

AN EXAMPLE OF WORSHIP-BASED PRAYER

Worship-based prayer incorporates a balanced, biblical pattern for prayer, based on the model Jesus gave to His disciples in Matthew 6:9-13. This pattern is similar to the 4/4 musical beat of a conductor. The following gives an example of how this can work from a sample portion of the Bible and in a spontaneous fashion.

During our “Seek Week” emphasis, we focus our prayers on passages of Scripture that feature the idea of *seeking* the Lord. Of course, various psalms have this emphasis. One particular morning, we chose Matthew 6:19-34 because of the injunction of verse 33. Here is how PRAYzing! happened for us.

Honestly, I walked into the prayer meeting with this text in mind but with no prior preparation or forethought. All of this came to us as the Spirit took the Word and directed us. Read the biblical text below and the explanation of our prayer time, and you’ll see how beautifully God conducted our experience.

↑ WHO IS GOD?

Matthew 6:19-34

¹⁹ “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

²² “The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. ²³ But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

²⁴ “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

²⁵ “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷ Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?

²⁸ “So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; ²⁹ and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ³⁰ Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

³¹ “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”

Based on the reading of the passage, participants took time to praise God because He is:

- The eternal rewarder and preserver of real treasure (v. 20)
- The One who knows our hearts (v. 21)
- Our source of light (vv. 22-23)
- Our rightful master (v. 24)
- Worthy of our undivided loyalty (v. 24)
- The One who dispels anxiety and worry (vv. 25, 28, 31)
- The provider for His creation (v. 26)
- Our caring and attentive heavenly Father (v. 26)
- The One who ultimately values us (v. 26)
- The creator of beauty—He clothes us with beauty (vv. 28-30)
- The One who knows us and our needs (v. 32)
- Lord of an eternal kingdom (v. 33)
- Fully sufficient for all things (v. 33)
- Superintending our lives even in and through trouble (v. 34)

Songs that became part of the flow: **“This Is My Father’s World,” “Enough,” “I’d Rather Have Jesus,” “Jesus, Lamb of God, Worthy Is Your Name,” “O Lord, You’re Beautiful,” “Oh, Worship the King”**

↓ HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND?

Based on verses 19-21 and the connection between that which we treasure and the affection of our hearts, we spent some time inviting His kingdom to come and will to be done with this sentence prayer: “Because You are my Father, I will treasure You above _____ and make YOU the ultimate affection of my heart.” Many people prayed using this simple but specific idea. We sang the song **“More Precious Than Silver.”**

← WHAT SHOULD WE PRAY ABOUT?

At this point, I broke the group into huddles of five or six people. In affirming the repeated commands to turn away from worry, trust the Father, and seek His kingdom purposes, we took some time to confess worry, express our trust in the Father, and pledge our loyalty to His kingdom purposes.

I suggested we use this prayer pattern for the first few minutes: “When I am tempted to worry about _____, I will trust You, my Father, to provide all that I need because You value me so much.”

Then I encouraged the group to shift their focus in order to intercede for others who have specific areas of need, asking God to deliver them from worry and draw them close to the heart of their Father and provider.

We transitioned after a time with the hymn **“’Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus.”**

→ WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

In the final segment, we came back together in the larger group. I noted, “This passage tells us that each day contains trouble but that our Father is able to give us daily grace and strength to overcome.” I asked participants to pray, one at a time, in faith and recommitment, in light of the inevitable troubles. It went like this: “Father, as I face the trouble of _____ today, I will seek Your kingdom and righteousness first.” Everyone echoed with the affirmation, “And all these things shall be added to you.” After ten minutes of this, we stood to sing all three verses of **“Seek Ye First.”**

↑ WHO IS GOD?

We concluded by praising God for His power as we sang the song **“He Is Able.”**