



JESUS' TEACHING ON FASTING AND PRAYER

"How to Pray - How to Fast"

Matthew Chapter 6 - Part Two

⁸ "Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. ⁹ **In this manner, therefore, pray:**

*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 forgive our debtors.

¹³ *And do not lead us into temptation,*

But deliver us from the evil one.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

¹⁴ "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ *But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (Matthew 6:8-14 NKJV)*

What we have just read is usually called "The Lord's Prayer". But why did Jesus give this model prayer to His disciples? Are we supposed to recite it? Many people improperly think that the Lord's Prayer is something that should be recited word for word. They think it is sort of a formula to pray to really be heard by God. In reality, Jesus is telling us something quite opposite in this passage. He is showing us the kind of prayer that is pleasing to God. Please don't misunderstand what I am saying. It is perfectly okay to pray this prayer if it is felt in your heart, line by line as you read it. It is Jesus showing us how to pray a simple prayer that is full to the brim!



God is more interested in hearing truthfulness from our hearts.

Remember last week when we talked about getting alone with God in a "prayer closet". I reminded you all that this means to get alone with God in a place where you suffer minimal worldly distractions. We want to get in a place where God is our focus and where we are attracted to Him and His direction for our lives. In genuine prayer we are not to just recite memorized

words back to God, rather we are to pour out our hearts to a loving Father who wants to communicate with us.

Think of the Lord's prayer as a **list of ingredients**. They are the ingredients that help make our times of prayer more meaningful and genuine. Our prayer time should begin with praise and adoration for the Father in heaven who made us, who loves us, and Who has a plan for us while we are here on this earth. Jesus was introducing a radical change in **calling the Creator of the Universe "Father"**. He is a good and precious "daddy" who is there to protect us, provide for us, and plans for us. This was a giant departure from an ethereal far-away God that was "out there" somewhere. Let me say that I think it is okay to address prayers to Jesus and the Holy Spirit as well because Jesus told His disciples that He and the Father are one. (John 10:30-38)

I want to dwell on fathers for a minute because today happens to be "Father's Day". Many reading this did not have a good earthly father. Some of you were abandoned by your fathers and others were perhaps even emotionally, physically, or sexually abused by your fathers. Your wounds are deep. You've tried for a lifetime to put back the brokenness within your Spirit and your soul. The reason it hurt so deeply and the reason the effects are so lasting is because the way you were treated was the ultimate betrayal of trust. It is unthinkable that the one being that God put on earth to protect you was in fact the source of your greatest pain. When you were vulnerable, and when you needed his support, it was not found. God made fathers to provide a picture of what a loving heaven father is like. Your earthly father abandoned you. He abused you, and he used you.



God intended for earthly fathers to be men of integrity. That means they are the same regardless of where they are. They are to be loving to their children. They are to be hard working, providing strong leadership to their children. A good father is honorable, dignified, strong and tough. He is not to be tough WITH his family, but he is to be tough FOR his family. He

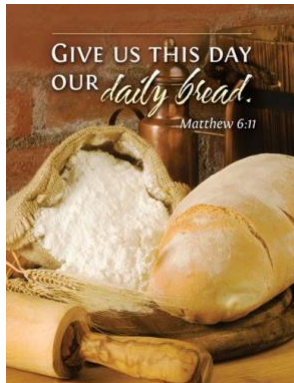
should be courageous for his family and devoted to his children. He is to be compassionate and loyal and faithful to his children. Who can measure up to be such a person? What father has not fallen short of God's best for him? I would say that all of us have fallen short of that ideal. We ALL OF US HAVE A FATHER IN HEAVEN who never never fails.

He is a father who picks us up when we're broken and He NEVER stops believing in us and He never stops cheering us on. If your father failed in a small way or a great way, please understand it was not God's fault. He watched on with broken heart as a broken person failed to be the father you needed. But NOW...your heavenly Father wants to heal your broken heart and put you back on the road you were intended to be on. Take it! Be healed! Claim HIM AND HIM ALONE AS YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN! Holy and precious and sacred is His name!



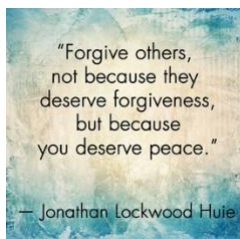
Jesus says we should pray to that Father declaring, "**hallowed be your name**". This is deeper adoration for our Father in heaven. It is recognizing that He is a holy God. He is sinless, perfect, and worthy of our praise. He is God and we are us! He is almighty, omnipotent, and worthy to be praised. Our prayer should then be modeled after the idea that our hearts cry out, "**thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven**". This means that my prayer should be saying to God

that I acknowledge His sovereignty and choose not my own will, but rather His beautiful and perfect will for my life. We desire His will to go on down here on earth just like it goes on up in heaven! As I said last week, when the Holy Spirit shows us that our desires are not His desires, we can ask our loving Father to change our desires and He will do that.



"**Give us this day our daily bread**" is one of the greatest things we can pray. It is not only a request but a declaration that He is sufficient. His grace is sufficient! God promises to provide all that we need emotionally, spiritually, physically, financially, for today. This is what I call the "manna principle". We as humans want to store things up to feel secure. This insecurity is at the root of those who feel a necessity to store up and hoard things. But God says we are to rely on Him for our "daily bread", our daily needs, our daily requirements. This doesn't mean we don't live prudent lives with a desire to conserve and make provision for a "rainy day", but it does mean that we don't put too much trust in those provisions we have set aside. Those provisions will only

be there tomorrow if God is in on the plan. He wants us to rely DAILY on Him, so when we pray for our daily bread we are acknowledging our transient presence here on earth, and we are acknowledging that He is the source of all that we need.



"**Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors**" reminds us to confess our sins to God and to turn from them, and also to forgive others as God has forgiven us. As we have learned together, forgiveness is the key ingredient to true peace, Shalom Peace, in your life. It is only when you can really forgive others with God's help AND forgive yourself with God's help

that you begin to heal and experience real Shalom. Jesus was clear that His kind of peace is a whole different kind of peace. He said, "*Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*" (John 14:27 KJV)

PRAYER to Resist Temptation

Lord,
Please keep me from temptation.
Protect my eyes from seeing what it shouldn't.
Protect my feet from going where it shouldn't.
Give me the wisdom to discern and make the
right choices today, so as not to be led into sin.
The devil bombards me with distractions,
but I will surely declare victory at day's end
through the power of the Lord Jesus Christ.
In Jesus' Name, I prayed. Amen.

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The conclusion of the Lord's Prayer, "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one" is a plea for help in achieving victory over sin and a request for protection from the attacks of the devil. The Greek word that the King James scholars translated as "temptation" is biblically inconsistent. It is not God who leads us into temptation. The word also means "trials" and things such as hardship. James, the brother of Jesus, said, "¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. ¹⁴ But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. ¹⁵ Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death." (James 1:13-15 NKJV) I spoke with Greek scholar Dr. Robby Dean who said the Irish Gaelic translation is very accurate when it says, "Help me to not to be drawn into temptation". Dr. Dean also says that the phrase must be connect with, "and deliver me from evil". In other words, "Lord, help me to resist when I'm weak and in danger of falling into sin." "if I'm on a diet and I'm hungry, help me to not be drawn into that temptation when I am offered a bowl of vanilla bean Bluebell Ice Cream." Anyway, you get the idea. It is our own sinful natures that draw us away from Him.

So, again, the Lord's Prayer is not a prayer we are to memorize and recite back to God. It is only an example of how we should be praying. Is there anything wrong with memorizing the Lord's Prayer? Of course not! Is there anything wrong with praying the Lord's Prayer back to God? Not if your heart is in it and you truly mean the words you say. Remember, in prayer, God is far more interested in our communicating with Him and speaking from our hearts than He is in the specific words we use. [Philippians 4:6-7](#) declares, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."¹

The Bible teaches the opposite. God is far more interested in our hearts when we pray than He is in our words. "But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Put on your prayer shawl! Get onto your zero-turn mower! Get alone with God and let Him speak into your heart. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words" ([Matthew 6:6-7](#)). In prayer, we are to pour out our hearts to God ([Philippians 4:6-7](#)), not simply recite memorized words to God.²

¹ <https://www.gotquestions.org/Lords-prayer.html>

² Ibid

Fasting to Be Seen Only by God



¹⁶ “Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. ¹⁷ But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

God loves it when we're obedient. Peter reminds us, ¹³ *Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; ¹⁴ as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; ¹⁵ but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶ because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.”* (1 Peter 1:13-16)

This part about fasting is a continuation of what Jesus is saying about motives. When we do acts of intimate service to God, let's keep them intimate. I have learned that most of the time when God whispers something into my heart, He desires for me to keep it between Him and me. If God wanted to share the truths that He shares with you with others He would inform them while He's informing you. He desires for us to obey because we love Him and we do not obey to receive ANY earthly credit from ANYONE. Fasting is a POWERFUL spiritual tool. I only learned about the power of fasting at the age of 62 in 2018. Jesus says some spiritual victory ONLY comes through "fasting and prayer". Learn to embrace an occasional fast when you are seeking victory in a spiritual area of your life! (Matthew 17:21)

We are called to be holy. That means we are "separate". What are we separate from? We are separate from the world with its agenda and interests. We are separated out to do the mission that He has for each of us to do. Just imagine how wonderful it will be to reach heaven and have the God who created you, take you into His arms and look into your eyes and say, "Well done good and faithful servant. Enter into rest!"

Let us pray!

Union Grove is one of the oldest Baptist communities of faith in the State of Texas dating back to 1844. Pastor Faber McMullen may be reached by email at uniongrove362@gmail.com or by snail mail at: 15301 FM 362, Navasota, Texas 77868. Tel: 936-825-1227 (Edited and proofed by Amanda Neese- Webster, Texas.) All financial gifts to this ministry are tax-deductible as a 501 (c) (3) Corporation.