

The Lord's Prayer

Not So Straight A's: Approval, Ambition, Anxiety--part 2

August 17, 2014

DAY 1: Introduction to the Lord's Prayer

1. Last week we studied how "self" can mess up even our spiritual disciplines. Jesus points us to simplicity and aims our spiritual focus on the Person of God.

Matthew 6:9 "This, then, is how you should pray..."

2. This prayer contains a (1) heading, (2) seven petitions, and (3) closing. Here's the Lord's Prayer:

Heading: *Our Father, who is in heaven*

Petition #1: *Hallowed be Thy Name,*

Petition #2: *Thy kingdom come*

Petition #3: *Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.*

Petition #4: *Give us this day our daily bread;*

Petition #5: *And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors;*

Petition #6: *And lead us not into temptation,*

Petition #7: *But deliver us from evil.*

Closing: *for Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.*

3. **The heading:** *Matthew 6:9 "Our Father in heaven..."*

4. Theologians describe God's nature as both transcendent and imminent.

a. Transcendent means high above, sovereign, highlighting God's awesome power. He is King of the universe, as represented by the simple phrase, "in heaven."

b. Imminent refers to God's tender mercies, His personal love, represented by the term, "Father."

5. God is both transcendent and imminent. How does that strike you? Which of these attributes do you tend to think of more? Why?

Petition #1: *Matt. 6:9 ...Hallowed be thy Name,*

6. "Hallowed" means to consider holy. It is a prayer that we learn to:

a. Revere God as our greatest treasure,

b. Honor Him through our obedience and allegiance to Him, and

c. Spread His message of salvation to everyone we can.

7. Which of these reasons to hallow God needs your attention? Why?

DAY 2: God's rule and will in our lives

Petition #2: *Matt. 6:10 Thy kingdom come...*

1. God's kingdom highlights God's rule.
2. God's kingdom does not refer to a geographic kingdom, like the United Kingdom. God's kingdom has no geographical boundaries.
3. Instead, God's kingdom is God's rule in the hearts of people. Wherever God's people are surrendered to His will, there you'll "see" God's kingdom.
4. Where do you see God's rule in your life?
5. What areas of your life have you surrendered to Him?
6. What area do you need to surrender more to God's rule?

Petition #3: *Matt. 6:10 ...Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.*

7. As you read today's news, you'll see plenty of evidence of Satan's will and man's evil will. There is a tremendous need for God's will to invade our fallen world.
8. How do you imagine God's will is done *in heaven*?
9. In what area do you have a need to surrender afresh to His will for your life?
10. Take a few moments to pray these two requests for yourself.
11. Pray for someone who needs God's rule and will in their lives.

DAY 3: Daily needs and daily forgiveness

Petition #4: *Matt. 6:10 Give us this day our daily bread;*

1. This seems like a simple petition. Do you think Jesus is referring just to food, or does this request have more to do than just bread?
2. This request has to do with our everyday needs. This petition would include provision for employment, money to pay our way and give. It would include our needs for shelter and clothing.
3. Jesus directs this petition to our daily needs. "Give us this day...." Why do you think He added the words "this day" and "daily" to this petition?
4. God uses our daily needs to drive us to Himself *daily*. What does that say about His care for us? What does it say about His desire to be engaged with us, relationally?

Petition #5: *Matt. 6:12 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors;*

5. Another big need is for daily forgiveness. "Debts" is a word used to describe the *effects* of our sin. They create a debt against divine justice. Is it possible to "repay" our debt?
6. Why do we need to ask for forgiveness?
7. Is there no way to gain forgiveness by our own efforts?
8. The request for mercy requires humility. Why is this important to our spiritual growth?
9. Jesus assumes that, of course, we are forgiving those who sin against us. How are you doing with forgiving others? Is there someone with whom you struggle to forgive?
10. What strikes you the most from the two petitions we studied today?

DAY 4: The battle against evil

Petition #6: *Matthew 6:13 And lead us not into temptation,*

1. Why do you think Jesus included this petition in the Lord's Prayer?
2. Giving into temptation can be ruinous to ourselves and to many people around us. We can live a life of obedience for many years, only to provide devastation by giving into temptation.
3. Pray this petition for yourself right now.
4. Are there temptations that come to mind over which you *need* God's intervention?

James 1:14 But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. ¹⁵ Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

5. The following is a list of how temptation *builds* from a simple *thought* to a *rattlesnake*. Underline words or ideas that strike you the most:

- A simple, evil thought.
- A strong imagination or impression made on the imagination, by the thing to which we are tempted.
- Delight in viewing it.
- Toying with the thought; enjoying the desire.
- Consent of the will to perform it.

The aftermath will be deadly.

Petition #7: *Matt. 6:13 ...But deliver us from evil.*

6. How is this petition similar to the last one?
7. How is this petition different from the last one?
8. The sources of evil are from (1) Satan, (2) human nature, and (3) the values of the world.
9. How does this 7th petition deal with each of these sources of evil?

DAY 5: Wrapping up

Closing: *Matt. 6:13 ...for Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.*

1. This prayer began (the heading) focused on the character of God. The prayer also ends with the focus on God's character. Underline the three truths Jesus highlights about God in this verse.

2. Which of these three qualities strikes you the most? Why?

3. Let's look back at the prayer as a whole:

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4. What did you learn this week from studying the Lord's Prayer?

5. What parts of this prayer do you most need to pray?

6. This prayer is simplicity itself. How can you keep this prayer in front of you in the coming weeks?

7. One of my responses to this prayer is my "obligation" to delight in God, my Father.

8. This prayer also highlights my need for surrender. "Lord, whatever challenges come my way, no matter how hard life may become, keep me surrendered to You. Keep me focused on Your kingdom, giving my life away, as Your Son gave His life away."