

What every Christian Ought To Know. How To PRAY (With POWER)



- (Matt. 6:9-13) **“After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.”**

- Prayer is not about getting what I want, but about the fulfillment of God’s will. The proper objective of prayer is not to enlarge my borders, build my empire, or expand my wallet but to **“further the kingdom of God.”** The point is not to elevate my name but to **“HALLOW”** God’s name.
- Everything in prayer revolves around **who God is, what God wants,** and **how God is to be glorified.** That is the sum and substance of proper praying. So how do we accomplish this? Through **reading, meditating,** and **memorizing** God’s **WORD.**
- Any prayers that are **self-consuming, self-indulgent, self-aggrandizing;** any prayers that seek whatever I want no matter what God wants; any prayers that suggest God must deliver because I have demanded it—those are prayers that take His name in vain. Such praying is an egregious sin against the **nature of God,** against the **will of God,** and against the **Word of God.**

We Must Submit To God's Paternity. #1

- The model prayer Christ gave His disciples stands in stark contrast to the kind of rambling repetition that we hear and often times exercise. Every word in the Lord's Prayer is **deliberate, intentional**, and loaded with **spiritual significance**—including the name Jesus used to address the Lord.
- **“And He said to them, *“When you pray, say: ‘Father, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. 3 ‘Give us each day our daily bread. 4 ‘And forgive us our sins, For we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.”*** (Luke 11:2-4).
- The prayer starts with a reference to God's **“PATERNITY.”** The first word—the address—is a reminder that **God is our heavenly Father**. We go to Him not only because He is a sovereign Monarch, a righteous Judge, and our Creator, but because He is a **“loving Father.”** That beautiful expression reminds us of the grace that gives us unlimited access to His throne, and it encourages us to come boldly, just as a son or a daughter would come to a loving dad.
- **Notice (Heb. 4:16) *“Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”***

- So, when we pray, we are going to a God who is our **LOVING HEAVENLY FATHER**. We can go with a sense of **INTIMACY**, and **CONFIDENCE** in the same tender, trusting way a little child would go to an earthly father. We can go boldly.
- We are approaching a loving deity who does not need to be appeased, but who embraces us as His own. In fact, because we are His true children, **Notice (Gal. 4:6)** *“Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”* **“ABBA”** is a term of deep affection, a common term for **“FATHER”** derived from the Chaldean dialect. Because it is easy to pronounce, it was how little children in New Testament times commonly addressed their fathers, like **“DADDY”** or **“PAPA”** in today’s English.
- When used properly, **“ABBA”** — **“FATHER”** — is an expression of profound worship filled with childlike trust. Here’s what that looks like:
- Father, I recognize that I’m Your child. I know You love me and have given me intimate access to You.
- I recognize that You have absolutely unlimited resources, and that You will do what is best for me.
- I recognize that **I need to obey You**. And I recognize that whatever You do, You know best. All of that is implied in the truth that God is our Father, and **THAT’S HOW JESUS TAUGHT US TO BEGIN OUR PRAYERS**.

We Must Seek God's Priority. #2

- **What is the most common motivation to go to the Lord in prayer?** Is it to **CONFESS SIN**? Or is it to make a petition on behalf of a loved one? Do we want to bring our latest requests to Him, or remind Him of something we think He may have overlooked? Far too much of our time in prayer is spent **FOCUSED ON US**, not on the One to whom we're praying.
- When was the last time you prayed simply to give God **glory**, or to express your **appreciation** for **His love**, **His mercy**, **His grace**, or **His character**? If prayer is an **"ACT OF WORSHIP,"** our prayer lives cannot revolve around us—our schedules, our trials, our needs, wants, and concerns.
- That self-centered approach stands in stark contrast to the model Christ gave His disciples. The Lord's Prayer is a **"WORSHIPFUL MEDITATION"** on **WHO** God is and the sovereign care He bestows on His people. It's a pattern for successful prayer—one that emphasizes the **glory** and **supremacy** of God.

- Notice again (Lk. 11:2-4) **“And He said to them, “When you pray, say: ‘Father, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. 3 ‘Give us each day our daily bread. 4 ‘And forgive us our sins, For we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.’ ”**
- The entire opening sentence of the prayer is a straightforward exclamation of **WORSHIP: “Father, hallowed be Your name” (Luke 11:2)**. That is expressed as a **“petition,”** but it is by no means a **“personal request;”** it is an expression of **praise**, and it reflects God’s own **PRIORITY:**
- Notice (Isa. 42:8) **“I am the LORD, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, Nor My praise to graven images.”**
- Jesus established the truth that prayer is worship by beginning His model prayer that way.

To worship God is to **“sing the glory of His name” (Psa. 66:2)**. **“Ascribe to the LORD the glory due His name” (1 Chr. 16:29; Psa. 29:2; 96:8)**. **“Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to Your name give glory” (Psa. 115:1)**. Such expressions capture the true spirit of a **“WORSHIPING HEART.”**

We Must Surrender to God's Program. #3

- Very few people make it through life without some sort of **PLAN**. The vast majority of us have to put a lot of thought into our schedules if we want to accomplish anything. And what we put the most time into planning says a lot about where our hearts are—too often **vacation, celebrations, and general leisure time** get lots of forethought, while responsibilities at work and around the house fit into our schedules as needed.
- **But where does God's will factor into our plans?** Are we too quick to get absorbed in our own plans and expectations for tomorrow without properly considering God's sovereign will?
- **Notice (Jam. 4:15) *"Instead, you ought to say, *'If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.'*"*** When planning the days and weeks ahead. We can't get carried away with our own program. **FAILING TO ACKNOWLEDGE GOD'S SUPREME WILL AND CONTROL IS **DISRESPECTFUL**—ESPECIALLY WHEN HE'S THE ONE WHO GRANTS OUR EVERY BREATH.**
- That same mindset needs to carry over into our prayer lives. It's easy to get caught up in petitions to the Lord regarding our immediate needs and desires. **IT'S MUCH HARDER** to routinely **surrender those things** to His will and wisdom, trusting in His perfect plan and provision.

- Christ's example to the disciples makes it clear—**the priority for believers is God's program, not our own.** As we saw earlier in this series, our relationship to God gives us bold confidence to bring our requests before Him. But those requests—and our entire lives—**must be subordinate to His plan.**
- **Notice (Lk. 11:2-4) *“And He said to them, “When you pray, say: ‘Father, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. 3 ‘Give us each day our daily bread. 4 ‘And forgive us our sins, For we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.’ ”***
- The closing phrase of **Verse 2** is ***“Your kingdom come.”*** It is a prayer for the advancement of God's kingdom. Like every phrase of the Lord's Prayer, this is antithetical to the prayers typically prayed by those who are concerned mainly about the advancement of their own programs, the building of their own empires, or the padding of their own pockets.
- **This is a prayer that God's program be advanced, and that His will be done.** In fact, in some Greek manuscripts the text includes the phrase, ***“Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth”*** (KJV). Jesus Himself included that phrase in the model prayer when he gave it in His **“Sermon on the Mount”** (Matt. 6:10) ***“Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.”***

- Every request we make in our prayers should first be run through this filter:
 1. **Is it in harmony with the goals and principles of God’s kingdom?**
 2. **Is it consistent with the expansion of the kingdom?**
 3. **Does it truly advance the kingdom, or does it merely fulfill some selfish want?**
- Name-it-and-claim-it theology is self-indulgent, and small minded. All it cares about is self-interest and selfish desires, with no thought for the greater cause of **CHRIST’S KINGDOM**.
- A godly attitude says, **Lord, advance Your kingdom if that means I lose everything**. That’s what the phrase **“Your kingdom come”** implies.
- The **“KINGDOM,”** of course, is the **“sphere where Christ rules—the realm where He is Lord.”** To pray **“Your kingdom come”** with sincerity is to submit one’s desires and to yield one’s heart without reservation to the **lordship of Christ**. To affirm the program of Christ’s kingdom is to set aside one’s own fleshly, materialistic, or selfish prayer requests, because, after all, according to **(Rom. 14:17) “for the kingdom of God is not EATING and DRINKING, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”**
- Any prayer that follows a different pattern is not an act of true worship, and therefore it is not a legitimate prayer.
- Remember, all true prayer is **WORSHIP**. We go to a loving Father, accepting that He knows best. Our prayers, then, reflect an obedient heart, a passion for His glory, and a desire to see the extension of His kingdom—that God might be honored. **Folks remember this statement!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

We Must **Stick** to Godly **Patterns. #4**

- A church in Florida recently began offering drive-thru prayer services. Men and women at the end of their rope and in need of prayer pull up outside the church to order up petitions to the Lord the way you and I might order a burger or coffee. Of the roughly 150 people they've prayed with so far, many of them have never actually set foot inside a church.
- That is clearly a ridiculous and **UNBIBLICAL** practice. But how often are we guilty of using our prayers just like a drive-thru window? We're too often driven to prayer by the **NEEDS** of the moment only, concerned about our **CIRCUMSTANCES** alone, and eager to get on with life as quickly as possible. We're prone to **self-centered thinking** that focuses on how **events impact** our lives rather than how **the Lord is working through them**.
- Instead, we need to **DISCIPLINE** ourselves to put God and His purposes **first** and look for what He is accomplishing in every situation, **REGARDLESS** of our **DESIRES** or **CIRCUMSTANCES**.

- Tonight, I want you to consider the prayers of **one O. T.** prophet—in the midst of a **truly dire situation**. But as you'll see, he didn't allow his **circumstances** to be an **EXCUSE**.
- **JONAH**: He prayed an exemplary prayer from the most unnatural and unimaginable of settings— ***“the belly of a fish.”*** If you can picture the wet, suffocating darkness and discomfort of such a place, you might begin to have an idea of how desperate Jonah's situation was at that moment. The whole second chapter of Jonah is devoted to the record of his prayer, and the entire prayer is a profound ***“expression of worship.”*** It reads like a psalm. In fact, it's full of references and allusions to the **Psalms**—almost as if Jonah were singing His worship in phrases borrowed from Israel's psalter while he languished inside that living tomb.
- The prayer is as passionate as you might expect from someone trapped inside a fish under the surface of the Mediterranean. Jonah begins in **Ch. 2:2** ***“I called out of my distress to the LORD, and He answered me”*** This was not a plea to God for help, but an **expression of praise and deliverance**, mentioning God in the third person and speaking of deliverance as if it were an **accomplished fact**.

- The remainder of the prayer is addressed directly to God in the second person—and the whole thing is an extended expression of more praise. Jonah rehearses what has happened to him **Notice (Jon. 2:3)** *“For You had cast me into the deep, Into the heart of the seas, And the current engulfed me. All Your breakers and billows passed over me.”* **Notice V. 5** *“Weeds were wrapped around my head,”*
- Keep in mind, **Jonah is still inside the fish** while he is praying this prayer (**Jonah 2:10**); yet he consistently speaks of his **“DELIVERANCE”** in the **past tense**. And here’s the amazing thing about this prayer: though Jonah must have been as desperate as anyone who ever prayed for rescue from the Lord, his prayer contains **NOT ONE SINGLE REQUEST**. It is a pure, resounding expression of **WORSHIP** and **FAITH IN GOD**, who alone could deliver Jonah. The key sentence is **verse 7**: *“While I was fainting away, I remembered the LORD, And my prayer came to You, Into Your holy temple.”*

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- The **FOCUS** of **JONAH'S** prayer—like all great prayers—was the **GLORY OF GOD**. Although no one, perhaps, has ever been in a situation where it would be appropriate to plead and beg God to answer more than Jonah was, there was none of that in his prayer. And the past-tense references to Jonah's deliverance were the furthest thing you can imagine from the contemporary prosperity-preachers' notion of "**positive confession.**" Jonah wasn't under any illusion that his words could alter the reality of his plight. He was simply extolling the character of God. And that is precisely what our Lord was teaching when He gave the disciples that model prayer in **LUKE 11**.
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- So, it ought to be clear that when Jesus taught His disciples to regard prayer as **“WORSHIP,”** that wasn’t anything novel. The great prayers we read in the O. T. were likewise expressions of **worship**—including those that were prayed in the most desperate situations. The parallelism between prayer and worship is no coincidence. **Prayer is the distilled essence of worship.**
- How much more, then, do you and I need to **reevaluate** our own **PRIORITIES** in prayer? Rather than paying momentary lip service to God before we get to our list of requests, we need to constantly examine our hearts in prayerful worship before the Lord, making sure we’re holding to the pattern **CHRIST PROVIDED.**
- **Successful prayer** isn’t about getting what you want from God. **IT’S ABOUT BENDING YOUR WILL TO HIS,** recognizing **His supremacy,** and reflecting on **His glory. It’s an act of worship**—one that knits your heart and mind to the Lord in consistent communion with Him.