PRAYER

Lesson 1 | Sunday, November 15, 2026 | Student Notes

Key Scripture: Matthew 6:9–13

Jesus gave His disciples a pattern for prayer in the Sermon on the Mount. The Lord’s Prayer is more than words to repeat; it is a framework that can shape our conversations with God.

Why Prayer Matters

Prayer is essential to the Christian life, yet it can be one of the most difficult spiritual disciplines to practice consistently. When life becomes busy, prayer is often pushed aside even while we make time for less important things.

- Consistent prayer requires more than good intentions; desire must become action.
- Praying during a crisis may come easily. Daily, life-shaping prayer takes commitment.
- Prayer invites us to spend time with God and allows Him to work in us.
- Scripture calls believers to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

The Eight Parts of the Lord’s Prayer

1. Our Father, which art in heaven
2. Hallowed be thy name
3. Thy kingdom come
4. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven
5. Give us this day our daily bread
6. Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors
7. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil
8. Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever

The Heart Behind Prayer

In Matthew 6, Jesus teaches about giving, prayer, and fasting. He does not tell His followers to avoid these practices; He teaches them to avoid doing them for attention or recognition. A hypocrite is an actor or pretender. Our motives matter to God.

- Give without seeking recognition. Pray without seeking an audience. Fast without trying to impress others.
- The goal is not merely to perform a religious activity but to approach God with a sincere heart.

Four Common Barriers to Prayer

1. The theological barrier. If God is sovereign, some wonder why prayer is necessary. Yet God invites us into relationship and allows us to participate in what He is doing. Abraham's intercession concerning Sodom illustrates how prayer drew Abraham into a deeper understanding of God (Genesis 18).

Remember: God wants us to be involved in what He is doing.

2. Unanswered prayer. Disappointment can make us question whether prayer matters. Sometimes the answer is "no" or "not yet." We can bring our requests honestly to God while trusting His wisdom and saying, "Thy will be done."

Remember: We can trust God regardless of the answer. "My times are in thy hand" (Psalm 31:15).

3. Feeling that we are not good at prayer. Distraction, uncertainty, and comparison with others can discourage us. Prayer grows through consistent practice, not through perfect words. Over time, what once felt difficult can become a treasured part of each day.

Remember: Keep praying. Our relationship with God can continue to deepen.

4. An incorrect image of God. God is neither a vending machine that gives us everything we request nor a harsh figure waiting to punish every mistake. Our view of God affects our willingness to speak openly with Him.

Remember: We can approach God honestly when we recognize that He is trustworthy and near.

Personal Application

Consider which barrier most often affects your prayer life. What is one practical change you can make this week to give prayer a consistent place in your day?

Central thought: Prayer is not simply a religious duty or a way to get what we want. It is an ongoing relationship with God, shaped by sincerity, trust, and consistency.