



When we choose to live different, we pray all the time.

Bible Story:

The Lord's Prayer: Matthew 6:9-15; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Memory Verse: "Never stop praying." *1 Thessalonians 5:17 NIRV*

Basic Truth: Jesus brought His followers to a mountain to explain to them what it means to live as part of God's kingdom - to live different. During that message, He taught them about the correct attitude to have when we pray and He even taught them *how* to pray. In **Matthew 6:9-15** Jesus teaches His followers how to pray by giving an example of prayer. God wants us to pray to Him with a right attitude and come to Him with anything and everything. In 1 Thessalonians 5:17, we're told to "Never stop praying." **When we choose to live different, we pray all the time.** We pray to grow closer to God. We pray because God wants us to.

Bible Study Message:

Last week, we finished learning about the Lord's Prayer in the Sermon on the Mount. We've learned that Jesus said that we should keep our prayers simple. God listens to us no matter if our prayers are long or short and you don't always have to have the right words. Jesus also mentions that we shouldn't "show off" when we pray. God doesn't want us to pray so people can see us or to hear how great we can pray. He wants us to pray in a quiet place with our own words, our needs, thanks, praise, and what we're sorry for. And we've learned about the example of prayer that Jesus gave us in the Lord's Prayer. We don't have to always pray the Lord's Prayer word for word. We can do that sometimes. But Jesus said that we should "pray like this." Jesus does not tell us to pray this prayer word for word every time we pray. He says "pray *LIKE this*." This prayer is an example of how we should pray and some of the things we should pray for.

We know that we should start our prayers addressing God as God, God's name is HOLY and we need to treat Him as holy, and that God's kingdom is going to be a place full of happiness and love. We can ask God to give us today all that we need. When we ask God for things, that means we trust Him and we'll leave the decision to God. We should ask for forgiveness, but we

also need to forgive people who have done wrong to us. And finally, we can ask God to help us know the right thing to do and protect us.

Whoa! We've learned a ton about prayer already! Today, we have one more thing to learn about prayer. We find it in 1 Thessalonians 5. Listen to what it says in verses 16-18:

"Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Give thanks no matter what happens. God wants you to thank him because you believe in Christ Jesus."

Did you catch what it said about prayer? It says to "never stop praying." So does God want us to pray every once in a while or all the time? That's right! God wants us to pray all the time! Prayer is a spiritual discipline. It's something we have to work on in order to be more like Jesus. We know that God wants us to work at some things like prayer because it says in 1 Timothy 4, verse 7-8:

"Don't have anything to do with godless stories and silly tales. Instead, train yourself to be godly. Training the body has some value. But being godly has value in every way. It promises help for the life you are now living and the life to come."

Prayer is one of those things that has value and helps us as we work to be more godly in our lives. Some other spiritual disciplines are reading your Bible, worship, serving others, and telling others about God. But today, we're making sure we know all we need to know about prayer. Who can tell me what prayer is? Prayer is talking to God. Anyone can talk to God, and we can talk to Him anywhere! It doesn't matter where we are. We should talk with God because it makes our relationship with Him stronger, and because the Bible tells us we should pray. We should also pray because God wants to hear from us.

God wants us to know Him more. He wants us to tell Him anything and everything. And God really does answer prayer. ***[Make it Personal: Tell your family about a time God has answered one of your prayers.]***

And here's the really cool part. God doesn't ever get tired of us talking to Him! He doesn't ever need a break from us like we might need a break from a friend or a family member. God wants to hear from us all the time! Remember what 1 Thessalonians 5:17 said? It said:

"Never stop praying."

It didn't say stop praying sometimes or only pray here or there. It said to NEVER stop praying. God wants us to talk to Him all the time! He loves us so much!

So when we're at school, on the playground, playing baseball, dancing, singing, at church, at home, lying down for a nap, or helping do chores...we can STOP and PRAY and talk to God! And

that's good news, isn't it? God is with us all the time, and He wants us to talk to Him about anything and everything all the time! Let's STOP and PRAY and talk to God right now.

~PRAY~

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Do you like to talk on the phone or Facetime? Do any of you talk on the computer?
- Who do you like to talk to and what about?
- Do your parents get upset if they lose their phones? Why do you think that is?
- Who can tell me what prayer is?
- What is something you have learned about prayer last week or this week that you didn't know before?
- Who should pray and Who should people pray to?
- Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18—What does it say about prayer?
- If talking to people is easy and we do it all the time, why is it so hard to spend time talking with God?
- Who can talk to God?
- When can we talk to God?
- Why is it important to talk to God?
- Is there anything you really want to talk to God about right now?
- Who are some people you could be praying for right now?

Activities for Preschool and Elementary Kids:

- **Prayer Chain Activity**
Items Needed:
 - ❖ **Paper or Construction Paper**
 - ❖ **Markers**
 - ❖ **Scissors**
 - ❖ **Tape or Glue or Stapler**

-Cut the paper into strips.

-Give each family member a set of strips and have them write one thing or person they want to pray for on each strip. **You may have to write for younger kids.**

-Once everyone has written on their strips of paper, link them together using the tape, glue or stapler to make a prayer chain.

-Put the chain up in your house where you can see it and be reminded to pray.

-At the same time each day, come together as a family, tear off one of the links of the chain and pray together for that request and/or person.

- **Prayer Hand Activity**

- Items Needed:**

- ❖ **Paper or Construction Paper**

- ❖ **Markers**

- Give each family member a piece of paper.

- Help each other trace their hand onto their paper.

- Have a discussion about how our hands can help us remember things to pray for using the below points.

- **Thumb:** The people closest to you—These are your close friends and family, often the first you think about when you pray. Give thanks to God and ask his protection on your parents, siblings, friends, and classmates.
 - **Pointer:** People who point the way—These are leaders in your life, such as teachers and pastors. Offer God your thanksgiving for them and ask him to help them in their important work.
 - **Tall Finger:** People in authority—The big people in the world need prayer too. Ask God to give wisdom to our government, military, and police.
 - **Ring Finger:** People who are weak—This is your weakest finger. We should remember others who are sick, live in poverty, or are treated badly. Pray that Jesus would give them new strength.
 - **Little Finger:** Your own needs—God wants to hear your needs too, especially when you put others first. Pray for your own growth in mind, body, and spirit.

- Go back through the above points and have each family member write someone or something on each finger of their hand.

- Put the correct name on each hand and then post them up where you can see them as a reminder to pray for those things each day.

- **Prayer Sardines Activity**

- Items Needed:**

- ❖ **Index Cards**

- ❖ **Pens or Markers**

- Turn a game of sardines into a group prayer session by writing a prayer on an index card or other piece of paper.

- Give the prayer to the person who is chosen to be "it," and have the rest of the players hide their eyes while that person hides with the prayer.

- All the other players must try to find the person hiding.

- Once one of the players finds the hider, they must join him in the hiding place.

- Each person that finds the hidden players must also hide with them until all the players are packed into the hiding place like sardines.
- Once all the players are in place, they all pray the prayer that is written on the card as a group.
- Have each family member take a turn writing a prayer and being "it." **You may have to help younger kids write their prayer.**

- **Telephone Activity**

- Items Needed:**

- ❖ **Family Members**

- This game is like the game "Telephone," but with a prayer twist.
- Sit everybody down in a circle on the floor or at a large table.
- Whisper a phrase that is based on prayer into the first child's ear. Some good phrases include "God will always hear our prayers" or "It makes Jesus very happy when we pray."
- The first person whispers a phrase to the person next to them, and they continue whispering the phrase around the circle until it reaches the last person.
- The last person says the phrase out loud.
- If you have a smaller number of people, have the phrase go around a second time before the person says it out loud.
- The phrase will most likely have changed while going down the line.
- Use this example to talk about how God hears what we mean to say even if we do not say it correctly.

- **Beach Ball Prayer Activity:**

- Items Needed:**

- ❖ **Beach Ball**

- ❖ **Sharpie or Permanent Marker**

-Write one category of "fill-in-the-blank" prayer prompts on each colored section of the ball. (You can also use a different type of ball you already have on hand, just improvise with the sections)

1. I praise you for...
2. Thank you for...
3. Please bless....
4. Jesus, forgive me.
5. Please help me with...
6. Hallelujah!

- Have fun throwing the ball from person to person.
- When you catch the ball, check and see where your right index finger landed and read off that prayer prompt.
- Have each family member fill in the blank when they catch the ball. *Note: "Jesus, forgive me." Ends with a period because some kids don't want to share a confession out loud and that is totally fine!*
- Continue playing as long as interest holds.