

Spiritually Authentic Praying *The Lord's Prayer*

Matt 6:9-13 NIV

*“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,
but deliver us from the evil one.*

It's the most well-known prayer in the world, even more than “Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray my Lord my soul to keep.”

More than “God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.”

More than “Good bread. Good Meat, Good God let us eat.”

Though the Lord's prayer is recited by Christians around the world and has been throughout church history. Jesus' intention was not just to give us words to memorize and quote.

Notice in verse 9 Jesus says, “This is how you should pray,” not “This is what you should pray.” Not just a prayer to prayed, not just a mantra to be recited; Our Savior has shown us an approach to the Father.

What I want to do is go through the Lord's Prayer this morning by expanding on it. We're going to approach this is a corporate prayer from us to God.

There are no notes in your bulletin. No blanks for you to fill in. For those of you, like me, who never listen to a sermon without pen and paper, this will stretch you a bit. But this morning I need your head and your heart. I still want you to actively listen, not passive, but listen prayerfully.

Alright, here we go.

Our Father in Heaven

Not “To Whom it May Concern” “to whomever may be listening.” “To whatever power or being that may be listening and may have the time and power to do something about it.” Not any of those things, but **father**. Intimacy and affection.

You are my father. Imagine that! Jesus called you Abba Father. Dad. You welcome us to sit on your lap and tell you all about it. As close as a child on his daddy's lap is how close I am to you when I pray.

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 God is our Father.

We are not just subjects, servants, pawns or peons. We are children. We are Your children. As our Father, You care enough to hear what we have to say. You have the time for us, time to listen to us. You are the God who hears. You are our father.

You are our Father in heaven. Better than any other friends in any other high places, You are our Father in the highest place. You sit upon the throne of the universe. You are not just a Father who listens, but a God who is in a position to do something about it. You are in a place of power. When we go to you in prayer all the resources in heaven are available to us. We have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms.

Hallowed be Your Name

May our heart's desire be that your name be regarded as holy – perfect and pure in every way. Above and beyond all that we are. God, you are close enough to be our Father, but you are still God. Your name is not mere sentiment, not just an expression, not an exclamation point to express my astonishment. Forgive us for using your name to swear, to draw attention to ourselves. Your glory is yours alone.

You're not a desperate wish, or our last resort. You are a holy God. You are a God so great and vast and powerful that you would be beyond our grasp or knowing, if you did not choose to reveal yourself to us.

Let our first desire in prayer not be for ourselves. It's not whatever laundry list of concerns I have. It is that we would have a deep reverence and awe for who You are. Hallowing Your name, though, is more than just respecting the letters G-O-D, as if capitalizing the G, or not using your name or title to curse is all there is to hallow Your name. It is to have my heart so deeply moved by your supreme greatness that I can only adore and honor you. And it is my hope that others are so deeply moved.

Your kingdom come

My greatest hope and desire is to see you reigning in you kingdom. Not territory or geography, but we long to see your rule enthroned on each and every human heart. At least I wish I could always pray that in all honesty.

Far too often, it's my kingdom, and my authority that I seek. Even in my praying, I am seeking 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 my pride, not my fear, not my anxiety.

Let your desire be the ruler of our hearts. Not our kingdom, not our 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 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.

And not just in heaven, but here on earth. Not just some faraway, distant, other place, but right now, right here, in my life as I live and breath, may Your will be done. Your will being done on earth begins with us. How can I pray for your will to be done somewhere else, if it doesn't begin with me, if it doesn't begin in our church and in our homes. Then, when your will is done in our lives, like a stone thrown into a pond, may it ripple further and further, until your will is done in our homes, in our offices, in our schools, in our city, in our nation. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Most holy and heavenly Father, we now turn to our own needs. Provide for our needs today. Supply our needs. Not our wants or our wishes, but our needs. I pray for food, clothing, for shelter, for health, for a job to provide for our loved ones and to share your love with others.

This is what we need. Help us to be content in these things, to be thankful for these things. Help us not to confuse what we want and what we need. Help us to be satisfied with our daily bread, and not feel entitled to our daily steak, our daily sushi, our daily lobster; just our daily needs.

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. As we trust in your provision, we find freedom from dependence on anything else. No pill or bottle can ever provide the peace that passes understanding that only comes from the God of peace, the Prince of Peace and the Spirit of peace. I pray for deliverance for those that find themselves enslaved to any of these pretenders to your throne.

Lord, we trust in you to take care of us in the present. It is so hard to ask only for "daily" bread. So often we want the next week's, the next month's, or next year's bread all laid out for us. We would prefer to have the whole of our lives mapped out and to see in advance how everything

will work out, but you call us to trust a 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 can cast all future cares and anxieties on you. Our present is in your hands.

Forgive us our debts

Lord, we must also place our past in your hands. We need your forgiveness. Even to pray this, we must confess our wrongdoing. I am a sinner. We are all sinners gathered here. We fall short of your glory. Every day. Our lives have missed the mark. We 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 our debt is beyond our ability to pay.

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 individual faults, my personal sins. 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 so staggering I could never repay. I need you to forgive my debt, because I can never pay it on my own.

Forgive us our debt... As we also have forgiven our debtors

Oh, Holy and heavenly Father, this is so hard for us to pray. Asking for your forgiveness is one thing, but to tie it in any way to how well we forgive others, that's a tough ask. Even as I don't want you to measure my debt to you, I calculate with strict exactness what I feel that others owe me. I expect full payment. I demand it. We all do.

But you have called us to forgive others with the same forgiveness that you show us. Lord, we can only do this because when we realize just how much you have forgiven us. Once I realize the enormity of our own sin, the trivial wrongs that others have done against us seem to fade in comparison. How could I ever demand so little from others, when you have forgiven so much for me?

Help us to let go, Father. Don't let wrongs we've suffered turn into bitterness and anger. Don't let them poison our soul. Set our hearts free 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 the evil one

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 us astray. There are so many traps that could ensnare us, so many distractions to turn us aside, and so many holes into which we could fall.

Satan knows our every weakness. He knows where to hit us most and where to hit us hardest, but you know our weaknesses too. And You are our strength and our shield. It is your Spirit who lives in us. The one who is in us is great than the one who is in the world.

Lord, please guide us through the minefield of life. Help us to see the snares set before us. Satan has a plan for our lives, but your plan is greater. Make my passion, my pursuit, my purpose be for your plan.

Your desire is for us. Satan desire is for our destruction. He is the father of lies. He always breaks his promises. He always pulls the rug out from under us. He never delivers the fun or future he dangles before us.

We know that we will be tempted and tested throughout life, but we also have the assurance that we will never be tempted beyond what we can bear. When tempted, you will provide a way out so that we can endure it. You will never lead us into a situation where Satan can win.

Sadly, though, we lead ourselves into temptation. We put ourselves in situations where Satan gets a hold of our life. But with your help we can overcome any temptation, we can pass any test.

We declare with the apostle Paul...

"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 us, it must begin right now, right here in our lives as we pray, so may your kingdom be in our hearts, may your power be seen in our lives, and may your glory be seen in all that we say and do. Amen.