

# Prayer Series #1

## The Lord's Prayer

Eric Cebin  
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We just finished a series of How to Study the Bible where we covered topics such as Scripture memory, hermeneutics, and inductive Bible study. This is in preparation for our next sermon series in the Gospel of John which will be for 25-30 weeks starting in December.

In November, we'll be talking about different aspects of prayer, starting with The Lord's Prayer.

First, I want to make a pastoral invitation for Fallow Month. *Fallow* is a farming term which means to leave the field barren for a season in order for it to gain nutrients. In the Village, we don't have any programs other than the candlelight Christmas Eve service on Dec. 24. All other meetings will take a break: we invite you to use your "free" Pilgrim Group nights to either rest or invite someone to your house. Also, pray for your pastors!

### **Matt 6:9-13 The Lord's Prayer**

**9** "This, then, is how you should pray:

    "Our Father in heaven,  
    hallowed be your name,

**10** your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.

**11** Give us today our daily bread.

**12** And forgive us our debts,  
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

**13** And lead us not into temptation,<sup>[a]</sup>  
but deliver us from the evil one.<sup>[b]</sup>

You already know the Lords' Prayer. Here is a personal story: My mother told me that as a boy, I loved to pray. I would sit in on prayer meetings and put my hands on people's heads to pray for them. At that time we went to a Brethren Church on a military base where they held a communion service every Sunday before the regular service. Everyone would sit in circle and the kids would be quiet. There was an expectation that young people would stand and either pray or read Scripture. However, I didn't do this: I remember for a long time not doing it. When I finally did it, I felt relieved.

I think all of us might feel anxious about praying out loud.

But even when we pray alone, we feel distracted and unsure what to do. Both kinds of prayer can lead to anxiety. At times, I still feel this!

Prior to the Lord's Prayer in Matthew, it says this:

## Matt 6: 5, 6

**5** “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. **6** But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

There are people who simply stand and pray in front of everyone in order to be seen. The truth is, we all long to be seen, both kids and adults. *Hypocrite* means to play someone whom you are not. The reward is what kind of spiritual engagement they will get. **Matt 6:5** says that we will be rewarded by our Father if we go into a space where we are alone. If Sue and I had an intimate conversation in front of everyone here, it wouldn't be the same as if we were alone because we would be conscious of your presence. Prayer is like this: it's an intimate relationship. We should approach it with some guards for the one who SEES us and rewards us (if we honor the intimacy and aren't just trying to get something).

**Matt 6:7** And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.

Yesterday, I was sitting at Le Buzz watching an awesome grandfather with 2 granddaughters. They were poking him with every request possible: can we go to Disneyland? Can we have orange juice? He was sitting there quietly responding to all their requests reasonably. No, we cannot go to Disneyland but maybe we can go to Paris. He got them really nice glasses of orange juice, though. Afterwards, he got them up, cleaned up after them, and left. He knew what they needed, gave them what they needed, and off they went. This is a picture of God the Father. The thing you really want to be heard: to be *simple and direct* with Jesus.

Jesus offers his disciples instructions to be *simple and direct*: in prayer, you don't need to act to be seen and nervously say things. Jesus is a calming presence.

In fact, The Lord's Prayer is a *divine biohack*: If you have done a Whole 30, a gluten-free diet, or no sugar diet, you are biohacking; this means doing something to change the way you feel. Biohacking is a pseudo-science with some good supportive research. Jesus gives us this prayer as a *biohack* for our prayer life.

Here is a quote from the movie *Shadowlands* about CS Lewis. Maybe he really said this!:

(Harry) “I know how hard you've been praying...and now God is answering you”

(Lewis) “That's not why I pray; I pray because *I can't help myself*, I pray because I'm *helpless*. The need flows out of me all the time waking and sleeping; it doesn't change God, it changes me.

This is my experience! When you pray, it has the power to change because it can reorient you.

I'm going to pass out some papers for an assignment I want you to do now. As we go through the Lord's Prayer, I want you to begin to construct your own translation as you listen to me talk about it. Then I will give you an opportunity to read your versions with all of us.

## Part 1

**Matt 6:9** This then is how you should pray: **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.**

Notice it doesn't say **MY** father...it's **OUR** father. Jesus is looking forward to reforming the Jewish prayer system. You aren't praying alone: you are joining a chorus of people everywhere that you belong to.

The word **FATHER** may be hard for some of us. This is a parental unit. However, it's not translated ABBA here...this word means *one who can give mercy*.

### Hallowed be your name

Hallowed means very, very special: This is saying God's name identifies that He is amazing, all-knowing.

This first little section is an orientation to who you are and who God is: this helps you adjust. We have a heart and out of our heart comes everything. We are trying to figure out who we are: who we are juxtaposed to the creator of the universe. If you can figure this out, you realize you don't have to be God.

## Part 2

**Mat 6:10** Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

We spend a lot of time and effort trying to figure out how to rule my kingdom and make sure things are done the way I want it done and that others are doing the same and to bring justice to those who violate my kingdom and my rules. My mind is constantly racing as we try to figure it out and adjust. But this verse tells my mind that I don't have to figure things out and that God has figured them out and He is ruling: All I need is for his will to become my will. I realize that I want my will.

So, the second part of The Lord's Prayer brings about adjustments to the things in your mind and brings about peace.

## Part 3

**Matt 6:11** Give us today our daily bread.

As a kid, I thought that in this part of the prayer, I was asking God for my food. But this sentence is only in 2 places in the Bible: once in Luke and here. It is really asking God to give us my

spiritual, physical, mystical needs: give me everything in every part of my life (physically, socially, mentally) that I need today.

This is an illusion to the communion: Give me YOU! If you stop eating for a while, you start starving: you produce cortisol, store fat, and go into dysfunction. When you are emotionally and spiritually starving, your body goes into reaction mode and survival mode: things are bad and we need to deal with life. Jesus is saying, “If you give this to me, I will give you what you need and give you peace. Not tomorrow: TODAY.”

What do I need today? Bread, spiritual nourishment, emotional regulation: can you give me these today? Most of us have a stocked refrigerator are trying to plan for the future and live outside of today. This prayer invites us to be present in the moment, to *live in today*, which will bring a certain amount of peace right now.

## Part 4

**Matt 6:12** And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors. In the world of biohacking, there has been a lot of research done on forgiveness. Within a tenth of a second, your body will assess if someone is faux (fake), if there is hunger, is this about fertility, or if it has to do with friendship? If the brain thinks something is a fake, it prepares to get away.

Forgiveness is interesting: it is giving up the demand for justice. If someone wrongs me, I think they need to pay me back, not repair: just a demand for payment for what someone did to me. When you give up this demand, in a split second, the unforgiveness will say the person is a fake and must be fought, they must be escaped from: I must run away. There is no room for friendship.

Jesus knows that if we cannot forgive one another, we will always be in conflict: nervous and angry with someone. Forgiveness is not figuring out how to feel OK with someone: it's giving up the demand for someone to pay for what they did. This doesn't mean you don't have justice or boundaries but your nervous system won't be triggered by them anymore. You will have peace.

## Part 5

**Matt 6:13** And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Jesus cannot lead us into temptation. So how does this work? Should we change *temptation* to “*trials*?” No, God IS sovereign. The Spirit led Jesus into the desert where he was tempted. Temptation is difficult: The author of temptation is the evil one and the effect it has on our emotional state. When temptation happens, Jesus says to ask for deliverance: ask God to get you out of this. You don't want to face the evil one because it will take everything you have to fight him!

As Christians, we sometimes think we want to do spiritual warfare but know that you have a right to ask not to do it. Knowing God is in control should bring a settling to your emotions.

Remember: *when you pray, it will change you, transform who you are, and bring you in a deeper relationship with Jesus.*

**The Doxology:** For thine is the kingdom and the power and glory forever Amen.

This is not in the original texts: This is not about the Lord's Prayer. This is how they ended every prayer: it was the way to say AMEN. Probaby Jesus didn't say this at this moment, but it was probably how Jesus ended many of his prayers.

Let's read the doxology together!

Write the Lord's Prayer on your own now for the next 5 minutes.