

## Lord, teach us to pray part 2: The Model prayer

What is the model prayer? It may sound like a rhetorical question, but we should ask and answer it anyway; because there are many prayers in the Scriptures and since the Bible is the Word of God, we cannot discount any of them. Sure, when asked "Lord, teach us to pray," Jesus responded with what we now refer to as the "Lord's Prayer." We know it well. Maybe, we know it a little *too* well. What I mean by that, is that we've become so overfamiliar with it, that it has now become 'rote' to us: we've memorized it, can quote it without even engaging with it and it has become religious routine to us.

The Lord's Prayer is not some religious 'omen' that magically protects us or obligates God to intervene on our behalf. Jesus was giving His disciples (and us) a model prayer to use as an outline to our prayer life, to our communications with the Father. Remember, at the time the Pharisees and Sadducees were reciting the same prayers, over and over again and Jesus was telling His disciples, "Pray differently... pray more intimately." Let's re-read the Lord's Prayer in context:

[SLIDE →] *"When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. "And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him."*

*"Pray, then, in this way:*

*'Our Father who is in heaven,  
Hallowed be Your name.*

*'Your kingdom come.*

*Your 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 do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]' -Matthew 6:5-13*

That's the context of the Lord's Prayer. Now, let's break down the content:

The Prayer is meant to highlight the important parts of our prayer life that connect us in a more intimate way with God the Father, being less religious, more about relationship and to actually warn us of things that can hinder all of the above.

*"Our Father who is in Heaven..."*

Right out of the gate, Jesus goes straight to referring to God as Father. This is very important on a few fronts. The Pharisees, in their attempt to be considered the most holy amongst the Nation of Israel, had arrived in a place that they dare not even say the name of God (YHVH, as revealed to Moses). They would at times simply refer to Him as "Hashem" which means the name. The mentality is brought out amongst the people, was that God was far off, not near and the focus became on your duties and religious responsibilities and not on having a relationship with God, listening to and following His voice. It became impersonable.

One of the main reasons Jesus came was to reveal God as "Father":

***"...and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."*** -John 17:26

Do you, in your spiritual imagination, think of God as some bright, unapproachable light, sitting on a throne who is far removed from our world and who may or may not answer your prayers depending on what kind of mood He is in?

Or do you know God and go to Him as a good Father, who wants His sons and daughters to come boldly to His throne of grace to receive grace, help and mercy in their time of need? Because you know that He longs for intimate relationship with us?

Perhaps some of us get hung up on the thought of Heaven, thinking it's like in another galaxy, far, far away; when in reality, the spiritual realm is just another dimension that is very close, just unseen to most. The Spiritual Realm is just the 4<sup>th</sup> Dimension, overlapping our physical realm.

***"Hallowed be Your name..."***

Holy is your name. Holy = to be set apart. This is a phrase of worship. We know that Jesus/Yeshua has been given the name that is above every other name. There is a place of reverence when it comes to who God is, but remember, we previously talked about that what it means to "take God's name in vain" is to make the name of God "common."

Worship should be a part of prayer life. Thanking God, not just for what He has done, but "who He is."

***"Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget none of His benefits..."*** -Psalm 103:1

***"Your Kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven."***

I've taught this on several occasions: The will of God isn't always done here on earth, as it is in Heaven. Jesus is helping us to understand that we have to say "yes" to God's will, in our lives.



We must partner and co-labor with God to bring about His will upon the earth. Don't get in the habit of always praying "If it's Your will..." (there are times where this is appropriate...) but find those things in His Word that ARE His will and pray those!

***"Give us this day our daily bread"***

This part of the Lord's Prayer is to remind us that God is THE source of all of our provision, both in the natural and in the spiritual. Our sustenance comes from Him: the bread that nourishes the body and the bread that nourishes the soul. It's a reminder to be thankful for all that He *has* provided, *is* providing and *will* provide. It's also a reminder to avoid self-determination. Often times we can fall into the trap of trying to be our own provider, which leads to striving and working in the flesh, rather than the Spirit. God is still Jehovah Jireh.

***"And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus."***

**-Philippians 4:19**

***"Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us."***

This is actually the main thrust of the Lord's Prayer, even though it is only one phrase among others that are all important. How do we know this? Context. We talked about the 'historical' context of what Jesus was teaching His disciples about in the midst of the Hebrew culture and in light of the Pharisees and Sadducees. But this is the 'Biblical context' of these verses. Remember, when the Bible was originally written, it was without the chapter and verse divisions that we currently enjoy.

If we look at the Lord's prayer we will see a repetition of the subject matter of Forgiveness, before, during and after the Model Prayer:

In Matthew 5, the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus addresses forgiveness several times (He addresses mercy, anger and reconciliation, retaliation and turning the other cheek, and loving our enemies. Specifically, He addresses this:

***"So, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny."*** -Matthew 5:23-26 (cf. Matthew 18:15-35)

This is the run-up to the Lord's Prayer where He addresses forgiveness again and then after:

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

As I've said before, unforgiveness is one of the greatest traps and temptations of the enemy!

When Jesus follows this up in the Lord's Prayer with:

***"...and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from [the] evil [one]."***

It too, is in the context of forgiveness... Most of us have probably thought this was a general "God, don't let us be tempted" prayer, but it's not. Firstly, because temptation is a given in this world (James 1:13-15); and secondly, because it's in the context of forgiveness. What Jesus is specifically pointing to here is: "Let us not be tempted to hold unforgiveness and deliver us from the devil's scheme to trap us with unforgiveness."

Many people are *still* walking with church hurts that they have not released to God in the courtroom of heaven. You may have heard the old adage: holding unforgiveness is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die. You can choose to be bitter, or you can choose to be better.

We will need to forgive and let God heal our hearts and trust that He will bring about justice if it is needed (Luke 18:7, 8). Otherwise, we will have a closed (hardened) heart, and we won't be able to walk in vulnerability and transparency in our relationships. In some situations, we will need to repent and seek reconciliation.

Jesus modeled this for us in John, chapter thirteen. At the Last Supper (a Passover meal) with His disciples, Jesus washes the feet of those who would betray, deny, and abandon Him, knowing that they would do these things. Would you or I be able to do the same?

Let the Lord be your shield and defender. He says, "Vengeance is mine... I will repay."

***"For Yours is the Kingdom, and the Glory and the Power, forever and ever. Amen."***

The Lord's Prayer begins and ends with "Worship."

Let's truly take the lessons of this Model Prayer and incorporate them into our prayer lives:

***Worship/Thanksgiving***

***Approaching God as Father***

***Partnering/Co-laboring with Him in prayer (listening to and not just presenting requests)***

***Recognizing and Trusting in His provision***

***Truly forgiving from the heart***

***Worship/Thanksgiving***

Let your prayers be Spirit-led with these themes woven throughout your daily prayers. Let your prayers be a continuous conversation with your Heavenly Father. Not a religious routine or meaningless repetition.