

# *“Righteous Prayer”*

Matthew 6:9-15

August 10, 2025

**INTRO:** What is prayer... & how, why, & to Whom we pray?

## **PRAYER**

### **VIDEO 1:**

*Why Pray? (GotQuestions.org)*

### **CONTEXT:**

- Matthew's Gospel on **Jesus Christ's Gospel** mMm
- **Lord's Sermon on the Mount** = *“How To Live Life”*
- *Righteousness defines/divides humanity/eternity.*
- Last time... **Christ's Righteous Rewards Principle**
- Today we will unpack **vv.9-15**.

**BIG IDEA:** Jesus taught that righteousness & prayer are intimately unified in & thru God's glory, grace, & gospel.

### **PREVIEW:**

1. God's PRINCIPLE
2. God's PRAYER (His **GLORY & GRACE**)
3. God's PROOF (His **GOSPEL**)

**TEXT:**

Matthew 6:9-15

# I. Christ's **PRINCIPLE** (v.9a)

Everything in the sermon falls under Matthew 3:15 & 5:20 & now 6:1

**Christ on...**

**Righteousness, Hypocrisy, & Rewards**

*Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven...*

- Matthew 6:1ff



9 *Pray then like this:*

1. We've learned WHY we pray...
2. **Now let's note what prayer is & includes...**
  - *"Intentionally conveying a message to God."* – Piper
  - More than a conversation with God...
  - The Spirit may communicate without our words...
  - *Up to God is prayer. Down from God is illumination.*
  - **Great biblical & missional examples of prayer:**
    - **MILITANT PRAYER:** Ephesians 6:18
    - **MESSIAH'S PRAYER:** John 17
    - **MERCY'S 7-WORD PRAYER:** Luke 18:13
    - **MIRACULOUS POWER PRAYER:** 2 Kings 6:17
    - **MISSIONAL PRAYER:** 1 Samuel 1:11
    - **MODEL PRAYER:** Matthew 6:9-13
  - **Various types or categories of prayer:**

- Adoration & Agreement (corporate)
- **Confession & Repentance**
- Thanksgiving & Supplication (petition)
- **Intercessory & Imprecatory (stop/smite)**
- Praise & Worship
- **Lament & Consecration**
- Faith & Obedience
- **Wisdom & Discernment**

### 3. What are the typical problems with prayer?

a. Eternal unrighteousness...

#### b. **BROADER BARRIERS TO PRAYER...**

- i. **WRONG MOTIVES:** James 4:3
- ii. **SIN:** Isaiah 59:1-2; Psalm 66:18
- iii. **IDOLS:** Ezekiel 14:3
- iv. **HARD HEARTS:** Proverbs 21:13; Luke 6:38
- v. **UNFORGIVENESS:** Matthew 6:15
- vi. **MARITAL DISHARMONY:** 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3:7
- vii. **UNBELIEF:** James 1:5-7; John 3:36; Rev. 2-3
- viii. **HYPOCRISY...** both positional & occasional

### 4. What is Christ's point & principle?

- a. Righteous prayer **glorifies** Almighty God!
- b. Righteous prayer **graces** God's ambassadors.

#### i. We pray to **BE Christ-like...**

- 1. Mark 1:35
- 2. Luke 6:12
- 3. Hebrews 7:25
- 4. Romans 8:34

- ii. We pray to **OBEY**... 1 Thess. 5:17; Eph. 6:18
- iii. Be **BIBLICAL**... Acts 2:42 & 6:4...
- iv. To **RECEIVE**...
  - 1. *Holy Spirit...* Luke 11:13
  - 2. *Mercy & Grace...* Hebrews 4:16
  - 3. *Peace...* Philippians 4:6-7
  - 4. *Joy...* John 16:24 & Psalm 16:11
  - 5. *Requests/Petitions...* James 4:2
- v. To **GLORIFY God**... 1 Cor. 10:31 & Acts 1:8
- vi. To get **READY**... Luke 21:34-36
- vii. To **FIGHT**... 1 Peter 5:8 & Ephesians 6:18
- viii. To **WIN**... Acts 12:1ff
  - 1. *Pray to empower the mission.*
  - 2. Pray to empower the ministry...
  - 3. *Prayer & Power are divinely related!*
  - 4. Prayer paves the way for holy works.
  - 5. *Few souls are converted without the fervent prayers of other intercessors.*
  - 6. See Psalm 139:23-24 & Psalm 51:2

Righteous prayer unifies  
God's, glory, grace, & GOSPEL!

## II. Christ's PRAYER (vv.9-13)

- See the prayer's **central** placement in His sermon.
- Don't miss the prayer's loving **intimacy...**
  - God's **GLORY**. God's **GRACE**. God's **GOSPEL**

### VIDEO 2:

*Breaking Down The Lord's Prayer (The Bible Project)*

#### A. CHRIST TEACHES GOD'S TRUTH...

*Pray then like this:*

- This is **Christ's command & Messiah's model...**

#### B. IN MIRACULOUS LOVE & AWE!

*"Our Father in heaven,*

- **"OUR" = Love**
  - *The biblical "our" is filled with intimacy & awe!*
  - There's a reason why the prayer starts here...
  - **Wrong applications of "Our" can be deadly**
  - *"Our" stresses bi-directional family dynamics.*
- **"FATHER" = Love & "in heaven" = Awe!**
  - See Almighty God's loving & paternal nature...
  - *"Father" was Jesus' most used name for God...*
  - *"Father" speaks to His family's leadership...*

# God's GLORY!

## C. GOD'S GLORY GOES OUT! (Thank You!)

*hallowed be Your name.*

### 1. Witnessing to Holy ROYALTY...

- Holy, Holy! HOLY!!!
- King of kings & LORD of lords!!!
- To reference God's name is to ref. Him!

*Your kingdom come,*

### 2. Witnessing to Holy REIGNING...

- Christ's brought the kingdom & will bring it back.
- **OUR GOD IS CREATOR, CHRIST & KING**
- *Christians long to live under God's kingdom reign!*
- **We live & witness as kingdom citizens...**
- Revelation 22:20 ***"Amen. Come Lord Jesus!"***

### 3. *Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*

- Witnessing to Holy REVERENCE...
- ***Worshipping Christians revere God's righteous will.***

➤ **God's will has 3 types:**

- We REST in His **PURPOSED** will... (final reality)
- We SEEK His **DESIRED** will... (humanity)
- We BE His **COMMANDED** will... (Christianity)

*God's will of purpose embraces the ultimate end of this world. His will of desire embraces conversion. His will of command embraces the commitment and obedience of His children. - MacArthur*

There is a tension between God's sovereignty and man's will, between God's grace and man's faith, but we dare not try to resolve it by modifying God's truth about either His sovereignty or our will, His grace or our faith.

**James 5:16**

***"the effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much"***

**VIDEO 3:**

*Does Prayer Change God's Mind?*  
(SBTS - Honest Answers)

# God's GRACE!

## D. GOD'S GRACE COMES IN... (Please?)

### 1. God's GRACE is Life-Giving & Sustaining!

<sup>11</sup>*Give us this day our daily bread,*

- Refers to *gifting what is needed to live/sustenance.*
- Points back to the **Exodus & 40 years of manna...**
- Reflects dependance upon God & His grace to live.
- Preps for what is coming: *"I Am The Bread of Life!"*
- *It's always best to praise & pray for God's grace!*

### 2. God's GRACE is Life-Saving & Sanctifying!

<sup>12</sup>*and **forgive us our debts/sins**, (Colossians 2:14)  
as **we** also have forgiven **our** debtors.*

**BEING MADE RIGHTEOUS & BEING FORGIVEN OF YOUR SINS IS  
THE POWER & PROMISE OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST!**

### 3. God's GRACE is Life Eternally-Securing!

<sup>13</sup>*And lead **us** not into temptation, (James 1:13)  
but **deliver/rescue us from evil**.*

**BEING MADE RIGHTEOUS & DELIVERED FROM EVIL IS  
THE POWER & PROMISE OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST!**



# God's GOSPEL!

## III. Christ's PROOF (vv.14-15)

For if you forgive others their trespasses, *your heavenly Father will also forgive you*, <sup>15</sup>but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

- Remember these key texts as you listen to Jesus:
  - **2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 3:16-17** “*...ALL Scripture...*”
  - **Romans 3:10:** *None is righteous, no not one.*
  - **Matthew 3:15 & 5:20** on “*righteousness*”
  - **Now... Matthew 6:14-15...** on *forgiveness*
- Now see 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:21 in this biblical light
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:21 = *Gospel, Grace, Glory!*
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:21 = all “proofs” foundation
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:21 = all fruit’s foundation...
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:21 = *forgiveness’ foundation*
- Christ-like compassion undergirds righteousness.
- **Christ’s love & compassion inspire forgiveness.**
- **NOTE:** Jesus makes His point from both angles...
  - **Positive: BLESSING & Negative: WARNING**

- See John 3:3;16;36 for *contextualization...*
- You MUST be born again...
  - Jesus came to forgive us & make us righteous.
  - *To biblically believe... is to biblically obey.*
  - Thus, the biblically forgiven biblically forgive.
  - And *those who don't forgive are unforgiven.*

The only way to be biblically forgiven = GOSPEL  
&  
The only way to truly forgive biblically = GOSPEL

**HYPOCRISY IS ROOTED IN THE DECEITFULNESS OF THE HEART.**  
**MAY WE PRAY FOR RESCUING AND EMPOWERING GRACE, SO THAT**  
**WE WILL NEVER BECOME COMFORTABLE WITH THE SPIRITUAL**  
**DUPLCITY OF HYPOCRISY. IT IS ONLY BY CONVICTING, RESCUING, &**  
**EMPOWERING GRACE THAT WE ARE ABLE TO SURRENDER OUR**  
**HEARTS SOLELY TO GOD. – Paul David Tripp (Everyday Gospel – August 8)**

*The fruit of biblical forgiveness is... biblical forgiveness.*

## REVIEW:

Jesus taught that righteousness & prayer  
are intimately unified in & thru God's  
glory, grace, & gospel.

➤ Hear the prayer answer these 5 key questions:

- **Who?** *God the Father in Jesus' name...*
  - 1 John 1:3; Rom. 1:8; Eph. 3:14-15
  - John 14:16 & **John 16:23-24**
- “...Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you. <sup>24</sup>“Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.*
- **What?** *God's **GLORY, GRACE, GOSPEL!***
- **Where?** *Closet AND Corporate...*
- **When?** *Daily: morning, evening, all day...*
  - **2 Thess. 5:17** *“without ceasing”*
- **How?** *With fervent & passionate hearts!*
  - **Hosea 7:14 & Hebrews 5:7**

## CLOSE:

What do you get when you put God's GLORY & GRACE together with miraculously transformative righteousness & prayer?

**A: Proof & fruit of The GOSPEL of Jesus Christ!**

Our prayerful righteousness glorifies God when we **revere** His **royal** name... His **reigning** kingdom... & His Word, will, & ways... The same is true, that we glorify God with our righteous prayers, when we declare our desperate dependance upon His **sustaining, saving, & securing** graces.

# PRAYER

## WORSHIP:

*The Lord's Prayer*

# STUDY NOTES:

## 4506. rhuomai ►

### Lexical Summary

rhuomai: To rescue, deliver, save

**Original Word:** ῥύομαι

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** rhuomai

**Pronunciation:** HROO-oh-my

**Phonetic Spelling:** (rhoo'-om-ahee)

**KJV:** deliver(-er)

**NASB:** rescued, deliver, rescue, delivered, ***Deliverer, rescues, set free***

**Word Origin:** [middle voice of an obsolete verb, akin to [G4482 \(ῥέω - flow\)](#) (through the idea of a current)]

1. to rush or draw (for oneself), i.e. rescue

### Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

deliverer.

Middle voice of an obsolete verb, akin to [rheo](#) (through the idea of a current; compare [rhusis](#)); to rush or draw (for oneself), i.e. Rescue -- deliver(-er).

see GREEK [rheo](#)

see GREEK [rhusis](#)

### HELPS Word-studies

**4506** *rhýomai* (from *eryō*, "draw to oneself") – properly, draw (pull) *to oneself*; to rescue ("snatch up"); to draw or rescue a person *to and for the deliverer*.

In Mt 6:13 ("the Lord's Prayer"), [4506](#) (*rhýomai*) is used in the closing sentence, "Deliver ([4506](#) /*rhýomai*) us from evil" – i.e. ***"Deliver me to Yourself and for Yourself."*** That is, "Lord *deliver* me out of my (personal) pains and bring me *to You and for You*."

[[4506](#) (*rhýomai*) properly means, ***"to snatch out for oneself"*** (H. Cremer, G. Winer).

J. Thayer, "Properly, [4506](#) (*rhýomai*) means *to draw out . . . to one's self*" – i.e. to rescue *for oneself* (*to oneself*). [4506](#) /*rhýomai* ("rescue") implies removing someone in the *midst* (presence) of danger or oppression, i.e. delivered "right out of" and *to* (*for*) the rescuer.]

## NAS Exhaustive Concordance

### Word Origin

akin to eruó (to drag)

### Definition

to draw to oneself, i.e. deliver

### NASB Translation

deliver (3), delivered (1), Deliverer (1), rescue (3), rescued (7), rescues (1), set...free (1).

## Thayer's Greek Lexicon

### STRONGS NT 4506: ῥύομαι

**ῥύομαι**; future **ῥύσομαι**; 1 aorist **ἔρρυσάμην** G (**ἔρρυσάμην** R, so T in [2 Corinthians 1:10](#); [2 Peter 2:7](#); L everywhere except in [2 Timothy 3:11](#) text) and **ἔρρυσάμην** (so Tr WH everywhere, T in [Colossians 1:13](#); [2 Timothy 3:11](#); L text in [2 Timothy 3:11](#)); a deponent middle verb, in later Greek with the 1 aorist passive **ἔρρυσθην** G (**ἔρρυσθην** R), and (so L T Tr WH in [2 Timothy 4:17](#)) **ἔρρυσθην**; (on the doubling of rho ῥ, and the breathing, see in Rho); from Homer down; the Sept. chiefly for לָצַד, also for לָצַד, לָצַד (to cause to escape, to deliver), לָצַד (to draw out), מִלֵּט, הוֹשִׁיעַ, etc.; from פָּדָה to draw, hence, properly, **to draft, to oneself, to rescue, to deliver**: **τινα**, [Matthew 27:43](#); [2 Peter 2:7](#); **τινα ἀπό τίνος** (cf. Winer's Grammar, § 30, 6 a.), [Matthew 6:13](#); [Luke 11:4](#) R L; [1 Thessalonians 1:10](#) (here T Tr WH **ἐκ**; [2 Timothy 4:18](#)); 1 aorist passive, [Romans 15:31](#); [2 Thessalonians 3:2](#); **τινα ἐκ τίνος** (Winer's Grammar, as above): [Romans 7:24](#) (cf. Winer's Grammar, § 41 a. 5); [2 Corinthians 1:10](#); [Colossians 1:13](#); [2 Timothy 3:11](#); [2 Peter 2:9](#); 1 aorist passive, [Luke 1:74](#); [2 Timothy 4:17](#); **ὁ ῥυόμενος**, **the deliverer**, [Romans 11:26](#) (after [Isaiah 59:20](#)).

## Topical Lexicon

### Topical Range of Usage

The verb translated “deliver” or “rescue” is used in the New Testament for every sphere in which God intervenes to save—spiritual, physical, temporal, and eschatological. Whether on the lips of the Lord Jesus, in apostolic testimony, or in prophetic hymn, **the word consistently sets God (or His Messiah) as the active subject and His people as the grateful recipients.**

## Old Testament Background Carried Forward

**Although a Greek verb, the concept stands in direct continuity with Hebrew expressions for divine rescue (“natsal,” “chalats,” “palat”).**

By employing this word, New Testament writers consciously connect the saving acts of God in Israel's account (Exodus, Judges, Psalms, Prophets) with the decisive saving act in Jesus Christ.

## Deliverance Grounded in the Person and Work of Christ

- [Colossians 1:13](#) places ultimate deliverance in the completed work of the Father through the Son: “He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of His beloved Son”.
- [Romans 11:26](#), citing Isaiah, calls the returning Messiah “the Deliverer” who removes ungodliness from Jacob, binding the term to the Messianic identity of Jesus.
- [1 Thessalonians 1:10](#) speaks of the risen Son “who rescues us from the coming wrath,” underscoring substitutionary atonement and final judgment.

## Prayer for Ongoing Protection from Evil

- The Lord's Prayer ([Matthew 6:13](#); [Luke 11:4](#)) commands believers to plead, “deliver us from evil.” Deliverance is thereby woven into daily discipleship, not merely initial conversion.
- Zechariah's Benedictus ([Luke 1:74](#)) anticipates a covenant-based rescue “from the hand of our enemies,” linking deliverance to the Abrahamic promise of fearless service.

## Apostolic Experience of Temporal Rescue

Paul repeatedly recounts concrete rescues:

- “He has delivered us ... and He will deliver us ... He will yet again deliver us” ([2 Corinthians 1:10](#)). One verb, three tenses—past, present confidence, future hope.
- “The Lord rescued me from all of them” ([2 Timothy 3:11](#)) refers to persecutions in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra.
- “I was delivered from the lion's mouth” ([2 Timothy 4:17](#)) and “The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into His heavenly kingdom” ([2 Timothy 4:18](#)) unite earthly

preservation with eternal security.

- Requests for prayer ([Romans 15:31](#); [2 Thessalonians 3:2](#)) show that divine rescue often operates through the intercession of the church.

### **Historical Illustration of God's Pattern**

2 Peter reaches back to Genesis: "He rescued righteous Lot" ([2 Peter 2:7](#)) and generalizes the lesson, "the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials" ([2 Peter 2:9](#)). New Testament believers are therefore heirs of an established divine *modus operandi*.

### **Deliverance and Human Unworthiness**

- [Matthew 27:43](#) records the mockers' taunt, "Let God deliver Him now, if He wants Him." Ironically, the one who refused to deliver Himself became the very Deliverer of others.
- [Romans 7:24](#) captures the sinner's desperation: "Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?" The implied answer is found in the next verse, "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

### **Eschatological Horizon**

Rescue language looks beyond the present age. Jesus "rescues us from the coming wrath" ([1 Thessalonians 1:10](#)), and Paul expects final deliverance into the heavenly kingdom ([2 Timothy 4:18](#)). The petition in the Lord's Prayer therefore anticipates a consummate liberation from Satan, sin, and death.

### **Pastoral and Ministry Significance**

1. Assurance: God's past faithfulness guarantees His future intervention.
2. Holiness: Being rescued from darkness ([Colossians 1:13](#)) obliges believers to walk as citizens of the kingdom of light.
3. Mission: Prayer for rescue from hostile opponents ([Romans 15:31](#); [2 Thessalonians 3:2](#)) propels gospel advance in difficult contexts.
4. Perseverance: Even when deliverance means martyrdom, the believer gains the ultimate rescue—safe arrival in the heavenly kingdom ([2 Timothy 4:18](#)).

### **Summary Statement**

Across its eighteen New Testament occurrences, this verb consistently presents the Lord as both Savior and Sustainer, acting decisively in Christ, continually in the believer's life, and finally at His return. The church therefore lives in grateful remembrance of past deliverance, confident reliance on present help, and eager anticipation of ultimate rescue.

## MACARTHUR:

### The Disciples' Prayer—part 1 (6:9–15)

Pray, then, in this way: “Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.]” For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions. (6:9–15) (For a more detailed study of the Disciples' Prayer, see the author's book *Jesus' Pattern of Prayer* [Chicago: Moody Press, 1981].)

Jesus' earthly ministry was remarkably brief, barely three years long. Yet in those three years, as must have been true in His earlier life, a great amount of time was spent in prayer. The gospels report that Jesus habitually rose early in the morning, often before daybreak, to commune with His Father. In the evening He would frequently go to the Mount of Olives or some other quiet spot to pray, usually alone. Prayer was the spiritual air that Jesus breathed every moment of His life.

Someone has said that many Christians offer their prayers like sailors use their pumps—only when the ship leaks. But to be obedient disciples of Christ, to experience the fullness of communion with God, and to open the floodgates of heaven's blessings, believers must pray as Jesus prayed. In addition to that, we must know *how* to pray. If we do not know how to pray and what to pray for, it does little good to go through the motions. But if we know how to pray, and then pray that way, every other part of our lives will be strengthened and put in proper perspective. As Martyn Lloyd-Jones has beautifully expressed it *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, “Man is at his greatest and highest when upon his knees he comes face to face to God” (2 vols. [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977], 2:45).

The Bible teaches a great deal about the importance and power of prayer. Prayer is effective; it makes a difference. **“The effective prayer of a righteous man,” James says, “can accomplish much” (James 5:16).** Abraham's servant prayed, and Rebekah appeared. Jacob wrestled and prayed, and Esau's mind was turned from twenty years of revenge. Moses prayed, and Amalek was struck. Hannah prayed, and Samuel was born. Isaiah and Hezekiah prayed, and in twelve hours one hundred eighty-five thousand Assyrians were slain. Elijah prayed, and there were three years of drought; he prayed again, and rain came. Those are but a small sampling of answered



prayer just from the Old Testament. The Jews to whom Jesus preached should have had unlimited confidence in the power of prayer.

Prayer is vital to every other aspect of kingdom living. We cannot, for example, give (see Matt. 6:2–4) or fast (see 6:16–18) properly unless we are in constant communion with God. The only giving that God wants is that which is sincere, willing, and done to His glory—giving that comes from a life of personal communion with Him. Fasting is meaningless apart from prayer, because apart from prayer it is apart from God. It will be a meaningless religious ritual. **The greatest emphasis in this passage (6:1–18), therefore, is given to prayer.**

#### GOD'S PURPOSE

God's supreme purpose for prayer, the purpose beyond all other purposes, is to glorify Himself. Although nothing benefits a believer more than prayer, the purpose in praying must first of all be for the sake of God, not self. Prayer is, above all, an opportunity for God to manifest His goodness and glory. An old saint said, "True prayer brings the mind to the immediate contemplation of God's character and holds it there until the believer's soul is properly impressed." Jesus affirmed the purpose of prayer when He said, "And whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified" (John 14:13).

**CONTRARY TO MUCH EMPHASIS IN THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH TODAY, TRUE PRAYER, LIKE TRUE WORSHIP, CENTERS ON GOD'S GLORY, NOT ON MAN'S NEEDS.** It is not simply to lay claim on God's promises, much less make demands of Him, but to acknowledge His sovereignty, to see the display of His glory, and to obey His will.

Because prayer is so absolutely important and because we often do not have the wisdom to pray as we ought or for what we ought, God has commissioned His own Holy Spirit to help us. *"We do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words"* (Rom. 8:26). That is surely what Paul means when he urges believers to *"pray at all times in the Spirit"* (Eph. 6:18).

In the few words of Matthew 6:9–15 our Lord gives a succinct but marvelously comprehensive outline of what true prayer should be. As we will discuss later, the second part of verse 13, a doxology, was possibly not a part of the original text. The prayer proper has two sections; the first section deals with God's glory (vv. 9–10) and the second with man's need (vv. 11–13a).

Each section is composed of three petitions. The first three are petitions in behalf of God's name, His kingdom, and His will. The second three are petitions for daily bread, forgiveness, and protection from temptation.

It is significant that Jesus makes no mention of where prayer should take place. As pointed out in the previous chapter, **JESUS' INSTRUCTION TO "GO INTO YOUR INNER ROOM" (6:6) WAS TO STRESS THE SINGLE-MINDEDNESS OF PRAYER, THE NEED TO BLOCK OUT EVERY OTHER CONCERN BUT GOD.** Jesus Himself had no inner room to call His own during His earthly ministry, and we see Him praying in many places and in many situations, both public and private. Paul's desire was for believers to pray "in every place" (1 Tim. 2:8).

Nor does Jesus specify a time to pray. Jesus, as well as saints of both the Old and New Testaments, prayed at every hour of the day and night. They can be seen praying at regular, habitual times, on special occasions, when in special danger, when specially blessed, before meals and after meals, when arriving at a destination and when leaving, and in every other conceivable circumstance and for every other conceivable good purpose.

Neither are attire or posture specified. As Jesus had already emphasized (6:5–8), it is the **ATTITUDE AND CONTENT OF PRAYER THAT ARE OF SUPREME IMPORTANCE**, and those two things are central to the pattern He now prescribes.

In any posture, in any attire, at any time, in any place, and under any circumstance prayer is appropriate. Prayer is to be a total way of life, an open and constant communion with God (Eph. 6:18; 1 Thess. 5:17). Because it is to be a way of life, we need to understand how to pray; and that is precisely why Jesus gave His followers this model prayer.

As with all of the Sermon on the Mount, what Jesus says about prayer was not essentially new. The Old Testament, and even Jewish tradition, taught all of the basic principles that Jesus presents here. **Many faults and perversions—such as praying to be seen of men and meaningless repetitions (6:5, 7)—had crept into Jewish prayer life.** But rabbinic tradition was truer to Scripture in its teaching about prayer than perhaps about anything else. Both the Talmud and the Midrash contain many lofty and helpful teachings about prayer.

From their knowledge of Scripture, Jews rightly believed God wanted them to pray, that He heard and responded to their prayers, and that praying should be continual. From Scripture they also knew that prayer should incorporate certain elements—such as adoration, praise, thanksgiving, a sense of awe at God's holiness, the desire to obey His commands, confession of sin, concern for others, perseverance, and humility.

But **something had gone wrong, and by Jesus' day most Jews had forgotten the teachings of Scripture** and even the sound, biblical teachings of their tradition.

**MOST PRAYER HAD BECOME FORMALIZED, MECHANICAL, ROTE, AND HYPOCRITICAL.**

After warning against those perversions that had so corrupted Jewish prayer life, our Lord now gives a divine pattern by which kingdom citizens can pray in a way that is pleasing to God.

That the prayer Jesus is about to give was not meant to be repeated as a prayer itself is clear for several reasons. First, in the present passage it is introduced with the words, **Pray, then, in this way**. In the account in Luke the disciples did not ask Jesus to teach them a prayer but to teach them *how* to pray (Luke 11:1). *Houtōs oun* (**then, in this way**) means literally, “Thus therefore,” and frequently carried the idea of “along these lines” or “in the following manner.” Second, **JESUS HAD JUST WARNED HIS FOLLOWERS NOT TO PRAY WITH “MEANINGLESS REPETITION” (v. 7). TO THEN GIVE A PRAYER WHOSE PRIMARY PURPOSE WAS TO BE RECITED VERBATIM WOULD HAVE BEEN AN OBVIOUS CONTRADICTION OF HIMSELF.** Third, nowhere in the New Testament—gospels, Acts, or epistles—do we find an instance of that or any other prayer being repeated by anyone or used in a repetitious, ritualistic manner by a group.

The Lord’s Prayer, or more accurately, the Disciples’ Prayer, is not a set group of words to repeat. It is fine to recite it, as we recite many parts of Scripture. It is certainly fine to memorize it and to rehearse it in our minds and meditate on it in our hearts. But it is not so much a prayer in itself as it is a skeleton which believers are to flesh out with their own words of praise, adoration, petitions, and so on.

***It is not a substitute for our own prayers  
but a guide for them.***

In fewer than seventy words we find a masterpiece of the infinite mind of God, who alone could compress every conceivable element of true prayer into such a brief and simple form—a form that even a young child can understand but the most mature believer cannot fully comprehend.

Another indication of the prayer’s divine comprehensiveness is seen in the seemingly endless schemes by which it can be outlined. When outlined from the perspective of our relationship to God, we see: **Our Father** showing

the father/child relationship; **hallowed be Thy name**, the deity/worshiper; **Thy kingdom come**, the sovereign/subject; **Thy will be done**, the master/servant; **give us this day our daily bread**, the benefactor/beneficiary; **forgive us our debts**, the Savior/sinner; and **do not lead us into temptation**, the guide/pilgrim.

**From the perspective of the attitude and spirit of prayer**, **Our** reflects unselfishness; **Father** reflects family devotion; **hallowed be Thy name**, reverence; **Thy kingdom come**, loyalty; **Thy will be done**, submission; **give us this day our daily bread**, dependence; **forgive us our debts**, penitence; **do not lead us into temptation**, humility; **Thine is the kingdom**, triumph; **and the glory**, exultation; and **forever**, hope.

In similar ways the prayer can be outlined to show (1) the balance of God's glory and our need; (2) the threefold purpose of prayer: to hallow God's name, bring in His kingdom, and do His will; and (3) the approach of **present** (**give us this day our daily bread**), **past** (**forgive us our debts**), and **future** (**do not lead us into temptation**).

Those are but a brief sampling of the ways in which Jesus' magnificent diamond of prayer may be cut.

The purpose of prayer is seen more in the overall thrust of these five verses than in any particular word or phrase. **From beginning to end the focus is on God, on His adoration, worthiness, and glory.**

## **EVERY ASPECT OF TRUE RIGHTEOUSNESS, THE RIGHTEOUSNESS THAT CHARACTERIZES GOD'S KINGDOM CITIZENS, FOCUSES ON HIM.**

Prayer could hardly be an exception. Prayer is not trying to get God to agree with us or to provide for our selfish desires.

Prayer is affirming God's sovereignty, righteousness, and majesty and seeking to conform our desires and our purposes to His will and glory.

Every facet of the Disciples' Prayer focuses on the Almighty. Here Jesus gives a comprehensive view of all the essential elements of righteous prayer, every one of which centers on God—acknowledging His paternity, priority, program, plan, provision, pardon, protection, and preeminence. Each element is overloaded with meaning, its truths being impossible to exhaust.

## GOD'S PATERNITY

**Our Father who art in heaven. (6:9b)**

God is **Father** only of those who have come to His family through His Son, Jesus Christ. Malachi wrote, "Do we not all have one father? Has not one God created us?" (Mal. 2:10), and Paul said to the Greek philosophers on Mars Hill, "As even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His offspring' " (Acts 17:28). But Scripture makes it unmistakably clear that God's fatherhood of unbelievers is only in the sense of being their Creator. Spiritually, unbelievers have another father. In His severest condemnation of the Jewish leaders who opposed and rejected Him, Jesus said, "You are of your father the devil" (John 8:44). It is only to those who receive Him that Jesus gives "the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12; cf. Rom. 8:14; Gal. 3:26; Heb. 2:11–14; 2 Pet. 1:4; etc.). Because believers belong to the Son, they can come to God as His beloved children.

Faithful Jews had known of God as their Father in several ways. They saw Him as Father of Israel, the nation He chose to be His special people. Isaiah declared, "For Thou art our Father, ... Thou, O Lord, art our Father" (Isa. 63:16; cf. Ex. 4:22; Jer. 31:9). They also saw Him in an even more intimate and personal way as their spiritual Father and Savior (Ps. 89:26; 103:13).

But over the centuries, because of their disobedience to the Lord and their repeated flirting with the pagan gods of the peoples around them, most Jews had lost the sense of God's intimate fatherhood. They saw God as Father only in a remote, distant, faded figure who had once guided their ancestors.

Jesus reaffirmed to them what their Scripture taught and what faithful, godly Jews had always believed: God is the **Father ... in heaven** of those who trust in Him. He used the title **Father** in all of His prayers except the one on the cross when He cried "My God, My God" (Matt. 27:46), emphasizing the separation He experienced in bearing mankind's sin. Though the text uses the Greek *Patēr*, it is likely that Jesus' used the Aramaic *Abba* when He gave this prayer. Not only was Aramaic the language in which He and most other Palestinian Jews commonly spoke, but *Abba* (equivalent to our "Daddy") carried a more intimate and personal connotation than *Patēr*. In a number of passages the term *Abba* is used even in the Greek text, and is usually simply transliterated in English versions (see Mark 14:36; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6).

To be able to go to God as our heavenly **Father** first of all means the end of fear, the fear that pagans invariably had for their deities. Second, knowledge of God's fatherhood settles uncertainties and gives hope. If an earthly father will spare no effort to help and protect his

children, how much more will the heavenly Father love, protect, and help His children (Matt. 7:11; John 10:29; 14:21)?

Third, knowing God as our Father settles the matter of loneliness. Even if we are rejected and forsaken by our family, friends, fellow believers, and the rest of the world, we know that our heavenly Father will never leave us or forsake us. “He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him” (John 14:21; cf. Ps. 68:5–6).

Fourth, knowing God’s fatherhood should settle the matter of selfishness. Jesus taught us to pray, **Our Father**, using the plural pronoun because we are fellow children with all the rest of the household of God. There is no singular personal pronoun in the entire prayer. We pray holding up to God what is best for all, not just for one.

Fifth, knowing God as our Father settles the matter of resources. He is **our Father who [is] in heaven**. All the resources of heaven are available to us when we trust God as our heavenly Supplier. Our Father “has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ” (Eph. 1:3).

Sixth, God’s fatherhood should settle the matter of obedience. If Jesus, as God’s true Son, came down from heaven not to do His own will but His Father’s (John 6:38), how much more are we, as adopted children, to do only His will. Obedience to God is one of the supreme marks of our relationship to Him as His children. “For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother” (Matt. 12:50).

Yet in His grace, God loves and cares even for His children who are disobedient. The story of Luke 15 should be called the parable of the loving father rather than the prodigal son. It is first of all a picture of our heavenly Father, who can forgive a self-righteous child who remains moral and upright and also forgive one who becomes dissolute, wanders away, and returns.

**Our Father**, then, indicates God’s eagerness to lend His ear, His power, and His eternal blessing to the petitions of His children if it serves them best and further reveals His purpose and glory.

## GOD’S PRIORITY

**hallowed be Thy name.** (6:9c)

At the beginning Jesus gives a warning against self-seeking prayer. God is to have priority in every aspect of our lives, and certainly in our times of deepest communion with Him. Praying is not to be a casual routine that gives passing homage to God, but should open up great dimensions of reverence, awe, appreciation, honor, and adoration. This phrase introduces a protection against any sentimentalism or overuse and abuse of **Father**, which is prone to being sentimentalized.

**God’s name signifies infinitely more than His titles or appellations. It represents all that He is**—His character, plan, and will. When Moses went up on Mount Sinai to receive the commandments for the second time, he “called upon the name of the Lord. Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, ‘The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and

truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin' " (Ex. 34:5–7). The characteristics of God given in verses 6–7 are the equivalent of "the name of the Lord" mentioned in verse 5.

It is not because we simply know God's titles that we love and trust Him, but because we know His character. "Those who know Thy name will put their trust in Thee," David said, "for Thou, O Lord, hast not forsaken those who seek Thee" (Ps. 9:10). God's name is seen in His faithfulness. In another psalm David declared, "I will give thanks to the Lord according to His righteousness, and will sing praise to the name of the Lord Most High" (Ps. 7:17; cf. 113:1–4). In the typical form of Hebrew poetry, God's righteousness and His name are paralleled, showing their equivalence. When the psalmist said, "Some boast in chariots, and some in horses; but we will boast in the name of the Lord, our God" (20:7), he had much more in mind than the title by which God is called. He spoke of the fullness of God's person.

Each of the many Old Testament names and titles of God shows a different facet of His character and will. He is called, for example, *Elohim*, the Creator God; *El Elyon*, "possessor of heaven and earth"; *Jehovah-Jireh*, "the Lord will provide"; *Jehovah-Shalom*, "the Lord our peace"; *Jehovah-Tsidkenu*, "the Lord our righteousness"; and many others. All of those names speak of God's attributes. His names not only tell who He is but what He is like.

But Jesus Himself gives the clearest teaching about what God's name means, because *Jesus Christ* is God's greatest name. "I manifested Thy name to the men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world" (John 17:6). Everything the Son of God did on earth manifested God's name. As the perfect manifestation of God's nature and glory (John 1:14), Jesus was the perfect manifestation of God's name.

**Hallowed is an archaic English word used to translate a form of *hagiazō*, which means to make holy.** Words from the same root are translated "holy, saint, sanctify, sanctification," etc. God's people are commanded to *be* holy (1 Pet. 1:16), but God is acknowledged as *being* holy. That is the meaning of praying **hallowed be Thy name**: to attribute to God the holiness that already is, and always has been, supremely and uniquely His. To hallow God's name is to revere, honor, glorify, and obey Him as singularly perfect. As John Calvin observed, that God's name should be hallowed was nothing other than to say that God should have His own honor, of which He was so worthy, that men should never think or speak of Him without the greatest veneration (cited in *A Harmony of the Gospels Matthew, Mark, and Luke* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979], p. 318).

**Hallowing God's name, like every other manifestation of righteousness, begins in the heart. "Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts,"** Peter tells us (1 Pet. 3:15), using a form of the word that **hallowed** translates.

When we sanctify Christ in our hearts we will also sanctify Him in our lives. We hallow His name when we acknowledge that He exists. "He who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him" (Heb. 11:6). To the honest and open mind, God is self-evident. Immanuel Kant had many strange ideas about God, but he was absolutely right when he said, "The law within us and the starry heavens above us drive us to God." (See William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 2 vols. [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975], 1:208.)



We also hallow God's name by having true knowledge about Him. False ideas about the Sovereign One are irreverent. Origen said, "The man who brings into his concept of God ideas that have no place there takes the name of the Lord God in vain." Discovering and believing truth about God demonstrate reverence for Him; and willing ignorance or wrong doctrine demonstrate irreverence. We cannot revere a God whose character and will we do not know or care about. But acknowledging God's existence and having true knowledge about Him are not enough to hallow His name. We must have a constant awareness of His presence. Spasmodic thinking of God does not hallow His name. To truly hallow His name is to consciously draw Him into every daily thought, every daily word, and every daily action. David put the focus of his life where it should always be—"I have set the Lord continually before me" (Ps. 16:8).

The Father's **name** is most **hallowed** when we behave in conformity to His will. For Christians to live in disobedience to God is to take His name in vain, claiming as Lord someone whom we do not follow as Lord. "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' " Jesus warned, "will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21). When we eat, drink, and do everything else to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31), that is hallowing His name. Finally, to hallow God's name is to attract others to Him by our commitment, to "let [our] light shine before men in such a way that they may see [our] good works, and glorify [our] Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). Psalm 34:3 sums up the teaching in this phrase with a lovely exhortation: "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together."

## GOD'S PROGRAM

### **Thy kingdom come. (6:10a)**

Frances Havergal wrote these beautiful words of tribute to her Lord in her hymn "His Coming in Glory:"

Oh, the joy to see Thee reigning,  
Thee, my own beloved Lord.  
Every tongue Thy name confessing,  
Worship, honor, glory, blessing,  
Brought to Thee with glad accord.  
Thee, my Master and my Friend,  
Vindicated and enthroned,  
Unto earth's remotest end,  
Glorified, adored, and owned.

Our greatest desire should be to see the Lord reigning as King in His **kingdom**, to have the honor and authority that have always been His but that He has not yet come to claim. The King is inseparable from His kingdom. To pray **Thy kingdom come** is to pray for the program of the eternal Deity to be fulfilled, for Christ to come and reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. **HIS PROGRAM AND HIS PLAN SHOULD BE THE PREOCCUPATION OF OUR LIVES AND OF OUR PRAYERS.**



But how self-centered our prayers usually are, focused on our needs, our plans, our aspirations, our understandings. We are often like tiny infants, who know no world but the world of their own feelings and wants. One of the greatest struggles of the Christian life is to fight the old sinful habits, with their constant and unrelenting focus on self.

Even problems and issues outside of ourselves can cloud our supreme concern for God's **kingdom**. It is our responsibility to pray for our families, pastors, missionaries, national and other leaders, and for many other people and things. But our prayers in every case should be that God's will be done in and through those people, that they would think, speak, and act in accordance with God's will. The best we can pray for any person or for any cause is that God's kingdom be advanced in that person or that cause.

The holy purpose of the divine Father is to exalt Christ in the consummation of history when the Son rules and reigns in His kingdom. The Talmud is right in saying that if a prayer does not name the kingdom of God, it is not a prayer (*Berakoth* 21a).

The greatest opposition to Christ's kingdom, and the greatest opposition to Christian living, is the kingdom of this present world, which Satan rules. The essence of Satan's kingdom is opposition to God's kingdom and God's people.

*Basileia (kingdom)* does not refer primarily to a geographical territory but to sovereignty and dominion. Therefore when we pray **Thy kingdom come**, we are praying for God's rule through Christ's enthronement to come, His glorious reign on earth to begin.

**Come translates the aorist active imperative of *erchomai*, indicating a sudden, instantaneous coming (cf. Matt. 24:27). It is the coming millennial kingdom (Rev. 20:4) of which the Lord is speaking, not an indirect effort to create a more godly society on earth through the progressive, human-oriented work of Christians.**

To pray **Thy kingdom come** is to pray for *God's* kingdom, the kingdom over which He, and He alone, is Lord and King. It will be a kingdom on earth (v. 10a), but it will not be a kingdom of this world—that is, of this present world system. "My kingdom is not of this world," Jesus told Pilate (John 18:36). No human kingdom could dovetail with God's kingdom, even partially. Sinful man could not be a part of a divine reign. That is why we do not advance God's kingdom by trying to improve human society. Many good and worthy causes deserve the support of Christians, but in supporting those causes we neither build the earthly kingdom of Jesus Christ or bring it closer. Even the best of such things are but holding actions that help retard the corruption that will always and inevitably characterize human societies and human kingdoms—until the Lord returns to establish His own perfect **kingdom**.

**The kingdom of God, or of heaven, was the heart of Jesus' message. He came to "preach the kingdom of God" (Luke 4:43).** There is no other gospel but the good news of the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. Always and everywhere He went, Jesus preached the message of salvation as entrance to the kingdom. He even stated that He

“must preach the kingdom ... for I was sent for this purpose” (Luke 4:43). ***For the forty days that Jesus remained on earth between His resurrection and ascension He spoke to His disciples “of the things concerning the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:3).***

God’s kingdom is past, in the sense that it embodied Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Matt. 8:11). It was present in the time of Jesus’ earthly ministry, in the sense that the true divine King was present “in the midst of you” (Luke 17:21, lit.). But the particular focus of our praying is to be on the **kingdom** that is yet to **come**.

God now and always has ruled the kingdom of the universe. He created it, and He controls it, orders it, and holds it together. As James Orr comments, “There is therefore recognized in Scripture ... a natural and universal kingdom or dominion of God embracing all objects, persons, and events, all doings of individuals and nations, all operations and changes of nature and history, absolutely without exception.” ... (cited by Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom* [Winona Lake, Ind.: BMH Books, 1980], p. 22). God’s is an “everlasting kingdom” (Ps. 145:13), and even now “His sovereignty rules over all” (Ps. 103:19; cf. 29:10; 1 Chron. 29:11–12; etc.).

But the most obvious fact of life is that God is not now ruling on earth as He rules in heaven (Matt. 6:10c)—and it is the divine *earthly* kingdom we are to pray will **come**. Our praying should be for Christ to return and to establish His earthly kingdom, to put down sin and enforce obedience to God’s will. The Lord will then “rule them with a rod of iron” (Rev. 2:27; cf. Isa. 30:14; Jer. 19:11). After a thousand years His earthly kingdom will blend into His eternal kingdom, and there will be no distinction between His rule on earth and His rule in heaven (see Rev. 20–21).

The Greek of this verse could be translated “Let **Thy kingdom come** now.” There is therefore a sense in which we pray for God’s kingdom to come presently. In a present and limited, but real and miraculous way, God’s kingdom is coming to earth each time a new soul is brought into the kingdom.

**First of all, the kingdom comes in this way by conversion (Matt. 18:1–4). So prayer should be evangelistic and missionary—for new converts, new children of God, new kingdom citizens.** Conversion to the kingdom involves an invitation (Matt. 22:1–14), repentance (Mark 1:14–15), and a willing response (Mark 12:28–34; Luke 9:61–62). The present existence of the kingdom on earth is internal, in the hearts and minds of those who belong to Jesus Christ, the King. We should pray for their number to mightily increase. Praying for the kingdom to come, in this sense, is praying for the salvation of souls. Every believer should seek others who can sing, “King of my life, I crown Thee now, Thine shall the glory be” (“Lead Me to Calvary,” by Jennie Evelyn Hussey).

The **kingdom** for which we are to pray, and of which we now have a taste, is of infinite value. “The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field” or a “pearl of great value” which a person sells all his possessions to buy (Matt. 13:44–46). Its value is so great that each of those parables emphasizes that the procurer sold all he had to purchase salvation (cf. Matt. 10:37).

**Second, the kingdom comes now through commitment.** The desire of those already converted should be to respond to the rule of the Lord in their lives now so that He rules in them as He rules in heaven. **When we pray as Jesus teaches, we will continually pray that our lives will honor and glorify our Father in heaven.**

The call for the kingdom to come is also related to the second coming of the Lord. John says in the last chapter of Revelation: "He who testifies to these things says, 'Yes I am coming quickly.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus" (22:20).

In that day, our prayers will finally be answered. As the hymn by Isaac Watts begins, "Jesus shall reign where 'ere the sun does its successive journeys run. His kingdom spread from shore to shore, 'til moon shall wax and wane no more." Paul emphasizes that waiting for the kingdom to come in its final form is not so much looking for an event as for a person—the King Himself (1 Thess. 1:10).

## GOD'S PLAN

**Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. (10:b)**

Many people wonder how God's sovereignty can be related to praying for His will to be done. **If He is sovereign, is not His will inevitably done? Does our will override His will when we pray earnestly and sincerely? That is one of the great paradoxes of Scripture, a paradox about which Calvinists and Arminians have debated for centuries. It should be evident that this paradox, like those of God's being three in one and Jesus' being wholly God and wholly man, must be left to the infinite mind of God, because it is far beyond the finite human mind to comprehend.** But what seems a hopeless contradiction to us is no dilemma to God. We hold both truths, seemingly paradoxical, in perfect tension with faith in the infinite mind of God, who resolves all things in perfect, noncontradictory truth (Deut. 29:29).

It is absolutely clear from Scripture that God is sovereign and yet not only allows but commands that man exercise his own volition in certain areas. If man were not able to make his own choices, God's commands would be futile and meaningless and His punishments cruel and unjust. **If God did not act in response to prayer, Jesus' teaching about prayer would also be futile and meaningless. Our responsibility is not to solve the dilemma but to believe and act on God's truths, whether some of them seem to conflict or not.**

## To compromise one of God's truths in an effort to defend another is the stuff of which heresy is made.

**We are to accept every part of every truth in God's Word, leaving the resolution of any seeming conflicts to Him. Attempting on a human level to resolve all apparent paradoxes in Scripture is an act of arrogance and an attack on the truth and intent of God's revelation.**

When we pray **Thy will be done**, we are praying first of all that God's will become our own will. Second, we are praying that His will prevail all over the **earth as it [does] in heaven**.

### WRONG UNDERSTANDING OF GOD'S WILL

Many people, including many believers, wrongly understand this part of the Disciples' Prayer. Seeing God's sovereignty simply as the absolute imposition of a dictator's will, some believers are resentful. When, or if, they pray for His will to be done, they pray out of a feeling of compulsion. God's will has to be done, and He is too strong to resist; so what would be the point of praying otherwise? The logical conclusion of most people who look at God in that way is that there is no point to prayer—certainly not to petitions. Why ask for the inevitable?

Other people are more charitable in their feelings about God. But because they, too, believe His will is inevitable, they pray out of passive resignation. They pray for God's will to be done simply because that is what the Lord tells them to do. They are resignedly obedient. They do not pray so much out of faith as out of capitulation. They do not try to put their wills into accord with the divine will, but rather shift their own wills into neutral, letting God's will run its course.

It is easy for Christians to fall into praying that way. Even in the very early days of the church, when faith generally was strong and vital, prayer could be passive and unexpectant. A group of concerned disciples was praying in the house of Mary, John Mark's mother, for the release of Peter from prison. While they were praying, Peter was freed by an angel and came to the house and knocked on the door. When a servant girl named Rhoda came to the door and recognized Peter's voice, she rushed back inside to tell the others, forgetting to let Peter in. But the praying group did not believe her, and thought she had heard an angel. When Peter was finally admitted, "they saw him and were amazed" (Acts 12:16). They apparently had been praying for what they did not really believe would happen.

**Our own prayer lives often are weak because we do not pray in faith; we do not expect prayer to change anything. We pray out of a sense of duty and obligation, subconsciously thinking that God is going to do just as He wants to do anyway.** Jesus gave the parable of the importunate widow—who refused to accept the status quo and persisted in begging, despite receiving no response—for the very purpose of protecting us against that sort of passive and unspiritual resignation.

***“Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart” (Luke 18:1).***

The very fact that Jesus tells us to pray **Thy will be done on earth** indicates that God's will is *not* always done on earth. It is not inevitable. In fact, lack of faithful prayer inhibits His will being done. In God's wise and gracious plan, prayer is essential to the proper working of His divine will on earth.

God is sovereign, but He is not independently deterministic. Looking at God's sovereignty in a fatalistic way, thinking “What will be will be,” absolutely destroys faithful prayer and faithful obedience of every sort. That is not a “high” view of God's sovereignty, but a destructive and unbiblical view of it. That is not the divine sovereignty the Bible teaches. It is not God's **will** that people die, or why would Christ have come to destroy death? It is not God's **will** that people go to hell, or why would His only Son have taken the penalty of sin upon Himself so that men might escape hell? “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9). That sin exists on earth and causes such horrible consequences is not evidence of God's will but of His patience in allowing more opportunity for men to turn to Him for salvation.

Other people, overemphasizing the importance of man's will, look at prayer as a means of bending God's will to their own. They think of God's providence as a sort of cosmic vending machine, which they can operate simply by inserting the required claim on one of His promises. As Elton Trueblood observes, “In some congregations the Gospel has been diminished to the mere art of self-fulfillment. Some current religious authors, far from emphasizing what it means to believe that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, write chiefly of themselves. Egocentricity is all that is left when the objective truth about the revelation of Christ is lost or even obscured.”

But Jesus undercuts that notion throughout His model prayer. True prayer focuses on **Thy** name, **Thy** kingdom, **Thy** will. Amy Carmichael wrote, “And shall I pray to change Thy will, my Father, until it accord to mine? But no, Lord, no; that shall never be. Rather I pray Thee blend my human will with Thine.”

There is a tension between God's sovereignty and man's will, between God's grace and man's faith, but we dare not try to resolve it by modifying God's truth about either His sovereignty or our will, His grace or our faith.

God is sovereign, but He gives us choices. God is sovereign, but He tells us to pray **Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven**. And **James** reminds us that ***“the effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much”*** (5:16).

#### RIGHT UNDERSTANDING OF GOD’S WILL

David sang of the angels who did God’s will. “Bless the Lord, you His angels, mighty in strength, who perform His word, obeying the voice of His word!” (Ps. 103:20). That is the way God’s **will** is done **in heaven**, and that is the way believers are to pray for God’s **will** to **be done on earth**—unwaveringly, completely, sincerely, willingly, fervently, readily, swiftly, and constantly. Our prayer should be that every person and thing on earth be brought into conformity with God’s perfect will.

A part of the right understanding of and attitude toward God’s will is what might be called a sense of righteous rebellion. **To be dedicated to God’s will is, by definition, to be opposed to Satan’s. To pray Thy will be done, on earth as it is heaven is to rebel against the worldly idea that sin is normal and inevitable and should therefore be acquiesced to or at least tolerated.** It is to rebel against the world system of ungodliness, the dishonoring and rejecting of Christ, and also the disobedience of believers. Impotence in prayer leads us, however unwillingly, to strike a truce with wrong. To accept what is, is to abandon a Christian view of God and His plan for redemptive history.

Jesus knew the end from the beginning, but He did not accept the situation as inevitable or irresistible. He preached against sin and He acted against sin. When His Father’s house was profaned, “He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the moneychangers, and overturned their tables; and to those who were selling the doves He said, ‘Take these things away; stop making My Father’s house a house of merchandise’ ” (John 2:14–16; cf. Matt. 21:12–13).

To pray for God’s will to be done on earth is to rebel against the idea, heard today even among evangelicals, that virtually every wicked, corrupt thing that we do or that is done to us is somehow God’s holy will and should be accepted from His hand with thanksgiving.

**NOTHING WICKED OR SINFUL COMES FROM THE HAND OF GOD, BUT ONLY FROM THE HAND OF SATAN. TO PRAY FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS IS TO PRAY AGAINST WICKEDNESS. TO PRAY FOR GOD’S WILL TO BE DONE IS TO PRAY FOR SATAN’S WILL TO BE UNDONE.**

To pray for God’s will to be done is to cry with David, “Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered; and let those who hate Him flee before Him” (Ps. 68:1) and with the saints under God’s altar, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, wilt Thou refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” (Rev. 6:10).



To pray rightly is to pray in faith, believing that God will hear and answer our prayers. I think the greatest hindrance to prayer is not lack of technique, lack of biblical knowledge, or even lack of enthusiasm for the Lord's work, but lack of faith. We simply do not pray with the expectation that our prayers will make a difference in our lives, in other people's lives, in the church, or in the world.

**There are three distinct aspects of God's will as He reveals it to us in His Word. First, is what may be called His will of purpose**—the vast, comprehensive, and tolerating will of God expressed in the unfolding of His sovereign plan that embodies all of the universe, including heaven, hell, and the earth. This is God's ultimate will, of which Isaiah wrote, "The Lord of hosts has sworn saying 'Surely, just as I have intended so it has happened, and just as I have planned so it will stand' " (Isa. 14:24; cf. Jer. 51:29; Rom. 8:28; Eph. 1:9–11; etc.). This is the will of God that allows sin to run its course and Satan to have his way for a season. But in God's appointed time sin's course and Satan's way will end exactly according to God's plan and foreknowledge.

**Second, is what may be called God's will of desire.** This is within His will of purpose and completely consistent with it. But it is more specific and focused. Unlike God's will of purpose, His will of desire is not always fulfilled; in fact, it is very unfulfilled in comparison to Satan's will in this present age.

Jesus greatly desired that Jerusalem be saved, and He prayed, preached, healed, and ministered among its people to that end. But few believed in Him; most rejected Him, and some even crucified Him. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem," He prayed. "I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it!" (Luke 13:34). That was the repeated experience of God's Son, who came to earth that men might have life, and have it more abundantly. Like the unbelieving Jews in Jerusalem, most people were not willing to come to Jesus for that abundant life (John 5:40; cf. 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9).

**Third, is what may be called God's will of command.** This will is entirely for His children, because only they have the capacity to obey. **The will of command is the ardent desire of the heart of God that we who are His children obey Him completely and immediately with a willing heart.** "Do you not know," Paul says, "that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness" (Rom. 6:16–18).

God's will of purpose embraces the ultimate end of this world, Christ's second coming and the setting up of His eternal kingdom. His will of desire embraces conversion; and His will of command embraces the commitment and obedience of His children.

**The great enemy of God's will is pride.** Pride caused Satan to rebel against God, and pride causes unbelievers to reject God and believers to disobey Him. For God's will to be accepted and to be prayed for in sincerity and with faith, self-will must be forsaken in the power of the Holy Spirit. "I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect" (Rom. 12:1–2).

When we pray in faith and in conformity to God's will, our prayer is a sanctifying grace that changes our lives dramatically. Prayer is a means of progressive sanctification. John Hannah said, "The end of prayer is not so much tangible answers as a deepening life of dependency.... The call to prayer is a call to love, submission, and obedience, ... the avenue of sweet, intimate, and intense fellowship of the soul with the infinite Creator."

The believer's call is to bring heaven to earth by hallowing the Lord's name, letting His kingdom come, and seeking to do His will.

In verses 11–13a Jesus gives three petitions. The first relates to our physical life and the present (**daily bread**), the second to our mental and emotional life and the past (**debts**), and the third to our spiritual life and the future (**temptation** and **evil**).

## 36

### The Disciples' Prayer—part 2 (6:9–15)

Pray, then, in this way: "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.]" For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions. (6:9–15)

### GOD'S PROVISION

**Give us this day our daily bread.** (6:11)

Although it may have been a genuine concern in New Testament times, to many Christians in the western world today, such a request may seem needless and inappropriate. Why should we ask God for what we already have in such abundance? Why, when many of us need to consume



less food than we do, ask God to supply our **daily bread**? What would be a completely understandable request of a Christian in Ethiopia or Cambodia, seems irrelevant on the lips of a well-fed American.

But this part of the Disciples' Prayer, like every other part, extends beyond the first century to all believers, in every age and in every situation. In this pattern for prayer our Lord gives all the necessary ingredients for praying. We can see five key elements in this request for God's provision: the substance, the source, the supplication, the seekers, and the schedule.

#### THE SUBSTANCE

**Bread** not only represents food but is symbolic of all of our physical needs. John Stott has observed that to Martin Luther, "everything necessary for the preservation of this life is bread, including food, a healthy body, good weather, house, home, wife, children, good government, and peace" (*Christian Counter-culture: The Message of the Sermon on the Mount* [Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1978], p. 149).

It is marvelous to understand that the God who created the entire universe, who is the God of all space and time and eternity, who is infinitely holy and completely self-sufficient, should care about supplying our physical needs—and should be concerned that we receive enough food to eat, clothes to wear, and a place to rest. God obligates Himself to supply our needs.

This part of the prayer is in the form of a petition, but it is also an affirmation—which is why it is as appropriate for those who are well-fed as for those who have little to eat. Above all it is an affirmation that every good thing we have comes from the gracious hand of God (James 1:17).

#### THE SOURCE

That leads us to the source, who is God. The **Father** is the one addressed throughout the prayer, the One who is praised and petitioned.

When all our needs are met and all is going well in our lives, we are inclined to think we are carrying our own load. We earn our own money, buy our own food and clothes, pay for our own houses. Yet even the hardest-working person owes all that he earns to God's provision (see Deut. 8:18). Our life, breath, health, possessions, talents, and opportunities all originate from resources that God has created and made available to man (see Acts 17:24–28). After scientists have made all their observations and calculations, there remains the unexplained element of the design, origin, and operation of the universe. It is unexplained, that is, apart from God, who holds it all together (Heb. 1:2–3).

God provided for man even before He created man. Man was God's final creation, and after He made and blessed Adam and Eve He said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you" (Gen. 1:29). Since that time God has continued to provide an abundance of food for mankind, in almost unlimited variety.

Yet Paul tells us that "the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, ... and advocate abstaining from foods, which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it is received with gratitude; for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and

prayer” (1 Tim. 4:1, 3–5). The Word of God sanctifies it by way of creation, and we sanctify it when we receive it with grateful prayer.

Every physical thing we have comes from God’s provision through the earth. It is therefore the sin of indifference and ingratitude not to daily recognize His gifts in thankful prayer.

#### SUPPLICATION

Supplication is expressed in the word **give**. That is the heart of the petition, because it recognizes need. Even though God may already have provided it, we ask Him for it in recognition of His past and present provision as well as in trust for His future provision.

The only thing that could make Jesus’ instruction and our petitions valid is the promise of God. We could not expect God to give what He has not promised. We can pray confidently because God has promised abundantly. “Trust in the Lord, and do good,” David counsels us; “dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness. Delight yourself in the Lord; and He will give you the desires of your heart.... Yet a little while and the wicked man will be no more; ... But the humble will inherit the land, and will delight themselves in abundant prosperity” (Ps. 37:3–4, 10–11).

God does not bind Himself to meet the physical needs of everyone, but only of those who trust in Him. In Psalm 37 David is speaking to believers who “trust in the Lord” (v. 3), “delight ... in the Lord” (v. 4), “commit [their] way to the Lord” (v. 5), “rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him” (v. 7), “cease from anger,” and “do not fret” (v. 8). He says, “I have been young, and now I am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, or his descendants begging bread” (v. 25).

#### THE SEEKERS

The **us** of Jesus’ model prayer are those who belong to Him. Speaking to believers, Paul wrote, “Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food, will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness; you will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God” (2 Cor. 9:10–11).

Jesus said, “Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who shall not receive many times as much at this time and in the age to come, eternal life” (Luke 18:29–30). God irrevocably commits Himself to meet the essential needs of His own.

The greatest cause of famine and its attendant diseases in the world is not poor agricultural practices or poor economic and political policies. Nor is the root problem lack of scientific and technological resources or even overpopulation. Those problems only aggravate the basic problem, which is spiritual. Only some fifteen percent of the arable land in the world is used for agriculture, and that for only half of the year. There is no major area of the world that with proper technology is not capable of supporting its own population and more.

Those parts of the world that have no Christian roots invariably place a low value on human life. The poverty in India, for example, may be laid at the feet of Hinduism, the pagan religion that spawned a host of other religions. According to *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and *Eerdman’s Handbook to the World’s Religions*, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism come from Hinduism. Shintoism, Zoroastrianism, Confucianism, and Taoism do not.

To the Hindu, man is but the incarnation of a soul on its way to *moksha*, a kind of “final emancipation,” during which trip he goes through countless, perhaps unending, cycles of reincarnation in both animal and human form. He works his way up to higher forms by good deeds and regresses to lower forms by sinning. Poverty, disease, and starvation are therefore seen as divine punishments for which the persons involved must do penance in order to be born into a higher form. To help a person in poverty or sickness is to interfere with his karma and therefore do him spiritual harm. (For a discussion of *moksha*, or *moksa*, see *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Micropaedia, VI, p. 972; for a more general discussion, see *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Macropaedia, vol. 8, pp. 888–908. Consult, also, *Eerdman’s Handbook to World Religions* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982].)

All animals are considered to be incarnations either of men or deities. Cows are held to be especially sacred because they are incarnated deities—of which Hinduism has some 330 million. Cows not only are not to be eaten but add to the food problem by consuming 20 percent of India’s total food supply. Even rats and mice, which eat 15 percent of the food supply, are not killed because they might be one’s reincarnated relatives.

Just as paganism is the great plague of India, Africa, and many other parts of the world, Christianity has been the blessing of the West. Europe and the United States, though never fully Christian in any biblical sense, have been immeasurably blessed because of the Christian influence on political, social, and economic philosophy and policy. The great concerns for human rights, care for the poor, orphanages, hospitals, prison reform, racial and slave reform, and a host of other concerns did not come from paganism or humanism but from biblical Christianity. On the other hand, the current degraded view of human life reflected in the low view of the family and growing legal and social approval of abortion, infanticide, and euthanasia are the legacy of humanism and practical atheism.

Without a proper view of God there cannot be a proper view of man. Those who have a right view of God and also a right relationship to Him through Jesus Christ are promised the provision of their heavenly Father. “For this reason” Jesus says, “I say to you, do not be anxious for your life, as to what you shall eat, or what you shall drink; nor for your body, as to what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body than clothing?... For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you” (Matt. 6:25, 32–33).

God has sometimes provided for His children through miraculous means, but His primary way of provision is through work, for which He has given life, energy, resources, and opportunity. His primary way to care for those who cannot work is through the generosity of those who are able to work. Whether he does so directly or indirectly, God is always the source of our physical well-being. He makes the earth to produce what we need, and He gives us the ability to procure it.

#### THE SCHEDULE

The schedule of God’s provision for His children is **daily**. The meaning here is simply that of regular, day-by-day supply of our needs. We are to rely on the Lord one day at a time. He may give us vision for work He calls us to do in the future, but His provision for our needs is **daily**, not weekly, monthly, or yearly. To accept the Lord’s provision for the present day, without concern

for our needs or welfare tomorrow, is a testimony of our contentment in His goodness and faithfulness.

## GOD'S PARDON

**And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. (6:12)**

**Opheilēma (debts) is one of five New Testament Greek terms for sin.** *Hamartia* is the most common and carries the root idea of missing the mark. Sin misses the mark of God's standard of righteousness. *Paraptōma*, often rendered "trespass," is the sin of slipping or falling, and results more from carelessness than from intentional disobedience. *Parabasis* refers to stepping across the line, going beyond the limits prescribed by God, and is often translated "transgression." This sin is more conscious and intentional than *hamartia* and *paraptoma*. *Anomia* means lawlessness, and is a still more intentional and flagrant sin. It is direct and open rebellion against God and His ways.

**The noun *opheilēma* is used only a few times in the New Testament, but its verb form is found often. Of the some thirty times it is used in its verb form, twenty-five times it refers to moral or spiritual debts.**

Sin is a moral and spiritual debt to God  
that must be paid.

In his account of this prayer, Luke uses *hamartia* ("sins"; Luke 11:4), clearly indicating that the reference is to sin, not to a financial debt. Matthew probably used debts because it corresponded to the most common Aramaic term (*hōbā*) for sin used by Jews of that day, which also represented moral or spiritual debt to God.

### THE PROBLEM

**SIN IS THAT WHICH SEPARATES MAN FROM GOD, AND IS THEREFORE MAN'S GREATEST ENEMY AND GREATEST PROBLEM.** Sin dominates the mind and heart of man. It has contaminated every human being and is the degenerative power that makes man susceptible to disease, illness, and every conceivable form of evil and unhappiness, temporal and eternal. The ultimate effects of sin are death and damnation, and the present effects are misery, dissatisfaction, and guilt. Sin is the common denominator of every crime, every theft, lie, murder, immorality, sickness, pain, and sorrow of mankind. It is also the moral and spiritual disease for which man has no cure. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Then you also can do good who are accustomed to do evil" (Jer. 13:23). The natural man does not *want* his sin cured, because he loves darkness rather than light (John 3:19).

Those who trust in the Lord Jesus Christ have received God's pardon for sin and are saved from eternal hell. And since, as we have seen, this prayer is given to believers, the **debts** referred to here are those incurred by Christians when they sin. Immeasurably more important than our need for daily bread is our need for continual forgiveness of sin.

Arthur Pink writes in *An Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1974), pp. 163–64:

As it is contrary to the holiness of God, sin is a defilement, a dishonor, and a reproach to us as it is a violation of His law. It is a crime, and as to the guilt which we contract thereby, it is a debt. As creatures we owe a debt of obedience unto our maker and governor, and through failure to render the same on account of our rank disobedience, we have incurred a debt of punishment; and it is for this that we implore a divine pardon.

#### THE PROVISION

Because man's greatest problem is sin, his greatest need is forgiveness—and that is what God provides.

Though we have been forgiven the ultimate penalty of sin, as Christians we need God's constant forgiveness for the sins we continue to commit. We are to pray, therefore, **forgive us**.

**Forgiveness is the central theme of this entire passage (vv. 9–15), being mentioned six times in eight verses. Everything leads to or issues from forgiveness.**

Believers have experienced once-for-all God's judicial forgiveness, which they received the moment Christ was trusted as Savior. We are no longer condemned, no longer under judgment, no longer destined for hell (Rom. 8:1). The eternal Judge has declared us pardoned, justified, righteous. No one, human or satanic, can condemn or bring any "charge against God's elect" (Rom. 8:33–34).

But because we still fall into sin, we frequently require God's gracious forgiveness, His forgiveness not now as Judge but as Father. "If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us," John warns believers. But, he goes on to assure us, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:8–9).

During the Last Supper, Jesus began washing the disciples' feet as a demonstration of the humble, serving spirit they should have as His followers. At first Peter refused, but when Jesus said, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me," Peter went to the other extreme, wanting to be bathed all over. Jesus replied, " 'He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.' For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, 'Not all of you are clean' " (John 13:5–11).

Jesus' act of footwashing was therefore more than an example of humility; it was also a picture of the forgiveness God gives in His repeated cleansing of those who are already saved. Dirt on the feet symbolizes the daily surface contamination from sin that we experience as we walk through life. It does not, and cannot, make us entirely dirty, because we have been permanently cleansed from that. The positional purging of salvation that occurs at regeneration needs no repetition, but the practical purging is needed every day, because every day we fall short of God's perfect holiness.

As Judge, God is eager to forgive sinners, and as Father He is even more eager to keep on forgiving His children. Hundreds of years before Christ, Nehemiah wrote, "Thou art a God of forgiveness, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness" (Neh. 9:17). As vast and pervasive as the sin of man is, God forgiveness is more vast and greater. Where sin abounds, God's grace abounds even more (Rom. 5:20).

#### THE PLEA

**Asking forgiveness implies confession.** Feet that are not presented to Christ cannot be washed by Him. Sin that is not confessed cannot be forgiven. That is the condition John makes plain in the text just quoted above: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). To confess means basically to agree with, and when we confess our sins we agree with God about them that they are wicked, evil, defiling, and have no part in those who belong to Him.

It is difficult to confess sins, and both Satan and our prideful nature fight against it. But it is the only way to the free and joyful life. "He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion" (Prov. 28:13). John Stott says, "One of the surest antidotes to the process of moral hardening is the disciplined practice of uncovering our sins of thought and outlook, as well as of word and of deed, and the repentant forsaking of them" (*Confess Your Sins* [Waco, Tex.: Word, 1974], p. 19).

The true Christian does not see God's promise of forgiveness as a license to sin, a way to abuse His love and presume on His grace. Rather he sees God's gracious forgiveness as the means of spiritual growth and sanctification and continually gives thanks to God for His great love and willingness to forgive and forgive and forgive. It is also important to realize that confessing sin gives God the glory when He chastens the disobedient Christian because it removes any complaint that God is unfair when He disciplines.

A Puritan saint of many generations ago prayed, "Grant me never to lose sight of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the exceeding righteousness of salvation, the exceeding glory of Christ, the exceeding beauty of holiness, and the exceeding wonder of grace." At another time he prayed, "I am guilty but pardoned. I am lost but saved. I am wandering but found. I am sinning but cleansed. Give me perpetual broken-heartedness. Keep me always clinging to Thy cross" (Arthur Bennett, ed., *The Valley of Vision: A Collection of Puritan Prayers and Devotions* [Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1975], pp. 76, 83).

#### THE PREREQUISITE

Jesus gives the prerequisite for receiving forgiveness in the words, *as we also have forgiven our debtors*. The principle is simple but sobering: *if we have forgiven, we will be forgiven; if we have not forgiven, we will not be forgiven*.

We are to forgive because it is the character of righteousness, and therefore of the faithful Christian life, to forgive. Citizens of God's kingdom are blessed and receive mercy because they themselves are merciful (Matt. 5:7). They love even their enemies because they have the nature of the loving heavenly Father within them (5:44–45, 48). Forgiveness is the mark of a truly regenerate heart. Still we fail to be consistent with that mark and need constant exhortation because of the strength of sinful flesh (Rom. 7:14–25).

We are also to be motivated to forgive because of Christ's example. "Be kind to one another," Paul says, "tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you" (Eph. 4:32). John tells us, "The one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked" (1 John 2:6).

Because it reflects God's own gracious forgiveness, the forgiving of another person's sin expresses the highest virtue of man. "A man's discretion makes him slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook a transgression" (Prov. 19:11).

Forgiving others also frees the conscience of guilt. Unforgiveness not only stands as a barrier to God's forgiveness but also interferes with peace of mind, happiness, satisfaction, and even the proper functioning of the body.

Forgiving others is of great benefit to the whole congregation of believers. Probably few things have so short-circuited the power of the church as unresolved conflicts among its members. "If I regard wickedness in my heart," the psalmist warns himself and every believer, "the Lord will not hear" (Ps. 66:18). The Holy Spirit cannot work freely among those who carry grudges and harbor resentment (see Matt. 5:23–24; 1 Cor. 1:10–13; 3:1–9).

Forgiving others also delivers us from God's discipline. Where there is an unforgiving spirit, there is sin; and where there is sin, there will be chastening (Heb. 12:5–13). Unrepented sins in the church at Corinth caused many believers to be weak, sick, and even to die (1 Cor. 11:30).

But the most important reason for being forgiving is that it brings God's forgiveness to the believer. That truth is so important that Jesus reinforces it after the close of the prayer (vv. 14–15). **Nothing in the Christian life is more important than forgiveness—our forgiveness of others and God's forgiveness of us.**

In the matter of forgiveness, God deals with us as we deal with others. We are to forgive others as freely and graciously as God forgives us. The Puritan writer Thomas Manton said, "There is none so tender to others as they which have received mercy themselves, for they know how gently God hath dealt with them."

And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. (6:13a)

**Peirasmos (temptation) is basically a neutral word in the Greek, having no necessary connotation either of good or evil, as does our English *temptation*, which refers to inducement to evil. The root meaning has to do with a testing or proving, and from that meaning are derived the related meanings of trial and temptation. Here it seems to parallel the term **evil**, indicating that it has in view enticement to sin.**

God's holiness and goodness will not allow His leading anyone, certainly not one of His children, into a place or experience in which they would purposely be induced to commit sin. *"Let no one say when he is tempted," says James, " 'I am being tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone" (James 1:13).*

Yet James had just said, "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials (*peirasmos*), knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance" (vv. 2–3). There is an interpretive problem, therefore, as to whether *peirasmos* in Matthew 6:13 is translated temptation or trial. As James tells us, God does not tempt. So why ask Him not to do what He would never do anyway? Yet James also tells us we should rejoice when trials come and not seek to avoid them. So why should we pray, **do not lead us into temptation?**

I affirm with Chrysostom, the early church Father, that the solution to this issue is that Jesus is here not speaking of logic or theology but of a heart desire and inclination that cause a believer to want to avoid the danger and trouble sin creates. It is the expression of the redeemed soul that so despises and fears sin that it wants to escape all prospects of falling into it, choosing to avoid rather than having to defeat temptation.

Here is another paradox of Scripture. We know that trials are a means for our growing spiritually, morally, and emotionally. Yet we have no desire to be in a place where even the possibility of sin is increased. Even Jesus, when He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, first asked, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me," before He said, "yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt" (Matt. 26:39). He was horrified at the prospect of taking sin upon Himself, yet He was willing to endure it in order to fulfill the will of His Father to make possible the redemption of man.

**Our proper reaction to times of temptation is similar to Christ's, but for us it is primarily a matter of self-distrust.** When we honestly look at the power of sin and at our own weakness and sinful propensities, we shudder at the danger of temptation or even trial. This petition is another plea for God to provide what we in ourselves do not have. It is an appeal to God to place a watch over our eyes, our ears, our



mouth, our feet, and our hands—that in whatever we see, hear, or say, and in any place we go and in anything we do, He will protect us from sin.

Like Joseph we know that what men and Satan mean for evil God will turn to the good of His children (see Gen. 50:20); but we are not certain that, like Joseph, we will be completely submissive to and dependent on God in our trials. The implication of this part of the prayer seems to be: “Lord, don’t ever lead us into a trial that will present such a temptation that we will not be able to resist it.” It is laying claim to the promise that “God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it” (1 Cor. 10:13).

**This petition is a safeguard against presumption and a false sense of security and self-sufficiency.** We know that we will never have arrived spiritually, and that we will never be free of the danger of sin, until we are with the Lord. With Martin Luther we say, “We cannot help being exposed to the assaults, but we pray that we may not fall and perish under them.” As our dear Lord prayed for us in His great intercessory prayer, we want, at all costs, to be kept from the evil one (John 17:15).

When we sincerely pray, **do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil**, we also declare that we submit to His Word, which is our protection from sin. “Submit therefore to God,” James says. “Resist the devil and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). Submitting to God is submitting to His Word. “Thy word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against Thee” (Ps. 119:11). So the believer prays to be kept from overwhelming solicitation to sin, and if he falls into it, to be rescued from it. **Deliver** is actually in the form of a command.

In a cursed world where we are battered by evil all around us, we confess our inadequacy to deal with evil. We confess the weakness of our flesh and the absolute impotency of human resources to combat sin and rescue us from its clutches. Above all we confess our need for the protection and deliverance of our loving heavenly Father.

#### GOD’S POSTSCRIPT

**For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions. (6:14–15)**

The prayer lesson concludes with a reminder that follows the teaching of forgiveness in verse 12. This is the Savior’s own commentary on our petition to God for forgiveness, and the only one of the petitions to which He gives added insight. Thus its importance is amplified.

**For if you forgive men for their transgressions** puts the principle in a positive mode. Believers should forgive as those who have received judicial forgiveness (cf. Eph. 1:7; 1 John 2:1–2) from God. When the heart is filled with such a forgiving spirit, **your heavenly Father will also forgive**

**you.** Believers cannot know the parental forgiveness, which keeps fellowship with the Lord rich and blessings from the Lord profuse, apart from forgiving others in heart and word. **Forgive** (*aphiēmi*) means literally “to hurl away.”

Paul had this in mind when he wrote, “I found mercy, in order that in me as the foremost [of sinners], Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience” (1 Tim. 1:16; cf. Matt. 7:11). An unforgiving spirit not only is inconsistent for one who has been totally forgiven by God, but also brings the chastening of God rather than His mercy. Our Lord illustrates the unmerciful response in the parable of Matthew 18:21–35. There a man is forgiven the unpayable debt representing sin and is given the mercy of salvation. He then refuses to forgive another and is immediately and severely chastened by God.

**But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.** That states the truth of verse 14 in a negative way for emphasis. The sin of an unforgiving heart and a bitter spirit (Heb. 12:15) forfeits blessing and invites judgment. Even the Talmud taught that he who is indulgent toward others’ faults will be mercifully dealt with by the Supreme Judge (*Shabbath* 151b).

Every believer must seek to manifest the forgiving spirit of Joseph (Gen. 50:19–21) and of Stephen (Acts 7:60) as often as needed (Luke 17:3–4). **To receive pardon from the perfectly holy God and then to refuse to pardon others when we are sinful men is the epitome of abuse of mercy.** And “judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment” (James 2:13).

There are petitions for the believer to ask from God, but there are also conditions for the answers to be received. Even more, our prayers are to be primarily concerned with the exaltation of the name, kingdom, and will of the Lord Jesus Christ. Prayer is primarily worship which inspires thanks and personal purity.

## DESIRING GOD:

January 30, 2023

# The Other Lord’s Prayer

Article by  
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The KJV translation of the Lord's Prayer is one of the most well-known portions of Scripture in the West. But we find the Lord's Prayer twice in the Gospels — once in Matthew (6:9–13) and once in Luke (11:1–4). **Doubtless Jesus delivered this prayer on multiple occasions.**

***While the Matthew and Luke versions are remarkably similar, there are a handful of important differences.***

The most obvious difference is Luke's omission of "Your will be done" and "Deliver us from evil." In this article, however, we will briefly sketch two of the subtler differences and apply these insights to our personal lives.

Before we comment on a handful of unique features of the Lord's Prayer in Luke, we will first examine one common, salient denominator between the two presentations of the Lord's Prayer (a point I expand upon further in my *Handbook on the Gospels*). ***Both evangelists underscore the name "Father" at the beginning of the prayer*** (Matthew 6:9; Luke 11:2).

## ***Our Father***

This appellation is odd, as Jews typically do not address God as their "Father." The Old Testament primarily casts God as Israel's covenant-keeping King who rules over the cosmos and graciously commits himself to preserving his people. This explains why the typical names are, for example, "Lord," "Yahweh," and "God." While the Old Testament presents Israel's God as Father on a few occasions (Exodus 4:22–23; Deuteronomy 1:29–31; 32:6; Psalm 103:13–14; Proverbs 3:11–12; Isaiah 63:16; 64:8; Malachi 2:10), the title appears relatively rarely.

In the four Gospels, on the other hand, Jesus's favorite term for addressing God is "Father" (for example, Matthew 10:32; Mark 8:38; Luke 2:49; John 5:17). Furthermore, Jesus, on a number of occasions, claims that God is also the "Father" of the disciples (Matthew 5:16, 48; 6:1; Mark 11:25; Luke 6:36; 11:13; 12:32; John 14:7, 21).

What accounts for the shift of language from the Old Testament to the New? Richard Bauckham argues that "Jesus may have understood Abba to be the new name of God that corresponded to the new beginning, the new exodus, the new covenant with his people that God was initiating" (*Jesus: A Very Short Introduction*, 67). **Just as God gives Israel a distinct name for himself in the exodus (Exodus 3:14–15), so now God receives another name in the second exodus.**

**THE TERM "FATHER," THEN, WOULD INCLUDE NOT ONLY A NEW DIMENSION OF INTIMACY BUT ALSO A NEW REVELATORY DESCRIPTION OF ISRAEL'S LORD. GOD, THE FATHER, WILL NOW BE KNOWN BY HIS WORK OF REDEMPTION IN HIS SON.** The Lord's Prayer, then, is primarily marked by pleading to God to continue working out the new eschatological phase in his program — the long-awaited second exodus.

## Teach Us to Pray

Now that we can appreciate the trajectory of the Lord's Prayer more fully, let us consider how Luke frames the prayer. **The Lord's Prayer in Matthew (6:9–13) occurs within the famed Sermon on the Mount (5:1–7:29), whereas Luke places the account in Jesus's journey from Galilee to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51–19:27).**

**All three Synoptic Gospels record Jesus's journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, but Luke reserves more than one-third of his narrative for the journey.** This portion of

Luke's Gospel is largely filled with parables and difficult sayings. The crowds (and Luke's audience) must be willing to suffer for the sake of the kingdom and embrace a Messiah who suffers and bears God's curse.

*The Lord's Prayer, then, serves as a guide for communing with God, asking him to achieve his redemptive purposes in the life of believers, and solidifying one's commitment to him.*

**“The Lord's Prayer serves as a guide for  
communuing with God.”**

**Luke dedicates more space to Jesus's prayer life than any other evangelist (3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 29; 22:41, 44).**

Jesus prays at critical moments in his ministry. Indeed, prayer bookends his ministry: we find Jesus praying at his baptism in the Jordan River (3:21) as well as on the cross (23:46).

We should assume that the disciples, like many first-century Jews, would have sought a robust prayer life. They would have recited the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:5-9) in the morning and evening and often prayed in their local synagogues.

The second half of Luke 11:1 reads, “When [Jesus] finished [praying], one of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray.’” This verse gives us the impression that the disciples noticed something peculiar about Jesus's prayer life. Was it *when* Jesus prayed, *how* he prayed, or *what* he prayed? Was it all three?

**Each Day's Bread**

Five imperatives are found in both Matthew's and Luke's depictions of the Lord's Prayer — "hallowed," "come," "give," "forgive," and "lead . . . not." The first two commands are somewhat synonymous since they entail the expansion of God's presence throughout the cosmos (Luke 11:2). The remaining three petitions constitute the manner in which the first two are carried out. That is, the requests for provision (11:3), forgiveness of sin, and deliverance from temptation (11:4) entail the responsibilities of the disciples in the ever-expanding kingdom.

Matthew's Gospel reads, "Give us today our daily bread" (6:11), whereas Luke adds, "Give us *each day* our daily bread" (11:3). The addition of "each day" (*to kath' hēmeran*) accents the disciples' radical dependence upon God's provision in their lives. **This precise idea of relying upon God providing "bread" for his people recalls Jesus's first wilderness temptation, where the devil entices Jesus to transform a stone into bread (Luke 4:3).** Jesus refuses and then quotes Deuteronomy 8:3: "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone'" (Luke 4:4). **In Deuteronomy 8, the general point is that Israel must be wholly dependent upon God's life-giving promises and presence.** If Israel trusts God, then the nation will enter the promised land, "a land where bread will not be scarce and you [Israel] will lack nothing" (Deuteronomy 8:9).

**The Lord's Prayer likely has in mind Jesus's wilderness temptation and Deuteronomy 8 — a passage that, in turn, looks back to Israel's wandering in the wilderness and God's feeding them daily with manna.** Because Jesus succeeded in clinging to the promises of God by not transforming the stone into bread, he gained the victory over the devil. **Jesus's success in the wilderness empowers the disciples to conquer sin and thereby receive the "daily bread" of the Lord.**

**In a word, the daily provision of bread the Father delivers to his people concretely demonstrates that they have spiritually entered the promised land of the new creation.** Perhaps, then, Luke's addition of "each day" functions as a continual reminder of God's end-time blessing in one's life.

# Forgive Our Sins

Luke's prayer also contains another unique detail. Matthew's Gospel reads, "Forgive our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors" (Matthew 6:12), but Luke's Gospel states, "Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us" (Luke 11:4 NIV).

**THE FORGIVENESS OF *SINS* IS EXCLUSIVELY BOUND UP WITH JESUS'S ATONING WORK ON THE CROSS.**

Old Testament prophets, especially Isaiah, expected God to forgive the sins of his people at the end of history — a final, eschatological act of pardoning grounded in the servant's faithful atoning ministry (Isaiah 43:25; 52:13–53:12; Jeremiah 31:34; Micah 7:19).

Luke explicitly identifies Jesus as the long-awaited servant of Isaiah (Luke 2:32 [citing Isaiah 49:6]; 22:37 [citing Isaiah 53:12]).

**FORGIVENESS IN THE LORD'S PRAYER, THEN, RESTS UPON JESUS'S SACRIFICIAL DEATH.**

Remarkably, Jesus institutes the Lord's Prayer *before* his work on the cross, but we must remember that all of Jesus's life is oriented toward securing forgiveness of sins on the cross (see Luke 3:3, 21; 5:20–24; 7:47–49; 24:47). In addition, because Jesus's followers fully identify with Jesus, they are endowed with the authority to grant "forgiveness" to others. What is true of the "servant" is true of his followers — the little "servants."

## Pray Like This

How do we apply these truths to our daily lives?

***“Those forgiven have firsthand knowledge of the need for forgiveness.”***

First, by asking God to provide us “*each day* our daily bread,” we admit our **radical dependence** on him, pleading with him to finish what he began. God has initially and spiritually placed us in the promised land of the new creation, but we still await the full transformation of our hearts and bodies.

Second, Jesus calls us to **always ask God to grant us forgiveness of sins**. While Christ died for our sins once for all, we continually come before the throne and plead with him to forgive the sins that beset us. **In addition, he commands us to extend forgiveness to those who have offended us**. Those forgiven have firsthand knowledge of the need for forgiveness, so we should never be tightfisted in granting it to others.

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## REFLECTIONS:

Connect the Context:

- Center of the center of the Sermon On The Mount: “How To Live Life”
- God is giving us God’s Word, will, & ways
- Righteousness defining & dividing humanity & eternity...
- Zoom in AND Zoom out...

Definitions:

- What is prayer?
- Piper’s definition is exceptional...
  - “Prayer is intentionally conveying a message to God.”



- Vertical upward = Prayer
- Vertical downward = illumination & revelation (NOT prayer)
- Got Questions has a few video explanations...
- Different “types” of prayers...

Descriptions: (see PRAYER series sermons)

#### A. #1 BARRIERS to Pray

- 8 Barriers To Prayer: WHY? (cf. Ephesians 6:18) “The WHY? can kill the WHAT? of the heart.” & “We need BOTH, more ‘ought’ AND more ‘HOW?’” in our Christian lives.”
  - Wrong Motives
    - James 4:3
  - Sin
    - Isaiah 59:1-2
    - Psalms 66:18
  - Idols
    - Ezekiel 14:3
  - Hard Heart
    - Proverbs 21:13
    - Luke 6:38
    - Philippians 4:19
  - Unforgiveness
    - Matthew 6:15
    - Mark 11:25
    - We were the nails that held Him to the cross...
  - Marital Disharmony
    - 1 Peter 3:7
  - Unbelief (at many levels & with many facets)
    - John 3:36
    - Revelation 2-3 (cf. Sardis & Laodicea)
  - Hypocrisy
    - Matthew 6:1-18

#### B. #2 REASONS to Pray

- 8 Reasons To Pray
  - Pray to GLORIFY God
    - 1 Corinthians 10:31
    - Colossians 3:23-24
  - Pray to OBEY
    - 1 Thessalonians 5:17
    - Ephesians 6:18

- Pray to BE CHRIST-LIKE
  - Mark 1:35 (Early)
  - Luke 5:16 (He OFTEN withdrew/slipped away to pray)
  - Luke 6:12 (All-Night)
  - Hebrews 7:25 & Romans 8:34 (Present in Heaven)
- Pray to BE BIBLICAL Christians (building to code)
  - Acts 2:42 (devoted)
  - Acts 6:4 (devoted)
- Pray to RECEIVE
  - God's Holy Spirit
    - Luke 11:13
  - God's Mercy & Grace
    - Hebrews 4:16
  - God's Peace
    - Philippians 4:6-7
  - God's Joy
    - John 16:24
    - Psalms 16:11
  - God's Answers/Blessing (to our Requests)
    - James 4:2
- Pray to BE READY
  - Luke 21:34-36
- Pray to FIGHT (biblically, missionally, & personally)
  - 1 Peter 5:8
  - Ephesians 6:12
  - Ephesians 6:18
- Pray to WIN!
  - Ephesians 6:18
  - Acts 12:1ff
  - Psalms 139:23-24
  - Psalms 51:2
  - Pray for the Lord to empower the victory.
    - There is a biblical & missional relationship between Power & Prayer.
    - Prayer paves the way to win (souls).
    - Relatively few souls are ever won outside of someone else's prayers.
    - We win in discipleship & sanctification by God's grace, often times as a direct result of answered prayers.
      - Psalms 139:23-24
      - Psalms 51:2

C. #3 = BIBLICAL GOD (The WHO?)

- a. 0 = no God/gods
- b. 1 = 1 god but wrong god
- c. 1111 = many different gods
- d. -† = Jesus "lite"
- e. †+ = Jesus "plus"
- f. -†+ = Jesus customized
- g. ?†? = Confused/Corrupted Jesus
- h. What difference will God make in this world through us?

D. #4 = APPRECIATION & Prayer (The HOW? – part 1) \*\*\* 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 \*\*\*

- a. PRAISE (for Who He is.)
  - i. Psalms 100 (Read it & take it to heart!)
    - 1. He is God
    - 2. We are His people
    - 3. If you KNOW Him you will praise Him.
    - 4. If you don't PRAISE Him, you don't know Him.
    - 5. He and His truth in love will never change or end!
- b. THANKSGIVING (for Who He is.)
- c. We get the 'please' & 'thank You' backwards!
- d. Let's be honest... our natural tendencies are self-serving & preserving.
- e. We need to BE a praising, thankful, tenth leper witness to the world.
- f. Praise = convergence of thanks, worship, & faith
  - i. Colossians 4:2-3 (devotion to prayer keeping alert with an attitude of thanksgiving... praying God will open a door for us to bring the Gospel truth... even while being imprisoned...)
  - ii. Luke 17:7-10 (serve God first then take care of yourselves, being thankful for the opportunity & privilege of serving The Lord...)
  - iii. Beware the wrong-hearted (fake) "thank you."
  - iv. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (Read these 3 verses carefully & consistently!)
  - v. 3 KEY THINGS about the Christian's Thanksgiving & Prayer:
    - 1. Past (graces)
      - a. Romans 6:17-18 (were slaves to sin, now slaves to righteousness)
      - b. Ephesians 2:1-10 (were dead in our sin, now saved by grace through faith)
    - 2. Present (graces)
      - a. Philippians 4:5-7 (the Lord is NEAR, be anxious for NOTHING... while battles rage on, the war is won! BE earnest in everything but anxious for nothing. In everything, with thankful prayer, know that God's peace that passes understanding is promised to the Christian).

- b. Acts 16: (Paul & Silas in Philippi... PRAYING & singing hymns of PRAISE inside the dungeon jail cell).
  - i. We can have peace & joy in the storms of life.
  - ii. This is NOT the power of positive thinking...
  - iii. This is faithful praise & worship of Christ.

3. Future (graces)

- a. Ephesians 5:15-21 (...ALWAYS giving thanks for ALL things... in the light of our eternal guarantees).
- b. "I go to prepare a place for you..."
- c. Read Luke 17's account of the 10 lepers...
- d. Jesus Freaks account of 2 Asian girls shot dead (with gratitude in their hearts) by their cowardice pastor with a revolver...

E. #5 PRAY, OBEY, & PLEASE – 1 John 3:21-22 (HOW? – part 2)

- HOW? = in obedience!
- Follow His mandate(s)!
- Loving God is not an option in biblical Christianity.
- Is there anything in your life elevated above Christ?
- How much do you love Christ?
- a. Most prayer lives are anemic because most lives are being lived out in disobedience...
- b. The Great Commandments & Great Commission are the best litmus test...
  - i. True biblical & missional LOVE
  - ii. John 14:15
  - iii. If one does not love they will not obey...
  - iv. If one does not obey they do not love...
- c. **1 John 3:21-22:**
  - i. Love God truly & He will give you the God-honoring desires of your heart.
  - ii. Obey AND... if you do what pleases God... you WILL get your heart's desire...
  - iii. Love of God obeys God.
  - iv. When we want to pray for what God wants... we will get what we both want!
- d. Obedience & Disobedience are GIANTS in the world of PRAYER!
  - i. See Adam & Eve... it was 1 sin, 1 bite, 1 fall of man...
  - ii. See Moses & his 1 sin of abuse & his closing years in the desert...
  - iii. See the difference between DO-ing vs. BE-ing (last week)...
  - iv. Disobedience is as much an attitude as an action...
  - v. ALL Christians have an ugly BC, a miraculous @, and an imperfect but passionate missional AD
- e. More Scripture:
  - i. Hebrews 11:6... without faith it is impossible to please God.

- ii. Hebrews 12:1-3a parallel 1 John 3:21-22 at the heart level...
- iii. Joshua 24:15... as for me and my house, we WILL serve the LORD!
- iv. Psalm 78... Don't test God... It is the essence of disobedience & it brings God's holy anger & wrath.

F. #6 = JOYOUS Prayer (**John 16:24**) (HOW? – past 3)

- a. J.O.Y. = JESUS (Joy in Jesus' name)
- b. Let's learn why we pray in Jesus' name...
  - **John 16:24** = "Until now, you have not asked for anything in My name. Ask and you will receive AND your joy will be complete." – Jesus (John 16:24)
  - John 20:31 = there is life in His name!
  - Acts 4:18 = Satan fears when we come in Jesus' name...
  - Acts 16:8 = authority in Jesus' name
  - 1 Cor. 1:10 = unity
  - Eph. 5:20 = thankfulness
  - Col. 3:17 = our purpose is found in Jesus
  - Deut. 28:47 = serving without joy/thanks brings God's discipline.
  - 2 Thess. 3:6 = discernment
  - 1 John 3:23 = believe & love
  - Acts 3:6 = POWER!
  - 2 Cor. 7:4 = joy in the midst of troubles
  - James 1:2 = testing of faith brings progressive blessings...
  - 1 Thess. 1:6 = in spite of severe trials we can have joy.
  - Luke 6:23 = rejoice no matter what because of our eternal reward.
  - See the Parable of the Soils to see how we are to respond...
  - When the Apostles watched Jesus ascend into heaven... next, they "returned to Jerusalem with great joy..."
  - Gal. 5:22 = JOY is a fruit of the Spirit!
  - 3 John 1:4 = JOY in watching your spiritual children walk with the LORD.

G. #7 = OFFENSIVE Prayer (**2 Corinthians 10:3-5**) (HOW? – part 4)

- We must break free of our bondage if we hope to live on offense...
- We must accept the universal context of 24/7 spiritual warfare!
  - Fight to keep the lost sure that are found...
  - Fight to convince the found that they are still lost...
  - Fight against justification AND sanctification!
- **The battlefield is the mind... the heart is the prize.**
  - **2 Corinthians 10:3-5**
  - Demolishing strongholds... (sin with a strong hold on us)
    - Fear > faith
    - World > worshipping witness
    - Etc.

- One stronghold is enough to cripple us
- We need BOTH... God's Word AND our Prayer!
- **Ephesians 6:10-20 (key on vv.12... 18, & 19)**
  - The battle is NOT a will-power fight...
  - We need the armor & power of God...
  - The Sword & PRAYER are the 2 OFFENSIVE parts of God's armor.
- **We need to LIVE God's biblical battle-cry!**
  - Joshua 1:9! (Let us BE a Joshua & Caleb on the battlefield.)
  - God told Gideon to blow the shofar to God's glory...
  - Living & praying the Great Commandments & Great Commission is living & praying on offense!
  - Ezekiel 33-36 tells the same principled message...
  - Pray Romans 1:25 for your life...
  - Pray Mark 9:24 for your life...
  - Pray more & more Scripture...
- **Don't be afraid! BE like Elisha & his words to his blinded servant! (2 Kings 6)**
  - "Oh LORD, open his eyes that he may see!" = 9 word prayer!
  - Then the LORD opened his eyes...
  - God's family is NEVER out gunned when we are walking with God!
  - Hebrews 12:1-3a... "for the joy set before Him... Consider Him!"

H. #8 = YAHWEH Thru YESHUA (Matthew 6:9-13) (HOW? - part 5)

- Traditionally known as "The Lord's Prayer"
- 

I. #9 = INTERCESSORY Prayer (Hebrews 13:18a) (HOW? – part 6)

- What is/are your key place(s) to BE in the family of God?
- Hebrews 13:8a = 3 words... "Pray for us"
- Love your leaders by faithfully following them & praying for them.
- The "pray" here is an imperative command... & a fruit of biblical love.

SAMPLE "Types" of BIBLICAL Prayers:

- Militant Prayers
  - Ephesians 6:18
- Model (vs. memorized) Prayer
  - Matthew 5:9-13 & Luke 11:1-4

Paradigms:

- When it comes to biblical prayer, we need more of BOTH the God-honoring 'ought' AND the Christ-like 'HOW?'
- We need to BE more about the right-hearted ADORATION and less about the right-DO-ing OBLIGATIONS.
- 2 halves
  - God's purposes (3 requests) = Loving God & seeking His will.
    - Our Father in HEAVEN
      - Relationship
    - May Your name be recognized as HOLY
      - He sets His family apart to be holy...
    - May Your Kingdom come & Your will be done.
      - Prays for reunion with God's will & way
  - Our concerns (3 points on challenges to living day to day life)
    - Give us today our daily bread (like in the Exodus)
    - Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us... (God forgives His people & calls His people to do the same with others... vs. revenge & vengeance – which belongs to God... love your enemy & bless those who curse you... and do good to those who hate you).
    - Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil...
      - We may often fail if/when tested or tempted...
      - Life is full of choices...
      - Seek God's gracious & merciful protection...
  - NOTE: Jesus used this model of prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane!
    - Father, not My will but Yours be done!
    - This prayer not only serves as a model for us...
    - This prayer models Christ's life, death, & prayer for us...
- 7 Petitions
  - Hallowed be Your name...
  - Your kingdom come...
  - Your will be done (on earth as it is in heaven)
  - Give us (this day) our daily bread...
  - And forgive us our trespasses (as we forgive those who have trespassed against us)
  - And lead us not into temptation...
  - But deliver us from evil (the evil one).
- 5 Keys: Who, What When, Where, How
  - Who = God The Father
    - Matthew 6 & Luke 11:2
    - John 12:44
    - John 16:23-24 ("in My name")
    - Ephesians 3:14-15
    - 1 John 1:3

- Romans 1:8
- What = His kingdom come, His will be done (first)
  - Matthew 6 & Luke 11:2
  - Matthew 6:33
  - James 4:3
  - 1 John 5:14
  - 1 Corinthians 10:31
  - Colossians 3:23-24
- When = Daily (mornings, mid-days, evenings - “without ceasing”)
  - Daniel 6:20
  - **Psalms 55:17**
  - Luke 5:16
  - 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18
- Where = Private
  - Tamion
  - NOT hypocrites public Matthew 6:6ff
  - Mark 1:35 (solitary)
- How = With our HEART
  - Matthew 6:7-8 (NOT repetition)
  - Fervently per James 5:16
  - Hosea 7:14
  - Hebrews 5:7
  - ...till sweating blood like Jesus
  - Passionately relational!