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Learning how to

# **talk to God**

from the great prayers of the Bible

## **The Lord's Prayer Is Our Prayer** **Matthew 6:9-13**

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## THE LORD'S PRAYER IS OUR PRAYER

### Matthew 6:9-13

The majestic creator of the universe has invited us to talk to Him. Think about that.

Prayer is the wonderful gift of experiencing a relationship with God and having a conversation with Him. The invitation to pray proves how much God loves us and cares about us. It's also the way we cry out to Him for help and ask Him to meet our needs. And it really makes a difference. Prayer makes a difference because He promises to listen and He promises to act.

So, why don't we pray more? One reason is self-reliance. We think we can handle life without God. So we rely on self, on money, and how smart we are. Another reason we don't pray is a lack of faith. Perhaps we've tried and it didn't work, so we stop praying. Yet, when life falls apart, we can't help crying out to God for help.

God invites us to talk to Him, and nothing could be more important than learning how to talk to Him ... and how to listen to Him. So this spring, we are going to *learn how to talk to God from the great prayers of the Bible*. There are 650 prayers in the Bible, and we're going to study the great prayers of David and Solomon. The desperate prayers of Jonah and Jeremiah. The great prayer of Jesus in garden. We're going to see how Jesus talked to His Father and how Jesus prayed for us. We're also going to study the great principles of prayer like praying with faith, asking according to His will, and how to intercede for others.

When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray, He gave them what we call The Lord's Prayer.<sup>1</sup>

This morning, we have the privilege of sitting at Jesus' feet and learning from Him, just as the disciples did 2,000 years ago. Imagine the disciples sitting there, listening to every word. We're listening to the same words. We have His words in our hands. This morning, Jesus, the Son of God, is teaching us how to talk to His Father, to our Father. And may His words inspire us and motivate to go deeper in prayer. Let's recite the traditional version together.

"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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen." (Matthew 6:9-13, traditional)<sup>2</sup>

The Lord's Prayer was never meant to be what it condemned. It was never meant to be a mechanical, formal, or recited prayer. Instead, it was intended to be "the prayer that teaches us how to pray."<sup>3</sup> It was meant to be a model for personal, intimate prayer.<sup>4</sup> Intimate because the majestic creator of the universe has invited us to talk to Him. This invitation is compelling because ...

- Prayer is simply talking to God. And we pray at His invitation. "Call to Me and I will answer you," He said (Jeremiah 33:3).

- Prayer is not doing something; it's being with someone. It's being in His company, being in His presence.
- Prayer is drawing near to God as He promises to draw near to us.<sup>5</sup>
- Prayer is pouring out our hearts to God and crying out to Him for help.
- Prayer is also listening to God and allowing Him to guide us.
- Prayer is like breathing. It gives life to the soul.
- And often and how deeply we pray reveals what we really think and believe about God.

As we study The Lord's Prayer, there are two main things Jesus is teaching us – *how to approach God* and *how to structure our prayers*. We can approach God with confidence because He is our Father, and we must approach Him with reverence because He is holy. And when it comes to structuring or shaping our prayers, The Lord's Prayer gives seven features upon which we are to focus. So, this morning, we will look at how to approach God and how to structure our prayers. As Jesus said, "This is how you should pray."<sup>6</sup>

### PRAYER IS RELATIONSHIP

The Lord's Prayer begins with "*Our Father who is in heaven.*" Which means, *prayer is relationship*, and Jesus wants us to know that His Father is our Father.<sup>7</sup>

That's amazing! We can pray to God as our Father because the Bible says, "You are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus ... and because you are children, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'" (Galatians 3:26, 4:6, NAS).<sup>8</sup>

When we talk about God as our Father, He is nothing like the absent father or the abusive father or the father who never told you he was proud of you. He is a perfect father. He is perfect in His love, perfect in His goodness, perfect in His discipline, perfect in every way. To call God Father puts Him in His wonderful place (as our Father), and it also puts us in our wonderful place (as His children).

With great joy, the Apostle John wrote, "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is who we are!" (1 John 3:1, NIV). As a perfect Father, the Bible says, "Our God is near to us whenever we call on him" (Deuteronomy 4:7, NLT).

Because He is our Father, we can trust that He loves us, that He cares about us, that He hears our prayers, and that He will answer in the way He sees best.

### PRAY WITH REVERENCE

God is our Father, but we must remember who we're talking to and *pray with reverence*. "Our Father *who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.*"

God is our Father. He is near and dear. But He is also “our Father who is in heaven.” He said, “Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool” (Acts 7:49, NIV). We must remember we are praying to the creator of the universe and the one who reigns from heaven. As Paul said to the philosophers at Athens, we must never forget that “in Him we live and move and exist” (Acts 17:28). We are praying to the one who gives us breath to pray!

King David said, “When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him?” (Psalm 8:3-4, NIV). David was amazed that someone as big as God would care about someone as small as him.

We must never forget that we are praying to the Holy One. “Hallowed be Your name.” “Hallowed” means sacred and holy. To “hallow” His name is to revere His name, to respect His name, and to honor His name. A woman in the Old Testament named Hannah understood this when she prayed, “There is no one holy like the Lord, there is no one besides you” (1 Samuel 2:2, NIV).

Jesus is teaching us how to approach God. Yes, trusting Him as Father, but also revering Him as holy.

### **PRAY IN SUBMISSION**

Jesus tells us to pray, “*Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven,*” which means *praying in submission*.

The Lord’s Prayer is a prayer of submission, surrender, and alignment. “Your kingdom come, Your will be done.” Prayer is aligning our hearts with God before we ask anything from God. And that’s a daily battle. Every day is a battle of the wills. Every morning we wake up, we must decide all over again whether we’re going to live that day for Him or not. That’s why Jesus said, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me” (Luke 9:23, NAS). It’s a daily decision. God’s will versus our will.

In 1755, the Puritan Richard Alleine wrote a simple prayer. It was later used by John Wesley as the covenant prayer when he founded the Methodist Church. I’ve translated it from the King’s English to modern English. This is how Richard Alleine prayed. “I am no longer my own, but Yours. Assign me any task, any rank, any job, any suffering. Let me be employed for You or laid aside for You. Exalted for You or humbled for You. Let me be full or let me be empty. Let me have everything or have nothing. I freely and heartily yield my life to You, for Your pleasure and for Your disposal. O Lord, You are mine, and I am Yours. So be it.”<sup>9</sup> That’s a prayer of submission. That’s what it sounds like to pray “Your will be done.”

To pray “Your will be done,” is to pray, “Lord, I want what You want, because I trust what You want is best.”

### **PRAYER IS ASKING**

The Lord’s Prayer is an invitation to ask, asking God to take care of us and provide what we need. Jesus said, “Pray like this ... *Give us this day our daily bread.*”

Prayer is not just for spiritual matters; however we define spiritual. Jesus invites us to pray for our personal, physical, and essential needs. Praying for daily bread means nothing is too trivial to ask from our Father.

Three truths are implied in the phrase “give us this day our daily bread.” (1) We are totally *dependent* on God for everything we need. (2) We can *ask* God for anything we need. (3) We can trust God to *provide* all we need.

Theologian J. I. Packer writes, “At the core,” when people bend their knees and cry out to God, “prayer is asking.”<sup>10</sup> Prayer is asking God to do something for us. And we have permission to ask. We have an invitation to ask. It could not be clearer. Prayer is asking.

One of the most fantastic promises in Scripture is in Matthew 7, when Jesus invited us to ask. He said, “Ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. You parents, if your children ask for a loaf of bread, do you give them a stone instead? Or if they ask for a fish, do you give them a snake? Of course not! So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him” (Matthew 7:7-11, NAS, NLT).

Prayer can be summed up in two words – relationship and request. No verse captures this better than John 15:7, when Jesus said, “If you *abide* in Me, and My words abide in you, *ask* whatever you wish, and it will be done for you” (John 15:7, NAS). Do you see it? “If you abide in Me” – that’s relationship. “Ask whatever you wish” – that’s request. Because of this privileged relationship with Jesus, we can talk to Him anytime and we can ask Him for anything.

Jesus said, “Pray like this ... Give us this day our daily bread.” Which means ... (1) We are totally *dependent* on God for everything we need. (2) We can *ask* God for anything we need. (3) We can trust God to *provide* all we need.

## PRAYER INCLUDES CONFESSION

*Prayer includes confession. “Forgive us our sins* as we forgive those who sin against us.”

There are some who insist that Christians should never feel guilty or ashamed. They quote Romans 8:1, which says, “There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” We’re glad that’s true. But there is a place for appropriate guilt. When we sin, and when God convicts us, something deep within us should be upset. Gordon MacDonald refers to guilt as “spiritual pain.”<sup>11</sup> Paul called it “godly sorrow.”<sup>12</sup> And that’s what we should feel when God convicts us of sin. Guilt is the soul saying in regret, “Oh why did I do that?” It’s saying, “Oh Lord, I am so sorry for what I have done.”<sup>13</sup>

We cannot approach God in prayer unless we confess our sins. The Bible says, “Your sins have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear” (Isaiah 59:2). Unconfessed, unrepentant sin disrupts our relationship with God. He will not hear our prayers if we refuse to confess our sins.<sup>14</sup> That means we’ve got to

be honest when we pray. No lies. No secrets. No pretending. Prayer is coming into the presence of God and allowing Him to shine His holy light on our hearts and expose the sin within us. And when He does, we can appeal to His amazing grace, and He will forgive us, cleanse us, and restore our relationship with Him.<sup>15</sup>

God does not convict us to condemn us. He convicts us to restore us. David knew that. He confessed his sin and prayed, “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me ... Restore to me the joy of your salvation” (Psalm 51:10, 12, ESV).

“Forgive us our sins.” Prayer includes confession.

### **PRAY FOR PROTECTION**

Jesus also teaches us to *pray for spiritual protection*. “*Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*”<sup>16</sup>

Temptation can strike suddenly like a tornado. A tornado can level a house, and temptation can level a soul. Or, temptation can slowly erode the spiritual foundation of our lives, and we don’t even realize it’s happening. Either way, suddenly or slowly, it’s coming. And either way, temptation can be devastating. Every day we face temptation. So we must pray, “Lead us not into temptation” – lead us away from temptation – “and deliver us from evil.”

We live in a culture that desensitizes us and conditions to think, “What’s the big deal?” The big deal is that the thrill of temptation always leads to regret. Sin is fun in the moment, but it always leads to regret. The big deal is that sin separates us from God, it offends His holiness, it dishonors the sacrifice of Jesus, it forfeits God’s blessing, and it leads to nothing but regret.

When we talk about temptation, we’re not just talking about big sins. We’re talking all sin. We’re talking about everything from adultery to anger. We’re talking about compromise, complacency, pride, lust, and shading the truth.

When it comes to temptation, we’re all vulnerable. Paul warns us, “If you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall!” But then Paul encourages us, “No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out” (1 Corinthians 10:12-13, NIV).

Temptation is real, but victory is possible. John declares, “You are from God, little children, and will overcome. For greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4). James adds, “Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you” (James 4:7-8, NAS). Temptation is real, but victory is possible.

### **PRAYER IS WORSHIP**

Jesus taught His disciples that *prayer is worship*. “*Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*”<sup>17</sup>

The Lord's Prayer ends with a dramatic climax. A crescendo of worship, adoration, and praise. After praying to the one who is our loving Father, to the one who reigns in heaven, to the one who is holy and hallowed, to the one who provides our bread, forgives our sins, hears our requests, meets our needs, protects our souls, and guides our steps ... then of course, we should spontaneously burst into praise. What should we say after a wonderful God has done all this? "Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen!"

"Yours is the kingdom!" David was a king, yet he knew there was a greater king. "For God is the King of all the earth ... God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne" (Psalm 47:7-8, NIV). "The Lord reigns ... (He) is robed in majesty and is armed with strength. The world is firmly established; it cannot be moved" (Psalm 93:1, NIV). And so many times the Bible records David repeating the phrase, "O Lord, there is none like You" (2 Samuel 7:22).

"Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen." Prayer is incomplete if it does not include praise.

## CONCLUSION

The Lord's Prayer is our prayer. It was never meant to be a mechanical, formal, or recited prayer. It was meant to be a model for personal prayer. Jesus is teaching us how to approach God and how to talk to God. **[HANDOUT]<sup>18</sup>** And I created a handout to guide your praying. I urge you to set aside some time each day this week and let this handout guide you through The Lord's Prayer. May it guide you, inspire you, and help you focus your praying.

And when you pray, ***trust Him as Father, and revere Him as holy.*** When you bow your head or kneel to pray, hold on to two truths. One, by faith in Jesus Christ, God is your Father, and you are His child. He loves you and promises to take care of you. And two, remember that He is holy. Respect Him. Adore Him. Revere Him. Remember who you're talking to.

"Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Your name."

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See Luke 11:1. J. I. Packer writes, “Three venerable formulae together add up to Christianity: the Apostle’s Creed, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord’s Prayer, summarizing respectively the Christian way of believing, behaving, and communing with God.” [J. I. Packer, *Praying the Lord’s Prayer* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), page 11]

<sup>2</sup> On the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem is the Convent of Pater Noster, the Convent of Our Father, built over the site where Jesus taught His disciples the Lord’s Prayer. The walls of the convent are decorated with ceramic tiles, each inscribed with the Lord’s Prayer so that it can be recited in 140 languages. The convent also has a website posting the Lord’s Prayer in 1,653 different languages and dialects. Which means the Lord’s Prayer can be prayed by almost every person in the world.

<sup>3</sup> By Marcus Dods.

<sup>4</sup> I love what Max Lucado writes. “When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, He gave them a prayer. Not a lecture on prayer. Not the doctrine of prayer. He gave them a quotable, repeatable, portable prayer.” [Max Lucado, *Before Amen* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2014), page 6.]

<sup>5</sup> See James 4:8.

<sup>6</sup> Albert Mohler writes, “The Lord’s Prayer takes less than twenty seconds to read aloud, but it takes a lifetime to learn.” [R. Albert Mohler, *The Prayer That Turns the World Upside Down* (Nashville, TN: Fidelitas Corporation, imprint of Thomas Nelson, 2018), page xvii.]

<sup>7</sup> Jesus said, “Pray like this, ‘Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Your name’” (Matthew 6:9). That one phrase is packed with theological significance. He is “our Father,” which points to His immanence, which means He is near and dear to us. He is “in heaven,” which points to His transcendence, which means He is above and beyond us. He is “hallowed” which means He is holy and deserves our reverence.

<sup>8</sup> See John 1:12, Ephesians 1:4, Romans 8:14-17.

<sup>9</sup> Packer quotes Alleine. J. I. Packer, *Praying the Lord’s Prayer* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 207), page 61. Alleine’s prayer was used by John Wesley as the covenant prayer for the foundation of the Methodist Church.

<sup>10</sup> Packer, page 149.

<sup>11</sup> Gordon MacDonald, *Restoring Joy to Your Inner World* (New York, NY: Inspirational Press, 1992), page 496. A compilation printing of several of MacDonald’s books including *Rebuilding Your Broken World*.

<sup>12</sup> See 2 Corinthians 7:9-11.

<sup>13</sup> See Psalm 38:18, when David said, “I am full of anxiety because of my sin” (NAS).

<sup>14</sup> See Psalm 66:18.

<sup>15</sup> See 1 John 1:9.

<sup>16</sup> David prayed a similar prayer. “Lord, don’t let me drift toward evil” (Psalm 141:4).

<sup>17</sup> The following is an excellent explanation of the textual issue of the phrase “thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever” in Matthew 6:13. This article can be found at [gotquestions.org](http://gotquestions.org).

Matthew 6:9-13 includes what is commonly referred to as The Lord’s Prayer, because in this section Jesus teaches His disciples how they should pray (Matthew 6:9). But the careful reader will notice that the ending is different in different translations, inviting the question as to whether “for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever” should be included in the Lord’s Prayer. The King James Version contains the ending, while the English Standard Version (ESV) and New International Version (NIV) do not. The New American Standard Bible (NASB) includes the statement in brackets with an editorial note that the oldest manuscript does not include the words.

Should “for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever” be included in the Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:13)? Luke might suggest not, as his gospel includes a slightly abbreviated account of the prayer (Luke 11:2-4) and excludes the “kingdom . . . power . . . glory” statement. Of course, Luke’s account does not provide evidence of what Matthew wrote, but it does show at least what Luke felt was germane to reproduce. The phrase “for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever,” as part of the Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:13), is absent from the early Greek manuscripts like Sinaiticus (Ⲱ) and Vaticanus (B), both 4th-century manuscripts; Bezae (D) from the 5th century; and Dublinensis (Z) from the 6th century. The absence of the phrase in these early Greek manuscripts is significant evidence that the words were not original in Matthew’s Gospel. That it is absent in the writings of early theologians like Tertullian (2nd-3rd centuries), Origen (3rd century), Cyprian (3rd century), Ambrose (4th century), and Augustine (4th-5th centuries) also suggests that “for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever” was not originally included in the Lord’s Prayer. On the other hand, there are some early references to the phrase, including in the very early (2nd-century) Didache [minus *he basileia* (“the kingdom”)] (Kirsopp Lake, *The Apostolic Fathers*, Volume I, G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1919, p. 320). While the phrase



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is absent from the earliest Greek Bible manuscripts, it is present in the majority of later Greek manuscripts and an increasing number of theological writings as time went on.

The question of whether or not “for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever” was included in the Lord’s Prayer is not easily answered, as there is data to support both perspectives. The earliest evidence of the Greek Bible manuscripts supports the exclusion of the phrase, while its widespread presence in later manuscripts means the phrase cannot be discarded lightly. Based on these data points, it would seem that the addendum to Matthew 6:13 may have been an editorial doxological addition first in the Didache (an extrabiblical document) and slightly refined to include the kingdom as time progressed. The doxology “for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever” seems most likely to be a kind of hymnic addition to facilitate a worshipful reading of the passage. While the statement is certainly true – God’s is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever – it was probably not originally in Matthew’s Gospel (particularly if one weighs heavily the earliest Greek manuscripts, as does the NASB, for example).

<sup>18</sup> When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray, He gave them what we call The Lord’s Prayer. Today, The Lord’s Prayer is our prayer. Although it is often recited corporately, it was never meant to be a mechanical prayer or a formal prayer. It was meant to be a model for personal prayer and daily prayer.

#### ***Our Father who is in heaven***

Prayer is relationship. Jesus teaches us that His Father is our Father. Prayer puts Him in His wonderful place (as Father) and puts us in our wonderful place (as children). Because He is our Father, we can trust that He loves us, that He cares about us, that He hears our prayers, and that He will answer in the way He sees best.

#### ***Hallowed be Your name***

Pray with reverence. God is our Father but remember who you are talking to. “Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.” Hallowed means holy and sacred. Jesus is teaching us to approach God with reverence, awe, and respect. Yes, trusting Him as Father, but also revering Him as holy.

#### ***Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven***

Pray in submission to His Lordship. The Lord’s Prayer is a prayer of submission, surrender, and alignment. Aligning our hearts with God before we ask anything from God. It is praying, “Lord, I want what You want, because I trust that what You want is best.”

#### ***Give us our daily bread***

Prayer is asking. The Lord’s Prayer is an invitation to ask. We can pray for our personal, physical, and essential needs. Three truths come from this one phrase. (1) We are totally dependent on God for everything we need. (2) We can ask God for anything we need. (3) We can trust God to provide all we need.

#### ***Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us***

Prayer includes confession. Unconfessed, unrepentant sin disrupts our relationship with God. He will not hear our prayers if we refuse to confess our sins. We must be honest with Him when we pray. No lies. No secrets. No pretending. Prayer is coming into the presence of God and allowing Him to shine His holy light on our hearts and expose the sin within us. When He does, we can appeal to His amazing grace. And when we do, He forgives, He cleanses, and He restores our relationship with Him.

#### ***Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil***

Pray for spiritual protection. Temptation can strike suddenly like a tornado. Or, temptation can slowly erode the spiritual foundation of our lives, and we don’t even realize it’s happening. Either way, suddenly or slowly, it’s coming. And either way, temptation can be devastating. Temptation is real, but victory is possible if we pray for God’s help.

#### ***For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, Amen***

Prayer is worship, adoration, and praise. “O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth” (Psalm 8:1). “For God is the King of all the earth . . . God reigns over the nations and is seated on his holy throne” (Psalm 47:7-8). “O Lord, there is none like You” (2 Samuel 7:22). And that’s why Jesus taught to pray, “Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”