

## **LESSON 31 - THE LORD'S PRAYER**

### **How Would Jesus Want Us To Pray?**

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**H**ow would Jesus want us to pray? One of Jesus's disciples asked this question, saying, "*Lord, teach us to pray, as John [the Baptist] taught his disciples.*" Jesus's response is recorded in Matthew 6:5-15 and Luke 11:1-13. Jesus gave a sample prayer, historically referred to as the "Our Father" or "The Lord's Prayer." It's the oldest, recitable Christian statement, said by Jesus ca. AD 29, written down by the biblical authors ca. AD 60. Versions of this prayer have been used for centuries in liturgical practice (church reading/reciting). The sample shown below is the most commonly accepted English rendering using lingo from the King James Version. Jesus taught His followers: 1) to pray with right heart motives; 2) to pray persistently as faithful, redeemed children; 3) The Lord's Prayer.

***1. Pray With Right Heart Motives.*** Matthew 6:5 Jesus says, "*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.*" Jesus criticizes their selfish motivations. Our motivation should be communication *to* God, flowing out of a right relationship *with* God. Four good types of prayer are A.C.T.S. (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication). If your goal is to be seen by others, being thought of as spiritual, religious, or lofty, then your motive is wrong. The Lord's Prayer is not an incantation to repeat repetitively like it has special power. Matthew 6:7-8 says, "*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. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.*" Our prayers shouldn't be vain repetition, babbling on as though God is impressed by the quantity or duration of our prayers. God won't answer our prayers unless they're driven from the pure motivations of our heart (James 4:3). Jesus also reminds us, that through Him, God the Father is also our Father. We're His children and He knows us and loves us. He already knows what we need even before we ask Him. Prayer isn't for you to update God as if He isn't all-knowing. The purpose of prayer is to spend time with God, growing our relationship as we talk and share our concerns with Him.

***2. Pray As God's Faithful, Forgiven, Persistent Children.*** Prayer is only successful with *faith* in the One the prayers are *given through* (the Son of God) and the One the prayers are *directed to* (God the Father). The prayer Jesus gave *assumes* we believe in Him and trust the Gospel. It's only through faith in Jesus that we're forgiven of our sins, made righteous, and can now boldly come before God's throne with our requests (Hebrews 4:16). It's only through our spiritual rebirth and our adoption into God's family that God the Father becomes our father. Whoever wants to come to God must first believe that He

exists and that He rewards those who seek Him (Hebrews 11:6). Matthew 6:6 says, *“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.”* This isn’t to suggest that group prayer among believers isn’t good. We see this in Acts 1:14 and 4:31. Prayers should be accompanied by gratitude, faith, and righteousness (James 5:15). Matthew 6:14-15 says, *“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.”* Pray as God’s beloved children, humble because He’s forgiven all our sins by His grace alone (Ephesians 2:1-10). Prayers will be hindered if we’re unwilling to forgive others. Our willingness to forgive is a sign that we believe the Gospel, and are grateful for God’s grace to us by extending that grace to others. Jesus also encourages us to be persistent in our prayers and keep asking (Luke 11:5-13).

### **3. Pray The Lord’s Prayer.** *“Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name.”*

First we acknowledge our adoption and God as our Father in Heaven. Hallowed is the same as holy, meaning unique or set apart. We recognize and celebrate that God is holy, has no equals, and is Lord and sovereign over everything. *“Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”* This has two meanings: first is our desire for God’s kingdom to come to earth in all of its fullness, for Jesus’s return for His bride, to set everything straight, and usher us into eternal life. Second is our desire for God’s kingdom to come to the earth right now, in greater measure and increasing influence towards repentance, godliness, and restoration. *“Give us this day our daily bread.”* We acknowledge that everything we have—health, shelter, relationships, family, even the daily food we eat—is completely dependent on God’s provision. It’s a gift from Him, we don’t deserve it, and we will be grateful for it, whether we have abundance or lack (Philippians 4:11-12). Matthew 6:12 says, *“Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.”* Luke 11:4 says, *“Forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us.”* The traditional KJV version uses the word “trespass,” constructively

blending the words translated “debt” in Matthew and “sin” in Luke. Our sin *is* a massive debt against God. It’s so large we can’t pay Him back. But Jesus paid our debts in full! We keep asking God for forgiveness daily because we need it, but at the same time we are *already receiving* His forgiveness continually through Jesus! This prayer is an ongoing reminder of our constant need for God’s grace, the gratitude for the grace we’re already receiving, and commitment to extend this grace and forgiveness to others. *“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”* We’re holy and righteous children of God but we still live in the flesh in a fallen world. We need the constant guidance of the Holy Spirit to live victoriously over sinful temptation, and the Lord’s deliverance and protection from the evil one (Satan) and every evil. Let’s pray The Lord’s Prayer.

## The Lord’s Prayer

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 be the kingdom, and the power,  
     and the glory. Amen.]

“Trespass,” which is a constructive blending of the words translated “debt” in Matthew and “sin” in Luke. See also Matthew 6:14-15 wherein many translations use the word trespass meaning a false step or sin.