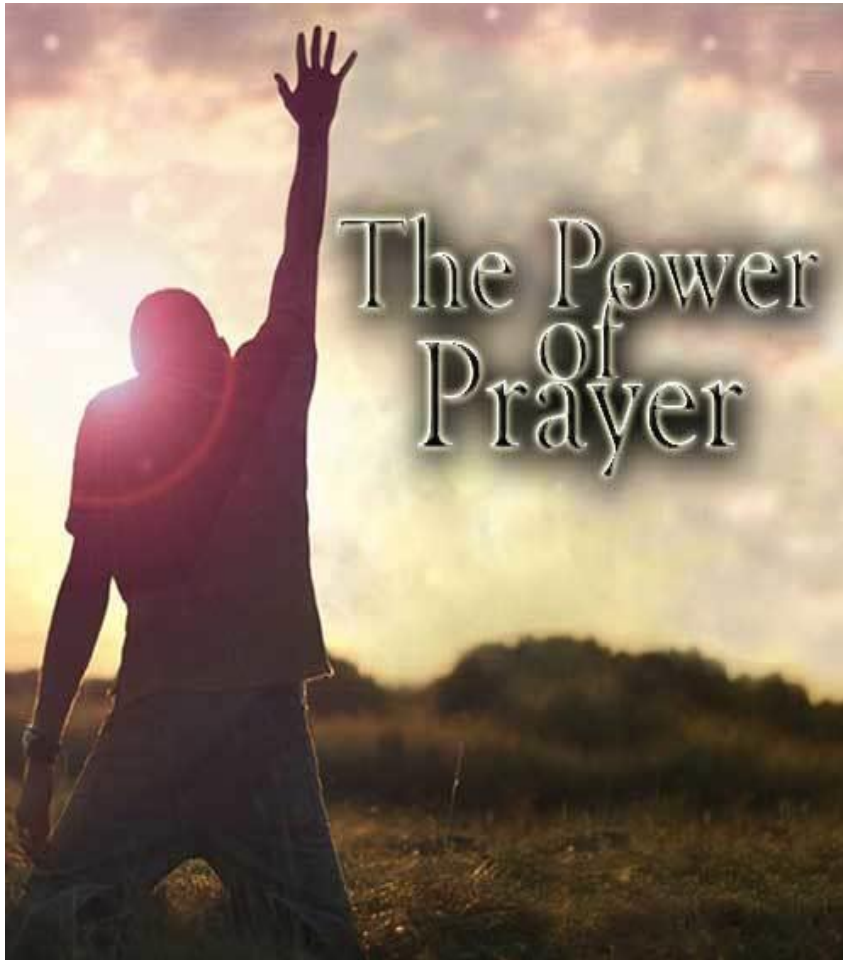


What every Christian Ought To Know.

How To PRAY (With POWER)



- (Matt. 6:9-13) “After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in 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 lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.”

INTRODUCTION TO PRAYER

- If you were to study the exemplary prayers in Scripture, you cannot help noticing that all of them are brief and simple. Prayer that is heartfelt, urgent, and unfeigned must be of that style. Verbiage and windbagery are badges of **insincerity**, especially in prayer. Here are a few examples.
- 1. The prayer of the publican: (Lk. 18:13) is as short and to the point as possible: **“God, be merciful to me, a sinner!”**
- 2. The prayer of the thief on the cross: “Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!” (Lk. 23:42).
- 3. Peter’s cry for help when he was walking on water:—sometimes cited as the shortest prayer in the Bible: **“Lord, save me” (Matthew 14:30).** All of these prayers are cut from the same cloth.
- Scripture records very few long prayers. Much of (Psa. 119) is addressed to God in the language of prayer, and of course, that is the Bible’s longest chapter. Other than that,
- (Neh. 9:5-38) contains the longest prayer in all of Scripture, and it can be read aloud with expression in less than seven minutes.

- **(John 17)** is the **New Testament's** longest prayer. It's also the longest of Jesus' recorded prayers, just **twenty-six** verses long.
- We know, of course, that Jesus prayed much longer prayers than that, because Scripture records several instances where He prayed in solitude for extended periods of time (**Matt. 14:23; Mk. 6:46**).
- When it suited Him, Jesus would even spend the entire night in prayer (**Lk. 6:12**).
- Jesus made it a habit to pray, both privately and with His disciples (**Jn. 18:2**). And the pattern was clear: His **long prayers** were the ones He prayed **in private**. His **public prayers** were perfect examples of **crisp, forthright, plain speaking**.
- Listening to Jesus pray and observing His constant dependence on private prayer gave the disciples an appetite for prayer. So they asked Him, **"Lord, teach us to pray"** (**Lk. 11:1**). He responded by repeating the very same model prayer He gave in the **"Sermon on the Mount."** We call it the **"Lord's Prayer."** We should probably think of it as the **"Disciples' Prayer,"** because its centerpiece is a **petition for divine forgiveness**, something Jesus would never need to pray for.

- Like all great praying, it is both **straight forward** and **without elegance**. There is not a wasted word, not a hint of vain repetition, and not a single note of **attracting attention (SELF)**, or religious **ceremony** in the whole prayer: Notice (Lk. 11:2-4) **“And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. 3 Give us day by day our daily bread. 4 And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.”**
- This prayer was a pattern for the disciples to follow, not a mantra to be recited without engaging the mind or passions. The various elements of Jesus’ prayer are all reminders of what our praying ought to include: **PRAISE, PETITION, PENITENCE**, and a **PLEA** for grace in our sanctification. Those are not only the key elements of prayer, they are also some of the principal features of **AUTHENTIC WORSHIP**.

Putting Away **Presumption**

- The worldly excess and spiritual shallowness of prosperity preachers and charismatic faith healers are easy to spot. It's a man-made, man-centered theology powered by extreme greed—one that encourages followers to make outrageous demands for prosperity and personal gain, reducing Almighty God to little more than a vending machine.
- But are we as quick to spot the same trends cropping up in our own prayer lives? Do we even notice when our prayers become more and more like shopping lists that show little care or concern for God's glory or His will? Or are we forgetting the model of prayer Christ gave His disciples?
- Today multitudes (**Lost/Saved**) think of prayer as nothing more than a way to get whatever they want from God. Prayer is reduced to a superstitious means of gain—and some will tell you that God is obligated to deliver the goods. Religious television is full of charlatans who insist that God must grant whatever you ask for if you can muster enough **"FAITH"** and refuse to entertain any **"DOUBT."**

- Charismatics are not the only ones who see prayer as nothing more than a kind of wish list. Plenty of mainstream evangelicals and old-style fundamentalists seem confused about the purpose of prayer, too.
- **John R. Rice**, an influential fundamentalist pastor, wrote a best-selling book in 1942 titled *Prayer—Asking and Receiving*. He wrote, “Prayer is not **praise, adoration, meditation, humiliation** nor **confession**, but asking. . . . Praise is not prayer, and prayer is not praise. Prayer is asking. . . . Adoration is not prayer, and prayer is not adoration. Prayer is always asking. It is not anything else but asking.”
- There are several problems with this perspective. First, Jesus’ model prayer is more than merely “asking.” It does include that; there are **“PETITIONS”** for daily bread (the barest of material needs) and forgiveness (the most urgent of spiritual needs). But the model prayer Jesus gave His disciples also includes at least four of the five elements Dr. Rice wanted to eliminate from his definition of prayer: **PRAISE, ADORATION, HUMILIATION**, and **CONFESSION**.

- Remove **PRAISE** and **PENITENCE** from the Lord's Prayer and you have gutted it. Insist that proper prayer **"is not anything else but asking"** and you overthrow one of the central lessons we learn from Jesus' for example:
- Prayer is first and foremost **AN ACT OF WORSHIP**. Even worse, such teaching sets up a kind of role reversal between the one praying and the God to whom he prays.
- The Bible teaches that **God is SOVEREIGN** and we are His **SERVANTS**. Name-it-and-claim-it theology teaches right the opposite. The person praying thinks he is in the demand-and-command position, with God in the role of the servant who is obligated to cough up whatever we ask for. This is anything, **BUT** biblical Christianity.
- **Prayer is much more than merely asking and receiving.** It is indeed a great **"privilege."** Notice (Heb. 4:16) **Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."** ";
- Notice (Phil. 4:6) **"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."**

- Scripture repeatedly promises that if we ask for anything in faith, God will answer—meaning if we ask “in accord with **GOD’S WILL** as prompted by His Spirit,” He will always graciously and generously respond Notice (Matt. 21:22) **“And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.”** (Matthew 7:7-11; 17:20; 21:22; Mark 11:24; James 1:6; 1 John 3:22).
- God often grants our requests according to (Eph. 3:20) **“exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.”**
- The nature of a “**TRULY FAITHFUL PRAYER**” is clearly spelled out in (1 Jn. 5:14) **“This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.”**
- In other words, the promise of answered prayer is not an unqualified blank check. The promise is made only to **FAITHFUL, OBEDIENT, SOBER-MINDED, BIBLICALLY INFORMED** Christians whose prayers are in “**harmony with the will of God.**” It’s not a guarantee of cargo to every gullible or superstitious religious enthusiast who uses “**Jesus’ name**” as if it were an abracadabra.
- Notice what Jesus said in (Jn. 15:7) **“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”**

- Far from being merely a wish list, “**godly prayer**” is fundamentally an “**ACT OF WORSHIP.**” It is an expression of our “**PRAISE,**” our unworthiness, our desire to see God's will fulfilled, and our utter “**DEPENDENCE**” on Him for all our needs. Thus every aspect of prayer is an “**act of worship.**”
- That includes the “**PETITIONS**” we make, because when we properly make our requests known to God—without anxiety, through **prayer** and **supplication**, and with **thanksgiving (Phil. 4:6)**—we are “**acknowledging**” His sovereignty, “**confessing**” our own total reliance on His grace and power, and “**looking**” to Him as Lord and Provider and Ruler of the universe—not as some kind of celestial Santa. **Proper prayer is PURE WORSHIP, even when we are making requests.**

- The **“Godward focus”** of Jesus’ model prayer is impossible to miss. The prayer starts with **“praise of God’s name.”** **“Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.”** It expresses a willingness for His Kingdom to come and His will to be done. **Pure worship thus precedes and sets the context for supplication.**
- Those opening lines establish the focal point of the prayer: the glory of God and His kingdom. In other words, the suppliant is concerned first of all not for his personal wish list but for the **honor of God and the extension of His kingdom.** Everything else fits into that context, so that the whole agenda of the prayer is determined by the kingdom and glory of God. That is perhaps the **most important** perspective to keep in mind in all our praying.
- Jesus said in (Jn. 14:13) **“Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son”** The purpose of all legitimate prayer is not to fulfill the felt needs or material desires of the one praying, but to acknowledge the **SOVEREIGNTY** of God and to magnify **HIS GLORY.**

- Prayer is not about getting what I want, but about the fulfillment of God's will. The proper objective of prayer is not to enlarge my borders, build my empire, or expand my wallet but to **"further the kingdom of God."** The point is not to elevate my name but to **"HALLOW" God's name.**
- Everything in prayer revolves around **who God is, what God wants,** and **how God is to be glorified.** That is the sum and substance of proper praying. So how do we accomplish this? Through **reading, meditating,** and **memorizing** God's **WORD.**
- Any prayers that are **self-consuming, self-indulgent, self-aggrandizing;** any prayers that seek whatever I want no matter what God wants; any prayers that suggest God must deliver because I have demanded it—those are prayers that take His name in vain. Such praying is an egregious sin against the **nature of God,** against the **will of God,** and against the **Word of God.**

- **“Name it, claim it”** prayers; the notion that God wants you always healthy, wealthy, prosperous, and successful; and lists of selfish requests are all quite at odds with the spirit of Jesus’ model prayer. Such requests are expressly excluded from the many promises that God will hear and answer our prayers
Notice (James. 4:3) “You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.” The faulty belief that underlies all such praying is no small error. It is rooted in a serious misunderstanding of the nature of God.
- Because prayer is an **ACT OF WORSHIP**, to offer a prayer based on such a heinous perversion of God’s character is tantamount to worshiping a false god. To put it bluntly, when someone presents God with a wish list rooted in greed, materialism, or other expressions of pure self-interest, then demands that God deliver the goods as if He were a genie, that is no prayer at all. It is an act of **blasphemy**. It is as abominable as the grossest form of pagan worship.

We Must Submit To God's Paternity. #1

- The model prayer Christ gave His disciples stands in stark contrast to the kind of rambling repetition that we hear and often times exercise. Every word in the Lord's Prayer is **deliberate, intentional**, and loaded with **spiritual significance**—including the name Jesus used to address the Lord.
- “And He said to them, **“When you pray, say: ‘Father, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. 3 ‘Give us each day our daily bread. 4 ‘And forgive us our sins, For we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.”** (Luke 11:2-4).
- The prayer starts with a reference to God's **“PATERNITY.”** The first word—the address—is a reminder that **God is our heavenly Father**. We go to Him not only because He is a sovereign Monarch, a righteous Judge, and our Creator, but because He is a **“loving Father.”** That beautiful expression reminds us of the grace that gives us unlimited access to His throne and it encourages us to come boldly, just as a son or a daughter would come to a loving dad.
- **Notice (Heb. 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.”**

- That **“family”** connection, by the way, is the basis for our boldness in prayer. The point is not that our words have any kind of magical power; not that God is somehow obliged to give us whatever we ask for; and certainly not that our faith merits material rewards—but that God in His sovereignty invites us to come to Him as a gracious and loving Father.
- The intimacy of the **Father-child relationship** does not diminish the reverence we owe Him as our sovereign God. Far less does it give us any reason to exalt ourselves. Instead, it is a **reminder** that we should be **“childlike”** in our dependence on God’s goodness and love.
- Ultimately, because He is our sovereign **Lord, Creator, Judge**, and **FATHER**, He is the only One we can rely on to supply all our needs and satisfy our deepest longings. If our prayers are truly worshipful, they will be permeated with recognition of that truth.

- Here's a great example, the prayer of (Isa. 64:8) **“But now, O LORD, You are our Father, we are the clay, and You our potter; and all of us are the work of Your hand.”**
That is the PROPER SPIRIT of prayer. Here's what he was saying:
- Lord, You made us. You gave us life. You alone can supply the resources we need. We are united with Your beloved Son by faith, and therefore we are Your children in every sense—totally dependent on Your will, Your power, and Your blessings.
- This prayer is very different from the prayer of a pagan who comes to a vengeful, violent, jealous, unjust, man-made god, believing some merit or sacrifice must be brought to the altar to appease that hostile deity. The biblical perspective we bring to prayer is that God Himself offered the ultimate sacrifice and supplies all the merit we need in the Person of His Son.
- All who by faith lay hold of Christ as Lord and Savior are **“SONS OF GOD”** (Gal. 3:26; cf. Jn. 1:12-13; 2 Cor. 6:8).
- Notice (1 Jn. 3:1) **“See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God...”**

- The **SACRIFICE** of Christ was offered on **OUR** behalf, so we have already received the very best God has to give. **Notice (Rom. 8:32) “He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?”**
- As if that weren’t enough, **Notice (Matt. 7:7-11)** Jesus makes this promise:
- **“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 “For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 9 “Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? 10 “Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? 11 “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!”**

- So when we pray, we are going to a God who is our **LOVING HEAVENLY FATHER**. We can go with a sense of **INTIMACY**, and **CONFIDENCE** in the same tender, trusting way a little child would go to an earthly father. We can go boldly.
- We are approaching a loving deity who does not need to be appeased, but who embraces us as His own. In fact, because we are His true children, **Notice (Gal. 4:6) “Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” “Abba”** is a term of deep affection, a common term for **“FATHER”** derived from the Chaldean dialect. Because it is easy to pronounce, it was how little children in New Testament times commonly addressed their fathers, like **“DADDY”** or **“PAPA”** in today’s English.
- When used properly, **“ABBA” — “FATHER”** — is an expression of profound worship filled with childlike trust. Here’s what that looks like:
- Father, I recognize that I’m Your child. I know You love me and have given me intimate access to You.
- I recognize that You have absolutely unlimited resources, and that You will do what is best for me.
- I recognize that **I need to obey You**. And I recognize that whatever You do, You know best. All of that is implied in the truth that God is our Father, and **THAT’S HOW JESUS TAUGHT US TO BEGIN OUR PRAYERS.**

We Must Seek God's Priority. #2

- **What is the most common motivation to go to the Lord in prayer?** Is it to **confess sin**? Or is it to make a petition on behalf of a loved one? Do we want to bring our latest requests to Him, or remind Him of something we think He may have overlooked? Far too much of our time in prayer is spent **FOCUSED ON US**, not on the One to whom we're praying.
- When was the last time you prayed simply to give God **glory**, or to express your **appreciation** for **His love**, **His mercy**, **His grace**, or **His character**? If prayer is an **"ACT OF WORSHIP,"** our prayer lives cannot revolve around us—our schedules, our trials, our needs, wants, and concerns.
- That self-centered approach stands in stark contrast to the model Christ gave His disciples. The Lord's Prayer is a **"worshipful meditation"** on **WHO** God is and the sovereign care He bestows on His people. It's a pattern for successful prayer—one that emphasizes the **glory** and **supremacy** of God.

- Notice again (Lk. 11:2-4) **“And He said to them, “When you pray, say: ‘Father, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. 3 ‘Give us each day our daily bread. 4 ‘And forgive us our sins, For we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.’ ”**
- The entire opening sentence of the prayer is a straightforward exclamation of **WORSHIP**: “Father, hallowed be Your name” (Luke 11:2). That is expressed as a **“petition,”** but it is by no means a **“personal request;”** it is an expression of **praise**, and it reflects God’s own **PRIORITY**:
- Notice (Isa. 42:8) **“I am the LORD, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, Nor My praise to graven images.”**
- Jesus established the truth that prayer is worship by beginning His model prayer that way.

To worship God is to **“sing the glory of His name”** (Psa. 66:2). **“Ascribe to the LORD the glory due His name”** (1 Chr. 16:29; Psa. 29:2; 96:8). **“Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to Your name give glory”** (Psa. 115:1). Such expressions capture the true spirit of a **“WORSHIPING HEART.”**

- Moreover, that first sentence qualifies every other petition in the prayer. It rules out asking for things “with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures” (**James 4:3**). It eliminates every petition that is not in accord with the perfect will of God.
- I love what **Arthur W Pink** had to say:

“How clearly, then, is the fundamental duty in prayer here set forth: self and all its needs must be given a secondary place and the Lord freely accorded the preeminence in our thoughts, desires and supplications. This petition must take the precedence, for the glory of God’s great name is the ultimate end of all things: every other request must not only be subordinated to this one, but be in harmony with and in pursuance of it. **We cannot pray aright unless the honor of God be dominant in our hearts.** If we cherish a desire for the honoring of God’s name we must not ask for anything which it would be against the Divine holiness to bestow.”
- What does that expression mean: **“Hallowed be Your name”**? In biblical terms, God’s **“name”** includes everything God is—His **character**, His **attributes**, His **reputation**, His **honor**—His very **Person**. God’s name signifies everything that is **TRUE** about God.

- We still use the expression “**my name**” in that sense at times. If we say someone has ruined his good name, we mean he has disgraced himself and spoiled his reputation. He has diminished others’ perception of who he is. And if I give you power of attorney, I have **authorized** you to act in my name. You thereby become my legal proxy, and any legal covenants you enter into are as binding on me as if I signed them myself.
- That is precisely what Jesus meant when He taught us to pray in His name: “**Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it**” (Jn. 14:13-14). He was delegating His authority to us to be used in prayer—authorizing us to act as if we were His emissaries when we let our requests be made known to God.

- By teaching us to **“begin”** our prayer by asking that the name of God be hallowed, Christ created a built-in safeguard against the misuse of His name for our own self-aggrandizing purposes.
- If we truly want God’s name to be **“hallowed,”** we would never sully the name of His Son or abuse the proxy He has given us by using His name to request that which He Himself would never sanction. To do that would be to take His name in vain, and that is a violation of the **THIRD COMMANDMENT**.
- Furthermore, immediately after Jesus **delegated the authority** of His name to His disciples, He said, **“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments” (v. 15)**. He then restated the principle with all the necessary qualifications just one chapter later, in **(Jn. 15:7) “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you”**
- It should be clear, then, that the expression **“Your name”** signifies far more than just a proper noun.

- God's name represents everything **He is**, everything **He approves**, and everything **He is known for**. So when we pray, "**Father, hallowed be Your name,**" we are expressing a **DESIRE** for God's character, His glory, His reputation in the world, and His very being **TO BE SET APART AND LIFTED UP**.
- The word "**hallowed**" (Greek *hagiazō*) means "**consecrated,**" "**sanctified,**" or "**set apart as holy.**" It includes the idea of being separated from all that is profane. This phrase is a prayer that God Himself would be blessed and glorified. Jesus Himself prayed for that very thing in (Jn. 12:28) "**Father, glorify Your name.**" It is a petition God **delights to answer**.
- By starting His model prayer that way, Jesus was reminding us of the **ultimate purpose of every prayer we ever offer**. The proper aim is for God to be **glorified, honored, known**, and **exalted in EVERY CONCEIVABLE WAY**.

- This needs to be a reminder **NOT** to call God **“Father”** in a cheaply sentimental or overly familiar way. He is our loving Father, but we are not to forget that **HIS NAME IS HOLY**. The fatherhood of God in no way diminishes His glory, and if we find ourselves thinking that way, here is the corrective: **“FATHER, HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME.”**
- The spirit of that plea is contrary to the main thrust of the so-called prosperity gospel. A story is told of a televangelist teaching the **“positive confession”** doctrine, and he told his audience that if they tacked the phrase **“not my will but Thine”** onto any of their prayers, they were not praying in faith. That is a lie from the pit of hell. Jesus Himself prayed **“not My will, but Yours be done”** (Lk. 22:42). By teaching us to begin all our prayers with a concern that the name of God be hallowed, He was teaching us to pray for **God’s will over and above our own**.
- The kind of god who is at everyone’s beck and call and who must cave under to someone else’s desires **is not the God of the Bible**. Those who portray prayer in such a fashion are not hallowing God’s name; they are dragging His name through the mud. Their false teaching is a denial of the very nature of God. It isn’t just **bad theology**, it is **gross irreverence**. **IT IS BLASPHEMY**. They are taking God’s name in vain, and that is patently antithetical to the spirit of this plea.

- **Luther's catechism (section 39)** asks and answers this question: "How is God's name hallowed among us? Answer, as plainly as it can be said: **When both our doctrine and life are godly and Christian.** For since in this prayer we call God our Father, it is our duty always to deport and demean ourselves as godly children, that He may not receive shame, but honor and praise from us."
- So when we pray, **"Father, hallowed be Your name,"** we are asking God to glorify Himself—to put His power, His grace, and all His perfections on display. One way He does that is by answering our prayers—**assuming our prayers are expressions of submission to His will** rather than merely flippant requests that arise from our own selfish desires.
- We were not created to enjoy prosperity in a fallen world. We were created to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. We ought to be more concerned for the glory of God than we are for our **own prosperity**, our **own comfort**, our **own agenda**, or any other **self-centered desire**. That's why Jesus taught us to think of prayer as an **ACT OF WORSHIP** rather than merely a way to ask God for things we want.
- **FOLKS THAT'S GOOD STUFF RIGHT THERE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

We Must **Surrender** to God's **Program. #3**

- Very few people make it through life without some sort of **PLAN**. The vast majority of us have to put a lot of thought into our schedules if we want to accomplish anything. And what we put the most time into planning says a lot about where our hearts are—too often **vacation, celebrations, and general leisure time** get lots of forethought, while responsibilities at work and around the house fit into our schedules as needed.
- **But where does God's will factor into our plans?** Are we too quick to get absorbed in our own plans and expectations for tomorrow without properly considering God's sovereign will?
- **Notice (Jam. 4:15) “Instead, you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.”** When planning the days and weeks ahead. We can't get carried away with our own program. **FAILING TO ACKNOWLEDGE GOD'S SUPREME WILL AND CONTROL IS DISRESPECTFUL—ESPECIALLY WHEN HE'S THE ONE WHO GRANTS OUR EVERY BREATH.**
- That same mindset needs to carry over into our prayer lives. It's easy to get caught up in petitions to the Lord regarding our immediate needs and desires. **IT'S MUCH HARDER** to routinely **surrender those things** to His will and wisdom, trusting in His perfect plan and provision.

- Christ's example to the disciples makes it clear—the **priority for believers is God's program, not our own**. As we saw earlier in this series, our relationship to God gives us bold confidence to bring our requests before Him. But those requests—and our entire lives—**must be subordinate to His plan**.
- Notice (Lk. 11:2-4) **“And He said to them, ‘When you pray, say: ‘Father, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. 3 ‘Give us each day our daily bread. 4 ‘And forgive us our sins, For we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.’ ”**
- The closing phrase of **Verse 2** is **“Your kingdom come.”** It is a prayer for the advancement of God's kingdom. Like every phrase of the Lord's Prayer, this is antithetical to the prayers typically prayed by those who are concerned mainly about the advancement of their own programs, the building of their own empires, or the padding of their own pockets.
- **This is a prayer that God's program be advanced, and that His will be done.** In fact, in some Greek manuscripts the text includes the phrase, **“Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth” (KJV)**. Jesus Himself included that phrase in the model prayer when he gave it in His **“Sermon on the Mount” (Matt. 6:10) “Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.”**

- Every request we make in our prayers should first be run through this filter:
 1. **Is it in harmony with the goals and principles of God's kingdom?**
 2. **Is it consistent with the expansion of the kingdom?**
 3. **Does it truly advance the kingdom, or does it merely fulfill some selfish want?**
- Name-it-and-claim-it theology is self-indulgent, and small minded. All it cares about is self-interest and selfish desires, with no thought for the greater cause of **CHRIST'S KINGDOM**.
- A godly attitude says, **Lord, advance Your kingdom if that means I lose everything.** That's what the phrase **"Your kingdom come"** implies.
- The **"KINGDOM,"** of course, is the **"sphere where Christ rules—the realm where He is Lord."** To pray **"Your kingdom come"** with sincerity is to submit one's desires and to yield one's heart without reservation to the **lordship of Christ**. To affirm the program of Christ's kingdom is to set aside one's own fleshly, materialistic, or selfish prayer requests, because, after all, according to **(Rom. 14:17) "for the kingdom of God is not EATING and DRINKING, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."**
- Any prayer that follows a different pattern is not an act of true worship, and therefore it is not a legitimate prayer.
- Remember, all true prayer is **WORSHIP**. We go to a loving Father, accepting that He knows best. Our prayers, then, reflect an obedient heart, a passion for His glory, and a desire to see the extension of His kingdom—that God might be honored. **Folks remember this statement!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

- Remember there is truly nothing wrong with praying to God for things we desire—as long as the desires of our heart are **HOLY**.
- We are encouraged—repeatedly—to ask, and to trust, and to align our desires with the **will of God**. And we are promised answers to such prayers. **Notice (Psa. 37:4) “Delight yourself in the LORD; And He will give you the desires of your heart.”**
- Remember, Jesus said, **“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you” (Jn. 15:7).**
- **“If you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you” (Jn. 16:23).**
- **“This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us” (1 Jn. 5:14).**
- Pay close attention to the **“qualifiers”**: “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, **[then]** . . . whatever you wish.” “Anything in my name.” “Anything according to His will.”
- Jesus’ model prayer has those same **qualifiers** built into it because of the way He taught us to recognize **GOD’S PATERNITY**, yield to **GOD’S PRIORITY**, and get on board with **GOD’S PROGRAM BEFORE** we ever make one petition for ourselves.

We Must **Stick** to **Godly Patterns. #4**

- A church in Florida recently began offering drive-thru prayer services. Men and women at the end of their rope and in need of prayer pull up outside the church to order up petitions to the Lord the way you and I might order a burger or coffee. Of the roughly 150 people they've prayed with so far, many of them have never actually set foot inside a church.
- That is clearly a ridiculous and **UNBIBLICAL** practice. But how often are we guilty of using our prayers just like a drive-thru window? We're too often driven to prayer by the **NEEDS** of the moment only, concerned about our **CIRCUMSTANCES** alone, and eager to get on with life as quickly as possible. We're prone to **self-centered thinking** that focuses on how **events impact** our lives rather than how **the Lord is working through them**.
- Instead, we need to **DISCIPLINE** ourselves to put God and His purposes **first** and look for what He is accomplishing in every situation, **REGARDLESS** of our **DESIRES** or **CIRCUMSTANCES**.

- Tonight I want you to consider the prayers of **three O. T. prophets**—each of them in the midst of truly dire situations. But as you'll see, none of them allowed their **circumstances** to be an EXCUSE.
- **JEREMIAH**: In the **32** chapter of the book of **Jeremiah**, the prophet of God is in prison. He had preached to a nation of people who would not hear. They just wanted to shut his mouth. They were not interested in anything he or his God had to say. Ultimately they threw him into a pit. He had seen no measurable success in his ministry **“as the world counts success.”** (**Jer. 32:16-22**) records his prayer: to let the focus of their prayers shift away from the Lord, His supreme glory, and His sovereign plan.

- “After I had given the deed of purchase to Baruch the son of Neriah, then I prayed to the LORD, saying, **17** ‘Ah Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for You, **18** who shows lovingkindness to thousands, but repays the iniquity of fathers into the bosom of their children after them, O great and mighty God. The LORD of hosts is His name; **19** great in counsel and mighty in deed, whose eyes are open to all the ways of the sons of men, giving to everyone according to his ways and according to the fruit of his deeds; **20** who has set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, and even to this day both in Israel and among mankind; and You have made a name for Yourself, as at this day. **21** ‘You brought Your people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs and with wonders, and with a strong hand and with an outstretched arm and with great terror; **22** and gave them this land, which You swore to their forefathers to give them, a land flowing with milk and honey.”
- Here is a man in great distress, torn with feelings of loneliness and grief, despairing of hope for his people, rejected by the entire nation. But the preoccupation of his heart was to extol the **GLORY**, the **MAJESTY**, the **NAME**, the **HONOR**, and the **WORKS OF GOD**. He was not **preoccupied** with his own pain. He was not **obsessed** with being liberated from his circumstances. Out of his **SUFFERING** came **WORSHIP**.
- **All our prayers should be of that flavor.**

- **DANIEL**: He was caught in the transition between two great world empires, and was **interceding** on behalf of a dispossessed people in a foreign land. **But notice** the spirit with which he brought his requests. He tells us in (Dan. 9:3) **“I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes”** Notice how his prayer begins in (Dan. 9:4-5) **“I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed and said, “Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments, 5 we have sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly and rebelled, even turning aside from Your commandments and ordinances.”**
- The starting point is **PRAISE**. That gives way to **PENITENCE**. And as the prayer continues in **Daniel 9**, there are **twelve** more verses of self-abasing confession as Daniel rehearses the sins of Israel. It’s filled with phrases like **“Open shame belongs to us, O Lord” (Dan. 9:8); “we have rebelled against Him; nor have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God” (Dan. 9:9-10); and “we have sinned, we have been wicked” (Daniel 9:15).** Those expressions are mingled with more **PRAISE**: **“Righteousness belongs to You, O Lord, but to us open shame” (Daniel 9:7); “the LORD our God is righteous with respect to all His deeds which He has done” (Dan. 9:14); and “[You] have brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand and have made a name for Yourself” (Dan. 9:15).**

- In the very last sentence of his prayer, Daniel makes one request, and it is a plea for mercy. All Daniel's praise (**focusing on God's righteousness and His mercy**) and all his penitence (**outlining the history of Israel's disobedience**) culminates in a prayer for forgiveness and restoration: **Notice (Daniel 9:19) "O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For Your own sake, O my God, do not delay, because Your city and Your people are called by Your name."**
- And that one request was preceded by this summary argument: Daniel gathered up all his **PRAISE** and all his **CONFESSION**; condensed them into one more affirmation of God's transcendent greatness and Israel's complete lack of merit; and then cited those very things as the grounds on which he was making his plea: **Notice (Daniel 9:18) "O my God, incline Your ear and hear! Open Your eyes and see our desolations and the city which is called by Your name; for we are not presenting our supplications before You on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Your great compassion."**
- **AGAIN, notice** that Daniel's prayer began with an affirmation of the **NATURE, GLORY, GREATNESS**, and **MAJESTY** of God. **It is an expression of WORSHIP**, and the request at the end thus flows from a **worshipful, penitent heart. THAT IS ALWAYS THE GODLY PERSPECTIVE.**

- **JONAH**: He prayed an exemplary prayer from the most unnatural and unimaginable of **settings—the belly of a fish**. If you can picture the wet, suffocating darkness and discomfort of such a place, you might begin to have an idea of how desperate Jonah's situation was at that moment. The whole second chapter of Jonah is devoted to the record of his prayer, and the entire prayer is a profound **“expression of worship.”** It reads like a psalm. In fact, it's full of references and allusions to the **Psalms**—almost as if Jonah were singing His worship in phrases borrowed from Israel's psalter while he languished inside that living tomb.
- The prayer is as passionate as you might expect from someone trapped inside a fish under the surface of the Mediterranean. Jonah begins in **Ch. 2:2 “I called out of my distress to the LORD, and He answered me”** This was not a plea to God for help, but an **expression of praise and deliverance**, mentioning God in the third person and speaking of deliverance as if it were an **accomplished fact**.

- The remainder of the prayer is addressed directly to God in the second person—and the whole thing is an extended expression of more praise. Jonah rehearses what has happened to him **Notice (Jon. 2:3) “For You had cast me into the deep, Into the heart of the seas, And the current engulfed me. All Your breakers and billows passed over me.” Notice V. 5 “Weeds were wrapped around my head,”** Keep in mind, **Jonah is still inside the fish** while he is praying this prayer (cf. Jonah 2:10); yet he consistently speaks of his **deliverance in the past tense**. And here’s the amazing thing about this prayer: though Jonah must have been as desperate as anyone who ever prayed for rescue from the Lord, his prayer contains **NOT ONE SINGLE REQUEST**. It is a pure, resounding expression of **WORSHIP** and **FAITH IN GOD**, who alone could deliver Jonah. The key sentence is verse 7: **“While I was fainting away, I remembered the LORD, And my prayer came to You, Into Your holy temple.”**
- **The FOCUS of Jonah’s prayer**—like all great prayers—was the **GLORY OF GOD**. Although no one, perhaps, has ever been in a situation where it would be appropriate to plead and beg God to answer more than Jonah was, there was none of that in his prayer. And the past-tense references to Jonah’s deliverance were the furthest thing you can imagine from the contemporary prosperity-preachers’ notion of **“positive confession.”** Jonah wasn’t under any illusion that his words could alter the reality of his plight. He was simply extolling the character of God. And that is precisely what our Lord was teaching when He gave the disciples that model prayer in **LUKE 11**.

- So it ought to be clear that when Jesus taught His disciples to regard prayer as **“WORSHIP,”** that wasn’t anything novel. The great prayers we read in the O. T. were likewise expressions of **worship**—including those that were prayed in the most desperate situations. The parallelism between prayer and worship is no coincidence. **Prayer is the distilled essence of worship.**
- How much more, then, do you and I need to **reevaluate** our own **PRIORITIES** in prayer? Rather than paying momentary lip service to God before we get to our list of requests, we need to constantly examine our hearts in prayerful worship before the Lord, making sure we’re holding to the pattern **Christ provided.**
- **Successful prayer** isn’t about getting what you want from God. **IT’S ABOUT BENDING YOUR WILL TO HIS,** recognizing **His supremacy,** and reflecting on **His glory.** **It’s an act of worship**—one that knits your heart and mind to the Lord in consistent communion with Him.

Remember Our Outline To Successful Prayer

1. We Must **Submit**
To God's **Paternity**.
2. We Must **Seek**
God's **Priority**.
3. We Must **Surrender** to
God's **Program**.
4. We Must **Stick** to
Godly **Patterns**. #4

We Must be **Satisfied** with God's **Provisions.** #5

- Our study tonight is going to concentrate on **verse 11**, a simple, familiar phrase. **The petition: “GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD.”**
- The word **“BREAD”** opens up to us the **simplicity, commonness,** and **power** of this petition, and yet suggests to us a deep and profound meaning that demands our careful study.
- As I began to examine this thought, I realized that as American's we have more grain than we can possibly use. In fact if we don't unload this grain by selling it to foreign countries it will drive the price of grain down so low that all the farmers will go into a recession. We have an incredible surplus of **GRAIN**.

- When you come to the statement, **“Give us this day our daily bread,”** it may at first seem a little irrelevant to us. Think about it, when was the last time you prayed, **“Lord, I plead with You to provide for me a meal.”** I bet there’s not many who would be honest and pray something like **“Lord, please prevent me from eating another meal. Teach me self-discipline. Lord, I must lose weight. I not only have enough for me but several others.”** When was the last time we really got desperate about our food? You say this message ought to be preached in Bangladesh, or Cambodia, or Sahara or somewhere, but not in America. This is **“irrelevant.” But this way of thinking proves our lack of understanding of the marvelous truth found in this text.**
- As Americans we have an abundance of technology, rich soil, and sophisticated machinery. For example, they’re now working on new kinds of **CORN** and **GRAIN**, that are being tested in Mexico, that recycle themselves and regenerate like grass does, you don’t even have to reseed them. **GENETICISTS** are now working on corn that will deposit back into the soil its own nitrogen, and will save us something like 13 million tons of fertilizer, which is made from natural gas, and that’ll save energy.
- The **EQUIPMENT** that we have, take for example one of the hundred thousand dollar monstrous combines, can now spew out **\$118,000.00** dollars’ worth of soy beans in a day. **One machine** is capable of this.

We have enough machines now, if they were all lined up wheel to wheel, we could **harvest Iowa in one day**. If you were to try this using human beings, it would take **31 million** people working **61 million** horses. Technology has given us incredible amount of productivity in terms of food.

For us to say, **“Give us this day our daily bread,”** is a little hard to imagine, and that’s what we are going to have to do tonight, **“IMAGINE”** that you don’t have any bread/food, then **imagine** that you’re desperate, and praying for some.

- Christ is presenting here the **proper way to pray**, the **proper pattern for praying**. And in this very simple prayer, we have all of the necessary ingredients for prayer, if you want to pray according to His standard. And one of the elements of praying is to pray for our daily bread. Now, that doesn't assume that we have it or don't have it. It's just there, and we have to deal with it as it is.
- But in this prayer, we noted first of all **two sections**: the **first** one dealing with **GOD**, and His **GLORY**. The **second** one dealing with **MAN**, and his **NEED**. First we saw **three requests**: "**Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. And thy will be done,**" and those focused on **God and His glory**. Then we see **three other requests** focusing on man and his need: "**Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**" God, then, is the **SUPREME ISSUE** here, and not until God is in the proper perspective can man pray properly about his own needs. Keep that in mind.

- First, we see **God's name, God's kingdom, God's will**, and then we move to **man's need**. We cannot pray properly in regard to our own human situation until God is in the proper place.
- Even though God is primarily exalted in the **first half**, the second half exalts Him, also and does not set Him aside. For example, the fact that **God gives us our daily bread, forgives our debts, and leads us not into temptation** is an **EXPRESSION** of **His power** and **His grace**. So God is brought to earth, as it were, in the second part. Notice **"Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done,"** WHERE? **"In earth, as it is in heaven."**
- How does God hallow His name, bring His kingdom, and do His will in the earth? **By giving us our daily bread, by forgiving us our debts** and by **leading us in our lives**.
- In other words it's as if the second half brings God into HUMAN LIFE. It is not that the **first three butter God up, NO!** We are saying,
 1. **GOD, GLORIFY YOURSELF IN OUR DAILY PROVISION.**
 2. **GOD, GLORIFY YOURSELF IN OUR CONSTANT FORGIVENESS.**
 3. **GOD, GLORIFY YOURSELF IN THE LEADING AND THE DIRECTING OF YOUR SPIRIT IN OUR LIVES.**

4. **GOD, BE ON DISPLAY IN YOUR WORLD, THAT YOUR KINGDOM MAY COME TO EARTH.** So, it is not a setting aside of God, in any sense. **PRAYER IS NOT BUTTERING UP GOD AND THEN DEMANDING CERTAIN THINGS FROM HIM.**
- We are to give God the privilege and opportunity of **REVEALING HIS GLORY** through the meeting of the deepest of human needs. We should want to do this because we want God to be on **display**, not because we make demands on Him for our benefit. If prayer becomes **man-centered, self-centered, or selfish** in any sense, it ceases to be the kind of prayer our Lord said should be characteristic of His kingdom. And yet so many people approach God that way.
 - We approach God in prayer to get something for us rather than to allow Him to glorify His name, and when we don't get it, then we begin to question God. If we would just allow God **"the right"** to make the choice as to how He would reveal His glory, no matter what He did we would then say, **"So let it be for Your glory. If that's what You choose as the avenue for Your majesty, so let it be."** However, when we become self-centered in our prayers, then we become **"questioning"** of God, and then that is a **serious SIN**. For many of us we have become vending machine operators. We stick a quarter in and we want a product, right then. Unfortunately we treat prayer the same way.

- Don't forget (Jn. 14:13) **"Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son."**
- Notice these three petitions that give God opportunity to glorify Himself. First of all:
 1. **"Give us this day our daily bread,"** This speaks of **"PHYSICAL life."**
 2. **"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."** This speaks of the **"MENTAL life."**
 3. **"Lead us not into temptation, deliver us from evil,"** This speaks of **"SPIRITUAL life."**
- **Bread**, that's our **physical life**. **Forgiveness**, that frees our mind from the anxiety and the pain of guilt, and the burden of sin. And **leading us and directing** us away from evil is the spiritual direction. By the way, bread takes care of the present, forgiveness takes care of the past, and help takes care of the future. So, all the dimensions of life are covered, and all the needs of life are covered. It's amazing, the marvel, the wonder of how God's infinite mind can reduce all there is of human need to **three simple profound statements**.

- **This entire prayer is set up to “GLORIFY GOD.”**
- “Our Father, which art in heaven,” that’s **GOD’S PATERNITY**.
- “Hallowed be thy name,” that’s **GOD’S PRIORITY**.
- “Thy kingdom come,” that’s **GOD’S PROGRAM**.
- “Thy will be done,” that’s **GOD’S PURPOSE**.
- “Give us this day our daily bread,” that’s **GOD’S PROVISION**.
- “Forgive us our debts,” that’s **GOD’S PARDON**.
- “Lead us not,” that’s **GOD’S PROTECTION**.
- “For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.” that’s **GOD’S PRE-EMINENCE**.
- **ALL OF THIS IS FOR GOD’S GLORY**. We must remember that everything we are, and everything we do is for His glory. Even when you stick food in your mouth, it’s for God’s glory **not for your sustenance**, primarily.
- **Notice (1 Cor. 10:31) “Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”** Well, how can eating food be to the glory of God? It brings Him glory if you remember **where it came from**, if you remember that He’s the **source of your food**. If you remember **the capacity that you have to enjoy the flavor**. If you’re **thankful to the one who provided the nourishment in it**. Every single thing is for the glory of God. **EVERYTHING!!!!** And prayer, nonetheless, is for **HIS GLORY**.

- No matter what we ask, it should be for His glory that we ask it, not for our gain. We're not badgering God to make Him change His mind for us.
- **David Meyers** says in a book called "**The Human Puzzle**," "Some petitionary prayers seem not only to lack faith in the inherent goodness of God, but also to elevate in human kind to a position of control over God. God, the Scriptures remind us, is **omniscient** and **omnipotent**, the **sovereign ruler** of the universe. For Christians to pray as if God were a puppet whose strings they yank with their prayers seems not only potentially superstitious but blasphemous as well.
- **First of all**: What is the **SUBSTANCE** here? It's **BREAD**. But it isn't just talking about bread in terms of a loaf of bread. "**Give us this day our daily bread**," is talking about the **PHYSICAL**. You see, man can't even be a spiritual being unless he is a physical one, first? God has to begin with the physical. It's awesome to know that God, the God who is infinite, eternal, and holy. The God of the universe who holds all the whirling worlds, and the spinning stars in the palm of His hand. That same God **CARES THAT MY PHYSICAL NEEDS ARE MET**, that I have a **meal to eat, clothes to wear, and a place to rest**, (Matt. 6:33).
- **Bread is all of that physical area**. **Martin Luther** said: "Everything necessary for the preservation of this life is bread, including food, a healthy body, good weather, house, home, wife, children, good government, peace." He saw all of the physical elements of life, the **NECESSITIES**, but not the **LUXURIES** of life.

- We can't ask God for the **luxuries** of life based on this verse, but for the **necessities**. What He chooses to give us by way of luxury is at His **gracious** hand, but He promises to give us the necessities.
- **Notice (Prov. 30:8-9) “Keep deception and lies far from me, Give me neither poverty nor riches; Feed me with the food that is my portion, 9 That I not be full and deny You and say, “Who is the LORD?” Or that I not be in want and steal, And profane the name of my God.”** I think that's the heart of this. It isn't self-seeking, give me more and more and more and more. It's just saying, **LORD GIVE ME WHAT I NEED**, and I want to let You know that I realize that **YOU** are the source of my **life**, my **food**, my **shelter**, my **clothing**, **MY ALL**.
- Why do we ask the Lord to forgive our sin and cleanse our life of something? Hasn't He already promised to forgive our sin (**1 Jn. 1:9**)? **Yes**, but He also said to **keep on confessing it!!!**
- When we say things like, “**Lord, lead me and guide me in a certain direction,**” doesn't the Bible say He will be our leader, and He will guide us in this way and in that way (**Prov. 3:5-6**)? **Yes**, but He wants me to **affirm that I recognize that LEADERSHIP** in my life.

- When we call out to the Lord and say, “**Lord, hear my prayer and answer,**” and we know He has, and always will. **But God wants us to affirm that confidence BECAUSE THAT EXALTS HIM.** I may never have to say, “**Oh God, I don’t have any food for my family, where is it going to come from?**” But, I will always need to say, “**GOD EVERYTHING I HAVE AND ALL THAT I SHARE WITH THOSE I LOVE COMES FROM YOUR GOOD AND GRACIOUS HAND.**”
- “**BREAD**” is the staple of life. And though we may not always be on the edge of hunger we are always to be **thankful** for all of it comes **FROM HIM.**



- We have talked about **“SUBSTANCE”** = **“BREAD.”** Now I want to point out the **“SOURCE.”** = The assumption of the petition is that the source is **“GOD.”** He’s implied behind the verb, **“Give us.”** He is the Creator and the Sustainer and the Preserver of the entire universe. Everything that we have is from His hand, **EVERYTHING.** And so the **source is God** and the **substance is bread.**
- God’s provisions started way back in the **“Garden.”** Notice (Gen. 1:29-31) **“Then God said, “Behold, I HAVE GIVEN YOU every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you; 30 and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to every thing that moves on the earth which has life, I have given every green plant for food”; and it was so. 31 God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.”**
- Here’s a great N.T. parallel to this verse. (1 Tim. 4:4) **“For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude;”**

- Now let's look at that verse in its context. Paul is describing the **“APOSTATE.”**
- **Notice (1 Tim. 4:1-5) “But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, 3 men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. 4 For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude; 5 for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer.**
- God has provided this incredible world of food for us to **“express our thanks to Him,”** we who believe and know the truth. The rest of the world just indulges itself without showing any gratitude at all.

- Notice verse 4-5 again, **“For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused, if it is received with thanksgiving.”** Now watch this. **“For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.”** So, what does that mean?
- How are all these foods **“sanctified by the Word of God?”** The answer is found in (Gen. 1:29-31) **“God’s Word” said it is all good. THAT SANCTIFIED IT.** Here the Word of God says, verse 4, **“Every creature of God is good.”** And again the **“Word of God” SANCTIFIES IT.** So, it is sanctified by the Word of God.
- **How is it sanctified by prayer?** **When it is received,** verse 4, **“with thanksgiving.”** **“When it is received with thanksgiving.”** The Word of God sanctifies it, and you sanctify it when you thank God for it. Do you really thank God for your food? Some of you may be thinking “Preacher we never eat without a prayer. I know most us give thanks, but are you really thankful? **Do you really see GOD AS THE SOURCE of everything?**
- God has given us a marvelous variety of foods, and that alone is **worth our gratitude.** The foods have been sanctified already by the Word of God, and they are doubly sanctified when you say thanks to God. When you are saying thanks to God for your provision on a daily basis to meet your physical need, you are fulfilling the spirit of, **“Give us this day our daily bread.”**

- In **(Gen. 43:11)** God provided nuts for our nutrition, and enjoyment. **“Then their father Israel said to them, “If it must be so, then do this: take some of the best products of the land in your bags, and carry down to the man as a present, a little balm and a little honey, aromatic gum and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds.”**
- God provided **vegetables** that can be found in scripture. Cucumbers, leeks, melons, onions, garlics, beans, lentils, bitter herbs, mint, dill, cumin.
- Notice **(Jer. 6:20)** talks about **“sweet cane”** which is probably **sugar cane**. And, you know how much sugar means to all of us, it flavor’s everything we eat. **“That tastes good.”**
- **Fruits** also are a part of **God’s plant foods**. We have in the Bible grapes, raisins, olives, figs, pomegranates, apples and then what Jeremiah and Amos call “summer fruit.” We’re not just too sure what it is, and those may only be family names, and there may be endless varieties of those.
- **Then we have animal foods (flesh) that the Lord provided.** There’s nothing wrong with eating meat, folks. It’s not spiritual to be vegetarian. If you’re a vegetarian and you prefer that, that’s fine, but as for me and my house, we are gonna eat meat whether it’s **chicken, venison, crab legs, crappie, or RIBEYE.**
- Notice **(Jas. 1:17)** **“Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.”**
- God is the **SOURCE**, who provides for our **SUBSTANCE**. We would do well to remember that when we pray.

- **THIS ENTIRE PRAYER IS SET UP TO “GLORIFY GOD.”**
 1. “Our Father, which art in heaven,” that’s **GOD’S PATERNITY.**
 2. “Hallowed be thy name,” that’s **GOD’S PRIORITY.**
 3. “Thy kingdom come,” that’s **GOD’S PROGRAM.**
 4. “Thy will be done,” that’s **GOD’S PURPOSE.**
 5. “Give us this day our daily bread,” that’s **GOD’S PROVISION.**
 6. “Forgive us our debts,” that’s **GOD’S PARDON.**
 7. “Lead us not,” that’s **GOD’S PROTECTION.**
 8. “For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.” that’s **GOD’S PRE-EMINENCE.**

- We have talked about **SUBSTANCE** = **BREAD.** Now I want to point out the **SOURCE.** = The assumption of the petition is that the source is **GOD.** He's implied behind the verb, **Give us.** He is the Creator and the Sustainer and the Preserver of the entire universe. Everything that we have is from His hand, **EVERYTHING.** And so the **SOURCE IS GOD** and the **SUBSTANCE IS BREAD.**
- Thirdly I want you to notice the **SUPPLICATION?** It's the verb, **GIVE.** **GIVE us this day our daily bread.** This is the heart of the petition. Now, what right do we have to ask God for this? Do I have some reason or basis to say to God, **Give me my daily bread, Father**?
- Well the only basis would be that **GOD HAD PROMISED** to meet my physical needs. And if He's made that promise, then I have a right to ask Him to fulfill it. And that is precisely the promise that He has given us. **Hallelujah!**

- Let's take a look at (**Psalm 37**), and I hope it will be helpful to you in understanding how God desires to **MEET YOUR PHYSICAL NEEDS**.
- **Is God bound to meet the Physical needs of everybody?** I don't believe this to be true, because there are some **conditions** to be met.
- **Notice (Psa. 37:3) "Trust in the lord, and do good..."** Now, this little statement is profound, because it encompasses the **"significance of salvation."** Salvation is **"believing God, resulting in good works."**
- Remember; **"Faith without works is dead."** So simply saying, **"Trust in the Lord, and do good,"** is just like summing up **"SOTERIOLOGY" (The study of salvation)** believing in God, and the result of that true faith is good works.
- if you are a **"FOLLOWER"** of Christ, and that **believing** is manifest faith, then you have the promise that **"So shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be FED."**

- Here is a great N.T. parallel Notice (2 Cor. 9:6-8) **“Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed;”** The Lord loves a **“cheerful giver.”** We are to sow **not sparingly**, but **BOUNTIFULLY**, and **God is able to minister bread for your food, and to make your fruits of righteousness abound.”**
- In other words, when you give to God and invest in God’s kingdom, God will not only **provide spiritual fruit**, but He will **provide, bread** for your food. The physical provision of God is a biblical promise.
- Notice back in (Psa. 37:4) **“Delight in the Lord.”**
- Verse 5 says **“Commit your way unto the Lord.”**
- Verse 7 says **“Rest in the Lord.”**
- Verse 8 says **“Cease from anger, and forsake wrath.”** And it goes through this, and it makes a comparison between the **“RIGHTEOUS”** person who does these things, and the **“UNRIGHTEOUS”** who does not.
- Notice verse 9 **“The unrighteous man shall be cut off,”**
- Verse 12 The **“wicked”** is mentioned. and then in
- Verse 13 **“The Lord will laugh at him; for he sees that his day is coming.”**

- For the **righteous** there is **PROMISE**, for the **unrighteous** there is **JUDGMENT**.
- **Notice verse 18** “**The Lord knows the days of the upright, and their inheritance shall be forever. And they shall not be ashamed in the evil time - ”** now watch “ - and **in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.**” But what does He say about the “unrighteous?”
- **Notice verse 20,** “**But the wicked will perish; And the enemies of the LORD will be like the glory of the pastures, They vanish—like smoke they vanish away.**” Just like “**answered prayer,**” God has **NO OBLIGATION** to provide for them, but for us **HE DOES**. Aren’t you thankful?
- This doesn’t mean that it will always be a “Buffet.”
- **Notice (Prov. 15:17)** “**Better is a dish of vegetables where love is Than a fattened ox served with hatred.**” When the relationships are right it doesn’t have to be fancy.

- **Notice (1 Kings. 17:1) “Now Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the settlers of Gilead, said to Ahab, “As the LORD, the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, surely there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word.”**
- In other words God says that’s it for the provision for Israel. No rain, no crops, no crops no food, no food, famine. But in the midst of it, **verse 2, “The word of the LORD came to him, saying, 3 “Go away from here and turn eastward, and hide yourself by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. 4 “It shall be that you will drink of the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to provide for you there.”**
- God organized the ravens to bring food to His prophet. Why? Because **“the wicked may perish,”** but in a famine the **“righteous will be preserved”** for God makes promises of physical provision for His own. **“And the ravens – ” verse 6 “ - brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening, and he drank of the brook.”** Well, the brook eventually dried up, and the prophet needed something to eat. And so the Lord said to him, **“Go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there; and I have commanded a widow there to sustain thee.’ And he arose and went to Zarephath, and when he came to the gate of the city, the widow was gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, ‘Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.”**

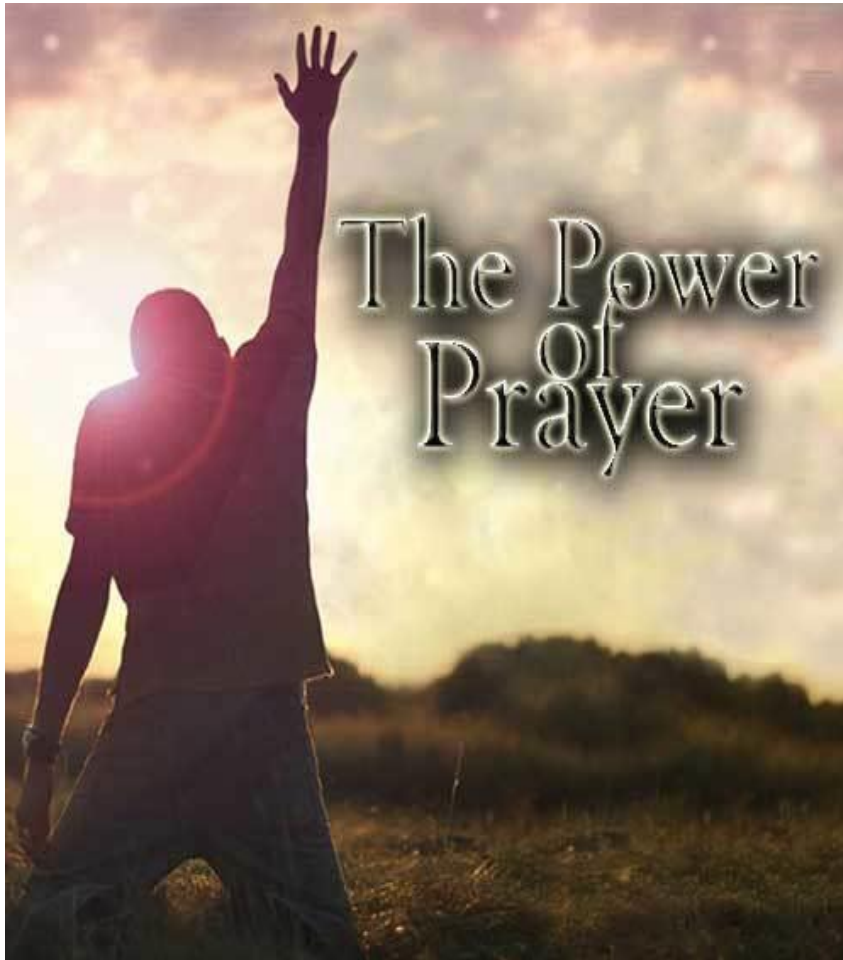
- Now, that's coming on pretty strong to the little widow who's picking up the sticks, as if she was supposed to know who this was. But apparently the Lord had kind of prepared her heart as **verse 9** indicates, **"And as she was going to fetch the water, he called to her and said, 'By the way, bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.'"** Now that introduced a severe problem. She said, **"As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse; and, I'm gathering two sticks, that I may go in and prepare it for me and my son, that we may eat it and die.'"** That's it. We have enough left to make one little cake. My son and I are going to split it and then die of starvation.
- **Notice verse 13-16 "And Elijah said into her, 'Fear not; go and do as thou hast said. But make me of it a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and then afterwards make for thee and for thy son. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, 'The barrel of meal shall not be used up, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain on the earth.' And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah; and she and he and her house, did eat for many days. And the barrel of meal as not used up, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spoke by Elijah."**

- That barrel just stayed full all the time, and that cruse of oil just stayed full all the time. And they just kept eating and **GOD MIRACULOUSLY FED THAT WIDOW AND HER SON AND THAT PROPHET IN THE MIDST OF THE FAMINE.** Why? **Because God was bound by His promise to His people that one who trusts in the Lord and does good will be fed.** And I really believe that sometimes we forget that God is concerned for the physical provision, and that we can claim that promise at His good and gracious hand.
- **Notice (Psa. 37:22) “For those blessed by Him will inherit the land, But those cursed by Him will be cut off. 23 The steps of a man are established by the LORD, And He delights in his way. 24 When he falls, he will not be hurled headlong, Because the LORD is the One who holds his hand.”**
- The whole idea here is a righteous man is cared for by the Lord. And then the climax of it is so wonderful in **verse 25.** And David says this, **“I have been young and now I am old, Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken Or his descendants begging bread.”** David says, I’ve been around a long time, and I have never seen the righteous forsaken and his seed begging bread. Why? **Notice verse 26, “All day long he is gracious and lends, And his descendants are a blessing.”**

- **Verse 27**, that's good reason to **"Depart from evil, and do good."** The promise of God for physical supply. God feeds His own. The Bible even mentions God sheltering His own if He has to grow His own private gourd over his head, just to keep the sun off him. **Notice (Lk. 18:28-30) "Peter said, "Behold, we have left our own homes and followed You." 29 And He said to them, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, 30 who will not receive many times as much at this time and in the age to come, eternal life."** I believe God has provided houses and lands and fathers and mothers and homes for His own in this life as well as the life to come.
- **GOD IS NOT BOUND TO THOSE WHO DO NOT TRUST HIM AND DO GOOD.** God may, in His gracious and sovereign choice, feed the unrighteous on occasion, but He's not bound to that. And someday all of those who are wicked will go hungry. **(Lk. 6:25) says, "Woe to you that are full now! For you shall hunger."** God is bound only to the physical provision of those who are His own children.
- **Notice (Psa. 33:18-19) "Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, On those who hope for His lovingkindness, 19 To deliver their soul from death And to keep them alive in famine."**
- God may not do it with **ravens** or like **Jesus**, feeding Him with **angels**, or He may not shelter them with a gourd that grows up over their head. Usually He feeds His own people by the hand of His own people. But God takes care of His own in the midst of a famine. **Notice (Psa. 34: 9-10) "O fear the LORD, you His saints; For to those who fear Him there is no want. 10 The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; But they who seek the LORD shall not be in want of any good thing."**

What every Christian Ought To Know.

How To PRAY (With POWER)



- (Matt. 6:9-13) “After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in 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 lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.”

- **THIS ENTIRE PRAYER IS SET UP TO “GLORIFY GOD.”**
 1. “Our Father, which art in heaven,” that’s **GOD’S PATERNITY.**
 2. “Hallowed be thy name,” that’s **GOD’S PRIORITY.**
 3. “Thy kingdom come,” that’s **GOD’S PROGRAM.**
 4. “Thy will be done,” that’s **GOD’S PURPOSE.**
 5. “Give us this day our daily bread,” that’s **GOD’S PROVISION.**
 6. “Forgive us our debts,” that’s **GOD’S PARDON.**
 7. “Lead us not,” that’s **GOD’S PROTECTION.**
 8. “For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.” that’s **GOD’S PRE-EMINENCE.**

We Must be
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#6

- For the next couple of weeks our focus is going to be on **verse 12**, **“And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.”** And then a footnote on verse **14**, and **15**, **“For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: 15 But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.”**
- Those three verses, the statement in the prayer and then the very important footnote and the very much misunderstood footnote that our Lord gives in **14** and **15**, are going to be the **“theme”** of our study for the next few Wednesday nights. The focus and the concentration of verse **12** is on the subject of **SIN** and its **FORGIVENESS.**
- This is a petition that **EVERY SOUL NEEDS** to face as a part of their prayer life.

- I think you will agree with me that the most essential, the most blessed and the most difficult thing that God ever did was provide man with the **FORGIVENESS of sin**. It is most essential because it keeps us from **ETERNAL HELL** and gives us **JOY** even in this life.
- It is most blessed because it introduces us into a fellowship with God that goes on forever and it is most difficult because it cost the Son of God His life, on a cross. The forgiveness of sin is the greatest need of the **HUMAN HEART**.
- Sin has a two-fold effect, generally, and that is that it damns men forever. That's its future effect.
- Secondly, its present effect is that it robs men of the fullness of life by bringing to bear upon his conscience an unrelieved and unrelenting **GUILT**. And so as we face the problem of **SIN** we face the fact that sin brings **IMMEDIATE** consequences, **guilt, loss of purpose, peace, joy, life** and the future consequence of **ETERNAL DAMNATION**.



- Just thinking about human life where sin is unforgiven, we have to face the fact of what **guilt** and **condemnation** in our own **CONSCIENCE** does to us.
- **William Sadler** said quote: “A clear **conscience** is a great step toward barricading the mind against neuroticism.”
- **John R. W. Stott** in his little book, *Confess Your Sins*, quotes the head of a large British hospital as having said and I quote, “I could dismiss half of my patients tomorrow if they were assured of forgiveness.” Again, **Forgiveness** is man’s deepest need **now**, and in the **future**, for **health** and for **heaven**. This is “**WHY**” it is the first petition related to man’s soul here in the Lord’s prayer.

- Now remember, the **first three** petitions “**Hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven,**” these **RELATE TO GOD.**
- The **last three** petitions **RELATE TO MAN.** “**Give us this day our daily bread, forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,**”
- The first of the last three is for **physical sustenance.** “**Give us this day our daily bread.**” And while there is only one petition for the physical life, there are two for the spiritual because it is much more important. **But the physical is first of all necessary.**
- We cannot live out spiritual principles unless we are alive **physically.** So, first our physical needs are met in **verse 11**, and then when we come to the **spiritual**, the first and most basic request on the part of the inner man is for the **forgiveness of sins.**
- This is man’s deepest spiritual need, and this is where God and man must **meet**, first of all. For before God can ever lead us at all let alone lead us **not into temptation**; before God can **deliver us at all from anything** we must have a relationship to Him which is possible **ONLY WHEN OUR SINS ARE DEALT WITH.**

- **GOD** our Father is a holy God is of purer eyes than to behold evil and cannot look upon iniquity. **“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God,”** said Isaiah. And there is no way that an absolute holy God can possibly entertain in His presence a relationship with unholy, ungodly sinful men.
- If we are to have any relationship with God, if there is any spiritual thing to be gained, it begins with a **petition for forgiveness**. And you will notice that in **verses 12, 14, and 15 FORGIVE** is mentioned **twice**. **SIX** times we see the thrust and the theme, **the forgiveness of sins**.
- The very nature of this prayer, is that we are **“acknowledging” a total DEPENDENCE on GOD**. We will have **“no daily bread without God.”** We will have **“no forgiveness of sin without God.”** We will have **“no leading and directing in our lives APART FROM GOD.”** Therefore, **“His is the preeminence, the power and the glory in the kingdom FOREVER!”** We are to focus on nothing, **BUT GOD**.

What every Christian Ought To Know.

How To **PRAY** (With **POWER**)



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- And now we come to **verse 12** in our prayers, routinely, to speak to God about the matter of the **forgiveness of sin**.
- Now, there are **four** principles I want to give you tonight, and **four** words we'll be discussing.
 1. **"SIN":** makes man guilty and brings judgment.
 2. **"FORGIVENESS":** is offered by God on the ground of Christ's death.
 3. **"CONFESSION":** of sin is necessary to receive that forgiveness from God.
 4. **"FORGIVING":** one another is an essential part of receiving forgiveness for ourselves.

PRINCIPLE #1: “SIN” MAKES MAN GUILTY AND BRINGS JUDGMENT.

- **SIN** makes man guilty and brings judgment. That’s the human dilemma; man is a **sinner** and that is his problem. Now the Bible says sin is “**LAWLESSNESS**,” which means **YOU** are breaking God’s law. It is violating God’s standard.
- **Notice: (1 Jn. 3:4) “Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and SIN IS LAWLESSNESS.”**
- **Notice (Rom. 3:19) “Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that EVERY MOUTH may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God;”**
- **Notice (Rom. 3:23) “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,”**
- **Notice (Rom. 6:23) “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”**
- **Here’s what this looks like.** We break His laws, we become guilty. And because we are **GUILTY**, the wages, penalty or the sentence, of our sin is **DEATH**.” So man is a sinner because he is “**LAWLESS**.” All men across the face of the earth stand in judgment before God for their sin.

- Now that we have our first principle, let's look at our first word: **SIN**. **“And forgive us our debts.”** Verse 15 uses the word **“trespass”** and **“trespasses.”** Naturally, both of these words describe **SIN**. Sin is the problem of every man. Let's look at **Romans chapter 3** for a moment, and this is very basic but very necessary and I'm going to build on this, and hopefully there will be something you've never seen before.
- **Notice (Rom. 3:10) “as it is written, “THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;”**
- I think the Lord worded it this way for all of the pious, self-righteous people who would say **“EXCEPT ME!”** And so the Lord says there is none righteous, no, **NOT EVEN YOU!!!!**
- **Notice V. 12 “ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE.”** They/we are together have become unprofitable. The Greek word means to go sour like bad milk. “There is none that does good, no not you.” **NOBODY!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

- Notice (Rom. 3:19) **“Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God;”**
- In other words, **THERE’S NO DEFENSE**. You have nothing to say to justify yourself. **“And all the world may become (accountable) GUILTY before God.”** This is followed by Verse 23, **“For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”** Then in Chapter 5 verse 22 we are told **“Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.”** Now watch (1 Cor. 15:22) **“For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.”**
- **The point is this**, people, everybody is confirmed in sin, everybody. Sin disturbs every relationship in the human realm. Sin stirs up cosmic chaos. Sin waits to attack every baby born into the world. David said, **“In sin did my mother conceive me.”** And the Bible tells us that iniquity begins even from the moment when one is born.
- Sin is the monarch of the world that rules the heart of every man. Sin is the first lord of the soul. Sin’s virus has contaminated every living being. Sin is the degenerative power in the human stream that makes man susceptible to **disease, illness, death** and **HELL**. Sin is the culprit in every broken marriage, every disrupted home, every shattered friendship, every argument, every pain, every sorrow, every anguish and every death. **SIN, IS HUMANITIES COMMON DENOMINATOR.**

- No wonder Scripture says in (Josh. 7:13) **“SIN is that accursed thing in the midst of thee.”** It is compared to the venom of snakes. It is compared to the stench of death. And tragically, from the viewpoint of human resources, absolutely nothing can be done about it.
- **JEREMIAH** said in **Ch. 13:23** **“Can the Ethiopian change his skin Or the leopard his spots? Then you also can do good Who are accustomed to doing evil.”** In other words, you have just about as much a chance to do good who are accustomed to doing evil.” It’s hopeless. Sin dominates the mind.
- **Notice (Rom. 1:21)** **“For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.”** This means that men have a reprobate mind, a mind given over to **“evil and lust.”** Sin dominates the will.
- **Notice (Jer. 44,)** **“Men will to do evil because their will is controlled by sin.”** Sin dominates the emotions and the affections.
- **Notice (John 3,)** **“They love darkness rather than light.”** The **MIND**, the **WILL**, the **AFFECTIONS**, and **EMOTIONS**, **ALL DOMINATED BY SIN.**
- **Sin Brings Men Under The Control Of Satan.** In (Eph. 2) it says, **“Men are guided by the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the sons of disobedience.”**

- Sin brings people under divine wrath, they become children of wrath, according to **(Eph. 2:3)** **"Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest."** Man has become **bullseyes** for the guns of God's judgment.
- Sin makes man's life utterly miserable. **JOB** says in **chapter 5, verse 7**; **"Man is born unto trouble like the sparks fly upward."**
- **(Isa. 54:21)** says, **"There is no peace to the wicked."**
(Rom. 8:20) says, **"The creature is subject to emptiness."**
- So man's whole life is color stained with sin, and the fifty million or so that die every year face the **ULTIMATE CONSEQUENCE OF SIN.**
- So man has a deep, deep problem. **SIN IS HIS PROBLEM!** And it's a deeper problem than his need for **BREAD** or **ANYTHING ELSE**, and so **JESUS** says when you pray you must pray relating your petition to your sinfulness.
- Your sin must be brought before God for it is your deepest need. It must be dealt with. And so as we pray in our prayers there must be this element of a **"RECOGNITION of our SINFULNESS."**

- Now, back to our text you'll notice in **verse 12** the word **"DEBT."** Then you'll notice in **verse 14** and **15** **"trespasses or trespass."**
 - Now watch this, there are **five words** in the N.T. for **SIN**. Here's a little word study.
1. **The first word is HARMARTIA:** this word is used probably more than any other in the N.T. for **sin**, and it means to **"miss the mark."** It's an archer's word. You shoot the arrow and miss the target, and generally the idea is that you miss because your arrow falls short. **"For all have sinned and fall short."** All are guilty of **harmartia** and fall short. No matter how far you try to shoot it, it never quite gets there. You know, some people's arrows go further than others, **BUT NOBODY GETS THERE.**
- So there are differences on how we approach the problem, but everybody's arrows fall short.
 - **So what is the mark?** Notice (Matt. 5:48) **"Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."** So when you're like God, you hit the mark, and when you're not, you don't. Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the fellowship of those **"WHO MISS THE MARK."** That's the first word for sin.

2. Notice a second word **PARABASIS**. It basically means, “to step across a line.” God draws a line and the line is between **RIGHT** and **WRONG**. When you sin, you step across the line. Sin is doing what is a forbidden thing in **thought**, in **word**, or in **act**.
3. Notice thirdly **ANOMIA**. Based on the word **nomos** which is the word for “**law**” in the Greek. It is the idea of “**lawlessness**.” This is a flagrant breaking of God’s law, a rebellion against God. There’s a progression in these words. **Harmartia**, the word, which has to do with missing the mark, speaks more of our basic incapacity, of **OUR NATURE**. We just can’t hit it.
- The second word, **parabasis**, is kind of the idea that we just kind of step across the line. We just can’t restrain ourselves from going into the forbidden area. And that’s a little more flagrant than **harmartia** seems to be. **Parabasis** is a little more self-directed, a little more planned and premeditated. But when you come to **anomia** that is open, flagrant rebellion against God. So you see a little progression in these terms.

4. But then finally we come to the word in **verse 12**. That's the word **"debt," OPHEILĒMA**. This is a very interesting word. It's only used here, and in **Romans 4**, the only two times it's ever used as a noun. Its verb form is used many times.
- It's a word that is not as familiar to us in terms of sin. But here's something interesting; its verb form is used **30** times, **25** in a **moral sense**, and it means **"to owe a debt."** The idea is that sin is a debt. When you sin, you owe to God a consequence **(DEBT)** for your sin. It's kind of like when you tell your kids, "You do that, and you'll get a whooping." And they keep doing it and so they have a debt to be paid.
 - When you violate God's holiness, the record is kept of your debt. At the end of the age, it tells us in Revelation, at the **"Great White Throne Judgment,"** God will judge the ungodly out of the **BOOKS**. What books? The books that contain all the records of the **DEBT** that they owe that is unpaid, and they are **SENTENCED TO AN ETERNAL HELL TO PAY THAT DEBT.**

- You see? Sin is a debt. You might be interested to know that among the rabbis and the Jews of Matthew's day, the most common word used for sin was the word "**KOBA**" which is an **Aramaic** word, and they spoke Aramaic in their common day language; not the Greek which this is written, and so **koba** was the most common Jewish term for sin. And *koba* means a debt because to a Jew the primary responsibility in life was to obey God, and when you disobeyed God you owed Him a debt for your disobedience.
- Now, when you go to **Luke** and you read about the **disciple's prayer**, Luke doesn't say, "**forgive us our debts.**" He says, "**Forgive us our trespasses or our sins,**" because he speaks in a maybe more classical manner. But, here, **Matthew**, with his Jewish orientation, zeros in on this concept of debt because he knows his Jewish audience will really pick up on that. We owe a debt. Sin, then, is a debt to God. It's all of the things we've said, then. All five words summed up is what really classifies and categorizes sin.

- **Arthur Pink** says, “As it is contrary to the holiness of God, sin is a defilement, a dishonor, and a reproach to us. As it is a violation of His law, it is a crime; and as to the guilt which we contract thereby it is a debt. As creatures, we owe a debt of obedience unto our maker and governor. And through failure to render the same on account of our rank disobedience, we have incurred a debt of punishment, and it is for this that we implore a divine pardon.” In other words, we owe such a massive debt to God because of our unrelenting sin that we could never pay that debt. Like the unfaithful servant, who owed so much it never could be paid in his whole lifetime, we can’t pay the debt. We are sinners who owe a debt that is so monstrous, it’s inconceivable that we could pay it. Never done. And if you ever come to God, you will come to God on the terms of recognition of that debt.
- Notice what **PETER** said, **“Depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”** Even **Paul said, “I am the chief of sinners.”** Listen, **JESUS** taught all men everywhere to pray this prayer, **“Forgive us our debts,”** and in so doing He laid out the universality of the problem of sin. If all men are to pray it, then all men are to admit it’s their problem. And that’s why the Holy Spirit came into the world in **John 16** to convict the world of sin because we’re sinners. Any man who honestly faces the reality of his character cannot be other than conscience of his debt to God and his need to be forgiven. **WE ARE SINNERS!!!**

PRINCIPLE #2: “FORGIVENESS”

IS OFFERED BY GOD ON THE GROUND OF CHRIST’S DEATH.

- Our second word is: FORGIVENESS. If sin is the **PROBLEM**, forgiveness is the **PROVISION**. We should be thankful for that?
- **Notice verse 12 again.** “**Forgive us our debts,**” forgive us. And you notice again the collective nature of the prayer, the “**us**” rather than the “**me**” encompassing **ALL OTHER BELIEVERS**. There’s a sense of community here. We’re all in the same boat, folks. Forgiveness, do you really understand what forgiveness is?
- Now this is the part we’ve been kind of building up to. What is forgiveness? What is it for God to forgive you?
- Remember our second principle, **forgiveness is available on the ground of Christ’s death.** Basically, forgiveness is
 - “God passing by our sin.”
 - “God wiping our sin off the record.”
 - “God setting us free from punishment and guilt.”
 - (Micah 7:18-19) says “**Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity And passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in unchanging love. 19 He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, You will cast all their sins Into the depths of the sea.**” Folks that is awesome! The O.T. says, “**He remembers our sins no more.**” He passes by our sins.

- Let me sum it up in two simple statements. Forgiveness is
 1. **TAKING AWAY OUR SIN**. Notice (Isaiah 53:6) **“All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.”** He has taken the iniquity of us all and laid it on Him (**JESUS**). Right? Then He:
 2. **COVERED OUR SIN**. Notice (Psalm 85:2) **“You forgave the iniquity of Your people; You covered all their sin. Selah.”** Notice also (Isa. 43:25) **“I, even I, am the one who wipes out (BLOTTED-OUT) your transgressions for My own sake, And I will not remember your sins.”** God literally eliminates our sin, and it’s only possible because of Christ. God couldn’t just pass by your sin unless He placed the punishment for it on someone else, and that is exactly **WHY** Christ Jesus died.
- Now, there are **two** kinds of forgiveness. Now watch this, this is really interesting.

1. JUDICIAL FORGIVENESS.

It views God as a judge. God looks down and see's, Your guilt. You've broken the law. You're under judgment, condemnation, there's got to be punishment. But then that same judge says, **"On the basis of Christ's death, He bore your punishment; He took your guilt; He paid for your sin; the price is accomplished. I declare you to be forgiven."** That is a **judicial act. Full, complete, positional** – positional forgiveness granted by God as the moral Judge of the universe. And by that act of judicial forgiveness, listen to this, **ALL** your sins: **PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE**, committed, being committed, and uncommitted are **TOTALLY, COMPLETELY** and **FOREVER FORGIVEN**, and you are **JUSTIFIED** from all things forever.

- Wow! So when does that happen?" It happens the moment you invite Jesus Christ into your life, the moment you are **redeemed, saved, born from above, born again, converted**. It happens the moment you place your faith in Christ, your sin is put on Him. **His righteousness is put on you, and God judicially declares you to be justified.** That's Romans 3 all day long. You are declared righteous. Positionally and forever, all sin covered, passed over, blotted out and forgotten. Isn't that awesome? This is a great time for a **HALLELUJAH!**
- And He just keeps on doing it. This is what He did on the cross for you, and me! **Notice (Matt. 26:28)** Jesus said as He was holding the cup, **"for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many FOR FORGIVENESS OF SINS."**

- **Notice also (Eph. 1:7)** Paul said, **“IN HIM we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.”** **Notice (I Jn. 2:12)** **“I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name’s sake.”** **Notice (Eph. 4:32)** **“Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.”**
- In other words, because Christ took all our sins and paid the penalty, when we believe in Christ and accept His sacrifice, God appropriates it on our behalf. Judicially, we are declared righteous and just forever and forgiven for sins past, present, future.
- Now is that just New Testament doctrine?” **NOPE**, Now watch this. It is Old Testament too. Now some people think that in the Old Testament you were saved until you sinned the next time, and then you made another sacrifice to be saved again. I don’t think so. I think you were saved in the O.T. just like people are in the N.T. by **believing** God, by **submitting** yourself to God. Redemption in the O.T. was just as **momentary, instantaneous** and just as exact as in the N.T.

- Let's take a look at **Abraham**. Notice (James 2:23) **"... 'AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED (IMPUTED) TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS,' and he was called the friend of God."** In other words, Abraham came to a point in his life when he had **FAITH** in God, and he **EXERCISED THAT FAITH** toward God, and accepted God as his Lord and his Savior. At that point, though he never saw the cross or perceived all that Christ would be, Abraham believed God, and was saved at that very moment.
- Notice (Rom. 4:3-5) **"... 'ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.' 4 Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. 5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness"**
- **ABRAHAM BELIEVED**, and it was counted to him for righteousness, and from then on it says in that same chapter, **"Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."** From the moment that Abraham believed, from then on throughout his life, God never imputed sin to him again **BECAUSE HIS SINS WERE PLACED ON CHRIST JUST AS MUCH AS YOURS ARE**. We are **post-Christ**. He (Abraham) was **pre-Christ**.
- **EVERY SIN** of all the saints of all those ages, at the moment they believed **were put on Christ**. Christ is the apex of history. Whether you lived on the front side or the back side, He still bore their sins. And by an act of faith at that point, the value of Christ's redemption was applied to them. Notice what (Psalm 103:3) says, that God is the one who, **"FORGIVES ALL OUR INIQUITIES AND HEALS ALL OUR DISEASES."**

- The O.T. saints knew **JUDICIAL REDEMPTION (forgiveness)**, and I believe their sins were nailed to the cross just as much as ours when they believed God.
- **Notice (Col. 2:13-14)** It's a great illustration. It gives us a picture of how God has kept these books I told you about. All through our lives He writes down the record of our sins, and the debt gets worse and worse. And there is no capacity in our lives to pay the debt at all. Then all of a sudden **CHRIST GOES TO THE CROSS**, and you read in (Col. 2:13) **"When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh"** That's **YOU**, dead. You couldn't do anything about your sins. You were hopeless. **"He made you alive together with Him,"** Now watch, **"Having forgiven us all trespasses"** and then this fabulous imagery, **V.14 "having canceled out (BLOTTED-OUT) the CERTIFICATE OF DEBT consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, HAVING NAILED IT TO THE CROSS."**
- When they crucified a criminal, they crucified him with at the top of the cross, the record of his crimes, nailed there for the world to see why he was being crucified.
- When **JESUS DIED** on the cross, God pulled all the pages out of the books that belonged to all who would believe throughout history, stacked them all together, nailed them to the cross, as if they were the crimes of Jesus. And when Jesus died, He paid the penalty for every crime that was nailed to His cross, and God blotted them out. **THAT FOLKS IS JUDICIAL FORGIVENESS.**

- NOW we know what Paul meant when he wrote (Rom. 8:31-39) **“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? 33 Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies; 34 who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. 35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 Just as it is written, “FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED.” 37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”**
- Notice also (Heb. 10:10) **“By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”** Here’s what that means: **“Sanctified”** means to be made pure, made holy, set apart, separated. We are made holy. We are set apart by the **ONE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST**. When Jesus died, and we believed, His sacrifice was **SUFFICIENT**. He said on the cross, *Tetelestai*, **“IT IS FINISHED.”**

- As we looked at **“JUDICIAL FORGIVENESS,”** there are many words to describe it. We said it involves **God taking away our sin, covering our sin, God blotting out our sin** and **God forgetting our sin**. It is done with; judicially settled for good. Now if we have Christians, then, praying this prayer, **“Our Father,”** and all of their sins forever are forgiven, and God has dropped the gavel and declared us righteous, then **WHY** are we saying, **“Forgive us our debts.”? WHY** are we asking God for forgiveness? If all of that is a settled matter, what is the point of praying that kind of prayer? The point is answered in a second kind of forgiveness. There is not only judicial forgiveness, there is

2. PARENTAL FORGIVENESS. This is why **“Our Father”** begins the prayer.

- Now we are not dealing with God as a **“RIGHTEOUS JUDGE,”** we are dealing here with God as a **“LOVING FATHER.”** Even though we have been judicially forgiven and forever that is settled eternally and never changes, we still **SIN, DON'T WE?** And when we sin, something happens in our relationship to God.

- The relationship doesn't end, but something is lost in the intimacy of it. If my girls, sin against me by disobeying me, the relationship doesn't end. They're still my children, and I'm still their father. There is a certain forgiveness in my heart that is automatic because they are in my family. But something is in the relationship that causes a loss of intimacy until they come and say, "Daddy, I'm sorry," and then the intimacy is restored. I'm married to my wife happily. Please understand that this is not some unbeliever praying for salvation. This is not some Christian pleading that God would please forgive his sins. Like the guy I heard on television and people were asking him questions and one person said, "If I sin and I die before I get it confessed, will I go to heaven?" And the man said, "No, you'll go to hell." What a terrible, terrible lie that is, to put someone under that kind of fear. We're not talking about that. We're talking here about the forgiveness that gives us **THE FULLNESS OF JOY IN INTIMACY WITH GOD**. It is all that the relationship can be. That's what he's talking about.
- **Notice back in Psalm 51.** Here's **DAVID**. David had received O. T. salvation. The righteousness of Christ as yet, the future, had already been imputed to his account by his **faith**. He was a redeemed man, but he fell into sin. Terrible sin, he committed adultery and murder and had he been anybody else but the king he probably would have lost his life.⁹²

- But David was under something other than the law; something above the law and even though his sins were heinous, he was spared because of his **POSITION**.
- **Notice the nature of his prayer in (Psalm. 51)** This is the kind of prayer that comes out of his guilt-ridden, bloodstained heart as he reflects on his sin. And I want you to know this first of all, **verse 14. “Deliver me from blood guiltiness,”** – now watch – **“O God, the God of my salvation.”** Listen. David affirms his salvation, and that God is still the God of his salvation. He cries to a God whose presence is there, whose spirit is there, whose salvation is his still.
- But, even in affirming that the **JUDICIAL FORGIVENESS** was there, David can’t help but feel the loss of something **intimate** in the relationship and that’s what he means when he cries out in **verse 2. “Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity And cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me. 4 Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight,”** Watch **Verse 7, “Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.”**
- You see, there’s a sense in which **JUDICIAL forgiveness** and **PARENTAL forgiveness** are different. David was saved but there was something between he and God that made him lose the meaning of that salvation.

- Notice what he says in **verse 8**, “**Make me to hear joy and gladness, Let the bones which You have broken rejoice.**” David wanted his joy back, didn’t he? Notice **verse 10**, “**Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me.**” The Capp-stone to this prayer is found in **verse 12**, “**Restore to me the**” – **WHAT?** – the “**JOY of your salvation.**” It doesn’t say restore unto me your salvation. He says restore unto me **the joy of it**. Now watch this:
- **JUDICIAL forgiveness** takes care of the “**FACT OF SALVATION.**”
- **PARENTAL forgiveness** takes care of the “**JOY OF SALVATION.**” I can be forgiven but if I’m sinful and refuse to confess, and repent in that sinfulness, **I forfeit the JOY** of the fullness of that relationship.
- Notice (1 John 1.) John begins **this wonderful epistle** by saying that he preaches Christ, the word of life, from firsthand experience. “**What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life—2 and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us.**”
- Okay, but why are you preaching Christ?

- The “**Why**” is found in **verse 3**. “**what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have FELLOWSHIP with us; and indeed our FELLOWSHIP is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.**”
 - John says we preach to bring you into the “**fellowship.**” We want to link you up with God, Christ and every other true follower. We want to bring you into the family. That’s **JUDICIAL forgiveness, (SALVATION)**. We want to get you participating in the common eternal life, to be one in the *koinonia* (fellowship,) That’s why we preach Christ.
 - Then **John** goes a step further in **verse 4**, “**And these things**” – what things? “**The things we write to you,**” in order that “**your joy may be full.**”
 - Now on the one hand, we preach the gospel so that you’ll come **into the fellowship**, and on the other hand we write the epistle so that in the fellowship you will know the **fullness of joy**.
1. **JUDICIAL forgiveness** is being saved and puts you “**IN THE FELLOWSHIP.**”
 2. **PARENTAL forgiveness** is being obedient to the standards and the principals we lay out makes you “**KNOW THE JOY OF THAT FELLOWSHIP.**”
- Then John says if you’re in the fellowship, **verse 9**, you’ll be “**confessing your sin and He’s faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to keep on cleansing us from all unrighteousness.**”

- **Notice (Jn. 13)** Our Lord is speaking of His love for His disciples here in this chapter in spite of their waywardness and sinfulness, in spite of the fact they were sitting around arguing of who would be the greatest in the kingdom. They were self-centered, indifferent, and unconcerned about Christ pending death. So, in the midst of it all, our Lord takes His outer garment off and puts a towel about his waste and starts to wash their feet; humiliating to Him and to them, for they should have done it for Him.
- Jesus comes to **Peter** in **verse 8**. Peter says you'll **"Never shall You wash my feet!"** It's just not gonna happen. I believe Peter is convicted, and that's why he wouldn't let the Lord stoop to do such a thing. **"Jesus answered him, 'If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.'**" And he takes that whole **physical scene** and turns it into a tremendous **spiritual truth**. He says Peter, if you want to really know what it is to fellowship with me, and experience the fullness of a relationship, you'd better let me wash you. Then Peter says, **"Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!"** Then Jesus say's to him in **verse 10** **"He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you."**

- The lord is telling Peter to be quiet, take a chill pill your already entirely clean. Peter, I only want to wash your feet, because there is a tremendous spiritual truth here. You're sitting around this table sinning. You are already clean, **VERSE 10 SAYS** not all of you are clean; one of you is not redeemed (**speaking of Judas**). But the rest of you are already clean. You've already been made righteous by faith. I am not talking about bathing you all over again. You only get made righteous how many times? One. You don't need that again.
- What I'm interested in is keeping the dirt off your **FEET**. Now in those days, of course, you took a bath in the morning as you got up and bathed your entire body and then you started out for the day and wearing sandals in that part of the world, the roads would either be muddy or dusty; you can imagine the muck. And when it was dry, dust everywhere and your feet would be dirty. And every time you would go into a home or a place of business or commune with people or eat a meal, it would be necessary for you to wash your feet just as a matter of propriety. And our Lord is saying to him simply this. You've already had **JUDICIAL FORGIVENESS**. You've had your spiritual bath when you believed. All that's necessary for me to do to keep the fullness of our relationship open is to wash your feet. That's **PARENTAL FORGIVENESS**, and daily as we walk through the world we collect the dust of the world. Those are the sins that we commit, and as we confess those things they are washed. And as we are confessing, **1 John 9, "He is faithful and still righteous to keep on forgiving and keep on cleansing us."**

- **Jesus** is simply saying once you've been cleaned, bathed in the saving blood of the lamb, you've received **JUDICIAL forgiveness**. That doesn't have to be done again, but **PARENTAL forgiveness** is something that goes on every day as we keep the fullness of the communion open.
- **POSITIONAL PURGING** needs no repetition, but **PRACTICAL PURGING** has to be repeated **every day**. When you pray, you'd better pray in accordance with **Matt. 6**.
- Somewhere in your prayers, after you have acknowledged **His name be hallowed** and **His kingdom** come and **His will be done**, and after you have acknowledged that God is the source of your **physical** and **daily sustenance**, you need to face the fact that your feet are dirty and you need to acknowledge the fact that as long as they're dirty and you're unconfessing and unrepenting of that sin, there is a loss in the **FULLNESS OF JOY** in the intimacy of the communion you can have with God. **BELIEVERS NEED TO OPEN THEIR HEART DAILY FOR THAT FORGIVENESS THAT KEEPS THE FEET CLEAN.**

- It was **Nehemiah** who said, **“Thou art a God ready to pardon.”** **IT MEANS THAT GOD IS EAGER TO PARDON.**
- I love Micah. **“God delights in mercy.”** You say, “But I go back every day and I keep saying Lord, I did this again and Lord, I have this problem again, and doesn’t God get sick of it? No, because **He delights in mercy**, because mercy is an act of His nature that gives him glory, for we glorify such a merciful God.
- That’s why in **Rom. 5** it says, **“Where sin abounds, grace does” – what – “much more abound.”** God loves to forgive, and you know, you can take all the forgiveness he’s got, and it won’t diminish his resource at all. And you can come back as many times as you want, and it’ll never diminish His love. He’ll forgive as often as you come. This awesome expression of grace is **NOT A LICENCE TO SIN!**

- **DR. BARNHOUSE** told a great story to illustrate this. He was talking to a college professor and he told a story about a couple. This is what he said. The man had lived a life of great sin and immorality but had been converted and eventually had come to marry a fine Christian woman. He had confided to her the nature of his past life in just a few words. As he had told her these things, the wife had taken his head in her hands and she drew him to her shoulder and kissed him gently and said, “John, I want you to understand something very plainly. I know my Bible well and therefore I know the subtlety of sin and the vices of sin that work in the human heart. I know you are a thoroughly converted man, John, but I know that you still have a sin nature and that you are not yet as fully instructed in the ways of God as you will be. The devil will do all he can to wreck your Christian life. He will see to it that temptations of every kind are put in your way and the day might come, John – please, God, that it never does – but it might come when you succumb to temptation and fall into sin. And John, immediately the devil will tell you it’s no use trying. You might as well continue on your way of sin. And above all, he’ll tell you not to tell me because it’ll hurt me. But John, I want you to know that there is a home for you in my arms. When I married you, I married your old nature as well as your new nature and I want you to know there’s full pardon and full forgiveness in advance for any evil that ever comes into your life.”

- Now that's something like God. When Barnhouse finished the story, the college professor lifted up his eyes reverently and said, "My God, if anything could ever keep a man straight, that kind of forgiving love in advance would sure do it."
- That is exactly and precisely the way God perceives his relationship to us. Listen, we've seen
 1. THE PROBLEM OF SIN. We've seen the
 2. THE PROVISION FORGIVENESS. I want to close with a
 3. Our third principle is THE PLEA CONFESSION. – We receive his forgiveness by confession of sin.
- You can know about **SIN** and **FORGIVENESS**, but if you don't **CONFESS** your sin, you'll never receive it. As long as you **HARBOR** your sin and **NEVER CONFESS** it, **REPENT** of it, **TURN** from it, **GIVE IT** to God and **AGREE** with Him about it, you will **NEVER** be free to know the joy that He wants you to know because the barrier is there and **IT SHATTERS THE INTIMACY OF FELLOWSHIP**.

- Let's be honest, it's hard to confess the sin in our lives. But you are not alone. Remember when **Adam** and **Eve** sinned, and they were used to walking and talking with God in the cool of the day, but the minute they sinned, the next thing they did was what? **"HIDE."** It's tough to confess, and as long as you don't, you forfeit the joy of your salvation. **Notice (Prov. 28:13) "He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, But he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion." COVER YOUR SIN, YOU DON'T PROSPER.** Whoever confesses and forsakes shall have mercy.
- Our **Spiritual Prosperity** is at stake. That's why he says you'd better say, **"Forgive us our debts."** Confession of sin is vital. Remember when **David** said to **Nathan**:
- **Notice (2 Sam. 12:13) "I have sinned against the Lord,"**
- **Notice what David said to Nathan again in (2 Sam. 24:17) "I have sinned against the Lord..."**

- Notice (1 Chron. 21:7) David said to God, **“I am the one who has sinned and done very wickedly.”**
- Notice what Isaiah said, **“I am a man of unclean lips and I live amidst a people of unclean lips.”**
- Notice what Daniel said in (Dan. 9:20) **“I was speaking and praying and confessing my sin.”**
- Peter said in (Lk. 5:8) **“Depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”**
- Paul said (1 Tim. 1:15) **“It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners among whom I am” – what? – “chief.”**
- Confessing sin isn’t easy **BUT IT’S NECESSARY** to appropriate the attended joy that comes with **parental forgiveness**.
- Don’t conceal your sin, confess your sin. **John Stott** says, and it’s true, one of the surest ***antidotes*** to the process of moral hardening is the disciplined practice of uncovering our sins of thought and outlook as well as word and deed, and the repentant forsaking of the same. If you don’t do that it’ll harden you.

- There are Christians who are, judicially forgiven and eternally secure, who are so hardened, so un-confessing, so insensitive to sin and so totally joyless who didn't even know the meaning of a loving, intimate fellowship with God. They've blocked it out by the barricade of their unconfessed sin. Confession.
- Here's an excerpt from the book ***The Prayers of Puritans***. "Grant me never to lose sight of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the exceeding righteousness of salvation, the exceeding glory of Christ, the exceeding beauty of holiness, and the exceeding wonder of grace. I am guilty but pardoned. I am lost but saved. I am wandering but found. I am sinning but cleansed. Give me perpetual broken heartedness. Keep me always clinging to thy cross. Food me every moment with descending grace and open to me the springs of divine knowledge sparkling like crystal flowing clear and unsullied through my wilderness of life."