

“THE DISCIPLE’S PRAYER”

Matthew 6:7-15

Would you like to know how to pray? I have a bookshelf full of books on prayer, but I don’t think you could really learn how to pray by just reading several of those books. Maybe you know someone who is fervent and consistent in their prayer life. You could go to them and ask them to teach you everything they know about prayer. However, their teaching would pale in comparison to that of the Lord Jesus Christ.

As we open the pages of the New Testament, we are struck by the intimate communion the Son of God had with God the Father in prayer. At His baptism, He prayed and heaven was opened and the Father spoke to Him. Then there was the time He prayed, and He was transfigured before the eyes of Peter, James, and John. Do you remember the time He prayed at the gravesite of a friend, and Lazarus was raised from the dead? Time does not allow me to go over the full scope of our Lord’s prayer life. One thing you need to know is this—*Jesus knew how to pray!*

The passage we have been studying for several weeks now is called The Sermon on the Mount. In this great sermon, Jesus laid out His expectations for all who would declare themselves to be His followers. One thing is certain; living in His kingdom requires a strong prayer life.

Our text today is Jesus’ response to their desire to learn how to pray. Several things are significantly absent in this text...

- **Jesus makes no mention of _____.** Jesus Himself prayed in public and in private.
- **Jesus does not specify _____ to pray.** Prayer was offered at special occasions, in times of great anxiety, during times of great blessing, and before meals.

- **Jesus did not insist on any particular _____.** Standing up, kneeling down, sitting upright, and lying prostrate are all acceptable to God.

This prayer also defines the attitude and spirit we ought to have...

- **“Our”** reflects unselfishness
- **“Father”** reflects family devotion
- **“Hallowed be Your name”** reflects reverence
- **“Your kingdom come”** reflects loyalty
- **“Your will be done”** reflects submission
- **“Give us this day our daily bread”** reflects dependence/faith
- **“Forgive us our debts. . .”** reflects penitence
- **“Do not lead us into temptation. . .”** reflects humility
- **“For Yours is the kingdom and the power”** reflects triumph
- **“And the glory”** reflects exultation
- **“Forever”** reflects hope.¹

Prayer is such an integral part of our walk with the Lord. We’ve got to get it right. MacArthur observed...

No matter how perfect a pattern this is, we must remember our Lord’s previous warning about our attitude in prayer. If our hearts are not right, even the Disciples’ Prayer can fall into misuse. So how do you make sure you have the right heart attitude? Just make sure you focus on God. That’s why this prayer is such a helpful model. Every phrase and petition focuses on God—on His person, His attributes, and His works. You prevent your prayers from being hypocritical or mechanical when you focus on God, not on yourself.²

¹ John F. MacArthur Jr., [*Alone with God*](#), MacArthur Study Series (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1995), 46.

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Do you know why Jesus did not make a bunch of rules about prayer? He fully intended for this prayer to serve as a pattern of prayer. Let me show you. Here's the prayer itself...

Matthew 6:9–13. . .

9 “Pray, then, in this way: ‘Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

10 ‘Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.

11 ‘Give us this day our daily bread.

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

13 ‘And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.’

Here's the first part of the prayer. . .

1. DELIGHT IN THE FATHER'S POSITION.

Jesus taught His disciples to approach the living God as “Father.” It is true that all people can call God “Father” by reason of creation. But, in this instance, Jesus was referring to an intimate term (Abba) that was reserved only for those who would commit their lives to Him.

John 1:12. . . But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name.

When we pray, we are to remember that God is not some impersonal force. He is a person. When Jesus prayed, He used the word “*Father*” more than 70 times. So, we are to delight in our Father's position by coming to Him with the eagerness of a child. Prayer is not a ritual. It is a _____ with “*our Father who is in heaven.*”

Just stop and think about your privilege. You get to call the God of all creation, Father. You get to enter into His awesome presence right in heaven itself. Listen, your Father has all the resources of heaven at His disposal. From this position, our great God rules and reigns. He is sovereign over everything. As you pray, you are to delight in the Father's position.

2. DELIGHT IN THE FATHER'S PRAISE

Catch these words—*"Hallowed be Your name."* What an immense privilege we have to enter into the presence of the living and holy God with the words "Father." Wait a minute. Are we to burst into His eternal presence without reverence?

Jesus taught His disciples to focus on how hallowed the name of God really was. *"Hallowed"* means to "set apart as holy, due all reverence." Peter wrote, ***"Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts." (1 Pet. 3:15)*** In the Bible, God is given some special names that reveal His character and glory.

- Elohim reveals to us that He is the _____, mighty and strong.
- El Elyon reveals that He is the possessor of heaven and earth.
- Jehovah Jireh reveals that He is the Lord who _____.
- Jehovah Shalom reveals that He is the Lord our peace.
- Jehovah Tsidkenu reveals that He is the Lord our righteousness.

Prayer is not just about getting our needs met. It is delighting in who the Father is and giving Him the praise He deserves. Delight in His position and delight in the Father's praise. Prayer is the worship of our soul overflowing in heaven's love language. It is sharing our life with Him and Him sharing His life with us.

3. DELIGHT IN THE FATHER'S PURPOSE

"Your kingdom come." In the Old Testament, God promised David...

2 Samuel 7:12... "When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom."

Listen, God's entire kingdom centers in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. To pray *"Thy kingdom come"* means that we want Christ to reign right now. Alan Redpath said...

Before we can pray, "Lord, Thy kingdom come," we must be willing to pray, "Lord, my kingdom go."

Later on Jesus will challenge His followers to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." So, before we go bursting into His presence, we must invite Him to rule in our hearts and lives. We must desire His kingdom more than anything else!

4. DESIRE THE FATHER'S PROVISION

In the book of Proverbs, the Bible says that ***"the prayer of the upright is God's delight."*** I have news for you today. Your heavenly Father wants to give you more than you can even ask. That's why Jesus taught His disciples to pray for "daily bread." Martin Luther commented on this particular request...

Everything necessary for the preservation of this life is "bread," including food, a healthy body, good weather, house, home, wife, children, good government, and peace.

Paul wrote, **"And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus."** (Phil. 4:19) Isn't this amazing? The God of the

universe wants us to depend on Him for our needs. When we do that, we are in essence saying. . .

Father, I trust you to meet my deepest needs. Glorify Yourself in my daily provision. Display your power and the glory of your eternal kingdom as you did when You provided the manna and the meat for the Jewish people in the wilderness.

5. DESIRE THE FATHER'S _____

"And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." Why did Jesus include this prayer of confession and cleansing in His pattern of prayer? Now keep in mind here that the issue is not salvation. It is fellowship. Unconfessed sin robs the believer of fellowship with his/her *Father in Heaven*.

Proverbs 28:13... He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, But he who confesses and forsakes *them* will find compassion.

2 Corinthians 7:1... Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

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

John MacArthur made this comment about the need for confession. . .

I have seen Christians, judicially forgiven and eternally secure, who for a time can be hardened by willful sin, so impenitent, so unconfessing, so insensitive to that sin, and so totally joyless that they did not even know the meaning of a loving intimate fellowship with God.

Please note the condition. **We must forgive others!** This is a kingdom requirement. It is not up for debate. How can we who have been forgiven withhold forgiveness from those who hurt us? I want to make this perfectly clear. Your purity before the Father depends in some part upon your forgiveness of others.

Matthew 6:14–15... “For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. **15** “But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

6. DESIRE THE FATHER’S PROTECTION

“And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” As a believer, you are living out your life in a fallen world. Powerful spiritual enemies are poised to take you down. The word “temptation” refers to _____. James made sure we would understand this request when He wrote. . .

James 1:13... Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.

So why are to incorporate this request into our prayer life? This is the expression of a believer who so fears and despises sin that he/she wants to *avoid temptation* rather than *defeat it*. This petition is a safeguard against presumption. Paul wrote. . .

Ephesians 6:10–13... Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. **11** Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. **12** For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. **13** Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

We must appropriate God's protection in prayer!

CONCLUSION

Prayer is heaven's love language. It is not a religious ritual nor is it meaningless repetition of well-worn phrases. Jesus gave us a pattern of prayer that can enrich our prayer lives immeasurably.

Delight in the Father's Position.

Delight in the Father's Praise.

Delight in the Father's Purpose.

Desire the Father's Provision.

Desire the Father's Purity.

Desire the Father's Protection.