

GROWING — Empowered to Pray V

Looking back, we see the disciples asking Jesus how to pray. And Jesus taught them first to call God father. We talked about the intimate relational nature of prayer, we talked about the power we have in praying God's kingdom down to earth. We also talked about the confidence we can approach God with like children approaching their parents for their needs and requests. We ended last week talking about how forgiveness enables us to unlock relationships and healing because both parties need to give and receive forgiveness.

Matthew 6:9 - 13

This, then, is how you should pray:

“ ‘Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.’

The New International Version. (2011). (Mt 6:9–13). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.



Lord, deliver us from the evil one. Even Jesus himself acknowledges that there is this entity of spiritual darkness that has arrayed itself against God and God's people.

There are spiritual forces behind the scenes that are trying to stop the movement of the Gospel in your life and in this world.

Most often in our context, this spiritual battle is fought in our mind. Jesus reminds us that our daily lives are lived in a war zone. As part of our spiritual warfare, Jesus is teaching us how to pray in this war zone.

This manifests tangibly in narratives, beliefs, voices, and thoughts about our identity, our calling, our career, our relationships

We then act out those narratives and beliefs in our lives.

Don't Let Us Fall Into Temptation

Pope Francis in 2019 changed the wording of this to reflect the original translation better. Instead of asking God not to lead us into temptation, he wanted to change how we think about this: "Let us not fall into temptation."

God doesn't bring darkness into our lives or barrage us with negative narratives about ourselves and other people. That's not the Father that is revealed by Jesus in the Gospels. James, Jesus' half brother puts it this way:

James 1:13 - 15

When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

The New International Version. (2011). (Jas 1:13–15). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

God will lead us into difficult situations, careers, callings, and places where our strength or abilities are not enough. He led Abraham into a difficult test, he led the Israelites through the desert for 40 years, and he led Jesus into the desert for 40 days.

He means to lead us through the wilderness and darkness, but he will not lead us into temptation.



He leads us through dark times where the enemy will come against us.
This is the test.

When we start to act out our positive narratives and pray the kingdom down and spend time in the word, you can expect the tempter to arrive. When you're at you're weakest or in pain, you can also expect the tempter to arrive.

The tempter, the opposer is an opportunist. He will take advantage of your weakness and undermine you because you're important to God's Kingdom.

Have you ever heard those false narratives?

"Maybe I'm just a loser."

"Maybe I'm not meant to do this."

"Maybe I should just stop trying and stop speaking."

I don't know about you, but that is more closely resembling the voice of the Accuser rather than the voice of the Father.

In The Wilderness

We just walked through a wilderness moment together in this pandemic, and this won't be the last wilderness we walk through.

When we're submitted to the Father and trusting the Spirit, he will lead us through the testing and wilderness and sustain us.

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted v by the devil. 2 After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3 The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

4 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. 6 "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written:

" 'He will command his angels concerning you,
and they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'"

7 Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. 9 "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."

10 Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"

11 Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

The New International Version. (2011). (Mt 4:1–11). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.