

THE COMMANDS OF JESUS - WEEK 3

Pray: Matt 6:9-13

The Ten Commandments given to Moses by God were similar to a constitution. They weren't *suggestions*. They brought order to the lives of the people. Obeying them was the key to an abundant life. We are studying the *commands* of Christ...directives that will set our lives in order if we live them. Practicing them, living them out, will not only transform us but also those around us.

Jesus taught us how to pray and how not to pray in Matt. 6:1-15.

Why do we pray? Because we are commanded to pray. Do we believe that God hears and answers? Do we want to know and do his will? Do we want to see transformation in the lives of those we are praying for and in ourselves?

When we pray, it is not only asking God for something, but it is communicating with Him intimately. We know he hears us. We know he answers. Psa. 20:5b May the Lord fulfill all your petitions.

Matt. 26:41: We pray to avoid temptation because though our spirit is willing, our flesh is weak.

1 Sam 12:23 God forbid that I should sin in ceasing to pray for you.

How do we pray?

We can pray "in our minds" or out loud. We may be in a situation where we can't pray out loud but we know we must pray. Sometimes we don't know what to pray. We can ask God to teach us to pray, to show us what to pray. Some people pray in tongues when they are at a loss for words.

Pray without ceasing (1 Thes 5:17). Basically this means to stay in a continual, permanent uninterrupted mode of prayer. How is that possible?! We may have established specific times of the day when we pray—many people pray in the morning to start their day. We can pray anytime anywhere! We can pray as we're driving in the car. And our prayers don't have to be extremely long. Sometimes it's just, "Jesus, help me!" But it is very beneficial to spend focused time in prayer.

How does God respond to our prayers? He hears us. He knows our hearts. He makes a promise to us in 2 Chron 7:14: "If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land." What a powerful promise!

Our prayers don't have to be in the King James Version, or high and lofty. They can be simple heartfelt prayers that God hears and answers in His time. Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also (Luke 12:34). Where is our treasure?

Questions:

1. What goals can you set for your prayer life?
 - a) Commit to pray daily (Lk 10:2)
 - b) Abide in Christ (Jn 15:4): dwell with him, be present and tarry in his presence. Don't be in a hurry to leave the King's presence (Ecc 8:3a)
 - c) Train others to pray.
2. Discuss the phrases of prayer in Matthew 6:
 - a) "Our Father"
 - b) "Hallowed be your name"
 - c) "Your kingdom come"
 - d) "Your will be done"
 - e) "Give us this day our daily bread"
 - f) "Forgive us our debts/sins"
 - g) "...as we forgive those"
 - h) "Lead us not into temptation"
 - i) "Deliver us from evil"
3. Pray The Lord's Prayer together to close.