

The Discipline of Dependence

April 26, 2026

Main Passage: Matthew 6:5-14

Theological Theme

Prayer is a vital part of the Christian life.

Introduction

- ① Have you ever practiced a skill for work or in life that you have grown really good at over time? What was it?
- ② If there was a skill you hoped to improve, how would you begin practicing it?

1. How to Pray (Matthew 6:5-8)

Prayer is a critical part of the Christian life. As Christians, we are disciples of Jesus. A good disciple models their rabbi, or teacher. A good disciple learns from the words their rabbi says. They learn from their actions, and an action we see Jesus take over and over again in the Gospels is praying (Matthew 14:23; Luke 5:16; 6:12). This was a regular, important practice in Jesus's life. He didn't just pray to bless the food He ate. Prayer wasn't an "every now and then" thing. It was regular, repeated, and consistent.

- ① What stands out to you in Jesus's words on prayer in these verses?
- ② Is there is there anything you find surprising or unexpected? Why?
- ③ Of these two descriptions of wrong approaches to prayer, which might you be more susceptible toward? Why?

2. The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13)

Prayer is a critical part of the Christian life, but one that many of us may not feel totally comfortable with. The impression that we need to be "perfect" in our words, or feelings of inadequacy (we don't want to sound dumb when we pray!), act as roadblocks for this needed practice.

- ❓ Consider reading this passage in a few different translations. What stands out to you? Did you notice something new?
- ❓ What can we learn about how we are to pray from Jesus's example here?
- ❓ Where are you encouraged by Jesus's model prayer? Where are you challenged?

3. Forgiveness (Matthew 6:14)

In Matthew 18, when Peter asked Jesus, "How many times must I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me?" (Matthew 18:21), Jesus taught the parable of the unforgiving servant. In it, the servant owes his master an amount so large he could never afford to repay, and the master shows the servant mercy. He forgives the debt. The servant, however, turns around and refuses to forgive a small debt owed to him by his fellow servant, and when the master gets word of this act, he has the servant thrown into jail.

- ❓ Why is forgiveness a vital part of the Christian life?
- ❓ What do Jesus's words in this verse indicate about the way unforgiveness in our lives impacts our prayers?
- ❓ Who is God calling you to forgive based on the grand scale of His forgiveness of you?

Conclusion

- ❓ What is your current relationship with prayer? How comfortable do you feel praying? How can you better weave the practice of prayer into your everyday life?
- ❓ How can we encourage one another in living as people of prayer?
- ❓ How does thinking about the forgiveness God has shown us help make it easier to forgive others? How should this forgiveness lead us to tell others about Jesus?