



78. Meaningless Repetition

Jesus said, *“When you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words,”* Matthew 6:7.

The Greek word translated in this verse as *meaningless repetition* possibly came from the name of a stuttering king or from the name of an author of long, wordy, tedious poems. This verse could be paraphrased as: *When you are praying, do not repeat the same old phrases again and again when you don't mean them ... don't babble ... don't be tediously repetitive and wordy.* There's nothing wrong with repetition in prayers. Memorized traditional prayers can be good. And lengthy prayers are fine. However, meaningless repetition and many words are not important ingredients in prayer. The Lord said, *“This*

people draw near with their words and honor Me with their lip service, but they remove their hearts far from Me, and their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned by rote,” Isaiah 29:13. It isn’t the words from your mouth that make a prayer meaningful ... it's the words that come from your heart. God desires sincerity more than repetitious quantity.

Think about the last time that you said the Lord's Prayer. Did the words come from your heart or were they meaningless repetition? You prayed, “*Thy will be done*”. Were you truly submitting your life to His will? You prayed, “*Give us this day our daily bread.*” Did you really want to live in day-by-day dependence on His provision? You prayed, “*Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*” Did you want God to forgive you as you have forgiven the people who hurt you? Mean what you pray. And pray what you mean. Pray from your heart ... not just from your lips.

www.NotJustMilk.org ... written by John D. Morris III

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