

Our Model of Prayer: The Lord's Prayer Matthew 6:9-13

The Lord's Prayer could also be called The Disciples Model. It's a pattern for prayer, and our own words may be completely different but we should use it to shape our prayers.

Our Secure Relationship – “Our Father in Heaven”

The prayer is not singular, but plural. It points to the community of believers. Christianity is about relationship.

The relationship Jesus told us to consider God as, is Father. The sum of all Biblical teaching – God is our Father! Father captures all of his character and names, with an emphasis upon a love relationship. He is everything a perfect father should be.

1 John 3:1a See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! (NIV)

We have a relationship with the Sovereign King of the Universe as our Father. What greater comfort could we possibly ask for!

Honor His Holiness – “Hallowed be your Name”

Hallowed is the older English version of “holy”. Holy means to be “separate, distinct, sacred”. Nothing can be used as a means to compare with God as He's beyond all comparison.

You have to travel 93 billion years at the speed of light to get from one end to the other of the universe! Yet Isaiah says God “marked off the heavens” with the “breadth of his hand” in Isaiah 40:12. Just as we can't fathom 93 billions light years, we can't fathom His holiness. Holiness is what makes him separate and distinct from all else. It's more than just his sinlessness or purity, it's his “other-ness”, his transcendence. The mystery of his awesomeness.

Isaiah 55:9 As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

“If you can understand it, it's not God” - Augustine

God's holiness is “a general term representing the conception of God's consummate perfection and total glory. It is his infinite moral perfection crowning his infinite intelligence and power as the crown of the God head. Holiness is God's total glory crowned”. – A.A. Hodges

Praying helps us recognize His holy nature and our role as name-bearers to represent our good and holy father. We are asking God to keep us from dishonoring his name.

Prayer is about changing us, changing our perspective, how we believe, and thus how we live.

The primary purpose of the universe and everything in it, is to hallow God's name.

Submit to His Lordship – “Your Kingdom come, Your Will be done on earth as it is in heaven”

The root cause of all human problems is that we've refused to submit to his rule, his way, his will. This lack of submission is rebellion, disobedience, autonomy; what the Bible calls sin.

In this supplication, we are submitting and asking God to rule over every area of our lives – emotions, desires, thoughts, behavior, action, commitment, love, and priority. We recognize that it's His will, not ours, which is the solution to all of our problems, individually and collectively.

The purpose of prayer is not to request Him to do my will, but for my will to be brought to submission to His will. God's will is good and pleasing and perfect and everything we need.

Romans 12:2 Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. (NLT)

This supplication also calls for us to adopt an eternal perspective. Our real life is an eternal life.

By looking to the eternal, we set our hearts' desire to our real home, the future kingdom where he rules completely, where all will submit to His Lordship, and he brings the fruit of submission to His will: the end of all suffering, injustice, poverty, sickness, pain, famine, and death.

1 Peter 2:11 Dear friends, I warn you as "temporary residents and foreigners" to keep away from worldly desires that wage war against your very souls. (NLT)

We recognize He is in control and will bring His will to earth in His perfect timing. We must submit to His timing while we live through the brokenness caused as a result of sin. We don't have to know how he's going to work out all things for His good pleasure, for His glory, but we trust Him because we know he is our good Father.

Without this trust in Him, we will try to take matters into our own hands. Take our own vengeance. Take our own control. If we walk in our own understanding we'll stumble in bitterness, unforgiveness, and doubt. But when we submit our will and our understanding, and choose to trust in His plan to bring His will in His timing, then we can rest.

Submission to His will brings a peace beyond understanding, and rest to our souls.

Our Dependency and Contentment – "Give us this day our daily bread"

Daily bread represents all of our necessities, not luxuries. We're praying for contentment and satisfaction with what He provides.

Proverbs 30:8 Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. (NIV)

I don't want poverty or I'll struggle with coveting and resent God, and I don't want riches or I'll fall into pride and forget God. I recognize that I just need my needs met, as true fulfillment doesn't come from any material thing, but only from Him.

Praying for “daily”, reminds me that I am completely dependent upon Him every single day. I pray in the recognition of his role as father, that he will take care of me, and I can rest in him.

Matthew 7:9-11 Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? 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! (NAS)

Heal Our Relationships – “Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors”

This is a prayer for not only forgiveness, it’s a prayer for our relationships – with others and with God – in light of what God has done by forgiving us.

Our relationship with God, is linked with our relationship with others.

1 John 4:19-21 We love because he first loved us. Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister. (NIV)

John points out that if we can’t love people, we can’t love God. If we hate someone, and we think we have a love relationship with God, we’re fooling ourselves. Our ability to have an intimate relationship with God, to know Him, is anchored by our ability to have intimate relationships with others

For us to love God and walk in a more intimate relationship with Him, we have to forgive others.

God has forgiven me of a great and enormous debt and offence which I could never ever repay, and He did so at an infinite cost to His innocent, beloved Son. As a result of His greatest feat, His forgiveness of me, I can receive healing, I can walk in healing, I can forgive the injuries and offenses done to me and I can walk in the healing for my soul which God has provided for me by choosing to forgive others.

Matthew 18:33 Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you? (NIV)

No matter how great the offense of others against us, it pales in comparison to the offenses which God has forgiven us against Him.

Unresolved bitterness, lack of forgiveness, is a sign that we’re not walking in the intimate love relationship God desires, and we’re limiting the healing that God can bring into our lives, through forgiveness. God wants to heal you, He wants you whole, He wants to release the pain, sorrow, bitterness, anger, and hate that is corroding your soul from unforgiveness. We gain this healing by seeing the infinite cost He paid to forgive you, the free gift of forgiveness he offers, and we grow in our acceptance of His free gift of forgiveness as we forgive others and walk in the healing freedom that comes from an intimate love with our Father.

Ephesians 4:32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. (NIV)

We need our relationships healed, and to do so, we need our hearts healed, by forgiving others as He has forgiven us.

Our Guidance and Protection – “Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one”
Temptation is a trial, a test. A test is neither good nor bad; the results are. The test is just a proving ground, but it provides the opportunity to fail. A test is used to show the quality of something.

James 1:2-3 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. (NIV)

We pray this supplication in humility and from a perspective of considering the holiness of God. It is foolishness to put yourself in the path of temptation. We desire not to be tempted, as we don't desire to fail in expressing our love for Him, and we desire to honor Him with holiness, and we don't trust ourselves not to fall to any temptation.

“God I love you, I want to know you, and I don't want to dishonor you, and I can't trust myself, so please don't lead me into a test where I could dishonor you”.

Our view of temptation is not that we overcome it, but that we escape it! Our attitude when it comes to temptation – Flee not Fight!

1 Corinthians 10:12-13 Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. (ESV)

I don't place confidence in my ability to pass a test. Testing implies the possibility of failure. We dare not desire to enter into it, because we understand the implications of sin. We don't want to sin, and we don't trust ourselves not to. Yet tests are inevitable, and failing tests is inevitable. So we also pray “deliver us from the evil one”. I know that if I fail, I have his protection. I know that if I do fail the test, you'll keep me protected. If we fail – He delivers us. If we succeed – he gets all the glory as the quality of his work is proven in us.

Faith in His Sufficiency – “For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen”

We rest our hearts and remember that nothing can ever snatch away the kingdom, power and glory . . . ever!