

Open Your Heart and Mind

- How will you honor Memorial Day?
- When you hear someone talk about prayer, what do you begin to think about? How does it make you feel when others pray in public, when you are asked to pray in public? What does your private prayer life look like?

Finding God in His Word (Read Matthew 6:1; 5-8)

- Looking at the key principle again, what do you think the attraction is to practicing spiritual disciplines for the praise of other human beings? How do you guard and fight against this temptation?
- In what ways have you observed the deceit of sin when one convinces themselves they are worshipping God when they are actually worshipping themselves?
- Why do we need to understand and believe that sin is far more than wrong actions, but is a disposition of the heart?
- Give a definition for prayer. In what way(s) is being prayer-less (not praying) functional atheism?
- Describe what you think it would look like for someone to be an actor, a hypocrite, at prayer? How can someone (how have you) prayed – doing the right thing for the wrong reason?
- Describe what it looks like to use empty phrases, unthinking or formulaic repetition, in prayer. What is deceptive in this? Why would Jesus warn against this activity in prayer?
- It is likely easier to see prayer being abused in a public setting, yet how can prayer be equally abused and self-centered in private settings as well?
- Pastor Malcolm said that in Jesus' positive examples on prayer, the ultimate issue has to deal with how we approach God. How do you get yourself into a mindset to approach God in prayer?
- In approaching God we need to do so exclusively. How can we shut others out and our selves out in order to approach God exclusively?
- In approaching God we need to do so engagingly? In what ways do you practice prayer keeping yourself mentally/physically/spiritually engaged in the process?
- In approaching God we need to do so expectantly? In what ways is it a comfort to know that God already knows what we need before we ask? How does that motivate one to prayer? Why would it motivate you to prayer?

Live the Christ Life

1. Has there been something from this study that you have found convicting about your own prayer life? It may seem counter-intuitive, but go to your heavenly Father and talk with Him, seeking His grace as you grow in your discipleship and practice of this spiritual discipline.