

DISCIPLES PRAY INTENTIONALLY

YEAR: TRANSFORM / FOCUS: LIVING IN PURSUIT / SERIES: DISCIPLE

BIG TRUTH: DISCIPLES PRAY INTENTIONALLY

Philippians 4:6; James 5:16, 18; Mark 11:24; Matthew 26:41

BIBLE VERSE: MATTHEW 6:9

“Pray then like this: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed by your name.’”

BIG IDEAS

- Prayer is about the pursuit of God, not the approval of others.
- Prayer is meant to align our hearts with God’s purposes.
- Prayer is meant to center our personal needs within our need for God Himself.

BIBLE PASSAGE: MATTHEW 6:5-15

TRANSFORM - LIVING IN PURSUIT

In High School, the Transform Year is an exploration of what it looks like to have transformed influence as we seek to live for a Kingdom that is greater than our own. First, we recognize that we will never be transformed if we are not Living for Jesus. To do this, we must first know who Jesus is by looking at who He says He is (John 8:58), and then look at what the Bible says about how in Him, we live by faith (James 1:6). Next, we recognize that to have transformed influence means that we must live as disciples in pursuit of Christ and His Kingdom over ourselves and our own kingdoms.

SERIES AIMS



Every student should know that...

- Jesus is the only source of life
- God’s Word is authoritative and applicable for all of life
- To follow Jesus is to pursue a life of sacrifice and surrender



Every student should feel...

- Thankful for the triune God who is worthy
- Convicted of how deception has led them to disobedience
- Responsible to use their influence to live for Jesus alone



Every student should strive to...

- Read through the gospel of John
- Memorize the Bible verse each week
- Implement regular rhythms of prayer and fasting throughout the semester



Every student should want to...

- Pursue obedience even when faith is a struggle
- Grow in living in step with the Holy Spirit
- Live their lives to glorify God the Father

GUIDES AND WORKOUTS

The Guide provides a commentary page on each week’s Bible verse and on each Big Idea that unpacks the Big Truth. Each week also includes a Student Workout as a resource to help the student pursue spiritual disciplines on their own. Additionally, each week has a Family Workout that helps equip parents and guardians to have spiritual conversations with their student.



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BIBLE VERSE: MATTHEW 6:9

"Pray then like this: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed by your name.'"

Disciples follow Jesus' example of prayer.

"Pray then like this..."

- Jesus' disciples follow His example in every way, especially in how they pray. Prayer is the mode by which God's people communicate to Him. A person who desires to be like Jesus will follow Jesus' example of how to pray.
- Disciples will listen to Jesus' teaching on prayer and do as Jesus instructed. They will pray as He prayed and follow His example of prayer. When we pray as Jesus instructs, we are aligning our hearts with His and seeking to be like Him.

Disciples pray with reverence to God the Father.

"Pray then like this: 'Our Father in heaven...'"

- The word "Father" in this verse translates in Aramaic to "Abba". This word would have been used by Jewish children to address their earthly fathers, but it was also used in Aramaic and Greek by adults to address their earthly fathers. This term would have been used with reverent familiarity because whether the person was a child or adult, he or she would have been addressing someone they knew well.
- Disciples pray to God the Father as One they know well, but they do so with reverence because He is the God of the universe. He is Holy and set apart and worthy of all honor and praise.

Disciples pray with great purpose.

"Pray then like this: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed by your name.'"

- For God's name to be "hallowed" is for it to hold the highest honor and to be set apart. When Jesus taught His disciples, He taught them to ask for God the Father to be glorified in all the world. Jesus taught this knowing that the Father in Heaven would be glorified through Jesus' death. Jesus prayed with great purpose.
- As Jesus' disciples, we, too, pray with great purpose. We pray that God's name would be made famous in all the world. We pray for His name to be held up as holy and for others in all of the world to praise Him. We pray for our lives to be used for His purposes in all of the world. When we do this, we are following Jesus' example.

BIG IDEA #1: PRAYER IS ABOUT THE PURSUIT OF GOD, NOT THE APPROVAL OF OTHERS.¹**[THIS]**

Prayer is the way God's people communicate with Him. As a disciple of Jesus, believers pray as a way to know God. Prayer isn't something that disciples do just to check off a box and say they've accomplished something. It's a way of pursuing a knowledge of God and seeking to know Him. When we want to get to know another person, we pursue them and have conversations with them. The same is true of our relationship with God. As we pray, we are communicating with Him, desiring to know Him and to be known by Him. In Matthew 6:5-6, Jesus taught His disciples to pray in secret. This doesn't mean that a believer can never pray in public, but it emphasizes the personal nature of our relationship with God. Because our relationship with God is personal, our prayer life is personal and is about a pursuit of Him and a deepening of this relationship.

[THEREFORE]**How can our prayer life help us know God?**

In Jeremiah 33:3, we see that a pursuit of God can result in knowing great and previously unknown things. When we pursue God in prayer, we will discover truths about God and grow our relationship with Him in ways that we wouldn't ordinarily. Psalm 145:18 also shows us that seeking God does result in finding Him. Prayer is not just speaking into nothing because God is active in our prayers.

[THIS]

In Matthew 6:5-6, Jesus teaches about people who stand in public in front of the synagogues to pray, doing so to be seen and heard. These people are praying so they will be noticed and to receive praises from others, not because they want to know God. He warns His followers against this type of prayer. Our prayer life isn't about seeking the approval of others. We do not pray so that the people around us approve of our prayers. Our prayers are personal and even when we pray publicly, we do so as a means of speaking to God. Often we hesitate to pray in front of others because we care too much what they may think of our prayers. When we change our perspective and focus more on communicating with God and using prayer as a way of talking to Him and seeking Him, we can pray in front of others or in private and not be bothered if others like our prayers or not. Our focus will be on pursuing God and God alone.

[THEREFORE]**Read Matthew 6:5-6. How has the approval of others kept you from praying in front of others?**

These verses show us people who desired to be seen as more religious and zealous than they really were. They prayed nice prayers in public, but their hearts were far from God. When we desire the approval of others too much, it will hinder our prayer life. We will choose to not pray at all or we will pray flowery prayers that are hypocritical and meaningless.

What have you learned about God through your prayer life?

Jeremiah 29:13 teaches that those who seek God with their whole heart find Him. When we pray to God and seek Him whole-heartedly in our prayers, we will find Him. Deuteronomy 4:29 reminds us that He draws near to those who are seeking Him and Psalm 14:2 promises us that God is looking down to see those who are seeking Him. God will reveal Himself to those who want to know Him. We can trust that when we seek Him in prayer, He will reveal Himself to us.

1. Matthew 6:6: When we pray, our desire should be to know God, not to garner the praise of others.

BIG IDEA #2: PRAYER IS MEANT TO ALIGN OUR HEARTS WITH GOD'S PURPOSES.²

[THIS]

In Matthew 6:9-10, Jesus teaches His disciples how to pray. These first few verses reveal how prayer works to align a believer's heart with the will of God. God's purposes for mankind and the world should be viewed as superior to those of anyone else because God is the beginning of all things. He is the Creator of the world and every person; therefore, He alone knows what is best and right. For a disciple of Jesus, God's purposes should hold the highest priority. We should desire His will be done before our will is done. We should seek His kingdom and work to expand His kingdom over creating our own kingdom. The sum of our lives isn't made up of our life on this earth. It's made up of what we do for God's kingdom and how we work to expand it and bring Him glory in all of the world. As we pray, our focus should be seeking His glory and desiring His kingdom to exist on this earth as it does in Heaven.

[THEREFORE]

Read Matthew 6:9-10. What do you think it means for God's kingdom to come here on earth?

When Jesus taught His disciples to pray for God's kingdom to come, He was teaching them to pray for His return and the new heaven and earth. He was teaching them to desire Jesus to rule and reign on earth as He does in heaven. Our prayer life works to move our hearts to desire this.

[THIS]

Because we live in this world, it's easy to get caught up in the things of the world. Even when we are redeemed and followers of Christ, we can become more focused on earthly things than heavenly things. Worldly distractions threaten to keep us from working to expand the Kingdom of God. Instead, we build earthly kingdoms that will all fade away when Christ returns and this world ends. When we pray, our prayer life can work to align our hearts with God's purposes for our lives. As we commune with God and sit before Him, our hearts open to hear Him, our desires are transformed. We see sin that we once overlooked. We see idols that we've created and need to repent of. We begin to understand what God desires of us and for us. As we pray, we grow in our understanding of God and His purposes, our hearts will align with His will and we will follow in obedience.

[THEREFORE]

How has prayer helped you see sin that you've previously overlooked?

Proverbs 28:13 shows us that concealed sin never leads us to prosper. When we seek God in prayer and ask Him to show us our sin, He will do so. Prayer helps us align with God's purposes because it helps us confess our sins and live righteously before Him. Romans 14:12 reminds us that each follower of Christ will give account of his or her actions before God. As we pray, we can recognize the sins we need to remove from our lives.

What does it look like for you to pray for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven? What keeps you from praying for this to happen?

In Matthew 6:9-10, Jesus teaches that His people should ask that His will be done on earth as it is done in heaven. To pray this, our hearts must desire God's purposes for ourselves and the world. We cannot be distracted by the things of the world or love the world too much if we are to pray this prayer.

2. Matthew 6:10: Disciples of Jesus use prayer to align their hearts with God's purposes.

BIG IDEA #3: PRAYER IS MEANT TO CENTER OUR PERSONAL NEEDS WITHIN OUR NEED FOR GOD HIMSELF.³

[THIS]

God is the beginning and end of all things. He is the Creator of all life and through Him all life is sustained. The sun continues to shine because He allows it to do so. We each have life and continue to breathe oxygen because God enables us to do so. He allows us to function in this life and to serve Him as His people. We need Him and without Him, we can do nothing. This is our greatest need. As His people, we have to acknowledge that we need Him above all else. When we can acknowledge that we need God more than anything else, we have arrived at a place of understanding our position before Him. Our prayer life helps us understand this. As we pray to Him, we grow in our understanding of who He is and how He works in us and in the world around us. As we understand this, we get a sense of His greatness and that all that we are and have is because of Him.

[THEREFORE]

How does your ease of life on earth keep you from seeing that your greatest need is God?

When life is easy, it's easy to forget that our greatest need is God. It's easy to forget that all we have is from Him. Hebrews 1:3 and Psalm 55:22 remind us that all that we have is from Him and that He alone sustains our lives. He is our greatest need.

How can you discipline yourself to use your prayer life to ask God for your greatest need?

Proverbs 8:17 and Lamentations 3:25 help us understand that when we seek God in prayer and seek Him as our greatest need, we will find Him. As we ask for more of Him, we will get more of Him. When we do this in our prayer life, we will center our needs on Him and grow in Him.

[THIS]

Every person who lives on this earth has daily needs. God is aware of our needs and knows before we even ask what we need and when we need it. Though God is all-knowing, Jesus still taught His people to ask for their daily needs in Matthew 6:11. It may seem pointless to ask God for something that He already knows we need, but the act of surrendering to God our most basic needs is an act of worship and acknowledgment that He is actually what we need. When we turn to Him for our most basic needs, we are actually centering these daily needs within our greater need, which is our relationship with Him. Just as Jesus taught His disciples to ask for their daily bread, we, too, should ask God for our needs each day. As we do so, we are focusing our hearts and lives on Him and reminding ourselves that He is our source for everything.

[THEREFORE]

How does abundance or even self-reliance keep you from asking God for your daily needs?

Deuteronomy 32:18 is a great picture of what it looks like to forget that all we have is from God. When the Israelites forgot God, they forgot all that He had done for them and that He had chosen them as His special people. When we live in abundance, or we rely on ourselves too much, we easily forget that it is God who gives us all good things. This can prevent us from asking Him each and every day for our daily needs.

3. Matthew 6:11-12: To ask God for our daily bread is to acknowledge that we first need Him above all else.