

Summer on the Mount Discipleship Guide

In **Matthew 6:7-15**, Jesus says, “And when you pray ...” indicating that it’s a given that any follower of Him should be a person of prayer. If you feel like you struggle to have a consistent, meaningful prayer life, please know that you are not alone. Prayer is a struggle because it’s definitely entering the arena of spiritual battle. Take heart, this is something that we can all work on together.

Pastor Evan’s sermon encourages us to lean into this particular truth: *How you pray to God reveals what you believe God is like*. One practical tip for developing our prayer habit is to spend more time in the Bible and learning some theology – simply letting God’s Word help us to understand what God is like. For example, Romans 8:14-15 helps us to lean into knowing God as our heavenly Father.

Following are some biblical texts to study, reflect and act upon:

Steps to Take:

- The foundation to all prayer is keeping our focus on God. Spend some time thinking about what a good father looks like and talk to God with that mindset.
- Pray biblically. As you read the Bible, turn the Scripture into prayers. When the Bible speaks about who God is and what He does, acknowledge that in your prayers – letting God be who He is meant to be = “hallowed be your name.”
- Ask. God encourages us to depend on Him for all of our needs: physical, relational, material, and spiritual. These requests are what we call petitions.
- Intercede. Pray for others – especially those we know we should forgive. Love your enemies by praying for them (this is how we can be obedient to Jesus two ways at the same time!) If you’re not sure what to ask for on behalf of others, try to remember that loving others is when we desire God’s best for them no matter what it might cost us.
- Seek deliverance. Prayer is a battle – what pleases God upsets Satan. As you seek to follow Jesus more deeply, prayerfully suit up in God’s armor (see Ephesians 6:10-18).

Finally – “pray without ceasing” the Apostle Paul wrote. Don’t give up, especially when you feel like your prayers are bouncing off the ceiling. They aren’t. You have God completely on your side whenever you pray. The Father invites us to His throne of grace, leaning into us as we speak to Him. The Spirit translates our feeble vocabulary into pleasing petitions. Jesus, the Son is right now praying for us even as we pray. The only way we can fail at praying is to not pray to our Father at all.

So, as Jesus said, “When you pray ... pray in this way,” and go back to Matthew 6:7-15 and follow His lead.