

HOW TO PRAY
(Matt. 6: 9-15)

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The disciples asked, “*Lord, teach us to pray*” (Luke 11:1). The Lord Jesus took this opportunity to pray, using a positive and negative not to pray to impress men by fancy words or pious actions, nor are we to pray to impress God by vain repetitions and lengthy prayers. Prayer is to be private and personal, and it is to be done out of a heart that loves God.
- B. Now in 6: 9-15, Christ tells us how to pray. This section has been improperly named “The Lord’s Prayer.” Actually, this is “The Disciples Prayer”, for it was designed for the disciples, not Christ. In 6:9, Christ says, “Pray ye.” The real Lord’s Prayer is found in John 17.
- C. Some extreme dispensationalists feel that the Lord’s Prayer is not for Christians today but is for the Jews and will be prayed by them in the Tribulation. However, in context this prayer was given to our Lord’s disciples to pray until He would set up His Kingdom on this earth. By direct application, this prayer can be prayed by any group of disciples waiting for the Kingdom to be established. The Church, therefore, can make this prayer, for the Church and Israel will have their parts in the future millennial kingdom.
- D. A very legitimate controversy is whether Christ ever meant for His disciples to pray this prayer word for word in public or private. In Matthew 6:9, it says, “*After this manner*”, indicating that it is just a pattern for prayer. However, in Luke 11:2 it says, “*When you pray, say . . .*” Apparently Christ meant it to be prayed literally and used as a pattern for prayer.

NOTE: This prayer covers everything in principle and can be prayed for general needs.

- E. The structure of this prayer is interesting. It is comprised of six requests. The first three requests are God ward, concerning the Father and God’s glory, and point to the coming of the future millennial kingdom. The last three requests are man ward, concerning God’s gifts to His family until the kingdom is established.

II. GOD’S PERSON or PRAYER FOR THE KINGDOM -- 6: 9, 10

- A. **Introduction:** The disciples were looking forward to the kingdom that would be set up on this earth when Christ would reign supreme. But the earthly kingdom did not come in Christ’s first advent, but the Bible tells us that it will come after His second advent. Until Christ establishes the Kingdom, all disciples are to pray the Lord’s Prayer or use it as a pattern for prayer.
- B. **Acknowledgement:** “*Our Father which art in heaven*”: “Our Father” is a term of close relationship in which the Christian realizes that God really does exist and cares for him. He approaches a Father, not a tyrant, realizing His presence. Prayer is realizing the eternal presence of God and this is contact with the God of the universe. There is a danger of rushing into the presence of God only to get something from

God, but our first responsibility is to love Him as Father. “Which art in heaven: tells us that God is not only imminent, very near, but He is also transcendent, far off. Our Father loves us, but He is still a God of majesty, greatness and mighty power to be worshipped.

- C. Sanctification: “*Hallowed be thy name*”: In the English this does not sound as though it is a request, but it should be translated, “Let your name be holy.” The word “holy” means to sanctify or set apart. Christ is telling his disciples to pray that, God in all of His character and attributes, should be revered by all men.

NOTE: Christians should have a burning desire that the whole world may bow before God in adoration, in reverence, in praise, in worship, in honor and in thanksgiving. It is obvious that all men do not reverence God but Christians do, for they have a spiritual relationship with their Father. Yet, there is a day coming in the future earthly kingdom when all men will sanctify the name of God (Isa. 29:23; Ezk. 36:23).

- D. Sovereignty “*Thy kingdom come*”: Literally this says, “Let your kingdom come”, and is a prayer for the coming of the earthly kingdom. Christians are to realize that God has a plan for this world and this plan will be consummated when the kingdom is established. We must pray that God will hasten the establishing of the future kingdom. Why? Because it will mean the triumph of good over evil, and the nearness of Christ is not too far distant, for Christ must return before the kingdom is established.

NOTE: Every Christian is spiritual seed of Abraham and the promises of a kingdom given to Abraham will be filled to his physical and spiritual seed. The word “kingdom” means the rule and reign of God. There is a sense in which the kingdom has come spiritually in the heart of every person who has acknowledged Christ as King of his life. As children of the future kingdom, we accept the sovereign reign of Christ over our lives. Yet, there is a day coming when the kingdom shall be established on earth and Christ shall reign over the whole world. We know that the Church will reign with Christ in the kingdom and perhaps it will also inherit the kingdom and perhaps it will also inherit the earthly kingdom as spiritual see of Abraham.

POINT: Since the kingdom is ours, we can most certainly pray that God will bring the kingdom.

- E. Submission: “*Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven*”: Literally this says, “Let your will be done in earth as it is in heaven.” As children of the King and participants in the kingdom to come, Christians are to pray for God’s will to be done on earth until the kingdom is established. NOTE: Christians do God’s will now, but in the future day all men will do the will of God when Christ rules and reigns over this earth in justice and righteousness.

III. GOD’S PROVISION or PRAYER FOR NEEDS UNTIL THE KINGDOM -- 6:11-13a

- A. Introduction: Until God establishes His kingdom; the children of the King will have to have certain needs met.

NOTE: Needs are important, but we must learn to honor and glorify God before we state our own needs. Self-centered prayers go unanswered.

- B. **Provision:** “*Give us this day our daily bread*”: We are to pray that God will meet our physical needs day by day, one day at a time. We are to pray for bread, not cake. Our basic needs are for food, clothing and shelter. If some luxuries come, that is wonderful, but we should not be disappointed if they do not come.

NOTE: God is interested in the minutest details of our lives. The folly of the 20th century is thinking that because we have scientific knowledge we do not need God to provide for us. How long could we live without rain and sunshine? Our health and very existence is in God’s hands. But the Heavenly Father cares for His children and will provide for them.

ILLUSTRATION: One time a lady came up to Dr. G. Campbell Morgan and said, “Oh, Mr. Morgan, I have a big prayer request because I have a big need.” Dr. Morgan quietly leaned over to the lady and said, “Is there anything big in God’s sight?”

- C. **Pardon:** “*And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors*”: The meaning of this request is found in verses 14 and 15 where Christ explains, “*For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses*”. This is referring to sanctification, not justification. This request for forgiveness deals with cleansing of sin in a disciples daily life. It is not concerned with how a person becomes a Christian.

NOTE: This request deals with our sociological needs in relationship to our brothers in Christ and to all mankind. If we are not willing to forgive others, God will not bless us as His children. There is a great need to know how to forgive others and to love others (Col. 3:13).

POINT: “You can tell how well a man is getting along with God by the way he gets along with other Christians and his fellowmen.”

- D. **Protection:** “*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil*”: God cannot directly lead any of his children into temptation, for temptation comes from the Devil. This request acknowledges God’s providential control over Satan for God can restrain Satan if He chooses to do so. The Christian is to ask God to so control Satan that temptation will be minimized. Christians need protection from satanic activity. They also need protection from evil, for sin affects our daily fellowship with the Father.

NOTE: Our supreme desire should be to have a right relationship with the Father, to know Him, to have uninterrupted fellowship and communion with Him. The most important thing in our life is our spiritual walk with God.

IV. **GOD’S PROGRAM or PRAYER FOR ANTICIPATION OF THE KINGDOM**

(6:13b): “For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.” -- Until the kingdom comes, Christians know that the kingdom belongs to God and that all power and glory also belong to God. As children of the kingdom, we are to live in anticipation of the kingdom yet to come. For the sooner God brings the kingdom, the sooner will be the Lord Jesus’ return for the church at the Rapture.

V. **CONCLUSION FOR THE SAVED:** The Lord teaches Christians some unique lessons about the pattern or method of prayer:

- A. Prayer must begin with God's glory and end with man's need.
- B. Prayer is basically asking God for things, and He delights in answering His children.
- C. Prayer is to be to the point. There is to be no beating around the bush. Pointedly, succinctly and quickly these requests are set before God. And we trust Him to answer our prayers.
- D. Our prayers are to be concerned with things that will bring honor to God. The coming of the kingdom, the provision of our physical needs, forgiveness and submission all bring glory to God.

VI. **CONCLUSION FOR THE UNSAVED**

- A. This prayer begins with the words, "Our Father." Only those who have been born again can call God Father. Not all people are the children of God; only those who have been born into God's family are children of God.

NOTE: The Bible nowhere teaches the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of all men. It is not there, and if you believe this you have been blinded to the truth.

- B. Christ told all men that they must be born again if they are to see the kingdom of heaven. Have you been born again? You can be if you will invite Christ into your life to be your personal Lord and Saviour. The Bible acknowledges only two kinds of children - children of the Heavenly Father through faith in Christ and children of the Devil through willful disobedience. WHO is your father? God or the Devil?