

## Spiritually Authentic Praying

### *The Lord's Prayer*

Matthew 6:5-9a:

*5 "And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 6 But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.*

*7 "And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. 9 Pray then like this:*

Would you please recite with me the LORD's prayer. I know we've all heard it and learned it in different translations, so I've put the ESV text on the screen so that we can say it as one.

*Matt 6:9-13:*

*9 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 this day our daily bread,*

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

*13 And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil. ESV*

This, our 20<sup>th</sup> Core passage in Core 52 is our Lord's lesson in prayer. He says we are to pray like this. Not as a formula, not that reciting these exact words is some sort of incantation that unlocks the gates of heaven. Jesus is modeling here for us an attitude and an approach to talking with God.

We are not to pray like the self-righteous, the religious professionals who pray to be seen by others and impress them, for in prayer, it only matters that God sees us and hears us.

Nor do we pray like those in many other religions, who think that their many words or their extravagant words will get them noticed by whatever supposed deity they think they're talking to, for the God we pray to already sees you, and He already knows. So, why does He want us to pray? So, we can know Him. It's all about relationship.

What I want to do this morning is simply pray through the LORD's prayer and expand on

it. If you have ever prayed through Scripture, this is what this is, except that this Scripture is a prayer itself. I want to pray through this as both personal prayer and as corporate prayer.

### **Our Father in Heaven**

Not "To Whom it May Concern," "To whatever power that may be listening and may have the time and power to do something about it." Not those things, but simply Father. Intimacy and affection. You are my Father. Imagine that! As close as a child on his daddy's lap is how close I am to You when I pray.

It is because of Jesus that I too can talk to You with such tenderness. It is because of His love, His sacrifice, His forgiveness, that I can talk to You just like He did. Jesus calls me His brother, and so You are my Father. I've been adopted into the family, and you love me, You love each of us as Your own children.

You are not just my father, but our Father. My Father and your Father, and your Father. You're the Father of all who believe. You are my brother. You are my sister. I am your brother. We are a family, and You are our Father.

We are not just subjects, pawns or peons. We are sons! We are daughters! We are Your children. As our Father, You care enough to turn your ear to what we have to say. You not only hear us, You listen.

You are our Father in heaven. You are not just a God who listens, but a God who is in a position to do something about what You hear. You are in a place of power. You sit on the throne of universe. When we go to you in prayer, all the resources in heaven are open to us.

### **Hallowed be Your Name**

May my heart's desire be that Your name be thought of and spoken as holy. You may be my Father, but You are still God. Your name is not mere sentiment, not just an expression, not an exclamation point to express my astonishment. Your name not a desperate wish, or a last resort. You are a holy God. You are a God so great and powerful that you would be beyond our knowing if you did not choose to reveal yourself to us.

Forgive me. Forgive us for when we toss your name around as nothing more than an expletive, as just a decoration with which to flower our speech, a thoughtless expression of surprise; an exclamation we tap our screens as the acronym OMG. Nothing more vile or

offensive ever crosses our lips or flows through our hands. Forgive us for when we use your name recklessly, for when we use your name and don't mean it, for when we use your name and we are not even thinking of You.

Let my highest concern in prayer not be for me, not for whatever laundry list of desires I have. Let it be that people, beginning with me, beginning with us would have a deep reverence and awe for who you are. Hallowing Your name is more than just respecting the letters G-O-D, as if capitalizing the G, or not using Your name to curse is all it means to keep your name holy. It is to have our hearts so deeply moved by Your supreme greatness that we can only adore and honor You.

**Your kingdom come,**

My greatest hope and desire is to see you reigning in you kingdom. Not territory or armies, but I long to see your rule enthroned on each and every human heart. At least I wish that was my constant prayer. Far too often it's my kingdom, and my authority that I seek. Even in my praying, I seek what I want, not what you want, but I want to seek your kingdom Lord. I want to see your desire be on the throne of my heart, not greed, not lust, not anger, not pride, but I want your desire to be the captain of my heart. Not my kingdom, not my authority, but yours God.

**Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.**

Your will be done. May your perfect purpose be accomplished in this world. Your will, Lord, not mine, not ours, but yours. Though my words may say otherwise, I so often live my life as to say, "My will be done in heaven as it is on earth." So Lord, I ask that your desire would be my desire. Your hope be my hope. Your will be my will. May your will be done.

Not just in heaven, but here on earth. Not just some faraway, distant, other place, but right here, right now, in my life, in our church, in our community, in our world. May Your will be done. How can we pray for your will to be done in other places, if it doesn't begin with us, if it doesn't begin with me. And if your will is done in my life, then like a stone cast into a pond may it ripple further and further out so that your will will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

**Give us this day our daily bread.**

Now Lord I turn to my own needs. Provide for my needs today. Supply my needs. Not my

wants or my wishes, but my needs. I pray for my basic food, my clothing and shelter, for health, for a job to provide for my family. This is what I need. Help us to be content in these basic things, to be satisfied with the simple, so that we can be thankful in all things. Help us not to confuse what we want and what we need.

We ask for your provision and sustenance, Lord. We understand that you have blessed us with intelligence and skill and you have called us to employ these in an effort to work and earn a living. But even this, Lord, is a gift from your hand, an invitation to partner with You in tending to your creation. Ultimately, Lord, we are dependent on you.

Lord, I trust in you to take care of me in the present. It is so hard to ask only for my “daily” bread. I want today’s bread and tomorrow’s. I want not just bread, but steak and cheesecake, and shrimp alfredo. We would prefer it to have our lives mapped out and to see in advance how everything will work out, but you want us to trust You one day at a time, to have faith step by step, so heavenly Father, give us faith for this day. We don't need to worry about tomorrow, so we cast all my cares and anxieties on you. Our present is in your hands.

### **Forgive us our debts**

Forgive not just “our” debts, but forgive my debts. It is easy to acknowledge our corporate shortcomings. I can easily admit human failings, but I need forgiven for my faults, my personal sins, my offenses. There are many times I willingly and purposefully violate your will. I have rebelled against you. I have rejected your will for my life. I cannot measure how much I have wronged you, and if I could place some sort of figure on it, it would be an amount staggering to the senses. I need you to forgive my debt, because I can never pay it on my own.

Lord, I must place my past in your hands. I need your forgiveness. Even to pray this, I must confess my wrongdoing. I am a sinner. I have fallen short of your glory. My life has missed the mark. I am in the same boat as the worst in this room. I am the worst in this room. I need your forgiveness.

Do not treat us according to what we deserve. Do not give us what we are owed. Do not demand that we give you what we owe you, for we could never repay. What reassurance it is to know that because of Jesus, when we come to you in prayer, that our debts aren't just cancelled. They are paid in full.

**As we also have forgiven our debtors**

Oh, Father, this is so hard for me to pray. Asking for your forgiveness is one thing, but to connect it in any way to how well I forgive others, that's tough. Even as I don't want you to measure my debt to you, I calculate with interest what I feel that others owe me. I expect full payment and more. I demand it.

But you have called me to forgive others with the same forgiveness that you've show me. Lord, I can only do this because I realize just how much you have forgiven me. Once I realize the enormity of my offence against you, the trivial wrongs that others have done against me seem miniscule by comparison. How could I ever demand so little from others, when you have forgiven so much for me?

Help us to let go, God. Don't let wrongs we've suffered turn into bitterness and anger. Don't let them poison our souls. Free our hearts with forgiveness. May others see Your love in us, because we have shown the same love to them.

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

Just as our present and our past are in your hands, so is our future. There are so many things in life that would lead me astray. There are so many traps that could ensnare me, so many distractions to turn me aside, and so many holes into which I could fall. Satan knows my every weakness. He knows where to hit me most and where to hit me hardest, but You know my weaknesses too. Lord, please guide me through the minefield of life. Help me to see the snares set before me. Satan has a plan for my life, but Your plan is greater. Make my passion, my pursuit, my purpose be for Your plan.

We will be tempted and tested throughout life, but Your word promises we will never face a trial where you will not provide a way through it. You will never allow us to be tested beyond our ability to bear. You will never lead us into a situation where Satan must win. Sadly, though, we lead ourselves into temptation. We put ourselves in situations where Satan gets a hold of our lives. But with your help we can overcome any temptation, we can pass any test.

*"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

**For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever, amen.**

There is no better way to end this prayer than with this beautiful doxology that our brothers and sisters in the early church used in their own worship. It is all about you, God. Your kingdom, Your power, and Your glory. It will be forever, but for me, it must begin right now, right here in my life as I pray, so may your kingdom be in my heart, may your power be seen in my life, and may your glory be seen in all that I say and do. Amen.

Matt 6:9-13

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