

Praying Like Jesus

SPRING 2026
CARE GROUP STUDY

Therefore, you should pray like this: Our Father in heaven, your name be honored as holy. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For if you forgive others their offenses, your heavenly Father will forgive you as well. But if you don't forgive others, your Father will not forgive your offenses.

- Matthew 6:9-15

INTRODUCTION

Imagine, for a moment, if you won an opportunity to learn how to shoot a basketball from Michael Jordan. He would provide you with your own pair of Air Jordans and guarantee that you could shoot like him. Would you take it? What about learning how to throw a football (fully inflated, of course) from Tom Brady? Perhaps sports are not your thing. Imagine if you could learn to sing from Aretha Franklin! Imagine sitting down to write poetry with William Shakespeare or learning how to write a mystery novel with Agatha Christie! Maybe you would be interested in more contemporary figures, such as learning to cook with Gordon Ramsay or how to act with Meryl Streep. Which of these would you take?

Each of these people is considered a master of their craft, among the greatest in their field. Learning from them would be an immense privilege. Simply looking at their accomplishments and how they work on their craft would convince you that they are worth learning from.

But what if you could learn from another Master whose craft could impact your everyday life? Jesus Christ was a Master in

the craft of prayer. He often began His day in quiet with prayer (Mark 1:35), prayed for His disciples (John 17), and even continues to pray for us while in heaven (Heb 7:25). Imagine, for a moment, that you had an opportunity to learn to pray like Jesus. Would you take it?

This is the opportunity afforded to us in what is known as the Lord's Prayer, found in Matthew 6:9-15. Some have said that the Lord's Prayer has been quoted more than any other saying in history. Jesus begins this section with **Therefore, you should pray like this**. You can pray like Jesus! Will you take the opportunity?

There are many reasons that people give for not praying. Maybe you do not know *how* to pray. Maybe you do not know *what* to pray. Maybe you do not know *why* to pray, or you are not convinced that prayer actually works. The Lord's Prayer addresses each of these by getting at the heart of prayer.

In this study, take the opportunity to learn from the Master. Take the opportunity to pray like Jesus.

Lesson 1

PRAY WITH A HEART THAT HONORS THE FATHER

INTRODUCTION

The Lord's Prayer is two sets of three petitions each. In v.9-10, three petitions are made toward the Lord, while v.11-13 contain three petitions regarding our physical, spiritual, and ethical needs. In our study, we will group these petitions into four ways in which Jesus speaks to our heart posture in prayer. Learning from the Master in prayer means having a heart like His.

MATTHEW 6:9

Therefore, you should pray like this: Our Father in heaven, your name be honored as holy.

PRAY WITH A HEART THAT HONORS THE FATHER v.9

As noted in the introduction, Jesus begins **Therefore, you should pray like this**. Reading the context in the Sermon on the Mount reveals that Jesus has been correcting different postures of prayer prior to giving His own instructions about prayer. In contrast to the show-off Pharisees (Matt 6:5) or the babbling Gentiles (Matt 6:7), followers of Jesus are instructed to pray differently, beginning with the proper heart of prayer rather than the many words meant to impress others.

Jesus says to **pray like this** or **pray this way** instead of "pray these words." The Lord's Prayer, then, is a model for our own prayer, not because of the specific words, but for the pattern of ongoing prayer that it exemplifies. No specific time or place is mentioned because this prayer is to be a way of life. As a model, this prayer can be used corporately and privately, protecting us from our own self-centered approaches to prayer.

The prayer itself begins with the famous words **Our Father in heaven**. In one phrase, Jesus combines the transcendent with the immanent, that is, the Lord is not only sovereign **in heaven** over the entire universe, but He is also intimate enough to be called **Father**. **Our Father** reigns from His throne **in heaven**, and one day, that will be our home too. The word Jesus uses

here for **Father** is what we might say as "Daddy" or even "Da da," the basic word that even a child can pronounce. Do you cry out to God in this intimate way? Through Christ, you can.

Did you know that Jesus is the first person in the Bible to address God as **Father**? **Father** was typically used as an analogy to describe God's relationship with His people in the Old Testament, but not as a direct address (cf. Dt 32:6; Ps 103:13; Isa 63:16; Mal 2:10). The term would be adopted throughout the New Testament as well to describe our **Father** who adopts us into His Kingdom by His Spirit (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6). Imagine the shock to this original audience when Jesus began the prayer in this way. As one pastor summarizes, Jesus' reference to God as **Father** "could only appear familiar and presumptuous to opponents" while "personal and gracious to followers."

However, not everyone can refer to God as **Father**. Only those who receive Jesus Christ and believe in Him are given the right to be sons and daughters of God (John 1:12). While songs might declare things like, "Santa Claus knows we're all God's children," this simply is not true. You are only a child if you have believed in the **Father**.

We each have a picture of what a **Father** is supposed to be like. Some of you have experience with wonderful earthly fathers, while others have had no father figure at all. What are we supposed to picture when we pray to God as **Father**? We picture God as a **Father** who knows what we need before we even ask (Matt 6:8). He supplies mercy and comfort in our hurting (2 Cor 1:3-4). He blesses us with wisdom, forgiveness, and a glorious inheritance (Eph 1:3-14). He encourages us to live lives worthy of His kingdom (1 Thess 2:11-12).

Perhaps you find prayer difficult because you do not know God as **Father**. Talking with anyone is awkward when you do not know them. The conversation bounces around until you land on something you have in common or maybe share an interest in. Prayer will continue to be awkward until you know God in the intimate way that Jesus pictures here. Do you put in the time to know Him as **Father**? Consider reading through some of the

Lesson 2

PRAY WITH A HEART THAT FOLLOWS THE WILL OF THE FATHER

INTRODUCTION

Do you ever find it hard to take directions or commands? Perhaps you notice this tendency in your own children at home. Part of our sin nature means that we fight against authority, even that of our Lord. The Lord's Prayer continues by showing how our hearts must continue to be transformed because, without the work of the Spirit in our lives, we will fight against the direction and will of the Father.

MATTHEW 6:10

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

PRAY WITH A HEART THAT FOLLOWS THE WILL OF THE FATHER v.10

The second and third petitions of the Lord's Prayer come in v.10 as Jesus continues to focus on God the Father. **Your kingdom come.** Matthew's gospel is all about the King and His **Kingdom**. Both John the Baptist and Jesus had arrived to preach a message of repentance because God's **kingdom** was near (Matthew 3:2; 4:17, 23). Even in the immediate context of the Sermon on the Mount, the emphasis is on living in God's **kingdom** rather than living for your own or the world's.

Our King is inseparable from His **kingdom**. To pray for **Your kingdom come** is to pray for more of God Himself. Like with the previous verse about God as **Father**, this can be an awkward petition if you do not know the Lord intimately. Our natural tendency is to desire being the King or Queen of our own lives, not giving that right away to someone else. Yet, to pray **Your kingdom come** is to acknowledge the role that God already has. Your prayers do not make God a King. But you do have the high privilege of giving honor to our eternal King, which in turn helps to orient our own prayers.

In the Bible, to pray **your kingdom come** addresses an "already/not yet" tension. In the "already," Christ's first coming, as recorded in the gospel accounts, begins the reign of His **kingdom**. However, the "not yet" anticipates a time when all

evil will be done away with and the final establishment of God's rule over all creation will happen. This is the glorious picture of Revelation 19-22.

So do you desire the King and His **kingdom** in your prayers? Jesus takes His reign a step further. **Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.** God's **will** is already being **done in heaven**; therefore, our prayer is for the same to happen **on earth**. Through the coming of Jesus Christ, **heaven** has come down to earth as Jesus teaches us about the Father's **will**. In a divine mystery, prayer is essential to the **will** of God being **done on earth**. That is, the purpose of prayer is not to get something for ourselves, but our prayer is a means by which God gets glory for Himself. While God does not need our prayers in order to act, He graciously invites us into the divine through the posture of prayer.

What is God's **will**? According to Matthew, God's **will** is His righteous demands (Matt 7:21; 12:50) and His determination for certain events to occur (Matt 18:14; 26:42). God's **will** is His plans and purposes for His creation, including your life.

How do we know God's **will**? God's **will** has been revealed to us in His Word. We come to know the **will** of God, His desires for us and His world, through the Word of God. Through His Word, we know that it is God's **will** that all might be saved (1 Tim 2:4). Through His Word, we know that it is the "good pleasure" of God's **will** to adopt us into His family (Eph 1:5). Through His Word, we know that it is God's **will** that His followers, including you, would bring the gospel to the ends of the earth (Matt 28:16-20). Are you waiting to discern the **will** of God? Look no further than His Word, which has already given us our marching orders from our great King.

Our prayers honor our Father when they align with His **will**. For example, praying that God will help you to lie convincingly or to get away with murder does not honor Him, nor will He honor the requests, because those prayers do not align with His **will**. Instead, to pray **Your will be done** is a dangerous prayer for the Christian because it means to die to your own self, your own

desires, your own **will**. To pray **Your will be done** requires a radical transformation of the way we think.

Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.

- Romans 12:2

As God's Spirit works in our lives, our thinking is transformed. We no longer prioritize our own plans and desires, but we long for the Lord's **will** to be done. In short, **Your will be done** is the climax of our adoration and worship. We are giving complete control to the Lord in prayer. But take heart! His **will** is better than yours.

What should we take away and apply to our own prayer lives as a result of the first half of this Lord's Prayer? Two applications:

1 - The proportions of the Lord's Prayer are radically different than our own.

- Of the 6 petitions made in this prayer, the first 3 are focused on the Lord, that He might receive the honor and praise. That is to say, half of the prayer is focused on God and not on our needs. Does that describe your prayers? If we are honest, the Lord is, at most, relegated to the first sentence or two of our prayers before we come to the "real reason" for our prayer, whether we ask Him to bless our food, keep us safe on our drive, or help us to have a good day. To be clear, God does desire that you would bring these items to Him in prayer (see below). Yet, Jesus is demonstrating a radical departure from the proportions of many of our prayers. [In prayer, God being on *His* throne is more important than us being on our knees.] Will you allow this truth to slowly change your prayer life? Consider how you might use the prayers and passages of Scripture to honor the Lord in this way.

2 - Our requests and petitions do matter to God, but we must place them in the proper order.

- Again, God does desire to hear from you! But what parent

would be okay with the child who only says to them, "Good morning Mom/Dad! Thank you for this day. Thank you for my food. Help me have a good day" before running out of the house to carry on their day. If this were the only communication you had with your child, then you would long for more. How much more should our heavenly Father, the giver of all good gifts from above (James 1:17), long to have more conversation with you than quick, self-centered prayers? As we think about the requests in the following portions of the prayer, we cannot forget how Jesus begins this prayer to orient our prayer life.

FOR DISCUSSION

- Do you desire the King and His kingdom in your prayers? What can you do to cultivate more of this desire?
- How does praying for God's kingdom to come spur us to action now? When God's kingdom comes in full, how will all of life be different?
- What does Scripture teach about God's will? How do we know what His will is?
- How can praying for God's will be dangerous for Christians? Why must our prayers align with God's will?
- How does the order and proportion of the Lord's prayer differ from our own? Why does Jesus give these petitions towards the Father before the requests about daily bread, forgiveness, and temptation?

Lesson 3

PRAY WITH A HEART THAT DEPENDS DAILY ON THE FATHER

INTRODUCTION

Now we come to the portion of the Lord's Prayer that we are perhaps most familiar with and the part that we typically recite in our own prayers. Yet, do not forget what has come before this verse. Our daily needs have their place in prayer, but only when kept in proper proportion. Only when submitting to the total lordship of the Father, His kingdom, and His will, can we bring these requests before God.

MATTHEW 6:11

Give us today our daily bread.

PRAY WITH A HEART THAT DEPENDS DAILY ON THE FATHER v.11

The final three petitions of Matthew 6:11-15 consider the physical, spiritual, and ethical needs that we have. First, we will examine our physical needs as Jesus continues, **Give us today our daily bread**. Other translations read the **bread of necessity** or the **bread that suffices**. Surveying some of the **bread** imagery in the Bible helps understand what Jesus is saying in this verse.

Perhaps the most famous story of **bread** happens in Exodus 16 with the Israelites in the wilderness. After saving them from slavery in Egypt, God promised to give them daily manna, a wafer-like **bread** with a taste of honey. They were to collect only enough for that specific day, with a double collection on the 6th day so that they could rest on the 7th. Any extra **bread** would stink and be ruined. Without any surplus or food storage, Israel had to depend on the Lord daily for His provision. If He did not provide, they would starve. The same was true for Jesus in New Testament times. In the days before grocery stores and Instacart, **bread** was a staple of the diet, something that the people could not live without.

To us as well, Jesus says we need **daily bread**. That is, our prayers must be prayed in such a way that if God does not answer, we would starve. Do you pray in this way? Do you

pray with a day-by-day, moment-by-moment dependence on the Lord? Or do you take confidence in your fully stocked fridge and pantry to get you through the week? For those of us who have an abundance of food in our homes, this portion of the prayer almost seems unnecessary. After all, when was the last time you woke up really questioning if you would have anything at all to eat that day? To ask for **daily bread** demands our regularly repeated prayers of need, a moment-by-moment dependence on the God who provides.

Yet, this verse is not just about actual **bread**. Throughout Scripture, **bread** is used to represent all foods or cover all physical needs (cf. Prov 30:8; Mark 3:20; Acts 6:1; 2 Thess 3:12; James 2:15). Think about this: the God of the universe cares about your physical needs. The food that you eat, the clothes that you wear, the places you live, the ailments you have, God cares about them all! He desires to provide for all of your physical needs. After all, He Himself is the Bread of Life (John 6:35).

Notice that we do not work to earn this **bread**. Jesus begins the verse with **Give**. The daily physical needs we have are met with the gracious provision of God. All good things we have, like the ability to work and eat, come from God (Deut 8:18; 1 Cor 4:7; James 1:17). Because these physical provisions are from the Lord, Jesus will go on in His Sermon on the Mount to say we do not need to worry or be anxious about these physical needs (Matt 6:25-34). Seeking God first, as the Lord's Prayer begins, will take care of these other needs.

Satan tries to dissuade us from praying. Have you ever thought any of these lies? "I don't want to bother God with my request." "He wouldn't care about this." "I have been praying for this for so long. Why should I keep praying?" "I don't think anything will actually change." Do not give in to these lies! The Lord delights to provide for His children above and beyond the example of good earthly fathers (Matt 7:7-11). He cares even about our **daily** needs, so He provides enough for **today**.

Starting with v.11 and through the rest of the prayer, the plural pronouns are also striking. **Give us today our daily bread**. Our

- [illegible]

Lesson 4

PRAY WITH A HEART THAT FORGIVES AND LOVES LIKE THE FATHER

INTRODUCTION

So far, praying like Jesus has meant praying with a heart that honors the Father, follows the will of the Father, and depends daily on the Father. In the final portion of the Lord's Prayer, Jesus addresses the spiritual and ethical needs we have that can only be met through His perfect sacrifice.

MATTHEW 6:12-15

And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For if you forgive others their offenses, your heavenly Father will forgive you as well. But if you don't forgive others, your Father will not forgive your offenses.

PRAY WITH A HEART THAT FORGIVES AND LOVES LIKE THE FATHER V.12-15

Debts is one of the New Testament words used for sin. Similar to how you might owe a **debt** through mortgage payments or a credit card bill, the Bible describes our sinful state before a holy and just God as being in **debt**. This state of **debt**, due to our sin, separates us from God. Therefore, this is the greatest problem that you and I face. In His grace and kindness, God has sent Jesus Christ to settle the **debt** we owe Him.

He (Jesus) erased the certificate of debt, with its obligations, that was against us and opposed to us, and has taken it away by nailing it to the cross.

- **Colossians 2:14**

In light of the way Christ has **forgiven** our **debts**, we also **forgive** the **debts** or sins of others against us (Eph 4:32). Jesus would tell a parable in Matthew 18:21-35 regarding forgiveness of debts, with the point being that the unforgiving servant did not forgive as he had been forgiven. Indeed, we find faithful forgiveness in Christ (1 John 1:9), but we also show that same forgiveness to others.

Verses 14-15 provide some extended commentary on the

petition of verse 12. In fact, it is the only one of the petitions in the Lord's Prayer that Jesus expounds upon. Perhaps that is because forgiveness is what we struggle with the most. Forgiveness cannot be a one-way process. Out of the forgiveness and love that we have been shown in Christ, we ought to forgive those who offend us. We cannot truly ask for forgiveness until our heart is ready to forgive. Importantly, Jesus says **forgive us our debts**. Jesus had no sin which He needed to ask forgiveness for! Instead, He demonstrates to His disciples the process by which being **forgiven** allows us to **forgive others**.

The final petition of the Lord's Prayer in v.13 considers our spiritual battle with **temptation**. At the heart of all of our **temptations** is a battle between our loves. Will we love our fleshly desires more than God? Will we love our desire for gluttonous eating more than our desire for godly self-control? Will we love our desire for boastful pride more than our desire for Christlike humility? Will we love our desire for physical pleasure more than we love God's good design of marriage? Will we love our desire to hear ourselves speak more than we love a godly desire to watch our tongues?

Jesus says **do not bring or lead us into temptation**. The Bible is clear that God does not tempt (cf. James 1:13; 2 Peter 2:9). He will, however, allow us to be tested. Hebrews 11 gives the example of Abraham being tested back in Genesis 22 when he was asked to sacrifice his only son, Isaac. Because of his faith, Abraham passed the test. In our testing, sometimes the best course of action might be to flee (2 Tim 2:22; 1 Cor 6:18). Whether God prevents the **temptation** or trial from happening in the first place or we run from the **temptation** we face, He will always provide a way of escape (1 Cor 10:13).

Petitioning the Lord for help in our spiritual battle with temptation again highlights our vulnerability in prayer. We need to be rescued from danger, so we ask our Father to save us. We need the discipline to avoid wrongdoing, so we ask our Father to give us strength. We need the wisdom to choose good over **evil**, so we ask our Father to guide us.

As a quick note, your Bible translation may add a doxology at the end of v.13 or a footnote that says, "For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen." This doxology, while certainly aligned with the heart of the prayer, is not found in some of the earlier manuscripts. Like with the other handful of places in the Bible, most translations add a footnote here for us to read these words while not including them as part of the main text. Still, we would do well to end our prayers in this way, with praise and adoration for our heavenly Father!

CHRIST CONNECTION

The Lord's Prayer is not simply Jesus recommending how we should pray. Instead, the heart of prayer as described in this passage is ultimately modeled by Jesus Himself.

- In all things, Jesus desired to honor His Father. "The one who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, because I always do what pleases him" (John 8:29)
- Even at His hour of agony, Jesus did the will of the Father. "Again, a second time, he went away and prayed, 'My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done'" (Matt 26:42)
- At the height of His busy ministry, Jesus consistently spent time with the Father (cf. Matt 14:23; Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16).
- Christ forgave the debts of others even on the cross. "Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing.' And they divided his clothes and cast lots" (Luke 23:34).

- Finally, Jesus loved good from the Father more than the evil temptation of the world (Matt 4:1-11).

Will you follow the example of our Lord and Savior in prayer? Praying like Jesus means not only following the Model Prayer of Matthew 6, but it means embracing the daily life of prayer that Jesus lived out. By God's Spirit and grace, we can become a praying people.

FOR DISCUSSION

- What does "debt" communicate about our sin before God? How might the verses cited above inform your answer?
- Why is your forgiveness before God connected to your forgiveness of others? What does this demonstrate about your understanding of forgiveness?
- What does the Bible say about temptation and testing? How can your prayer life address these?
- How does Jesus model the heart of prayer we have studied in Matthew 6:9-15? How does His example encourage you to pray?
- As a result of this study, what change can you make to your own prayer life? How can your Care Group encourage one another to cultivate a growing prayer life?

UPCOMING PRAYER OPPORTUNITIES

OD Prayer Team	Weekly
Men's Prayer	April 3 & 4 7-8am
Night of Prayer and Worship	April 17 6-8pm
Women's Prayer	April 25 8-9am
Men's Prayer	May 1 & 2 7-8am
Women's Prayer	May 23 8-9am