



Quick Backdrop

As Christians, we know a lot of truth about prayer and its effects, but we can still fall prey to common misconceptions. Sometimes praying to God feels lonely or like a duty. Sometimes, we only reach out when we need help out of a jam. What if God wasn't just waiting to hear from us, but what if He was waiting to talk with us? What if learning the truth about prayer completely changed the way that we personally approach God?

Let's take a look at some of these common misconceptions. But before we dive in, we're going to call these misconceptions what they are: lies. Here's why: each of these misconceptions can lead us to a prayerless life, and we have one Enemy who benefits from our prayerless lives, the Father of Lies, the Devil. As we move through these verses, see if you can lock onto the rock-solid truth about prayer.

1 Digging In (God, Show Me!)

Lie #1: I need to impress God, and anyone else listening, with my prayer.

Read what Jesus had to say about prayer. Underline anything that sheds light on this lie.



Luke 18:9-14 (NIV)

⁹To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: ¹⁰"Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. ¹²I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.' ¹³"But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' ¹⁴"I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

Do either of these characters in Luke 18 seem similar to your personal experience?

Lie #2: I need to do all the talking.

Sometimes, prayer feels like we're shouting at God across the street. What if we stopped talking and listened for God?

Psalm 46:10 says, *"Be still, and know that I am God!"*

Try being silent and inviting God to speak to your heart and mind in the quiet moment.

Consider being alone for 10-15 minutes - no TV, no music, no texting - and let God's Spirit speak into your heart....you just might be surprised!

Lie #3: I need to close my eyes or it doesn't count.

A lot of us have been taught prayer rituals: close your eyes, fold your hands, kneel down, say these specific words, close with "InJesusNameAmen." Circle anything you see in these verses that might give insight into prayer rituals.



Matthew 6:5-8

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 others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ⁶But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ⁷And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Mark 1:35

³⁵Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

Luke 6:12

¹²One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray,

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray continually, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Rituals can get boring and stale and don't always come from our heart. So, try something new. Try going on a walk. Try talking out loud. Try writing your prayer in a journal. Find a way that helps you be more intentional and comfortable with God.

Fold or Cut



2 Taking It Inward (God, Teach Me!)

Take a moment to think about what you believe about prayer. Do any of these three lies seem easy to believe?

Ask yourself, "How can I change my prayer habits to be more in tune with God?"
Write down what comes to mind.

3 Seal the Deal (God, Change Me!)

Prayer is not a name-it-claim-it, Jeanie-in-a-bottle magic trick. Through prayer, we don't change God, but rather, God changes us.

Pause for a moment and sincerely tell God exactly how you want to grow your prayer conversations. What do you want to change? What do you want to hear? How do you want to move forward? Go ahead; He's listening.

Brainstorm some new approaches to prayer. Write down at least three practical ideas and do one today.

Fold or Cut