

Francis Chan Says Christians May Be Praying Wrong

Are you praying the right way? If you aren't sure, you might want to take a lesson from Francis Chan.

The author of *Crazy Love* and other best-selling Christian books argues that some Christians aren't praying the right way—they are too focused on their own needs rather than God's mission. As Chan sees it, it's no surprise that there are so many ineffective prayers that don't get answered. Scripture, after all, warns about this.

"James 4 says a lot of times you'll ask and you don't receive because what you're asking for you're asking to spend on your own passions and no one warned me about that," Chan said in his latest video in the Basic series.

A seven-part film series produced by NOOMA filmmakers, Basic is Chan's response to his frustrations with the modern-day church. In the video, Chan challenges believers to examine the roots of the church and get back to the basics of prayer.

An always transparent Chan shared how he once thought he could just ask God for anything, as if He is a big genie in the sky. Now, Chan realizes he has to be more careful about his prayers, and he encourages other Christians to be more careful also.

"I would just start opening my mouth and talk to God about whatever, and there's some truth to that. But I noticed in the Bible there are also some warnings that we have to be very careful how we approach God," says Chan, former pastor of Cornerstone Community Church. "For example, Ecclesiastes 5 says guard yourselves, guard your steps when you go near to the house of God, and it says draw near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools who do not know that they are

doing evil.”

As he looks at the way the disciples prayed in the days of the early church—and as he looks at the way Jesus taught us to pray—Chan says he realizes it’s a lot different from what he was taught. In response to this revelation, Chan has been diving back into prayer studies for the past few years. In the video, he shares insights from the Lord’s prayer.

“Think about these phrases now that we’ve been saying for years that maybe we didn’t mean, We used to say ‘Give us this day our daily bread.’ We’re asking for our daily provision. Truth is, I think, if God just gave us our daily bread, many of us would be angry,” he says. “That’s all you’re going to give me? You’re just going to give me enough to sustain me for today? What about tomorrow or next year or 10, 20, 30 years from now? I want to know that I’m set up. And yet Jesus says just pray for your daily provisions.”

Chan also explored Jesus’ next petition about temptation and deliverance from evil.

“Haven’t you prayed that at times in your life when you were actually still holding on to some temptation? Maybe you weren’t even ready to let go of all of your sin and yet you’re saying it,” Chan says. “It’s like your words weren’t matching up to your heart.”

Chan says the verse of Scripture in the Lord’s prayer that scares him has to do with forgiveness.

“We’re saying ‘God forgive me in the same way as I have forgiven others.’ That scares me because I know I’ve prayed that while being angry at other people. I know I’ve prayed that prayer while I was still unforgiving,” he says. “So now when I’m telling God forgive me in the same way as I forgive other people, see, we need to be warned about this kind of stuff.”