

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.”**

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.”***

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.

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.

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.”*

- 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**.

- 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.

We Must be Satisfied with God's Provisions. #5

- **Now notice with me verse 11**, a simple, familiar phrase. **The petition: “GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD.”**
- The word **“BREAD”** opens up to us the **simplicity, commonness, and power** of this petition, and yet suggests to us a deep and profound meaning that demands our careful study.
- As I began to examine this thought, I realized that as American's we are unlike many countries in that we throw more food away than some consume.
- When you come to the statement, **“*Give us this day our daily bread,*”** it may at first seem a little irrelevant to us. Think about it, when was the last time you prayed, **“Lord, I plead with You to provide for me a meal.”**

- I bet there's not many who would be honest and pray something like **“Lord, please prevent me from eating another meal. Teach me self-discipline. Lord, I must lose weight. I not only have enough for me but several others.”** When was the last time we really got desperate about our food? You say this message ought to be preached in Bangladesh, or Cambodia, or Sahara or somewhere, but not in America. This is **“irrelevant.”** **But this way of thinking proves our lack of understanding of the marvelous truth found in this text.**
- God has so richly blessed America with fertile soil, technology, and industry that we as a country have forgotten what it's like to trust God for our next meal.
- For us to say, **“Give us this day our daily bread,”** is a little hard to imagine, and that's what we are going to have to do tonight, **“IMAGINE”** that you don't have any bread/food, then **imagine** that you're desperate, and praying for some.

- Christ is presenting here the **proper way to pray**, the **proper pattern for praying**. And in this very simple prayer, we have all of the necessary ingredients for prayer, if you want to pray according to His standard. And one of the elements of praying is to pray for our daily bread. Now, that doesn't assume that we have it or don't have it. It's just there, and we have to deal with it as it is.
- But in this prayer, we noted first of all **two sections**: the **first** one dealing with **GOD**, and His **GLORY**. The **second** one dealing with **MAN**, and his **NEED**. First we saw **three requests**: ***"Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. And thy will be done,"*** and those focused on **GOD AND HIS GLORY**. Then we see **three other requests** focusing on man and his need: ***"Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."*** God, then, is the **SUPREME ISSUE** here, and not until God is in the proper perspective can man pray properly about his own needs. Keep that in mind.

- First, we see **God's name, God's kingdom, God's will**, and then we move to **man's need**. We cannot pray properly in regard to our own human situation until God is in the proper place.
- Even though God is primarily exalted in the **first half**, the second half exalts Him, also and does not set Him aside. For example, the fact that **God gives us our daily bread, forgives our debts, and leads us not into temptation** is an **EXPRESSION** of **His power** and **His grace**. So, God is brought to earth, as it were, in the second part. Notice ***"Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done,"*** **WHERE?** ***"In earth, as it is in heaven."***
- How does God hallow His name, bring His kingdom, and do His will in the earth? **By giving us our DAILY BREAD, BY FORGIVING US OUR DEBTS** and by **LEADING US IN OUR LIVES.**

- In other words, it's as if the second half brings God into **HUMAN LIFE**. It is not that the **first three butter God up, NO!** We are saying,
 1. **GOD, GLORIFY YOURSELF IN OUR DAILY PROVISION.**
 2. **GOD, GLORIFY YOURSELF IN OUR CONSTANT FORGIVENESS.**
 3. **GOD, GLORIFY YOURSELF IN THE LEADING AND THE DIRECTING OF YOUR SPIRIT IN OUR LIVES.**
 4. **GOD, BE ON DISPLAY IN YOUR WORLD, THAT YOUR KINGDOM MAY COME TO EARTH.** So, it is not a setting aside of God, in any sense.
PRAYER IS NOT BUTTERING UP GOD AND THEN DEMANDING CERTAIN THINGS FROM HIM.

- We are to give God the privilege and opportunity of **REVEALING HIS GLORY** through the meeting of the deepest of human needs. We should want to do this because we want God to be on **display**, not because we make demands on Him for our benefit. If prayer becomes **man-centered, self-centered, or selfish** in any sense, it ceases to be the kind of prayer our Lord said should be characteristic of His kingdom. And yet so many people approach God that way.
- We approach God in prayer to get something for us rather than to allow Him to glorify His name, and when we don't get it, then we begin to question God. If we would just allow God **"the right"** to make the choice as to how He would reveal His glory, no matter what He did we would then say, **"So let it be for Your glory. If that's what You choose as the avenue for Your majesty, so let it be."** However, when we become self-centered in our prayers, then we become **"questioning"** of God, and then that is a **serious SIN**.

- Don't forget (Jn. 14:13) ***“Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.””***
- Notice these three petitions that give God opportunity to glorify Himself. First of all:
 1. ***“Give us this day our daily bread,”*** This speaks of **“PHYSICAL life.”**
 2. ***“And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”*** This speaks of the **“MENTAL life.”**
 3. ***“Lead us not into temptation, deliver us from evil,”*** This speaks of **“SPIRITUAL life.”**
- **Bread**, that's our **physical life**. **Forgiveness**, that frees our mind from the anxiety and the pain of guilt, and the burden of sin. And **leading us and directing** us away from evil is the spiritual direction. By the way, bread takes care of the present, forgiveness takes care of the past, and help takes care of the future. So, all the dimensions of life are covered, and all the needs of life are covered. It's amazing, the marvel, the wonder of how God's infinite mind can reduce all there is of human need to **three simple profound statements.**

- This entire prayer is set up to “*GLORIFY GOD.*”
- *“Our Father, which art in heaven,”* that’s **GOD’S PATERNITY.**
- *“Hallowed be thy name,”* that’s **GOD’S PRIORITY.**
- *“Thy kingdom come,”* that’s **GOD’S PROGRAM.**
- *“Thy will be done,”* that’s **GOD’S PURPOSE.**
- *“Give us this day our daily bread,”* that’s **GOD’S PROVISION.**
- *“Forgive us our debts,”* that’s **GOD’S PARDON.**
- *“Lead us not,”* that’s **GOD’S PROTECTION.**
- *“For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.”* that’s **GOD’S PRE-EMINENCE.**

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- **ALL OF THIS IS FOR GOD'S GLORY.** We must remember that everything we are, and everything we do is for His glory. Even when you stick food in your mouth, it's for God's glory **not for your sustenance**, primarily.
 - Notice (1 Cor. 10:31) "*Whether then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*" Well, how can eating food be to the glory of God? It brings Him glory if you remember **where it came from**, if you remember that He's the **SOURCE** of your food. If you remember **the capacity that you have to enjoy the flavor**. If you're **thankful to the one who provided the nourishment in it**. Everything is for the glory of God. **EVERYTHING!!!!** And prayer, nonetheless, is for **HIS GLORY**.
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