

Learning how to Respond to God in Prayer

Set the Stage

- We established that prayer is continuing a conversation that God started.
 - It is our response to God and is a direct avenue to know God better. It ends with an encounter with God.
- How can we correctly respond to God? Is there a right way and a wrong way?*
- If there is anyone who can teach us how to pray or respond to God, it is Jesus.
 - He is God, He has existed with God and so has communicated with God for a long time.

Read Matthew 26:36-44

- Here we come to a prayer of Jesus in what appears to be the hardest time in his life.
 - How did he pray? What did he say? What was his plan or methods?*
 - What can we learn from this prayer?*

Take it to the Next Level

In learning how to respond to God, Jesus teaches us to...

1. Addressing God (39)

A. Recognizing who God is. (Adoration, praise)

- Jesus begins His prayer by addressing God as Father.
 - We should begin this way, because it puts God in his rightful place and us in our rightful place.
- What does it mean that God is our Father?*
 - He is accessible and wants to hear & help
 - He gives, guides, corrects,

-He is personal and loving.

-He is our source of... peace, joy, love

-God who we should love supremely, we love not so much for **who** He is but for **what** he can do for us.

-Too often we come to God to make us happy.

B. Recognizing who we are. (Confession)

-A big part of learning how to pray and what to pray for, is learning who we are.

-We must recognize that we have a heart disorder.

-Our heart's loves are "disordered" or out of order.

-What we should love in third and fourth place are typically first in our heart

-Too often, we don't pray to know God, we pray to get things from God. We pray when circumstances force us to pray.

-We pray to get things to make us happy.

-We see God as a means through which to get things to make us happy.

-God has not become our happiness.

-God should be seen as our source of happiness not the source to get us things to make us happy.

In learning how to respond to God, Jesus teaches us to...

2. Addressing the Main Purpose (39, 42)

A. Seeking God's will.

-Jesus prays three times in our passage:

-In all three prayers, the main focus was on seeking and surrendering to God's will.

-When we talk about God's will we mean:

- What God desires, what God is thinking on the matter, what's the bigger picture.
- Why does Jesus focus on God's will so much in his prayer?*

1. Prayer of petition (39)

- Asking God to remove the trial and suffering
 - In his petition, he is seeking what God's will is.

2. Prayer of acknowledgment (42)

- Acknowledging what God's will might be.
- Acknowledging that God may not answer by removing the trial.

3. Prayer of understanding (44-45)

- In his repetition he is working out what God's will truly is. **He is communicating and listening to His father.**
- He comes to the conclusion of what God's will is.

- It is the "no" that we struggle with so bad.
 - It is not a mean no, it is a revealing of what His will is.

- We may not always understand what God is doing and why He is doing it but we understand His character (Father)
 - (Good, love, unchanging, can't lie)

B. Surrendering to God's will

- God did not answer Jesus' prayer...
 - God did not take away the "cup" (trial of suffering) because the "cup" was His will.
- In His surrender, He is giving over to whatever God's will is. The end result of prayer is encountering God,

discovering what God's will is and then
surrendering to it.

-“Jesus was not wrestling with God's will or resisting God's will. He was yielding Himself to God's will. As perfect Man, He felt the awful burden of sin, and His holy soul was repelled by it.” Warren W. Wiersbe

-The surrender is easier, the better we know God.

-When we know He is good, He always cares,
knows what is best, knows what we need
better than we know.

-Read Hebrews 5:7-9

- God answered “no” to his own Son.
- It was through the suffering that he learned
obedience or how to submit to God's will.
- We come to know God through our suffering.

In knowing God better, Paul prays that God will give them...

3. Addressing our Helper and Hinderance (41)

A. The spirit is willing in prayer.

-God has given us the Holy Spirit as a huge helper in and
for prayer.

-Read Romans 8:26-28

1. The Holy Spirit helps us to pray:
2. The Holy Spirit helps us to know what to pray:
 - The Holy Spirit helps align our prayers
with God's will.

B. The flesh is weak in prayer.

-The disciples could not stay awake. Jesus taught them to
pray to resist temptation. They let the flesh win and
they fell to the temptation.

-26:56 - The disciples fled

- The flesh is always going to be a hindrance to us. It is always there dragging us down.
- The flesh tells us:
 - Pray later, prayer doesn't work, prayer sucks,
 - The flesh gets tired, distracted, worried, consumed with other things.
- The flesh is not going to help you pray. You will have to fight the flesh in order to pray.

Conclusion

-Prayer is a journey, a discovery of what God's will is.

- A specific part of prayer is learning and discerning God's will. If prayer is knowing God better, then prayer is a direct avenue to discovering God's will.
 - In the world, our lives, in certain situations, in other people's lives.

Taking your next step

How can you respond to God through prayer?

1. Pray to your Father.

- He wants to hear from you. He wants to talk with you.
- He wants to answer you.
- He will respond to us as we respond to Him.

2. Pray to discover what God's will is.

- There is no better way to discover God's will than to have a conversation with Him.

3. Pray to surrender to God's will.

- We may not always understand why God does what He does.

-Prayer is getting to know God better which will allow us to surrender to His will easier.

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