



Matthew 6:9-13 (NIV)

"This is how you should pray,
Our Father in Heaven,
Hallowed be Your Name
Your Kingdom come
Your will be done
On earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors
And lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from the evil one."

How do you pray?

This is a question that has been asked for centuries and wonderfully enough, Jesus addressed this exact topic, and it can be found in the book of Matthew and Luke.

Now in the 1st century Jewish culture, they had multiple prayers that they repeated daily. One when they woke, one every time they ate, when they washed their hands, when they went to bed, plus multiple other occasions. They often recited prayers, so this wasn't a new concept for Jesus' followers.

In Luke's version the disciples asked Jesus how to pray because they saw Him go off to pray often and they wanted to know what He was doing. In Matthew's version, Jesus starts off by saying how not to pray (Matthew 6: 5-9). And then He continues and says, "this is how you should pray"...

The Lord's Prayer has been a staple prayer among believers but the question that has been debated has been: Do we repeat this prayer over and over or is it a guide to teach us how to prayer?

And the answer is both.

This prayer can be used as a template and as a pre-written prayer. So, what's the difference? This week's devotional will address The Lord's Prayer as a pre-written prayer and next week we will talk about using this prayer as a template.

There are many pre-written prayers in the bible. Repeating pre-written prayers aren't bad. They can actually be super helpful at times and in different seasons of life. The book of Psalms is a book of pre-written prayers that are there for us to pray.

The danger behind prewritten prayers is that when we say them or even if we have them memorized then we may not be thinking through the words that we are speaking and therefore potentially not meaning them. One way to caution against this, is to read it out of your Bible so your eye glances over every word and allow yourself to pause after reading each verse to absorb its meaning. And then asking yourself: Do I really mean or believe everything that I'm reading and praying?

Let's break down The Lord's Prayer so we understand what we are saying when we pray using it as a pre-written prayer.

"'Our Father in heaven,":

It's worthy to note here that in Jesus' day, this was a revolutionary way to address God...to consider God Our Father was not spoken of before Jesus. Yet this was His go-to way to teach His disciples to address God. So, when we repeat this prayer, we have to agree and acknowledge that God is our Father who is in Heaven. And when we say, "in Heaven", it's not meant for us to think that God is in this far off place but, for us to understand that He is close like the air.

"hallowed be Your name,"

"Hallow" means to revere and respect the Holiness of God. So, when we speak this, we are acknowledging the Holiness and beauty of God and come to Him with a heart of joy and gratitude for who He is and His Holiness and goodness.

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

Jesus is acknowledging that God's kingdom has not yet come, and that God's will is not yet done in full. Basically, saying that what is happening on earth is in drastic opposition to what is happening in Heaven. Yet, we have the ability to pray for the 2 worlds to collide so that God's kingdom in Heaven gets fulfilled here on Earth. And so, if we are repeating this line in prayers, then we need to be in agreement that my prayers can change the trajectory of this world.

"Give us each day our daily bread."

Jesus tells us to pray for God to supply our daily needs...not weekly, not monthly, not quarterly, not yearly needs. Daily needs. So, when we repeat this, we have to check our heart to make sure that we are notthinking too far into the future or that future worries aren't affecting our mental energy or attitudes. This verse helps us to stay in the present and to trust God to supply all our needs.

"Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us."

Now this is the most dangerous line in the whole prayer and most people don't even know what they are saying as they are mindlessly repeating it. Jesus continues in Matthew 6:14 "If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins". Most don't realize the stipulation here that Jesus added. What we are praying when we say these words is that if you aren't willing to forgive someone that has sinned against you, then God is not going to forgive you of your sins. We are all in need of forgiveness daily. This is a reminder to check our hearts and see if we need to process through and heal from what others have done to us.

"And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one."

going to get tempted. We all are Temptation is not the sin. Jesus was even saying tempted. Jesus is here that temptation is from Satan (the evil one) and don't let thattemptating thought from the evil one escalates into sin. Satan will plant the temptation but don't allow him to get a foothold on you and lead you into sin.

The Lord's Prayer is a beautiful premade prayer that Jesus wrote to His 1st century followers that is still used today. encourage you to periodically read this prayerto check your heart, to set up your day in the beauty and goodness of God, to set your mind to do God's will in your life, to trust God for the daily provisions, to remind yourself to forgive and forgive quickly and to not let the enemy get a foothold in your life and you give in to temptations.

READ:

Matthew 6:9-13

Luke 11: 2-4

REFLECT:

- Do you pray mindlessly or are your prayers intentional? Do you mean the words that you say?
- Is there anyone in your life that you need to ask for forgiveness or anyone that you need to forgive?
- Read each line of The Lord's Prayer and ask the Holy Spirit to check your heart to see if you mean each verse or if you need help in a certain area.

PRAYER:

Father God, I Thank You for all that You are teaching me. Help me to pray the way that Your Son, Jesus, taught us to pray. Guide my mind and heart to speak the words that You would have me speak. Allow me to continue to learn and grow closer to You. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.