

SERMON NOTES

SERIES: **Check Your Settings: 2016 System Update**
TITLE: **PRAY**
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We're in the final week of a 4-week series called "Check Your Settings". In the Christian life, it's important to cultivate some basic habits, or settings, which will help us to live our lives focused on God and to abide in his word. These four settings are: READ, SERVE, GIVE, and PRAY.

When our settings aren't right, nothing works right. We saw in the first week of this series that our spiritual lives work the same way. If you are a Christian, you need to set your mind and heart on things above. This means we need to set our minds on eternal things rather than earthly things that constantly work to draw our hearts away from God and the life that Jesus died to make possible for us.

Today, we look at the "PRAY" setting, specifically focusing on Matthew 6:5-13.

In the middle of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus tells us how to pray. First, he says, "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites," who want other people to hear their prayers more than God. Instead, he wants us to have the right audience for our prayers. Then he goes on to tell us how we *should* pray, using a prayer that churches and people all over the world have prayed for the past 2,000 years. Jesus gave us an example we can use to model our own prayers. What does this look like? Consider the following observations.

PRAY...

1. ...by acknowledging your need

- a. Admitting our neediness to God is one of the first steps towards trusting him in prayer.

2. ...different kinds of prayers

- a. Talk to God about God's big picture, for example:
 - i. Hallowed be your name
 - ii. Your kingdom come
 - iii. Your will be done
- b. Talk to God about your daily life, for example:
 - i. Give us daily bread

- ii. Forgive us our debts
- iii. Lead us not into temptation
- c. If we go to God in both joy and sorrow, gratitude and frustration, and humility and confidence, there is maturity in that prayerful diversity. There is a deeper intimacy to be enjoyed when we embrace these distinct ways of communing with him.

3. ...in community

- a. Praying in community means praying alongside others as a forgiven and a forgiving people.
- b. The essence of praying in community is a willingness to, in victory and defeat, shoulder one another's burdens in prayer.
- c. Praying in community is a strong way to neutralize your excuses, because the people you're praying *with* and *for* are probably going through stuff very similar to what you're going through.

4. ...in view of who God is

- a. Biblical prayer is contingent on God and not us. The God to whom we pray is sovereign and benevolent and wise and just and loving all the time, even when we don't know how those things work together. He is... and he can, and should, be trusted in prayer.

For Discussion:

1. What prevents, or threatens to prevent you from staying in daily prayer with God?
2. Where in your heart do you deny your need for God's help?
3. Who is your prayer audience? How are your prayers different when you pray in private versus in public?
4. How intimate are your prayers? Do they signify a healthy marriage relationship, such as between God and his people, or more of a "two ships passing in the night" situation?