

★ Teach Us to Pray

4th - 6th Grade
Lesson 4

The Instruction of Christ

Do you ever pray? Have you ever seen someone else praying? God has told us in the Bible that we are supposed to pray. Prayer is asking and receiving. God has given us prayer as a way for us to speak with Him.

In the New Testament, the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray. They wanted to know how and when they should pray.

The Model of Christ in Prayer

And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.

—Mark 1:35

Jesus prayed early in the morning. Many people in the Bible got up early in the morning to pray, like Abraham, Joshua, and Daniel. The Bible does not say we must pray in the morning, but that is what Jesus did. That is what we will do if we want to be like Him.

THE SECRET

Ralph Cushman

I met God in the morning
When the day was at its best,
And His presence came like sunrise,
Like a glory in my breast.
All day long His presence lingered,
All day long He stayed with me,
And we sailed in perfect calmness
O'er a very troubled sea.
Other ships were blown and battered,
Other ships were sore distressed,
But the winds that seemed to drive them
Brought to us a peace and rest.
Then I thought of other mornings,
With a keen remorse of mind,
When I too had loosed the moorings,
With His presence left behind.
So I think I know the secret,
Learned from many a troubled way:
You must seek God in the morning
If you want Him through the day.

Not only did Jesus pray early in the morning, He also prayed alone. The Bible says in Matthew 14:23 that Jesus “sent the multitude away, and he went up into a mountain apart to pray.” Later, Jesus told the disciples how wrong it was for the scribes and Pharisees to pray in front of many people. They were only praying in front of people to attract attention. Prayer is a personal thing between you and God. Sometimes it is good for people to pray together in groups, but it is important that everyone have a time to pray alone.

A Model of Prayer to Follow

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

—Matthew 6:9-13

Jesus taught the disciples how to pray! The first part of the prayer says, “Our Father which art in heaven...” We need to be saved to be able to call God our Father. The next thing He says is, “Hallowed be thy name.” God is amazing! He is very holy and very wonderful. It is important to be respectful when we pray. God is not our “buddy” or “pal.” God is holy. Even the angels who live in Heaven with Him bow before Him and cry, “Holy, holy, holy” (Revelation 15:4).

Next, Jesus says to forgive. If we have not forgiven someone, we should not come to God in prayer. We need to forgive people first, just as Jesus has forgiven us.

A Model of Prayer to Avoid

Jesus taught us how to pray in Matthew 6. But He also taught us how we should not pray.

But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

—Matthew 6:6-7

We should not pray just to have other people see us. Jesus went to a place to pray where no one else was. The scribes and the Pharisees would go out into the street where everyone was, so that everyone would be able to hear them. They wanted to bring glory to themselves. Jesus also said that these same men would use “vain repetitions.” That means they would say the same things over and over again. Have you ever asked your mom or dad for something over and over again? They probably said, “Don’t ask me again.” God does not want us to repeat ourselves over and over again.

Conclusion

We should have a time that we meet God alone each day. We need to pray and read the Bible. Jesus did this in the morning. We need to live our lives one day at a time. Read your Bible today. Pray today. Each day that we spend time with God, we grow closer to Him.