

Teach Us to Pray

by Shane Idleman

Effective prayer requires a heart and mind relationship, forgiveness, and a willingness to listen and learn from God.

Duration: 34:15

Scripture: Matthew 6:9

Topics: "The Power of Prayer", "Preparing the Heart for Prayer"

Description

Shane Idleman emphasizes the significance of prayer in the life of a believer, highlighting that the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, recognizing its power in His ministry. He explains that prayer is a heart and mind relationship, requiring preparation and focus to connect with God effectively. Idleman discusses the Lord's Prayer as a model, stressing the importance of approaching God relationally, seeking His will, and maintaining a clean heart through confession and forgiveness. He encourages believers to prioritize prayer, remove distractions, and understand that God is enough, even when prayers seem unanswered. Ultimately, he reminds the congregation that God's kingdom and glory prevail, empowering them to face daily challenges with strength.

Transcript

The title of the message is, teach us to pray. Anybody need help in this area? Teach us to pray. And the disciples, after spending time with Jesus, they didn't say teach us how to preach, teach us how to lead worship, but teach us how to pray.

Now there's speculation on that, but I think it's because they realized that that was probably one of the most important things Jesus did. He would leave groups of people and go and pray. He would be alone on a mountain and pray.

He would say, I need to go and pray. And they saw the power in his prayer. So I think that they saw this powerful aspect of Jesus's life, and to ask Jesus to teach me how to pray would be an awesome question, an awesome sermon that he would give us, obviously.

And he did give us this. And as many of you know, it's found in Matthew 6, they call it the Lord's Prayer. And what it does, in Matthew 6, 9, I think we can put that up on the screen as well.

It opens with this statement, Jesus said, now this is Jesus. Jesus said, in this manner, in this manner, therefore pray. So what he was doing, he was setting the guidelines up early.

He was telling us and those listening, listen, this is how you're going to pray. Now many religions, I wouldn't say many, but I'd say some religions get caught up on the exact prayer. And they have to say this prayer.

And they have to say, you know, our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done. And it's that exact prayer. And it's kind of like a repetition.

And Jesus also said, be careful, don't pray like the heathen, with vain repetition. So it's really not going through every single line item, which if you do is great. But it's not the words exactly, and you have to say this 10 times, and you have to, you know, go through it every day.

It's he's saying, in this manner, here's your focal point. That's what I put up there. This is our focus with these goals in mind.

So that's what Jesus is doing. He's laying it out. Okay, get ready.

If I were to say, okay, now pray in this manner, we're talking about the heart. And I will remind you that prayer is a heart and mind relationship. If you don't get your heart ready, if you don't get your mind staying on what God wants you to focus on, you're going to drift.

It's a heart mind relationship. And I don't remember who it was. But they said, I spend more time preparing to pray than I do praying.

I think it was Martin Luther, I'm not sure. But I spend more time preparing to pray. And when I first read that probably a decade ago, I wasn't too sure what he meant.

Now I know exactly what he meant. Because it's getting the heart still before God and resting the heart and resting the mind. And sometimes you have to just sit there and rest in God and get your mind focused on who he is.

And this might not apply to some of you, but I know it's going to apply to the majority of you. One of the biggest distractions for me in this getting started in prayer, and you might have the opposite effect. And I've opened up about this before.

And I think it fits in perfect. But that's why it's hard for me to have coffee in the morning. Because I want to do everything but pray.

Right? Got my Christian crack. I can't sit down for more than 10 minutes. I got to get up.

I got to do this. I got it. My mind's not focused.

My mind's not focused. And I wish I could bring you a picture of a spider web making a web on caffeine. It's all over the place.

And we take stimulants sometimes. And I can't sit there. I can't still my mind.

So it doesn't work good for me. It doesn't get my mind and heart ready. I know others of you are so blessed.

You can sit there and it just puts you in in la la land. And you can relax. But for some of us, we can't.

So I have to do that. Remove that. Remove the phone.

Unless there's worship on. But remove the phone. Remove the distractions.

For me, it's an early morning quiet hour or two. Where it's not the hustle and bustle of the day. It's not the kids running around for some of you.

And for moms, it's hard. And husbands should let watch the kids and let the the wives go out and experience times of prayer. Or stay at home and relax.

So you have to find that quiet hour. That quiet location. And then you have to have a quiet heart.

You can't just start going into a list of things. Because I don't really think that's prayer. Prayer is relational.

Prayer is getting the heart ready. And I'll look at the clock sometimes. And you know, time will go by.

Maybe 45 minutes, an hour. And I realized I haven't prayed very much. But I listened.

It's okay to not say anything. And just listen. And have your heart quiet and still before God.

We do that in relationships, don't we? You ever sit down with your spouse? You should and say, I'll be quiet and listen for a season. 10 minutes, 15, whatever it is. Let me just listen.

And so that's part of prayer is just listening. And as I'm listening, sometimes I'll meditate on scriptures. Scriptures will come to mind.

Things will come to mind that I have to put out. You know, get on the news. What's going on? What's going on our nation? What's going on? I got to get on that email.

And thoughts will come. I got to email that person. I got to take care of this.

And you just sometimes I'll have a post-it note. So I will write down, okay, I got to do that later. Put it to the side.

Instead of going and do that. Oh, Morgan told me to take out the trash. And they're going to be here in an hour.

I better get up and do that. So we write these things. I write these things down and for later, but you have to still your heart.

I think that's part of the biggest part of prayer is getting the heart ready to receive from God. Is that not true? Because if the heart's not open, remember I've given this analogy before, if the heart's closed, it can't receive anything. I can't grab anything.

So that's the first part there is getting the heart ready in this manner. And then he begins by saying, our father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Our father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

So what Jesus is doing again, I believe we don't have a, he didn't, Jesus didn't leave us with a commentary on this. So we just have to speculate. But our father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Father is relational. Because sometimes we, we start to pray, you know, this, this, this magnificent God, which he is. And sometimes we forget it's relational.

You can call him father as a believer. Father, your son is in need of this. Father, your daughter is in need of this.

How many parents listen when their parents, when their kids are truly talking to them and truly saying, mom, dad, would you listen? So you can enter into that and saying, father, listen to me. I need you. And then also we learn here to pray according to God's will to be kingdom-minded.

Oh, that's hard, isn't it? Lord, what is your will? Our father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Oh, I'm sorry. I jumped ahead on that one.

Our father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Father is relational. Approach him in holiness and reverence because of who he is.

That word, hallowed be your name, is your name is so holy, so reverent. We have to remember that we are in the presence of almighty God and that that'll humble you. That'll get you, your heart in the right area, in the right position to receive as well.

And I also believe that this can be a time of deep confession. As I sit and I'm praying and I'm saying, our, my father who art in heaven, I don't say these exact things, but hallowed be your name. We are asking God to speak.

We are asking God to clean our hearts. We are asking God to shape and mold our destiny and our choices. So that, in me, prompts confession also.

You want to make sure the heart's clean and not besetting sin and not going to God with unconfessed sin. We want to make sure that that is taken care of. I like what Ian Bounds said, those who live well, pray well.

If you take anything from this sermon, that could be one strong point. Those who live well, pray well. How you live affects your prayer life, doesn't it? When we're caught in sin, when we're not doing things that God wants and knows he's called us to do, do you pray very well? Usually the times we have the strongest prayer with the strongest anointing is when we're in fellowship with God, when we've confessed sin, when we've gotten back on track and we say, God, you're going to get me through.

And this prayer life is electric because now we're in right relationship with God. Those who pray well, live well. And those who live well, pray well.

It goes together. And what he's talking about here is holiness in this mark of a Christian, that the strength of their prayer life. Now, I don't want you to think that the more holy you are, the more prayers God will answer, because you can turn to God at any season of your life.

But there is something about living boldly for Christ and removing distractions and having that holy life that pulls down heaven. The effectual, a fervent prayer of a righteous man or woman avails much. And then verse 10, your kingdom come.

Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. It's a good reminder that God's kingdom is coming. Praise God with what's going on in our world today.

Do you ever look at the news and say, oh my Lord, I mean, the elections are getting so bad, politics. I mean, it's going to be, there's going to be some hate in this country if certain people aren't elected and it's just brewing and it's not getting any better. So God, would your kingdom come? And when I pray that, Lord, your kingdom come, it reminds me, okay, what is God's will? Because we're so worried about, you know, we're going to, we're going to, is God on our side versus you better make sure you're on God's side.

That's the key. Abraham Lincoln, I believe, prayed that when the nation was at odds. We need to find out, are we on God's side? Lord, kingdom come, your will be done.

And I want to pray according to God's will. And I will pray, Lord, show me what your will is. I know what I want, but show me what your will is.

And as we were praying, I was praying a year for the radio stations that I told you about before. If you're not sure, you can ask us about that later. But my prayer often was, Lord, show me what your will is in this area.

We don't want to touch this with a 10 foot pole if you're not in it. We need to know what your will is. And I don't think God is playing games in heaven.

I really don't. I really don't think he's playing hide and seek with your prayer life. I think he wants you to seek him.

I think he wants to show you what his will is. So when you're humble and teachable and sincere, and you say, Lord, show me your will, confirm, remove things, God will answer those prayers. And when you ask, what is your will, you know what you do? You keep asking.

Keep asking. Keep asking. That's why Jesus said, keep knocking.

Keep knocking. Keep petitioning God for those prayer requests. And then acknowledge that heaven has the final say.

Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Thank God you have the final say. God, heaven has the final say in this.

And really what this prayer is doing, it's getting your heart back and it's positioning it in the right direction toward God. Lord, get my heart back on the right track. Acknowledging that heaven has the final answer in this.

And again, on this political things that are going on, politics, we need to really make sure what side God is on. Where's God at? What does he want us to be doing in our nation and in the churches? And then verse 11, give us this day our daily bread. Our daily bread.

Pray that needs are satisfied. This is where we go through the sifter. We find out what our needs are versus what our wants are.

And I believe a lot of prayers aren't answered because we're praying according to our wants, not our needs. The difference here, Lord, what do I need? Well, he's saying it right here. Give us this day our daily bread.

And many times we're looking too far ahead. God says right now, today, what is my daily need? Lord, you're going to provide whatever that is. And I also believe that it keeps us, when he says here, our daily bread, God wants to hear from us daily.

Daily, he wants to hear from us. Give us our daily bread. But also what happens when God doesn't answer? I mean, I've read articles just recently about a man who prayed for, or actually prayed for his brother that God would heal him of autism.

And he hasn't, 18 years later. What happens when the cancer doesn't leave? See, this is a time right here, God, give us our daily bread. And I've learned that we have to get to a point to where God is enough.

God is enough or you will go crazy. You will lose your faith. You will get upset at God because he's not answering things that you want him to answer.

So your faith has to be anchored on God is enough. Now it sounds easy, but you get to a point where like Job, though he slay me, yet will I trust him. The Psalms talks about taking everything from me, Lord, but as long as you are my anchor, as long as you are my rock.

And I can name dozens of names right now who are bitter and distant from God because he did not answer prayers according to what they wanted. And many of those were good prayers. We've had to bury people that we prayed for.

Good prayers. But you have to, as believers, you get to the point where God, you are enough. Even if you don't answer this prayer, I love you, I will trust you, I will follow you.

The enemy cannot work in that environment. It's hard to discourage that kind of person. It's hard for a root of bitterness to grow in that kind of person.

You've got to get to the point where you say, God, you are enough. And it really happens, at least in my own life, I don't want to share too much. But when you're praying for healing in people, and you don't see it, and you get frustrated, you could start to lose faith.

You even consider not praying anymore. And I'm often reminded, when I read the Bible, that Lazarus still died. Lazarus.

The girl Jesus raised from the dead, they still died. So sometimes God's will isn't healing every single person. We don't understand his will.

And that's a difficult one for healing, isn't it? That's probably one of the top ones. Or finances, or marriage issues. And Lord, why aren't you answering? A couple reasons.

I believe, number one, it draws us closer to Christ if we use it to our advantage. Now, it can push you away. But desperate times call for a desperate clinging to the cross.

Looking back at my own life, Lord, why in the world did I go through that? But thank God I did. I guarantee I would not be up here today had I not gone through what I went through. Because through that pain, through the brokenness, through the utter humiliation, that song we sing, out of the ashes you begin to arise.

God begins to pull you up out of the ashes and you walk head held high because you know who God is. Even though the prayers weren't answered. Even though you didn't see the results.

And I think it's a shame when we begin to base our opinion on God based on what he's answering versus who he is. And I know it's difficult. It's easy to say, but it's difficult.

But you have to get to a point where he is enough. And then it goes on to say, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Now, I don't want to take too much of a rabbit trail here.

I had the verse in and I thought, I don't want to just mention it if I can't fully explain it. But this is the part where where Jesus said, if you do not forgive others, God will not forgive you. Now, of course, people, what does that mean? Salvation? What does that mean? All I know is I don't want to find out.

God says, if you're not forgiving others in your heart, and if I time to break it down, there's a lot to that, where God can possibly hold something against us because we're holding unforgiveness and bitterness in our hearts, and we won't receive fully the blessings of God, that relational aspect of God. But Jesus said it here, forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. So prayer reminds us to forgive.

I don't know about you, but it's hard to hold in a lot of anger when I'm praying. That's why many Christians don't pray, because they're bitter, and they're angry, and they're resentful, and it quenches a powerful prayer life, quenches, I should say. Can you really pray when you're holding all that in? I can't.

Tell me how you do it. If I'm bitter, and there's unforgiveness, and resentfulness, and just anger, I can't pray. I don't want to pray.

I might say a quick pray, Lord, get them. Lord, I'm tired of this. I'm not going to deal with them any longer.

But to really pray, you've got to remove those things. And that's this point is here, forgive and let. It doesn't mean the other person is right.

See, that's where we mess up. Because people say, Shane, you don't know what such and such did to me. No, I don't.

But forgiving doesn't mean they were right. It just means you're releasing that root of bitterness that is growing in your heart. And from that release, now you're free.

You're not holding that against them. Let God judge them. And then your prayer life comes alive again.

And it doesn't mean you won't feel the pain. It doesn't mean you won't struggle with bitterness or unforgiveness, because we struggle with that. But you're releasing it.

God, I'm letting it go this morning. And I know in my own life, and the people I've talked to, that once they let that go, the floodgates fall. The eyes, and they begin to pray again.

They begin to, oh, God, thank you. They begin to say things like that. Thank you, God.

Thank you for releasing me. Oh, God, I feel your spirit again. I'm alive again.

Oh, God, thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

What was the stumbling block? Unforgiveness and bitterness and anger. That's why I think many people cannot pray. And I mean, pray well and really pray and pull down heaven, because that stumbling block is there.

That root of bitterness. Here's how damning, I'm not cussing. Here's how damning and dangerous bitterness is because it's already, it will start to plant excuses in our mind why we can remain bitter.

We can sit here and say, man, that's a good point, but nope, I'm not letting it go. So how many more weeks, months, years are you going to sit in church and hold on to this? You got to let that go, and you have to let it go quickly. Now, obviously, I think he's talking about God will forgive us our debts in regard to sanctification.

Of course, we need to be forgiven of our sins for salvation, but he's teaching disciples to pray, Lord, forgive us of our sins, of our debts, of the things we've committed. It's very good to confess. Confession is good for the soul.

I have people tell me, I confessed when I got saved. I don't need to confess. Have you been like Jesus? You've lived a perfect life.

Confess of that tongue, confess of that anger, confess of allowing demonic influence into your home. I just preached Sunday, which some of you know, we're here. I didn't say in the first service, but I went off on the second service.

I saw the trailer for that new movie, The Nun, N-U-N. I can't even watch the trailer, but somebody emailed me. They said, I am so convicted.

I've let that garbage into my home. I've been watching darkness and horror films, and I confess it, but they saw the spiritual connection. It was hurting them spiritually.

You cannot let darkness in, enjoy darkness, and then expect the light of the gospel to penetrate through your life. It's impossible. When the light comes on, the darkness flees, but when the darkness comes on, the light is suppressed.

We see it a lot of times in kids who struggle with suicide or adults. It's because they're feeding this darkness and this depravity. Confession needs to take place, and God, I shouldn't have done that.

I shouldn't have acted that way. You get there in the morning or evening, whenever your prayer time is. For me, I'm brain dead in the evening, so mine's in the morning.

You pray, God, I need to get this out of me. This pride or this jealousy came up, or I was hot-tempered with my kids, or I'm impatient. God, would you begin to remove this? Show me how.

Ask if there's changes you can make, changes you can make in your own life, the way you view things. Maybe you're too focused on money. Maybe you're not taking care of your body.

That has huge ramifications on how we feel. When you're not feeding your body good, when you're not taking care of it, it affects your emotions, your serotonin levels, your dopamine. I can get into a lot of detail about that if you want to, but I've had people come and tell me, Shane, I feel 10 times better when I start to take care of my body.

God will begin to convict you of those areas in this prayer time of confession. How are you going to get through and, God, relieve anger in your life if you don't confess it? Well, I'm just short-tempered. Well, you'll never get better.

How are you going to get through lust if you don't confess it? God, this isn't healthy. This isn't good. Show me.

How are you going to get through? Anyone struggle with jealousy? That's huge. Bitterness? Envy everything? How are you going to get through that if you don't confess it? That's why they call it the green eye monster. Envy, I think it is, because it keeps growing.

This is a wonderful time during your prayer, whether you do it midway through. I like to do it at the beginning. Confession, and it begins to clear the heart.

Before you realize it, you don't even know what you're praying for. You're just either crying or you're so thankful that God is a good God. In the thankfulness, you need to start praying for things that are not even on your mind or weren't even on your list, because God is leading you through His Spirit through deep areas that need healing.

I already said this. I don't know if I have it up there, but one of the hindrances to unanswered prayer is unforgiveness. One of the main hindrances to unanswered prayer is unforgiveness.

What this does, forgiving others of wrongs done against us, it keeps us in a humble, teachable position to receive from God. See, if you want to receive from God, you have to position yourself correctly, do we not? I mean, if I'm like this, I'm not going to hear from God, I don't want to spend time, I'm not going to receive much. But this puts us in a humble, teachable position to receive.

So when my heart is open, it's like my hands are open. Could you hand me something? Yes, now I can receive. Same thing with getting the heart open.

And it's a daily struggle. Everything I'm talking about does not happen overnight, it's a daily struggle. There'll be weeks where you're doing great, and then you fall off.

And it's hard to get back on track because the enemy wants to keep you kicked down, and keeps kicking you while you're down. Remember I talked about that thing on Sunday, or a few Sundays ago, the devil is relentless. We sing that song, God won't relent, guess who else won't relent? He doesn't care if you're having a hard day, he likes it when you have a hard day.

The enemy isn't concerned about your feelings, he'll take everything he can from your life if possible. He doesn't give up, he doesn't let up, you have to run into the strong tower of God's presence here in this prayer closet. And then 13, and do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Now we know through scripture that God does not lead anyone into temptation. It says that, he doesn't lead you, like push you into temptation. Now there's different translations on this, but let's talk about this for a minute.

Lead us, Psalm 5, verse 8, Psalm 27, 11, they talk about God leading us, what is the best direction? Lead us in your ways. So lead me out of temptation, Lord, lead me into your way, into your position. And Lord, lead me not into temptation.

Now we know what that means, you ever have kids, how many of you have kids or have had kids, and you will avoid certain aisles in the grocery store? Okay, when I take my kids shopping, we're doing the outer perimeter. Produce, healthy food, I'm not going down that candy lane no matter what happens. And you know what, it helps them avoid temptation.

But if I walk them, what kind of dad's going to walk them right by the candy and then tell them, no. Lead you right in, no. But it works for us as adults too, Lord, please lead me, don't lead me.

You know what your trigger is, alcohol, pills, lust, addictions, whatever it is, Lord, keep me away from those triggers. Don't lead me down the grocery aisle that I struggle with. Keep me away from those temptations, do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

So there's a delivering that takes place. So he's saying, don't lead me towards temptation, God, pull me from that and also deliver me from the wicked one. When he comes against me, raise up your spirit against him and deliver me from the wicked one.

You better be praying that every morning for your children, for yourselves, for your family, Lord, deliver me from the wicked one because he is a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. And I think we go into battle unarmed and unprepared. Again, this is a great opportunity at this point in the prayer to confess and ask for strength.

And this can also refer to trials. Lord, do not lead me through trials, unnecessary trials. Pull me out of that fire before it gets too hot.

So what I do, I use this as a model prayer and that's what I'm sharing with you this evening. Did you get the heart right? You remember who God is? There's confession that takes place. There's deep humility.

There's a removing of sin. And I think we got to get back to that where we need to make prayer a priority. You need to discipline your body to pray because you're not going to get up and you're going to feel like it.

You're not going to get up and feel like praying like you feel like watching game two of the World Series. True story. I stayed at home and I worked on this for game one.

Did I feel like it initially? But about 10 minutes into it, when God just began to pour a lot of this into me and get my prayer life back that last night and just wanting to help others, it changed. See, the feelings came in later. We allow the feelings to control us.

I'm going to do something that I feel like versus saying no, I'm going to do it because it's right and we're called to discipline ourselves. And then the feelings of accomplishment and enjoyment and satisfaction come after the hard decision has been made. So we need to get back.

And that's one thing I'm embarrassed about when I read older books. I'm reading one right now written 100 years, 120 years ago. Like, where are these guys spending so much time to pray? Reading journals, David Brainer and Jonathan Edwards and Wesley and you know, spent 5am to 7.30 in prayer and supplication.

And they'll list their prayer. They might say, well, I can't do that. We could if we wanted to.

Now some people can't go hours. I got it. But we can start prioritizing and start removing things that are distracting us and say, God, you're going to be the priority again.

Even when I don't feel like it, I'm going to pray. I'm going to seek you. Because that's what's about seeking God even when we don't feel like it.

And then we remember that yours, God, is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever and ever and ever and ever. Remember who you're praying to. Amen just means I agree.

We agree with this statement. God's kingdom will prevail. God's power, His glory, no matter what's happening in the news, no matter what political party takes office on November 6, we find out certain things.

It doesn't matter in the big scheme of things. I don't want to clarify that. It does matter, I think.

But God's kingdom is what's going to finally prevail. Remember who God is. His dominion, His power and His glory forever.

So that's how you end the prayer is after the confession, everything we just talked about. You say, okay, Lord, your kingdom will prevail, your dominion, your authority, and you walk out strengthened. See, most people go into their day not strengthened, weakened.

Right? They look at the news. Well, it was me. Grab a pot of coffee.

Oh, Lord, I'm in a hurry. And they just hit the road. Weakened, weakened, not strengthened.

They go to work, weakened. Employees get on their back, weakened. They're not strengthened in the Lord.

So you leave that prayer closet and you say, God, remember, I'm remembering your dominion, your power and your glory forever. And you bring back God. You put God rightfully on the throne again.

And you remember, oh, God, you're so good. Your kingdom will prevail. You've already won the war.

We're just in the battle. And you start to focus on and get thankful. And you walk out of that prayer closet bold in the authority of who Christ is and what God has given you.

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