

Lord Teach Us To Pray

In **Matthew 6**, the Lord taught His disciples about prayer. Luke records another version of this lesson in **Luke 11:1-4**. I prefer this version because I believe it contains more than the other version.

We need to remember that each disciple wrote down what he remembered and that we all remember things and write things just a little bit differently than somebody else. The same basic principles of prayer are contained in both.

I'm going to start with **Matthew Chapter 6** and verses **5-6**.

Matthew 6:5-6 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. **6:** But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

This doesn't mean that you have to go into an actual closet in order to pray and get God's attention. It means that we are not to make an open show of praying to be seen of men. That has its own reward, an earthly reward and not a heavenly one.

Why are you praying to begin with? Is it to get attention from people or attention from God to meet your needs? Men may give you applause, but they rarely give you money or anything else you really need. If you look at famous movie stars, they're more zeroes than heroes.

We need to get alone with God so that we are not distracted from our purpose. Our purpose is to commune with God, to get his attention, to develop a relationship with God, to ask God to help us with our needs.

In the very next chapter Jesus said:

Matthew 7: 21-23 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. **22:** Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? **23:** And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

It's important to pray alone so that we can develop that "love" relationship that we need with God. The passage in **Matthew 7:21-23** tells of them doing many Godly things, but they had no personal relationship with God. What turned out to be the most important, the things they did or their relationship with God? Relationship is the most important!

That's not to say that the things they did were unimportant. We should do good things; we should appropriate the power of God that is available to us if we follow biblical principles. That's very good! But relationship is always the most important!

Now let's go to **Matthew 6:7-8**

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Matthew 6:7-8 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. **8:** Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

You may have heard somebody who prays the same thing over and over again. As an example they might say: “Oh God, Oh God, Oh God, Oh God, Oh God, Oh God, Oh God, Oh God, Oh God. I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you. Hear me oh God, Hear me oh God, Hear me oh God, Hear me oh God, Hear me oh God, Hear me oh God, Hear me oh God, Hear me oh God, Hear me oh God, Hear me oh God, Oh God, Oh God, Oh God, Oh God, Oh God, Oh God, Oh God, Oh God, Oh God.”

I’m sure that God heard them, but what did they really say? Is God actually God? Yes, of course He is. Should we love God? Of course we should! But we should study the word of God and find many of the other names and attributes of God which are in the bible and call him by those names.

There is a poster that should still be available at Berean that has many of those names and attributes of God on it. I want to get one for the church some day and put it in one of the young people’s classrooms so they will learn those names at a young age.

God is far more concerned with the content of your prayer than the noise you make while praying it. Words without purpose are just noise, we must have a purpose to our prayer. That’s not to say that we won’t say much to God, or come to Him often with the same request.

Let’s look at the parable of the widow and the unjust judge:

Luke 18:1-7 And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; **2:** Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: **3:** And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. **4:** And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; **5:** Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. **6:** And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. **7:** And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?

Jesus commended the widow for continually bringing her purpose before the unjust judge. He has said in this passage that we are to continually bring our needs before his throne. He has said that he hears us and will remedy the issue in due season.

We’re told in **Galatians 6:9** And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

We need to consistent in our prayers, but we need to be specific as to our requests which we ask of God, and we need ask them from the depths of our heart.

Now we get into the actual format for our prayers. We’re not just to repeat the words of the “Lord’s Prayer”, but we’re to use the template that he’s given us to form our own prayers to God. We need to break down this prayer piece by piece. Let’s start now with:

Matthew 6:9 After this manner therefore pray ye:

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Our Father:

We are first of all to acknowledge God as our Father. God is our patriarch, the senior member of our family. We always offer due respect to the patriarch of the family. He is always acknowledged as the head of the family. We need to acknowledge his headship over our lives.

Let's look at **Romans 8: 13-16**: For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. **14**: For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. **15**: For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. **16**: The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

Once we are saved, we are the children of God, He is now our father. He now has the rule and reign over our lives. When we pray, we need at the very start to let God know that we are his children, and that we are coming to him because he is our father.

Which art in heaven:

We need to acknowledge that He rules from heaven. The bible tells us in:

Acts:7:49 Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest?

We need to come to him acknowledging that he has the "Big Picture" view of our lives and all that is going on in our lives. He knows us, and He knows everything that has affected us, or will ever affect us. God is Omniscient, which means "All Knowing".

Heaven is a far greater place than earth. There are things going on there that we don't have the imagination to even dream of. God is in control up in heaven so He is more than able to be in control down here on earth.

We need to acknowledge his superiority to us and let Him know that we trust His decisions for our lives. Again, we acknowledge Him as God.

Hallowed be thy name:

This is where the rubber meets the road so to speak. This is where we start to praise Him. It says in:

Psalms 150:1-6 Praise ye the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power. **2**: Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness. **3**: Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp. **4**: Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs. **5**: Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals. **6**: Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD.

We are to praise God for all that he has done for us, all that He will do for us, for all that he has done, period! We are to praise the Lord with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength.

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We need to bless the Lord, or as it says in:

Hebrews 13:15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

When we take the time to praise the Lord, we are sacrificing our time, but Jesus sacrificed his life for us. What's a little time compared to that? We had better get used to because there's a whole lot of worship going on in heaven. Let's read the 4th chapter of Revelation:

Revelation 4:1-11 After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. **2:** And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. **3:** And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. **4:** And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. **5:** And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. **6:** And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. **7:** And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. **8:** And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. **9:** And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, **10:** The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, **11:** Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

Praise and worship to God is what these most highly honored groups were doing. They were mentioned in the bible because God wants us to know just how important that praise and worship are to him. He is a jealous God! He wants all the praise and worship that we give to go to Him!

Matthew 6:10

Thy kingdom come:

Revelation 22:20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

We need to be praying that the Lord would come quickly. We really don't want Him to delay because the evil that is to come is so horrible that many who are weak in the faith may fall away.

We need to be concerned about souls. We don't want anyone to be lost, not if we truly know what hell is going to be like.

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It says in **Revelation 19:20** “And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.”

Do you really want someone to burn forever in a lake of fire? What is the lake of fire? It sounds like molten lava. The horrendous pain that those who will dwell therein will suffer is beyond our ability to comprehend.

This is a good time to pray for souls. As we pray for the Lord to come quickly, we need to pray that the end time revival will start even quicker. We need to be faithful to pray for our lost loved ones, our friends, our coworkers, those that we meet in the store or on the street.

We need to pray everyday that the Lord will give us a soul to witness to. When He does it, and He will... We need to be faithful to witness to that person. We need to trust the Lord that the person He is pointing out to us is ready to hear the gospel. We need to memorize the scriptures relating to salvation so that we can lead them to the Lord! But it all begins with prayer!

Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven:

We need to pray that the Lord's will be done. This is again, a place of submission of our will to the will of the Lord. He rules and reigns in heaven, we need to let Him rule and reign in our heart.

Many times we want to “Do our own thing” instead of listening to the Lord. This is a wrong attitude! How can we expect the Lord to do things for us if we're being rebellious children? We need to remember that He is God and we are not. We have to trust the Lord to run our lives; we will be so much happier if we will.

Matthew 6:11

Give us this day our daily bread:

It isn't until this time that we are to bring our own issues before God. At this time, after acknowledging God's position as our father, after acknowledging His position as ruler of the universe, after praising and worshipping Him, Then and only then do we bring our needs before the Lord.

We need to be careful what we pray for when we do bring our “needs” before God. We need to make it our needs, not necessarily our desires. It says in:

James 4:2 Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. **3:** Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

We need to be sure that we do not lust after goods and other things! God is not obligated to meet all our desires, just our needs. We need to pray that we will have the mind of Christ when we pray in this area. We want His will to be done in everything. That includes what He desires for us to have or not have.

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God wants us to be blest, but He is also concerned about us being spoiled brats with an attitude that we are better than other people. God doesn't want to be our Genie in a bottle that we only come to for things to please us.

God is like a loving parent, He wants us to appreciate what He gives us. He wants us to know that we can get certain things through hard work and dedication. Those things which we are unable to obtain but are necessary to our spiritual or physical health; those things he wants us to bring to Him in prayer.

That said, He often answers my smallest prayer. He does things like that at the times that I seem to be at wits end, at times when I really need a spiritual or emotional boost. God knows that I don't ask a lot of Him, I think that's why He is so willing to help me in seemingly minor areas.

This is also a time when intercessory prayer should be entered into. God wants us to pray for others and not just ourselves. The Lord himself makes intercession for us:

Romans 8:34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

When the Lord washed the feet of the disciples at the last supper, he said this was an example for the disciples to follow. The scripture we have just read is also an example for us. We should follow that example and pray for others. Let's look at another passage of scripture:

1 Timothy 2:1-3 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; **2:** For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. **3:** For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;

This should reinforce the concept of intercessory prayer. We are not just to pray for ourselves, even though that is necessary, but we are to spend time praying for others, especially those who are leaders in our land. Leaders are a reflection of the spiritual health of a nation. That's why it is so important that we elect godly leaders. That's why it is so important that we pray for our leaders, that they will remain godly, or become godly.

We shouldn't just limit our prayer to secular leaders. We need to pray for the leaders in the church. The devil is out to destroy the leadership of any church. The devil hates churches, and especially those in leadership positions. If he can destroy the leadership of a church, he has effectively destroyed an entire church. How many souls will be lost when a church is destroyed, or even the victim of a split? Having been in a church, early in my walk with God, where several splits took place; I can tell you that as many as 50 percent of a congregation never goes to another church, they just fall away.

We always need to pray for our family, friends, and coworkers. Just as we listed souls under "Thy Kingdom Come" here is another place to pray for souls. All our relatives may be saved, but we need to pray that they stay saved! While no man can take away our part from the lambs book of life, we can willingly walk away from God's grace. We need to pray for spiritual strength for those we love or work with, and again, souls in general.

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Matthew 6:12

And forgive us our debts:

We pray this because if the lord doesn't forgive us of our sins, we will die in them. We need to come before Him with an honest heart. We need to understand that He will forgive us of our sins, but we need to ask Him first. Let's see what it says in 1John 1:9

1John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Clearly, it is stated in this scripture that we are to confess our sins before we will have forgiveness, but that we will have forgiveness if we do confess them. I believe that confession should be made to God and not to men. It says that some sins are so shameful they should not be mentioned (to men) therefore they are to be confessed to God who already knows what your sins are.

Be serious and be honest with God; you are not going to fool Him! Take full advantage of His mercy and grace. You would be foolish to try to hide your sins from an all knowing God. Sin will send you to hell, why would you try to hide it instead of confessing it to God and getting rid of it and the penalty that goes along with it. It says in **Romans 6:23**.....

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Holding onto sin will only send you to eternal damnation in hell. You will burn forever in the lake of fire with the devil and all his other minions. If you confess your sins to God he will forgive you of your sins and eternal life is in your grasp.

As we forgive our debtors:

The best reason I can give you for this is just a couple of scriptures farther down in his same chapter:

Matthew 6:14-15 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: **15:** But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

How can we expect God to forgive us if we think we are better than God and we hold grudges? If we want God to forgive us, we need to be adult enough to forgive those who have done us wrong. That doesn't mean if someone didn't pay us back a debt they owed us that we are required by God to loan them money again. It just means what it says, that we forgive them for ripping us off. I truly think this would also be a great time to pray that they get right before God so that they are not lost.

If we don't forgive others, it creates deep seated bitterness in our hearts that makes it hard to look on others with compassion. We also need to remember who we represent. We represent Jesus Christ and we need to represent Him well. It's been said that you may be the best example of a Christian some will ever see. To be a Christian means to be "Christ like". What kind of portrait of Christ will

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people see when they look at you? What kind of bible will they read when those who know you read your life on a daily basis?

Here's another example of what God will do if you don't forgive others:

Matthew 18:21-35 Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? **22:** Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven. **23:** Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. **24:** And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. **25:** But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. **26:** The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. **27:** Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. **28:** But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. **29:** And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. **30:** And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. **31:** So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. **32:** Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: **33:** Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? **34:** And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. **35:** So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

It is critically important that we forgive others. While we are at it, we need to seriously consider forgiving ourselves of some of the things from our past the devil uses to bring us down. Those things that we may consider so horrific that we wonder if God has really ever forgiven us for them. But as we read above **1John 1:9** says:

1John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

God's word is true! It is impossible for God to lie! If God has forgiven us of our sins, who are we to hold them against ourselves?

Matthew 6:13

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

Who among us has never been tempted to sin? Everybody has been tempted to sin, whether by the devil or by their own lusts..... and we have all failed the test! It says in **Romans 3:23**

Romans 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Therefore we have all needed and will continue to need a savior. We need to Him to save us from our past sins and to keep us from any future sins.

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Romans 6:1-2 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? **2:** God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

We can no longer make excuses for our sins. Christ died and rose from the dead that we should live with him eternally. You will find that in the next few verses after the ones above.

The sixth chapter of Romans tells us how we are to die to sin and to live for God. We live for God by avoiding sinning. We are to consider ourselves dead to sin and dead men don't sin because, well, they are dead!

We all have our weaknesses and this is why we need to pray that God would keep us away from temptation. Sin is hard enough to avoid without flirting with our areas of weakness. Sometimes we go near those areas we should stay away from, other times the devil makes sure those things come into our immediate neighborhood. We're told in:

2Timothy 2:22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

While following after righteousness, faith, charity, peace, seem like things you should pray for under the heading "Give us this day" Now would seem an appropriate time to pray this same prayer. We need to keep our mind on things above and not on things below. As it states in:

Philippians 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

If we will do these things, and of course pray that God helps us to do so, we will have very little temptation come our way. It's when we dwell on those things we shouldn't that we have issues with sin. We should be growing closer to God and farther from sin with each passing day!

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen:

Just as we started off praising and worshipping God, just as we acknowledged Him as God; and as the supreme authority in our lives. We end our prayers in the same manner. We give Him all the glory, honor and praise because it is all due unto Him!