



Lesson 34: Whose guilt is this?

Read Matthew 5:33-37. What prohibition does Jesus give on making oaths? Why should we not swear by heaven or earth? (Hint: it has to do with who actually has a claim to heaven and earth.)

Read Luke 22:39-46. Knowing that Jesus knew what God's will was, and what He was about to face, why is it significant that He prayed "Your will be done, not mine"?

Read Matthew 6:5-15. What attitude are we not to adopt when we pray?

Reading through verses 9-13, what can you gather that our prayers should look like? (Note, Jesus wasn't saying that this prayer is the only prayer we are ever allowed to pray. Read Matthew 7 for further instruction on prayer.)

Notice, too, that in His instructions to us, Jesus uses the very words that He will use later, in the Garden of Gethsemane as He prays, "Your will be done". Knowing this, is there anything we can expect to withhold from God, when we pray those words, too....even to our very lives?

When our prayers are self-focused, our hearts become more self-focused as well. One model of prayer that I see value in is to follow the "ACTS" acronym prayer. When you pray, first, you begin with the A for Adoration, giving all glory to God for who He praise for Him. Specific things, not just general "you're great". C is for Confession. Open your heart to your Father, and bring your sins to Him, to be brought back into right relationship with Him so you can see where He is leading you. Again, this isn't a generic "forgive me for my sins" but specific, between you and God, as you really address the heart issues that you face. T is for Thanksgiving, spend time thanking God for the

provision He has for you, for the specific things that have brought gratitude to your heart, and even thanking Him for the trials, knowing that He is refining you for His purpose and glory. Finally, S is for Supplication. This is when we come to Him to ask for the needs of ourselves and others. Today, most “prayer requests” fall under this category, and yet, we shouldn’t start with a “wish list” to take to God. When we do, we fall prey to the tendency to treat God as a cosmic vending machine, forgetting the awesome Creator whom we serve.

Today, as you spend time in prayer, don’t just go to God with a list of “wants” or even a list of “needs”. Remember, God owes none of us anything—even the air that we breathe. Knowing that, spend time praising our Father today, and thanking Him and coming before Him with a truly repentant heart.