

**RED LETTER CHRISTIANS**  
**PRAY EFFECTIVELY #1**  
**Matt 6:9-13**

Video Clip from Flight 93 - Getting ready to crash praying The Lord's Prayer

Prayer is the normal response to crisis. It is featured over and over again in movies that deal with war, disaster and even alien invasions. Over and over again polls of the American population tell us that the vast majority of Americans daily or on a regular basis. The desire to pray is built into our DNA. People do it almost unconsciously.

James says if any of you are in trouble, you should pray...that is normal.

With all this prayer, you would think that our world would be safe and getting better. It doesn't seem to be getting better or safer.

There is a difference between prayer and effective prayer. There is often a difference between the prayers people pray and the prayers that Jesus prayed. Jesus' prayer changed things, they got results. When we pray like Jesus, our prayers will change things

This series is entitled **RED LETTER CHRISTIANS PRAY EFFECTIVELY**

Red Letter Christians are those who are determined to be like Jesus. They listen to his Words – the red letters and watch his life and ask that their life be changed so that it will look like his life, so that it will live in real life. Red Letter Christians pray... they pray effectively.

This series of Red Letter Christians will focus on Jesus' teaching on prayer found in Matthew 6 and Luke 11. It is often called The Lord's Prayer, but it probably should be called The Disciples Prayer.

Before we jump into the Lord's Prayer, let's take a minute to see the context of his teaching. The prayer is found in two places: Matthew 6-The Sermon on the Mount and here in Luke 11: in response to the disciple's question. We will look at how the Lord's Prayer is set up.

*Luke 11:1*

*1 One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."*

Look at what is happening here. Jesus was praying, the disciples were watching and asked him how to pray. They noticed something different about his prayers from their prayers. They asked him to teach them how to pray. A good parent or teacher knows that the best teaching takes place in response to a question. A question means people are interested and are more open than at any other time.

Before we go on, we need to see that Jesus modeled prayer to his disciples. Parents, do you want your kids to pray? They need to see prayer modeled. Leaders, do you want those you are leading to pray? Model prayer. This is why we have requested that every leader is in a prayer meeting.

I have a visible picture in my mind of my father and mother praying with us kids. They modeled prayer as a daily activity. They modeled prayer as normal. Prayer set the spiritual tone; it created the atmosphere of our home.

Jesus modeled prayer and then taught the disciples to pray.

The church has historically taught its new converts and children to learn this prayer. Not as an ending, but as a starting place in the life of prayer. The church has encouraged people to memorize the prayer but also use it as a model/pattern for prayer.

**Learning to pray like Jesus is an exciting adventure!** As the disciples learned to pray they saw miracles happen; people were healed, brought to Christ, power was unleashed and demons were cast out. These disciples were transformed from fishermen to fishers of men. These were common folk who became the leaders of the Church and turned the world upside down. These disciples learned how to pray. We must learn how to pray as well.

Notice I said learning to pray like Jesus. Praying effectively must be learned. But you don't have to go to seminary to learn it. It isn't hard. The Spirit of God will teach us as we read the word, pray with sincerity alone and with the Body of Christ.

**Learning to pray like Jesus enables us to live in Jesus' presence**

***Ephesians 2:6***

*And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the **heavenly realms** in Christ Jesus,*

When we pray we move into the presence of God, we take our seat with Christ. God's intention is that we are to live in Christ. We often get out of our seat and start living life on our own. It gets lonely on our own. It gets troubling on our own. God intends us to live each day, each moment in His presence.

## VIDEO ILLUSTRATION      “I LOVE MY SPACE”

### **Learning to pray like Jesus is also dangerous.**

Anytime we get serious about changing the world through prayer and ministry, the satanic world will come against us. The powers of this world are following the marching orders of the prince and power of the air. Any real prayer, life changing prayer, world touching prayer is taken notice of by the enemy.

Martin Luther said... anytime the work of Christ occurs, demons move into action.

*Ephesians 6:11-12*

*Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.*

Once you start praying effectively, you must continue or you will be overcome. Don't ask this question if you don't intend to follow-through and pray. It's dangerous.

Don't forget that the Jesus who taught us to pray like this was crucified!

I understand to a certain extent those in our church and other churches who just want to get their feet wet; Just enough to be a Christian without getting all “crazy.” I think you know that if you sell out, you have to keep selling out.

The Message translates Jesus words in Matthew six in such a clear way.

*Matthew 6:5-9*

*"And when you come before God, don't turn that into a theatrical production either. All these people making a regular show out of their prayers, hoping for stardom! Do you think God sits in a box seat?"*

*"Here's what I want you to do: Find a quiet, secluded place so you won't be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to sense his grace."*

*"The world is full of so-called prayer warriors who are prayer-ignorant. They're full of formulas and programs and advice, peddling techniques for getting what you want from God. Don't fall for that nonsense. This is your Father you are dealing with, and he*

*knows better than you what you need. With a God like this loving you, you can pray very simply. Like this:*

What is Jesus saying here? I believe he is making three very simple but significant points about prayer.

**1. Prayer can be abused.**

The religious leaders of Jesus day had made prayer in a sport. There is a prize for who prays the longest, loudest and makes the biggest show. It was like a skating or diving competition. The person skates or dives and those watches hold up their signs rating the skating performance or dive. That was a 9.9 out of ten and everyone claps and is thrilled. That works in skating, diving, gymnastics but it doesn't work in praying.

**2. Prayer requires honesty before God**

**3. Prayer is not a formula to get what you want; it is conversation with our Father** who happens to be God.

Let's read it together. Not because it's only value is to pray over and over, but because there is value in praying it together. I want us to pray it together three times, first in the KJV because this and the 23 Psalm sounds strange in any other version. I have also include it from The New Living Translation which I really enjoy reading.

Before we do, some people look in their Bibles, especially new translations and see that the last verse is often left out with a note at the bottom saying that the oldest manuscripts do not include *For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, Amen.*

That just blows some people away. It isn't that big of a deal. We don't have the original version of the Bible. We only have copies from about 100 years after the originals were written. The oldest copies don't seem to have that last line. If Jesus was saying these words are the words you have to pray, and you have to say it just like I am saying it then it would matter. Jesus was giving us a pattern to follow.

If we had to say it word for word it would be tough since Jesus probably spoke it in Aramaic, which none of us speak very well. It was written down in Greek which isn't even the same Greek they speak in Greece today.

*Matt 6:9-13 (King James Version)*

*Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.*

*Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

*Give us this day our daily bread.*

*And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*

*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:*

*For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. (KJV)*

*Matt 6:9-13 (The New Living Translation)*

*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.*

*Give us today the food we need,<sup>1</sup>*

*and forgive us our sins,*

*as we have forgiven those who sin against us.*

*And don't let us yield to temptation,<sup>1</sup>*

*but rescue us from the evil one.*

*For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*

Jesus disciples watched Jesus pray effectively and asked him to teach them to pray. How about you? Is your prayer effective? Is it like Jesus' prayer? Or, do you need to spend some time at the beginning of this series asking God to teach you to pray more effectively?

## CLOSING PRAYER TIME

Quiet music playing...

Prayer scriptures on the screen...

You can come and kneel at the altar and ask God to help you pray more effectively or you can sit quietly, read the scriptures and pray.