as well as your circumstances?