

THE LORD'S PRAYER

There's only one thing the disciples asked Jesus to teach them. They didn't ask Him to teach them how to teach, even though He was a master teacher. They didn't task him to teach them how to do miracles, even though He raised people from the dead. They did, however, ask Jesus to teach them how to pray. There was something uniquely powerful and rewarding about the prayer life of Jesus. Thankfully, both Matthew and Luke give us a record of this teaching known as the Lord's Prayer, which serves as an excellent model for every time we pray.

Matthew 6:9-13

Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed by 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 lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

Connect With God Relationally

"Our Father in heaven"

There is a fork in the road every time we approach God. One is a religious path and the other is a relational path. God isn't interested in us going through a religious routine, but He desires a genuine and growing relationship with us. Jesus died so that we could be adopted sons and daughters that approach God as Father. Starting our time of prayer acknowledging (and even worshipping over) this relationship is POWERFUL.

Romans 8:15

For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"

Praying relationally is what your spirit wants to do and will get your prayer life going in the right direction. Praying in your flesh (religiously) is difficult and exhausting. Praying by the Spirit is life giving and rewarding.

Sample Prayer:

Father, I come to You in prayer today grateful that I am your son/daughter. Even though I have sinned and don't deserve it, you have forgiven me and adopted me as your very own. I am so grateful to call you Father. Thank you for loving me and paying the price for us to be a real relationship.

Worship His Name

"Hallowed by your name"

Coming to our Father with a heart of worship gives us the right perspective of Him (large) and whatever it is that we are facing that day (small).

Psalm 100:4

Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!

More specifically, there is something powerful about mentioning His names that helps us worship Him specifically and personally. Here is a sample:

God is Righteous - He makes us clean and right before Him
God is Sanctifier - He has called us and set us apart for a purpose
God is Healer - He heals our diseases
God is Shepherd - He speaks to us and leads us
God is Peace - He is our peace in every storm
God is Provider - He supplies all of our needs

Proverbs 18:10

The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe.

Speak God's names out loud and proclaim who He is to yourself and those around you. It's not only worship but it's a reminder to ourselves and others how powerful and great is our God.

Sample Prayer:

Father, I am awe of You. Your Name is a strong tower and a place I want to run to for protection. I honor you and love you as my Healer, my Shepherd, my Peace, my Provider, my Sanctifier and my Righteousness. Your Name is great and I worship you!

Pray His Agenda First

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

The essence of sin is putting ourselves at the center of our lives. The essence of salvation is putting Jesus at the center of our lives. Praying daily for His agenda to come into our lives and our world is to align our hearts with His. We will soon care about what He cares about and will more and more want earth to be like heaven (where His perfect will reigns).

Luke 12:31 (NIV)

But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

Spend time focusing on what God is focused on, which includes (but not limited to):

- The lost being saved (Luke 19:10, 1 Tim 2:-2-3, 2 Peter 3:9)
- That I would seek what God wants for me, more than what I want for me (Matthew 16:24)
- Wisdom to know Him more (Eph 1:17)
- To be able to discern God's will through transforming my mind, testing, and prayer (Romans 12:2)

Also, consider scriptures like Revelation 21:3-5 that describe what heaven is like and pray for it to be that way on earth.

Revelation 21:3-5

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

- God will dwell with His people
- He will wipe away every tear (sadness or depression)

- No more death (no wars, murder, abortion, etc)
- No mourning, crying or pain (disease, hate, racism, etc)
- All things new (bodies, creation...everything)

This is a game changer. When I'm praying for someone to become a follower of Jesus, I realize I'm praying God's will for that person. He wants to dwell with them. He wants to be their God. Our prayers can expand beyond personal evangelism to Community Group multiplication, and church planting.

When I'm praying for someone going through deep grief. I can pray with confidence because God's presence in their situation will bring comfort where there is sorrow. Praying for the sick, those in constant pain, the oppressed...anyway in which humanity is suffering from the effects of living in this present, broken and dark world, we can pray for the future Kingdom of God to break in to our present situation.

We can grow in confidence as we pray because Jesus' sacrifice brings heaven and earth together:

1 John 5:14-15

And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.

John 15:7

If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

Sample Prayer:

God, I recognize there is no better plan for my life than Yours. I pray that Your will be done in my life (name the areas where need to submit to Him) and in our world. This world needs your reign and rulership. I pray for every person that has yet to trust in you (perhaps name a few that you know) that they would know you, love and follow you. I pray for more of your spirit and wisdom to know You more and show me where I am not trusting You. I want to pray for my friend who is sick...I pray you would heal her. I pray for my nation. I pray for your Kingdom to come and bring an end to hatred and division.

Depend on Him for Everything

"Give us this day our daily bread,"

God promises to supply all our needs (Philippians 4:19, Luke 12:31). Even though He is upholding the universe by His power (Colossians 1:17), He also knows about the hairs on your head (Matthew 10:30) and notices every tear (Psalm 56:8). He wants us to come to Him with our problems and needs to trust Him to provide.

Psalm 121:1-2

I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.

Ask God for what you need TODAY. It is helpful to write down the concerns that you have and bring them to God in prayer. If it's worth worrying about, it's worth praying about (Philippians 4:6, 1 Peter 5:7). You may find it helpful during this section of prayer to open your

hands before God to physically show your surrender to Him. Problems can either be ours or God, but they can't be both.

Matthew 11:28

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Sample Prayer:

Father, I acknowledge that everything I need today will come from You. You made the heaven and the earth and are sustaining them with Your power. You also know about every detail of my life. You care for me and you have the power to help me, so I give it (be specific) to You completely. I look to you to help me, sustain me, and give me Your peace. Remind me of Your hope and power today. I am grateful for Your past provision and thank You in advance for taking care of my needs. Remind me of Your hope and power today.

Forgive and Be Forgiven

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

God's forgiveness of us is total, immediate, and unilateral. Moreover, we can receive it at any time we ask. Even when Roman soldiers were mocking Him, Jesus forgave them (Luke 23:34). Later, when Jesus was being crucified, one of the two thieves crucified alongside him confessed his guilt to Jesus. Jesus responded by promising him access to heaven. We can have confidence that He will forgive us no matter what we've done.

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Ask God to check your heart and life to show you areas where you might need to ask for forgiveness. Sometimes we are not even aware of where we have sinned (1 Corinthians 4:4, Psalm 139:23), but God in kindness shows us. Confess that sin and ask for forgiveness. It's important to confess our sin to close friends as well (James 5:16).

Then, it is your turn to forgive those who have sinned against you. Because of His forgiveness of us (we had an unpayable debt), we now have the resources to forgive anyone of anything. We can even choose to forgive people in advance (developing a posture of forgiveness). Ask God to forgive you and to help you to forgive others.

Sample Prayer:

Jesus, thank you for dying for my sin and removing the penalty of past, present and future sins. Please forgive me for _____ and show me any areas in my life that I need to repent of in order to receive forgiveness and healing. Thank You for showing me unfailing grace. As You have so freely forgiven me, I also want to freely forgive others. Please help me let go of all my offenses in Jesus name. I release to You those who have hurt me! I trust You to handle those situations according to Your perfect will.

Engage in Spiritual Warfare

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

Jesus makes it very clear that we have an enemy who is seeking to steal, kill and destroy us (John 10:10). The Apostle Peter charges us to be sober minded and alert because the devil, like a roaring lion, is looking for an opportunity devour us (1 Peter 5:8). So while spiritual warfare may seem mysterious and difficult to understand, we must take these warnings

seriously. The good news is the Bible makes it plain and better yet, gives us the resources to resist the Devil to the point we send him running (James 4:7).

Ephesians 6:11-12

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Most of spiritual warfare is simply being aware his schemes. Simply put the Devil is a liar (John 8:44) and an accuser (Revelation 12:10). The Devil wants to lie to you about God, about others and about you. He will accuse God ("God doesn't love you...did He really say?"), accuse your brothers and sisters in Christ and will accuse you. Therefore, learn to stand firm in the truth of who God is and who you are. Simply meet his lies and accusation with truth.

Lie: God doesn't love you

Truth: God sent His Son to die for you (John 3:16)

Lie: God won't provide for you

Truth: God didn't spare His own Son, will He not with Him give you all things? (Romans 8:32)

Lie: I messed up too much for God to love me

Truth: Nothing can separate us from God's love (Romans 8:35-39)

Sample Prayer:

God, I recognize that my struggles today aren't against the people or circumstances around me, but against the enemy. Please help me to see how the enemy is lying to me. Help me to take these lies captive and obedient to Your Truth (list out specific areas where you have believed lies). Jesus, I know that you don't accuse but you advocate for my brothers and sisters in Christ. Help me not to fall into the temptation of accusing others, but instead believe the best about them (1 Corinthians 13:7). While the enemy wants to destroy me, my family and my church, I know that You came to give me life to the fullest. I speak the name of Jesus over every area of my life and resist the enemy's pursuit of me. I don't have to fear the Devil because greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world (1 John 4:4).