



Practice Prayer

October 4-10, 2026

J.D. began the session by commiserating with anyone who has tried to pray without getting distracted. It's tough to stay focused.

What strategies have you tried to help your times of prayer stay on track?

Which ones have worked for you?

Jesus offered us what J.D. calls a “model prayer,” known as the Lord’s Prayer. But before Jesus taught us how to pray, he described ways not to pray. **Read [Matthew 6:5-8](#).**

The Pharisees prayed pretentiously, using prayer as a means to an end. They wanted something from God more than they wanted a close relationship with God. Gentiles—those who did not have any relationship with God—would recite prayers mechanically, thinking repetition would make God pay attention.

In what ways have your own prayers resembled those of the Pharisees or the Gentiles?

What changes can you make to avoid attempting to use or manipulate God with your prayers?

Read [Matthew 6:9-13](#).

As he introduced the Lord’s Prayer, J.D. told the story of his daughter bursting through a crowd to show him her picture. Her freedom and joy is a reflection of what our relationship with God our Father can and should be. He welcomes our prayers with open arms.

How have you imagined God listening to your prayers? Is he attentive and caring or skeptical and disapproving?

In what ways can your prayer life be enriched through the reminder of God’s fatherly affection for you?

The Lord’s Prayer offers us a memorable yet simple structure for meaningful conversations with God. We can recite it thoughtfully or use the intents behind each line to help us focus on one particular theme. Whether worshiping, thanking, seeking forgiveness, or interceding, we are assured of God’s loving attention and pleasure when we pray.