

**“CLEAN OUT YOUR PRAYER CLOSET!”**  
**(Matt.6:5-8)**

In Christ’s foundational teaching known as “The Sermon on the Mount” He includes instruction on how to pray. He first addresses misconceptions and abuses of prayer. Today we will see three truths necessary to “clean out our prayer closets” for the kind of prayer life that pleases God.

**I. The PROPER ATTITUDE of Prayer (v.5)**

**“Hypocrites”** =Actors, Pretenders  
Mat.23:13-15, 23-29

**Greatest danger to religion = Old self becomes “religious”**

**Wrong Motive = To be seen of men (Lk.18:11)**

**\*\*AVOID HYPOCRISY IN PRAYER\*\***

**II. The PERSONAL INTIMACY of Prayer (v.6)**

**“Enter Into Thy Closet”**  
Pray more in private than in public  
Our Goal = PIETY, not the appearance of it.

**“Thy Father which seeth in secret” (Jn.1:48)**  
He sees our hearts

**\*\*FOCUS 100% ON GOD IN PRAYER\*\***

**III. The PRESCRIBED MANNER of prayer (vv.7-8)**

**“Vain Repetitions” (1 Cor.14:15)**  
No desire to seek or do God’s Will

**“Father knows before you ask!”**  
God does not need our instruction

**\*\*PRAY TO A PERSONAL GOD\*\***

**“CLEAN OUT YOUR PRAYER CLOSET!” (Mat.6:5-8)**  
**Small Group Discussion Guide**

1. **Read/discuss Matt.6:5.** What is the wrong motivation for prayer that Jesus refutes? Why are those who pray this way “hypocrites”? (See also 6:2, 16) What is the “reward” that they have already? How would you answer someone who says, “I don’t go to church because there are too many hypocrites there”?
2. **Read/discuss Mat.6:6.** How does the instruction of this verse sharply contrast the error addressed in v.5? Is the Lord condemning all public or group prayer? (Consider Acts 4:24; Mat.14:19; 18:20). What are some of the blessings of praying together with other Believers in Christ?
3. **Read/discuss Mat.6:7.** Why are vain repetitions in our prayers not wanted by our Heavenly Father? (See vain repetitions in 1 Kgs.18:26-29 & Acts 19:28-34) Is it wrong to repeat the same prayer request more than once? (See Mat.26:39-44 and 2 Cor.12:7-9). What are some practical ways that we can obey the command in 1 Thes.5:17 to “Pray without ceasing”?
4. **Read/discuss Mat.6:8.** How can we avoid thoughtless repetition in our prayers? (See 1 Cor.14:15, 19, 32) If God already knows our needs, then why bother expressing our needs to Him in prayer?

**Digging Deeper:**

Read over several times the pattern of prayer given by Jesus in Mat.6:9-15. Write down at least five principles for prayer that you can draw from these verses. (e.g., “Our Father” – Prayer is for those who have been born into God’s family by faith in Christ).

Write down a prayer request for which you will commit to pray for the next 30 days. Pray fervently for this request, making sure that you are worshipping God as you pray, allowing Him to change and grow you, and willing to submit to Him for His will in this request.