

## PRAYER LESSON 144

### Prayer Is Relationship Based

In his day, Jesus denounced the practice of prayer of the Pharisees because it was performance focused. They thought that prayer was a ritual that they must practice to be right with God. They used prayer as a way of showing off to those who observed them praying. Jesus said about them in Matthew 6:5 **"And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full."**

Jesus told his disciples that prayer was about a relationship with the Father, an intimate relationship with the creator. The disciples were use to seeing the pharisees pray and may have been modeling their prayers after the Pharisees. When Jesus condemned the Pharisee's prayers the disciples responded by asking Jesus to teach them to pray. Jesus then gave them the model prayer we call the Lord's Prayer.

The Lord's prayer is all about this relationship God wants with us. Remember a relationship with the Father is only possible because Jesus' death dealt with our sins, the very sins that kept us from this relationship in the past.

In the Lord's Prayer we recognize the distinction between us and God. We also see the extent of this new relationship we have with our Father. We can call him our Father, and yet we quickly recognize his holiness, his infinite difference from us. God is almighty, so he has the power to answer our requests. He is also all loving, so he will want to answer them.

It is not in God's plans to disappoint us. He says through the prophet Jeremiah in Jeremiah 29:11 **For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.** This desire on the part of God to answer us is a result of the relationship we have with him.

So, when you pray, remember that you are praying to a God who loves you very much and has the power to answer even your greatest request.