

## 01.12.22 – A Weekly Word for Covenant Church

**Title:** “How Not to Pray”

**Scripture Reading:** [Matthew 6:5-8](#)

**Reflection:** Pastor Henry

When I read our Bible passage for this week once again in preparation for writing this devotional, for better or for worse, a certain line from the television show [Lost in Space](#) came to my mind. Those of you reading this who are younger than 40 might not have any idea what I am talking about. But, those of you who are older than 40 may remember this 1960’s show and distinctive line that [The Robot](#) would say to Will Robinson it seemed at least once every episode.

Do you remember the distinctive line of *The Robot* that I am referring to?

The memorable line was this: “Danger, Will Robinson. Danger!”

You can click [HERE](#) to hear a short clip of this warning for the first time or to bring back a few memories. 😊

This distinctive line of *The Robot* came to my mind because in our verses for this week and His teaching on prayer, Jesus warns us about dangers that you and I need to be aware of when it comes to our spiritual practices. When it comes to giving, prayer, and fasting (see all of [Matthew 6](#)), Jesus begins each of His teachings with the “do not’s.” Jesus starts with the pitfalls that we need to be both aware of and avoid. “Danger! Danger! Danger!”

When it comes to prayer and the prayers we pray, what are the dangers we need to avoid?

First, Jesus says to us when we pray, beware of making a “show” or “theatrical production” out it for others to see and hear ([Matthew 6:5](#)). Avoid this danger. Instead of trying to be fancy-schmancy about prayer in public view, Jesus calls us rather to pray in a secluded place. When we are there, he calls us to use simple, straightforward words, words that will enable us to be as honest as we possibly can when we pray ([Matthew 6:6](#)).

Jesus also says, beware of making the audience for our prayers anyone else but God. Danger awaits us when we shift the focus of our prayers away from God to someone or something else ([Matthew 6:6](#)). Prayer is to God and God alone. Its focus is not for anyone or anything else.

Finally, Jesus says, beware of babbling on and on and on and on and on and on and on and on and on when you pray. ([Matthew 6:7](#)) Dangers await us when we begin to think more words equals a better prayer. Chief among these dangers Jesus says is that we forget that God already knows what we need before we even ask God in prayer ([Matthew 6:8](#)).

What happens when we heed Jesus’ instruction and avoid these dangers? Pastor Doug summarized it so very

well for us at the end of his message.

“If we take these truths to heart, we are freed to pray – not for self-promotion or to impress others, not to try and gain favor with God (Jesus did that for us); not to get what we want (God actually knows the best plan). We can simply pray what is on our heart because the Father isn’t impressed by our words, understands our complete dependence on him, and already knows everything there is to know.”

**Prayer:**

Jesus, time and time again, you spent time in prayer time with your Father in Heaven. Jesus, as we turn our attention to prayer in the days and weeks to come, Lord, teach us how to pray. Amen.

-A prayer based on Matthew 6 and Luke 11

**Action Item for the Day/Week:**

Prayer Practice #1: Keeping the Daily Hours

This week, spend 3-5 minutes in prayer, three times a day. Pray when you get up in the morning, at noon / the middle of your day, and when you go to bed at night.

Don’t know what to pray?

Pray this kingdom prayer which is our missional practice for the month of January:

*Lord, we pray for an outpouring of your Holy Spirit that you would...*

*REVEAL Christ to us,*

*SHAPE us in the character of Christ,*

*and EQUIP us for the mission of Christ. Amen*

If you would like a background photo of this prayer for your phone, please contact the church office and we will email it to you.

**Songs for today:**

[Lord, Listen to Children Praying](#)