



Big Idea: Talking to God can sound just like talking to a parent.

Primary Scripture: Matthew 6:7-13

Supporting Scripture: Luke 11:2-4, Romans 8:15-17, Philippians 4:6-7

CAPTURE (Why should students pay attention to and care about your message?)

I love reading books, but I have a confession to make. I never read the introduction. I don't read preambles. Anything that happens before Chapter 1 just isn't for me. I have always assumed that if it was so important that they wanted me to read it, they'd include it in one of the chapters. I just want to get to the story. I want to get to the point.

I feel this way about conversations sometimes, as well. Have you ever had someone begin speaking with you, and they give this long, winding preamble? And you sit there knowing that there's a question coming. They want to ask you to do something with them or for them. How do you feel in that moment? I admittedly feel really frustrated.

I love to help people, but I don't love when it feels like people are trying to work me before asking for help, like they're trying to convince me of why I should help them before they even ask for help. Or maybe it feels like they're trying to play on my emotions to compel me to help them with whatever request is coming next. It just feels manipulative to me.

Have I been guilty of this? Absolutely! I think it's a particularly common approach when you're still a kid. I used to do it to my parents all the time. I thought I was very clever. Now that I'm grown and often on the other side of these types of conversations, I know what my parents knew back when I was a kid. I now know that my parents could see right through me. How? Because...

We don't give prepared speeches to our parents. They were not fooled by my attempts to appear casual. They were just waiting, patiently or otherwise, for me to get the point. The way we speak to our parents is so different from what could be called a sales pitch or a speech that when we drift into that, they catch on pretty quickly. It's so unnatural and forced.

We have conversations with our parents. While there may and even should be a different level of respect when speaking to our parents, we still generally talk to them like we talk to everyone else. I do not call my dad on the phone and say, “Oh, gracious Dad. You have always heard me when I have been in need. You have faithfully helped me. Now, can we please go to lunch together?” He’d wonder what was wrong with me. We don’t speak like that.

I start every conversation with my dad the same way. “Hey, Dad.” It’s casual. It’s conversational. It’s borne of familiarity and closeness. We just jump into conversation. We are two people who know each other, who love each other, and who want what’s best for each other. We don’t need pretense or speeches. No preambles, no speeches. Just conversation.

What if I told you that we can approach prayer in the same way? After all...

Prayer is just a conversation with God. I don’t say that to demean prayer. Prayer is important. Prayer is powerful. But at its core, prayer is a conversation between us and God. We speak; God listens. God speaks; we listen. That’s a conversation, right? Over the next few weeks, we’re going to look at three types of conversations we have with God. We have different conversations with Him, because our relationship with Him is multifaceted. Today, I want to talk about how prayer is a conversation with God as our Father.

SCRIPTURE (What does God’s Word say?)

When we pray, we can talk to God as our parent, because that is one of the ways He relates to us. I think it’s my favorite way. To understand this, I want to look at what is perhaps the most famous prayer in Matthew 6:7-13.

⁷ “When you pray, don’t babble on and on as the Gentiles do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. ⁸ Don’t be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him! ⁹ Pray like this:

Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. ¹⁰ May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

¹¹ Give us today the food we need, ¹² and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us. ¹³ And don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one. (Matthew 6:7-13 NLT)

We call it this “The Lord’s Prayer,” as it was Jesus’ praying to God the Father, and in doing so, he showed us how we can pray to Him. He said, “pray like this,” so we know there are going to be some things that we need to take away from this. To be clear, He was not commanding us to pray this prayer and only this prayer. He said, “pray in this way;” giving us an outline for how we ought to approach God as our Father in prayer. So, if we should approach God as our parent in this way, we need to highlight some truths from this passage to make sure we understand what Jesus meant.

INSIGHTS (What might this Scripture mean?)

The first truth I want to highlight is:

1. Your Dad knows you.

Before Jesus got into the outline for how to pray, He told us something really important about God as our Father. He knows us! That means we can just be ourselves. We don’t have to pray like people who are trying to impress Him. We don’t have to get His attention. We have His attention, because He knows us as His children.

Not only does God know you, but He knows exactly what you need. There’s no need to give him a long-winded preamble. You don’t have to establish cause or need. He already knows exactly what you need before you ask, which means you can just ask Him.

The second truth I want you to see about God as our Father is:

2. Your Dad will provide for you.

You know how your parents work hard, pay all the bills, and make sure you have what you need? That’s called providing for you. Sometimes, parents will even defer to you. A lot of parents may have a need or something they have wanted for a long time, and they will still provide what you want or need first.

As our Heavenly Father, as our Parent, God will also provide for us. He doesn't do it out of obligation but out of love and care for us as His children. In verse 11, Jesus told us to ask God to give us the food we need. In Luke 11, it tells us the wording He used here was to give us our daily bread. This was a reference back to the Exodus, where the Jewish people walked through the wilderness on their way from Egypt and to the Promised Land. God provided manna, a type of bread, for them. And they only gathered what they needed for that day. It was a daily bread.

So here, Jesus instructed us to ask God for our daily bread. I think that's significant. There were times early on when some of the Israelites gathered more than a day's worth, because they were afraid it wouldn't be there tomorrow. The extra manna they gathered would spoil. God wanted them to know that He'd give them enough for what they needed each day. They just needed to trust Him.

When we are told to ask God to give us today our daily bread, it calls on Him to provide, and it implies trust on our part. We will let Him worry about tomorrow. We let Him worry about the future. We trust Him. We trust that He will provide for us as our Dad.

The next truth I want you to see is:

3. Your Dad will forgive you.

Have you ever had to confess something to your parents? Have you disobeyed them directly, or you did something at school that you knew they'd be unhappy with? You carry the guilt and likely worry about getting caught. Whatever it is, you feel pushed over the edge. You can't take it anymore. You must tell your parents before someone else does. And what happened? They might have gotten angry. Some parents do. They may have seemingly not cared, which made you wonder why you didn't say something sooner instead of carrying that worry for so long. But whether they reacted in a chill way or in an emotional way, they probably moved on. Right? They love you, so they work towards forgiving you. Right?

Jesus told us in verse 12 to ask God to forgive us of our sins. Sin is when we do something contrary to God's will for our lives. It is going outside of His plan and disobeying Him. It could be disobeying a biblical command, or it could be ignoring God's specific call on our lives. And we know that we



Big Idea: Talking to God can be just like talking to a trusted friend.

Primary Scripture: John 15:9-17

Supporting Scripture: Matthew 6:5, 1 Peter 5:7, Thessalonians 5:17

SURFACE

- Tell us about your closest friend. How do you know each other? What do you guys like to do?
- Why do you think being around a friend without even talking to them is good enough for our hearts sometimes?

SERIOUS

- How does it feel when you are trying to tell someone something, but they don't seem to be listening to you? Or they keep cutting in and talking over you?
- Share about a time when you learned that someone you liked or admired considered you a friend.

SPIRITUAL

- Read John 15:15 again. How is this statement significant to you?
- Have you ever felt like you were hiding a part of yourself or just holding something back from God? Why do you think we tend to do this?
- What sorts of things can you talk to God about as your friend? Don't just say, "everything." Be specific.
- Read 1 Thessalonians 5:17 again. How can you implement this into your prayer life?

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