

Whom do I pray to?

By: James Yang

Matthew 6:5-13

⁵ “When you pray, don’t be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they will ever get. ⁶ But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

⁷ “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. ⁸ Don’t be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him! ⁹ Pray like this:

*Our Father in heaven,
may your name be kept holy.
¹⁰ May your Kingdom come soon.
May your will be done on earth,
as it is in heaven.
¹¹ Give us today the food we need,
¹² and forgive us our sins,
as we have forgiven those who sin against us.
¹³ And don’t let us yield to temptation,
but rescue us from the evil one.*

How does one pray each day? And why do we sometimes find that we run out of prayers in certain seasons?

Quite often, we come to the Lord in the posture of God as our helper—approaching Him when we need something or someone, seeking His grace in moments of personal need. At other times, we may practise our faith out of fear or even a subtle self-righteousness (perhaps unintentionally). We begin to think that if we pray more in a certain way, we will be seen as faithful or righteous. We worry that if we fail to say or do certain things properly, God might somehow withdraw His grace from us.

It is precisely this kind of prayer that Jesus speaks against—because it is both self-defeating and self-centred.

Consider how Jesus instructs us to pray in Matthew 6:9:

“Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. May your kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

This prayer directs us toward a posture of worship, submission, and wonder. It was never meant to be recited merely as a religious formula or ritual—though we have often grown accustomed to

doing so in our churches and liturgies. Instead, Jesus invites us to reflect deeply and to understand the heart of the God who calls us into intimate relationship with Him. He invites us to trust Him in our grimmest hours of need and in our greatest moments of joy.

If God is truly my Lord, Master, and Saviour—and if I wholeheartedly trust and believe in Him—then I can approach Him with joy and gladness. I can come to Him when everything in life feels as though it is crumbling.

And if we do not know where to begin, we begin here: by acknowledging who He is.

When we do this—when we surrender our worries, our anxieties, and everything that keeps us awake at night—we often find that our prayers are answered in that very surrender. Not in who I am, nor in what I insist should happen, but in who He is—and in trusting that He knows a better way.

To acknowledge the wonder and glory of God first is to discover the courage to walk through the darkest night and the lowest valley. And in doing so, we begin to see the stars He has placed above us to guide the way—because we know He is present, and He is always with us.