

Matthew 6:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

Analysis

The assurance that 'your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him' raises the question: why pray if God already knows? The answer is that prayer's purpose is not informing God but communing with Him, aligning our wills with His, expressing dependence, and receiving what He delights to give. God's foreknowledge doesn't make prayer unnecessary but rather guarantees its effectiveness—we pray to a Father who knows and cares about our needs.

Historical Context

This verse contrasts the biblical God who is personally attentive to His children with pagan deities who required information and persuasion. The covenant name 'your Father' emphasizes intimate relationship, not impersonal deity needing to be informed or manipulated.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. If God already knows your needs, why is prayer still necessary and valuable?
2. How does understanding God as 'your Father' rather than distant deity transform the nature and motivation of prayer?

Interlinear Text

μή	οὐν	ὁμοιωθῆτε	αὐτόν	οἶδεν	γὰρ	ὁ	πατήρ
not	therefore	Be	him	knoweth	for	G3588	Father
G3361	G3767	G3666	G846	G1492	G1063		G3962
ὑμῶν	ᾧ	χρείαν	ἔχετε	πρὸ	τοῦ	ὑμᾶς	αἰτῆσαι
your	what things	need of	ye have	before	G3588	ye	ask
G5216	G3739	G5532	G2192	G4253		G5209	G154
αὐτόν							
him							
G846							

Additional Cross-References

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.

Luke 12:30 (Parallel theme): For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.

Philippians 4:6 (Parallel theme): Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

Psalms 38:9 (Parallel theme): Lord, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee.