

Matthew 6:10

7 And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. **8** So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

9 Pray, then, in this way:

‘Our Father who is 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 do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Review:

Jesus is teaching about prayer in the Sermon on the Mount. He is speaking to His disciples, but also to the crowd who has gathered. He is correcting wrong thinking and practice in the Jewish religious community. This prayer has been called the Lord’s Prayer, but it could also be called the Disciple’s Prayer because it was given for their benefit, to give them God’s perspective on prayer.

Our prayers should not be meaningless, but _____.

Our prayers do not need many words to reach God’s ear; they should be

_____.

Our prayers do not inform God, they are our _____ to God and express our

_____ on Him.

This teaching on prayer from Jesus is not a ritual to repeat, but a

_____.

The Pattern of Prayer

The Approach to God:

When we pray, we are entering the presence of God to speak with Him. Our ability to enter the presence of God is based on our relationship to God. The blood of Jesus cleanses us so that we can stand boldly and confidently in the presence of God without fear, but it is our relationship as children of God that invites us into His presence.

“Our Father, who is in heaven”

Hebrews 4:16

Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 10:19-22

Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Here is a quote from R.C. Sproul about speaking to God as our Father:

“A few years ago, a German scholar was doing research in New Testament literature and discovered that in the entire history of Judaism—in all existing books of the Old Testament and all existing books of extrabiblical Jewish writings dating from the beginning of Judaism until the tenth century A.D. in Italy—there is not a single reference of a Jewish person addressing God directly in the first person as Father.

There were appropriate forms of address that were used by Jewish people in the Old Testament, and the children were trained to address God in proper phrases of respect. All these titles were memorized, and the term Father was not among them. The first Jewish rabbi to call

God “Father” directly was Jesus of Nazareth. It was a radical departure from tradition, and in fact, in every recorded prayer we have from the lips of Jesus save one, he calls God “Father.” It was for that reason that many of Jesus’ enemies sought to destroy him; he assumed to have this intimate, personal relationship with the sovereign God of heaven and the creator of all things, and he dared to speak in such intimate terms with God. What’s even more radical is that Jesus says to his people, “When you pray, you say, ‘Our Father.’” He has given to us the right and privilege to come into the presence of the majesty of God and address him as Father because indeed he is our Father. He has adopted us into his family and made us coheirs with his only begotten Son.” (Ligonier Website)

Romans 8:16-17

The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

John 16:23-24,26-27

In that day you will not question Me about anything. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you. Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full . . .

In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I will request of the Father on your behalf; for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me and have believed that I came forth from the Father.

That Jesus would tell His disciple to start their prayers with “Our Father” was shocking and it is still profound today. Martin Luther, who used the Lord’s Prayer as a pattern for his own prayers on a regular basis “believed the address was a call to not plunge right into talking to God but first recollect our situation and realize our standing in Christ before we proceed into prayer.” (Timothy Keller, Prayer, 110) The pattern here is that prayer should be started by “thinking over who it is that you will be addressing, what he has done to give you access to himself . . . how you stand related to him.” (Packer and Nystrom, Praying: Finding Our Way, 286).

3 God Centered Requests

By placing these matters at the beginning of His prayer, Jesus called on His followers to give their highest priority to seeking the honor of God and the spread of His kingdom throughout the world.” (Ligonier Website) The first part of the Disciple’s Prayer is a response to all that God is.

Matthew 6:33

But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

“Hallowed be Your Name”

First and above all else, Jesus says to pray for God’s name to be hallowed—to be honored as holy on the earth. “Hallowed” means “to render God holy, venerate Him, sanctify or set Him apart.” Holiness has to do with moral purity. It also has the idea of uniqueness and transcendence. R.C. Sproul uses the word “otherness” to describe the holiness of God. In all that He is, all of His traits and character, He is transcendent, set apart and “other” from us. John Piper says it this way: “There is an infinite difference between Him (God) and us.”

This is an interesting prayer request. Martin Luther asked this question: “What are we praying for when we ask that His name become holy? Is it not holy already?”

Ephesians 5:1

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children

1 Peter 2:9

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light

We are praying for the reputation of God, that He would be known in all His holiness. We are also praying for ourselves as children of God. We bear His name, we are asking that God would keep us from dishonoring His name. We are requesting that God in His power would make us good and holy in our hearts, thoughts, words, and actions.

“Your kingdom come”

The second request naturally flows from the first request. As God’s children look around them, it is obvious that God’s name is not honored in all the earth, so the request for God’s kingdom to come is fitting.

God’s kingdom has a present reality and also a future fulfillment. It is the kingdom where God reigns supreme. Christ came as the Messiah to sit on the throne of David. One day he will reign physically on the earth as King, but first He reigns in the hearts of His children.

Colossians 1:13

For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son

Daniel 7:13-14

I kept looking in the night visions,
And behold, with the clouds of heaven
One like a Son of Man was coming,
And He came up to the Ancient of Days
And was presented before Him.
And to Him was given dominion,
Glory and a kingdom,
That all the peoples, nations and men of every language
Might serve Him.
His dominion is an everlasting dominion
Which will not pass away;
And His kingdom is one
Which will not be destroyed.

One day every knee will bow to the King of Kings, but the kingdom begins with God ruling in the hearts of people. This is a prayer for the “Lordship” of Christ, that people would acknowledge God’s reign by willingly bowing to His authority. R.C. Sproul said it well: “Jesus is using the kingdom of God here to refer specifically to that realm where people do His will freely and

joyfully. Because God's will is done freely and joyfully in this kingdom, His name is hallowed or regarded as holy by the kingdom's citizens."

"Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven"

When people willingly submit to the sovereign reign of Christ in their hearts, they will follow with obedience to the will of the King.

Matthew 12:50

"For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother."

John 4:34

Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work."

Ephesians 6:5-6

Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ; not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.

Luke 22:41-42

And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and *began* to pray, saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done."

We have God's revealed will in His Word so doing His will is obeying Him and keeping His commandments. "God's kingdom is evident wherever people do His revealed will." (Ligonier Website)

John 14:21

He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.

Psalm 103:19-22

The LORD has established His throne in the heavens,

And His sovereignty rules over all.

Bless the LORD, you His angels,

Mighty in strength, who perform His word,

Obeying the voice of His word!

Bless the LORD, all you His hosts,

You who serve Him, doing His will.

Bless the LORD, all you works of His,

In all places of His dominion;

Bless the LORD, O my soul!

“God-centeredness— comes first, because it heals the heart of its self-centeredness, which curves us in on ourselves and distorts all our vision. Now that the prayer is nearly half over, and our vision is reframed and clarified by the greatness of God, we can turn to our own needs and those of the world.” (Timothy Keller, *Prayer*, 114)

Application

Daniel 9:1-3

In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans—in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was revealed as the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years. So I gave my attention (set my face) to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes.

1. How can we be intentional in learning to pray? What are hindrances? What are areas of growth that you would like to see?
2. How might we be helped by considering our approach to God?
3. Look back at the 3 God-centered prayers. Which ones are part of your prayer life, which ones are not? What have you seen in your own life when you have prayed God-centered requests?
4. Here is an example of how you might use the pattern of “Your kingdom come” to pray.
 - 1) Pray for the final and ultimate establishment of God’s kingdom.
 - 2) Pray for conformity to His will, that Christ would reign in my heart.
 - 3) Pray for God’s kingdom to come to others through us.

