

I. The Lord's Prayer in Biblical Perspective
"Why Study the Lord's Prayer?"
Matthew 6:5–15
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This is the word of God. Matthew 6:5–15.

5 "And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. **6** But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. **7** "And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. **8** Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. **9** Pray then like this:

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

10 Your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread,

12 and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

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

The grass withers and the flower fades, but the Word of God abides forever.
May God bless this His Word to the heart of His people.

Before we begin this ten study series I have selected some study books to go along with this study for those who want to dig more into the Lord's Prayer and the first book is by J.I. Packer titled Praying the Lord's Prayer which is an excellent book. The other book which is an even bigger study book on the Lord's Prayer is by Thomas Watson titled The Lord's Prayer. This book will grind one's teeth a bit on this subject matter.

This study is on prayer and how to pray as a Christ centered disciple. One of the things I love to do when I go visit places is to go to cemeteries and churches. If one goes to churches that are rooted in the theology of the reformation and have taken seriously the Great Commission one will see particularly in older churches that they have not been redesigned from churches to become theaters. Many felt as though in the older churches in particular that the facilities ought to enhance worship and disciple making. When one goes into many of those churches, either when one sits down and looks to the sides of the pulpit or when one enters the lobby (or the narthex), one will find three formulations that became crucial disciple making instruments. One would be the Ten Commandments. God's Law does three things. One it does evangelism. It tells a person that they cannot save themselves, they need a Savior, and it sends them to Jesus. Two it tells the saved how to live and love to Jesus. Three it restrains the sin in society when it is loved and lived by God's people. So Christ

centered disciple making would always make use of the Gospel use of the Law of God.

The second thing one would see displayed in a church is the Apostles' Creed. The early church put together this basic Christianity 101 discipleship tool. That church would make disciples by teaching them basic Christian doctrine. The Apostles' Creed has eleven basic truths and it was used in these churches to teach new Christians as they began to mature.

Then the third thing one would usually see displayed would be the prayer that Jesus taught His disciples to pray which is the Lord's Prayer. Those are the three things one would see in these churches that were apart of Christ centered disciple making. There are ten studies on the Lord's Prayer and some time in the future I would love to do a series on the Apostles' Creed and the Law of God, the Gospel use of the Law of God.

So, why study the Lord's Prayer? My desire is that Christ's intention with the Lord's Prayer will bear fruition in the lives of the Christians in this church. I want this study to invigorate, direct, propel and guide us as Christ centered disciples in how to pray. There are three key phrases. Two are found in this text and one is found in Luke 6 where the Lord's Prayer is seen in a digestive form.

Here are the three phrases. One is the request of the disciples and Christ answers the request by what is known as the Lord's Prayer. The disciples' request was "Lord, teach us to pray." Jesus then in response to that request says this phrase, "When you pray..." This is the second phrase which tells the reader that Jesus assumes His disciples already pray. Jesus does not say "*If* you pray..." He says "*When* you pray..." He says this phrase three times. The third phrase is when Jesus says, "Pray this way." Then He gives what is known as the Lord's Prayer. So the first phrase is a request ("Lord teach us to pray), the second phrase is an assumption ("When you pray...") and the third phrase is a prescription ("Pray this way.").

In my research on this I found out that in the early life of the church they did not call this text the Lord's Prayer. They did not call it the Disciples' Prayer. They called it "The Prayer." They eventually called it "The Prayer of Prayers." Now the Bible is absolutely full of prayers but eventually it was identified as the Lord's Prayer. If one has ever studied to preach or teach one realizes that they get more out of the subject being taught than those being taught. Since I have been studying the Lord's Prayer I have been so moved at how Gospel rich this prayer is. The Gospel life is so embedded in these few words known as the Lord's Prayer and it is absolutely amazing. Pray that God will open this text up to you as you study this text with me.

The other thing that will be brought out as the Lord's Prayer is studied is learning to pray Kingdom prayers. The Lord's Prayer is found right in the middle of the Sermon on the Mount which is the Kingdom life. Jesus is teaching the Kingdom citizens, His disciples, how to have a Kingdom prayer life. This is not a self-centered prayer life. It is not a church-centered prayer life and it is not even a nation-centered prayer life. A person's life, church and nation are impacted with prayer but what Jesus is teaching is Kingdom intercessory prayer that is rooted in the Gospel life truths.

Here are five things from these three phrases that one can use to guide one into prayer. The first thing one needs to know is that the Prayer of Prayers is a requested prayer. "Lord, teach us to pray." Jesus' disciples requested that He teach them how to pray. So He affirms it by saying, "When you pray, pray this way." It is a requested prayer. Why would they request that prayer? It is clear that they want to pray and know that they are expected to pray. It is clear that they desire to pray but they want Jesus to teach them to pray. Why? There was a time in my life where I thought disciple making was for me to teach and then for others to do. I would go through a set of books with those who I was discipling and then I would say "Now, you all go do this." Then I learned that people learn much more from what they see than what they hear. What they hear is important because then they know what to look for when they see but people learn about 80 percent by imitation and 20 percent from instruction. So the real way for me to do disciple making was to teach, mentor and do, model, so that others can see it. Paul says in 2 Thessalonians 3 to "imitate me as I imitate Christ." So a disciple maker needs to teach and do. When I began to look at The Disciple Maker, Jesus, He did not teach and they did not teach, do, mentor and model but He would do and teach. That is how one gets the Lord's Prayer.

What did Jesus do? He prayed. He prayed in public, He prayed in the synagogue, He prayed in private. He prayed on a mountain. He prayed in a garden. He prayed in an upper room. He prayed. The disciples saw Him pray, the way He prayed, and how He prayed. They then said, "Teach us to pray. We want to pray like You." If one wants to be a disciple maker it is do and then that becomes teach. "Lord, teach us to pray." Then one can help people do what they have been taught and what they see.

But this also was requested because these men, these disciples, most of them come out of a serious commitment to being an Old Testament believer. Most of them come from a hot bed of a recent revival of an Old Testament belief. It was around the Sea of Galilee. If one was a good Old Testament believer one would have been taught to pray eleven times everyday. Here are six of them real quick. One would have been taught to pray at every meal. There is three times right there, breakfast, lunch and dinner. One would not eat until they thanked the Lord in prayer and then when one ate one would bless the Lord after one ate for His provisions. So there was another three times to pray totaling six times, praying once before and after each meal.

Where did the other five times come from? Remember the man in the Old Testament who was taken out of Israel and put in a foreign land but he did not give up his commitment to the Lord and he even got up into the higher courts of the pagan kings? This was Daniel. He prayed three times every day. He prayed when he awoke, at noon and in the evening. Add these three to the other six times and there are nine times to pray.

There are two more times to go. One would have been taught the Shema found in Deuteronomy 6. It says, "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one." The Lord our God is *echad* (meaning one). Then one would have been taught the eleventh prayer and it was called the Prayer of Benedictions. One would have been taught eighteen benedictions to bless God's name with. Most of the Lord's

disciples were aware of this Old Testament training. Now they are following Jesus who is the fulfillment and they come to Him, seeing Him pray and knowing that they are to pray with regularity so they say to Him, "Teach us to pray." So it is a requested prayer from the disciples who want to pray rightly.

Secondly it is a pattern of prayer. The prayer of patterns is a pattern prayer. Basically this pattern of prayer is broken into three sections. The first section is the invocation of adoration which is the first part of the Lord's Prayer – "Our Father who art in heaven." This section is acknowledging our relationship and His exaltation.

The second section is an intercession of supplication. Supplications are what one needs God to supply or what one wants God to supply. There are six intercessions and they are broken into two sections; three vertical, three horizontal. The first intercession is "Hallowed by thy name." The second intercession is "Thy Kingdom come." The third intercession is "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." After those vertical intercessions come the three horizontal intercessions. The fourth intercession is "Give us this day our daily bread." The fifth intercession is "Forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors" and the sixth intercession is "Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil."

The third part of the Lord's Prayer is the invitation to exaltation – "For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, amen." One may say, "The English Standard Version did not include that." There is a reason why. The oldest manuscripts do not have it and this will be covered in a later study. But suffice it to say in a later study it will be discussed whether it would belong in this particular body of prayer or not. The fact is one can find this same statement three times in the Bible using the same basic words. "For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever." So that statement is an invitation to the exaltation of God.

As this prayer is studied one will learn the multiple prayers that one is taught in the Bible. What acronym do people love to use to teach people to pray? It is A.C.T.S. which stands for Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication. All four of these are found in the Lord's Prayer. God invites us to adoration, to confession, to thanksgiving, to supplication, to intercession and He teaches us all of these elements of prayer that actually can become individual prayers.

The third thing about the Lord's Prayer is that it is not only a request prayer and a pattern of prayer but it is a relational prayer. This prayer is not a religious, ritualistic, regiment of repetition. On the contrary, it is The Disciple Maker teaching His disciples how to pray. When He teaches them to pray as the address the Triune God they call upon Him, "Our Father." This brings out the relationship of a child to the father, a son to the father, a daughter to the father. It is a relational prayer of the Disciple Maker teaching the disciples who in turn have now taught us as Christ's disciples and Christ centered disciple makers and more than the relationship of mentor and mentored, it is a family relationship of father and His children. So we learn to come to our Father even in our confessions, not as criminals but as sons and daughters to the Living God.

The fourth thing about the Lord's Prayer is that it is conversational. The prayer only has one side of the conversation but it assumes a two-sided conversation. The word *prayer* is never used to talk about how God speaks to us. The word *prayer* is used to talk about how we speak to God. We speak to God two ways, in praise and in prayer. Prayer can include praise and praise can include prayer. But it is conversational. It is us intentionally communicating to God our Father. How does God speak to us? He speaks to us by revelation and illumination. The Holy Spirit has given us the Word of God and then He opens it up to teachers, preachers and personal Bible study. God speaks to us in His Word and then we speak back to God from that Word in prayer. So it is dialogical conversational like this;

"My son who am I?"

"My Father who art in heaven."

"My son, what do you desire most?"

"Hallowed by Your name."

"Son, what else do you desire?"

"Your kingdom to come, Your will to be done, that Your people will have their daily bread, that You'll forgive us of our debts as we are forgiving our debtors and You will lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil."

"Son, why do you desire this?"

"For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, amen."

As we go through this study on the Lord's Prayer we will learn how to enlarge it as we go through the petitions but these petitions fundamentally bring us into dialogue with God who has spoken to us in His Word.

Fifthly and finally, it is the Lord's Prayer. I received a phone call one time from a guy that said, "I heard your sermon on the Lord's Prayer." He was referring to a sermon I preached about 20 years ago in my youth which has fled. He said, "I heard that you said this is more rightly called the Disciples' Prayer." I said, "Yes I did but I didn't come up with that." He said, "Let's start a movement to call it the Disciples' Prayer." I remembered in my youth that the Lord's Prayer was in John 17 where He prays before He goes to the cross and I thought that is the High Priestly Prayer so let us start a movement and rename this the Disciples' Prayer. Yet thankfully I did not say "yes" and thankfully to this day it has not been accomplished because I believe one needs to keep calling this the Lord's Prayer. Certainly the purpose of this prayer is to teach the disciples to pray but the Lord is the One who is teaching the disciples to pray. This is the Lord's Prayer.

Remember those discipleship tools, the Apostle's Creed? Praise God for the Spirit of God and the church of God that gave it to us in the first century. Remember the Law of God? How did we get the Law of God? We got it from the finger of God. We get the Lord's Prayer from the lips of God. This is not some disciple making guru that says, "Now here's a good way to pray." This is your Lord. This is your Sovereign Lord, your Savior who has said, "Pray this way." It is the Lord's Prayer that He has given to us. This is not the prayer of a church, a Baptist prayer, a Presbyterian prayer, an Anglican prayer. This is the

Lord's Prayer for all of His churches who love Him, follow Him and desire to pray rightly to Him.

Here are three basic takeaways from this study. These takeaways will get one started as we study the living out and practicing of the Prayer of our Lord as Christ centered disciples. The first thing is to realize that the Lord's Prayer reveals two assumptions that our Lord has stated about true Christ centered disciples. The first assumption given in the Lord's Prayer is that true Christ centered disciples have a heart's desire to pray and to pray rightly. God's people do not need to be taught to pray. They need to be taught *how* to pray but not to pray. The Lord says "When you pray" and He assumes repeatedly that His people want to and desire to pray.

Why? There are two reasons. One is by virtue of creation every human being has the instinct to pray. God made us to have a relationship with Him even unbelievers. I have been around professed atheists who pray. Many times it is not a very good prayer. For example, one may have a problem trying to put together a toy for their child and they pinch their finger and say, "Oh god!" Now that is a prayer. It is instinctive. It is not a good prayer and it is not the extent of praying. I have heard the records of vowed atheists taking God's name in vain. I have asked them, "Why do you use a name for someone that you don't believe exists?" We have an instinct to pray. That is why Jesus assumes we will pray but more than that we have a human instinct to pray by virtue of creation. We have a compelling desire to pray by virtue of conversion. As Christians, we have a compelling desire not only to pray but to pray rightly.

I have never yet preached on prayer, singular sermons or series of sermons that two things inevitably happen. One is personal conviction about the inadequacy of my own prayer life and I am already there. Secondly, God's people will come and say "Thank you." I have never yet met a believer who was satisfied with their prayer life because of a second assumption. The second assumption is that the Lord assumes that we need to be taught *how* to pray, not to pray but *how* to pray. We have a desire to pray rightly that we want to be taught to pray. True believers do not need to be taught to pray. It is instinctive and it is compelled in their soul and in their heart but they do need to be taught how to pray. Therefore He says, "Not if" but "When you pray, now pray this way." Instinctive prayer is prayers of vanity. We do not pray by instinct. We pray by the direction of God's Word that teaches us how to pray. Instinctively we were created to pray but there is something that was left out. What was it? It is our sin nature. Our sin nature takes that instinct and perverts it into narcissism and self-centeredness. So what I need is the transforming power of God's grace and God's Word to teach me how to pray rightly.

The second takeaway is that in this Prayer of Prayers the Lord reveals not only two assumptions but two expectations about His disciples. The first expectation is that they will learn how to pray. They are teachable. They want to be taught. They say, "Lord, teach us." There is a desire to pray rightly. I want to be careful in what I am about to say but it needs to be said. I know the church is marginalized and by in large impotent in today's culture. There are many reasons why but I will only mention one at this time and I believe this reason is

the most fundamental and foundational of all. I love creative, strategic thinking about how to evangelize and how to contextualize in neo-pagan world to reach people for Christ but the fact is that we are powerless because we are prayerless. All of our strategies and ideas are absolutely nothing until we understand that we do not pray for our work but our work is to pray. James said it this way in James 4:2b, "*You do not have, because you do not ask.*" He is speaking of wisdom and power here. We have this desire to pray but many times we neglect it because while we would all acknowledge the importance of prayer, in our operational life we have reduced it to a last thing.

Here is the way it happens. Someone comes to another and says, "I wish I had this. If I had this I could do this." The other person says, "I wish I could help you but the least I can do is pray." There is a giveaway of our true view of prayer. I am not saying that prayer is the only thing we do but it is never the least thing you can do. It is the most important thing we can do. My work for the Lord is a poor substitute for the Lord's work through me and He works through praying people. If I have not neglected prayer many times I have given misguided prayers or vain prayers. Let me finish James. James 4:2b, 3, "*You do not have, because you do not ask (prayer is neglected). You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.*" These are vanity prayers, self-centered prayers, and the instinctive prayer instead of the taught prayer of kingdom intercession. God's people will want to pray. They will not neglect prayer. They want to learn to pray. They do not pray in vanity or misguided or mercenary.

The second expectation of Jesus is that His disciples will learn to pray habitually. It will be a way of life. He says, "When you pray..." He assumes we will not only be teachable in learning how to pray as Christ centered disciples but that when we are learning it will become habitual. It will become like breathing in our life.

So how does one get started? Here some final thoughts on this. The key to getting started is not the church and not the government. People say, "The government won't let us pray in schools." I want freedom to pray in schools and I think it is one of the constitutional rights but the government is not going to stop prayer in schools. As long as there is Algebra tests in school there will be prayer in school. That is a promise! There will be prayer in school.

I love God's Word in prayer. This Prayer of Prayers is short, comprehensive yet succinct. It encompasses everything; heaven, earth, God's glory, our needs. It is profound. People have been studying on it and preaching on it for two thousand plus years. It profound yet it is simple. It is a simple way to learn to pray. It is ordered yet it is symmetrical. It goes from heaven to earth, to God's glory to man's needs and from the kingdom and into this world. It is transforming yet it is transferable. It can be given away to disciple making.

So how does one get started? The first thing one needs to do is to set a time and a place to pray. Make it known and get accountable. Someone may say, "That's simple." To get a little more complicated I would like for one to set five places to pray the Lord's Prayer. One place should be in one's closet. If one does not have a closet then use a chair. Get a place to meet God personally.

The second place is one's family room. There should be family worship everyday. Pray together as a family in whatever room that may be. The third place is where one's small group meets. If one is not in a small group then find one to be apart of. Here is a place one can be accountable to others. The fourth place to pray is in one's church. This place shall be called a house of prayer. During a Briarwood service there are five different times we pray and five different prayers are prayed. Church growth people say not to do that because they think it is dead time for people so they would prefer people to pray at home. God says His house will be called a house of prayer and when God's people gather to worship there is nothing more important than the calling upon God. We pray adoration, intercession, thanksgiving, supplications, benedictions and invocations. Pray in the worship center, in church. The fifth place to pray is everywhere. My favorite place to pray in this category is Highway 280.

Recently, I was on 280 and a lady was behind me talking on her cell phone and ran right into my rear bumper. I put my phone down and got out of the car and she said, "Please don't call the police, I don't have insurance." The Lord gave me the opportunity to pray with her. Now, I love my phone in the car because I can get though 280 calling on people yet we think we are smart with this "wireless" technology. God has had wireless for a very long time and there are no bills at the end of the month because the freight has already been paid. When one gets on 280, 31, 459 or wherever just pray everywhere. 1 Timothy 2:8 says, "*I desire then that in **every place** the men should pray, lifting holy hands.*"

The second thing one needs to do is to pray out loud. Check out the times Jesus prayed. In Matthew 26 when Jesus went to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray it says in verse 39 that He "prayed, saying..." which implies He prayed aloud. If one can pray in their closets without praying aloud then that is fine but I cannot do that. I believe Jesus prayed out loud in the garden and even on the mountain and I believe that we ought to pray out loud. One does not have to pray out loud but by in large I think the best thing to do is to pray out loud. When I pray silently within about 45 seconds I am already thinking about other things I have to do in that day but when I pray out loud there is a big difference. Prayer is intentional communication and I would encourage one to pray out loud.

The last thing to do to get started is to pray from God's Word. In this study we will learn how to pray the Lord's Prayer by going through all of the pieces of it to pray Biblically. Robert Murray McShane said, "If you want to humble any Christian, look them in the eye and ask them about their prayer life." We need to learn to pray. I know one prays when they are converted and when God moves one to pray but we need to learn from Jesus how to pray. We need to learn from this prayer that the Lord gave us as a pattern that is relational and conversational.

I was away recently and my wife, Cindy and I were out to eat and we came back and we turned the T.V. on to try and catch the news. There was a program on called "The Biggest Loser" and it was in its fifth year. In this program one wins by losing. They were giving these four year testimonials on this particular show. I was talking to my sisters later and said, "There are three reasons why this show is so successful. One has to do with honesty, they get on

the scales. The second reason is transparency, they get on the scales publicly and thirdly is because of accountability, they had to get on it every week with a mentor, a coach, a discipler.” Be transparent. Weigh out one’s prayer life. Get on the scales. Be honest. Get accountable. Ask the Lord to teach you to pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank you for the moments together in Your Word. I pray that You would take Your Word and build it in our hearts in powerful ways. I thank You for my brothers and sisters in Christ. I thank You for the privilege to learn with them and how to pray has a Christ centered disciple. Guide us. Father, I am a sinner not deserving of coming into Your presence but I come readily and boldly as Your child. Led by the Holy Spirit in the name of Jesus Christ Your Son guided by the Prayer of Prayers which He designed for all who have put their trust in Him as their Lord and Savior.

Our Father which art 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 lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, Amen.