

# Matthew 6:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

## Analysis

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The warning against 'vain repetitions' (Greek 'battalgeo'—meaningless babbling) condemns mindless, mechanical prayer that multiplies words without heart engagement. The comparison to heathens who think 'they shall be heard for their much speaking' references pagan practices of repetitive incantations designed to manipulate deities. True prayer is personal communion with the Father who knows our needs, not magical formulas to coerce divine action. Quality of relationship matters infinitely more than quantity of words.

## Historical Context

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Pagan prayers in the Greco-Roman world often involved repetitive formulas, magical names, and lengthy invocations attempting to gain gods' attention through sheer volume. Some Jewish traditions also developed elaborate, lengthy prayers. Jesus condemns empty verbosity while affirming persistent, heartfelt prayer (Luke 18:1-8).

## Related Passages

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**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

## Study Questions

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1. How can you distinguish between wrong 'vain repetitions' and right persistent prayer or liturgical forms?
2. What does this warning teach about viewing prayer as relationship with a personal Father versus mechanical religious ritual?

## Interlinear Text

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Προσευχόμενοι	δὲ	μὴ	βαπτολογήσητε,	ὥσπερ	οἱ		
<b>when ye pray</b>	<b>But</b>	<b>not</b>	<b>use</b>	<b>as</b>	G3588		
G4336	G1161	G3361	G945	G5618			
ἐθνικοί	δοκοῦσιν	γὰρ	ὅτι	ἐν	τῇ	πολυλογίᾳ	αὐτῶν
<b>the heathen</b>	<b>they think</b>	<b>do for</b>	<b>that</b>	<b>for</b>	G3588	<b>much speaking</b>	<b>their</b>
G1482	G1380	G1063	G3754	G1722		G4180	G846
εἰσακουσθήσονται							
<b>they shall be heard</b>							
G1522							

## Additional Cross-References

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**Ecclesiastes 5:7** (Parallel theme): For in the multitude of dreams and many words there are also divers vanities: but fear thou God.

**Matthew 26:44** (Prayer): And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

**Acts 19:34** (Parallel theme): But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

**Matthew 6:32** (Parallel theme): (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

**Matthew 26:42** (Prayer): He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.

**Matthew 18:17** (Parallel theme): And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

**Matthew 26:39** (Prayer): And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

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