

Teach Us to Pray

Introduction

Much has been written about prayer and many of the articles and books are quite good and informative. It is not my intention to re-hash all that has been said about prayer but, if possible, give us a different perspective on it. One of the tenets that is taught about prayer is that it is “just talking to God”. While there is truth in that statement, there must be more to it otherwise why would the disciples ask the Lord to “teach us to pray”?

Luke 11:1 NASB

- (1) It happened that while Jesus was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples."

Jesus answered this question by giving them what we commonly call “the Lord's prayer” but is actually the model prayer.

Principles of Prayer

Before Jesus gave the disciples the model prayer, he laid down some basic principles about praying.

Matthew 6:5-8 NASB

- (5) "When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.
- (6) "But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you.
- (7) "And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words.
- (8) "So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

These principles contrast true prayer from the type of praying that hypocrites and unbelievers do.

Principle 1: Praying is not to be done as a show of piety or as a performance before men.

Principle 2: Praying is a hidden, secret thing that is between you and the Father.

Principle 3: Prayer is to be straightforward and not meaningless repetition.

Principle 4: Prayer is a reminder of our dependency on our heavenly Father who already knows our needs before we ask Him.

The Model Prayer

After giving the disciples the principles about praying, Jesus proceeded to tell them how to pray with the model prayer.

Matthew 6:9-13 NASB

- (9) "Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.
- (10) 'Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.
- (11) 'Give us this day our daily bread.
- (12) 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
- (13) 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]'

Notice the verbs in this prayer: hallowed, come, done, give, forgive, lead, and deliver. In the original language these these 7 verbs or petition each carry with it an urgency demanding an immediate answer. Let's look at each of 7 petitions.

Hallowed be Your name: hallowed means “sanctified”, set apart. God's name is already holy; it is already sanctified. However, we are asking that His name is to be set apart in our midst and held as holy and sanctified. We are saying that we will not debase His name in any way. We will not use His name in jest or as a curse but will respect and honor it.

Your kingdom come: Knowing Christ Jesus, we know the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand (Matthew 4:17). We also know that God has delivered us from the power of darkness, literally "the authority of the darkness," and has translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son (Colossians 1:13). In Christ Jesus we have every right to call upon that Kingdom's immediate protection and our plea should be for immediate help from His Kingdom. What would this mean? It would mean that the protection and the provision of the Kingdom should be ours as soon as our heart's cry reaches the heart of God.

The presence of God's Kingdom means the present overthrow of Satan's hand upon our life.

The presence of God's Kingdom means present provision of His strength,
the present release into our minds of His wisdom,
the present supply of our needs through His power
the presence of His Kingdom
means peace, safety and protection
from the traps set for us by the enemy of our souls.

His Kingdom's presence can become known in whatever circumstance we may find ourselves. We can even walk in the midst of trouble and know the deliverance His Kingdom offers us.

Your will be done: This is directly related to “your kingdom come” since those who enter the kingdom are those who do the will of the Father (Mathew 7:21). While we translate the verb as “be done” its fuller meaning is “to come into existence”. With this in mind, we have the rendering “your will come into existence on earth as it is in heaven”. The will of God exists and is fully accomplished

Prayer Series: Lesson 1 – Teach Us to Pray

in heaven where the Kingdom of God is fully operational with its installed King, Christ Jesus. We are to pray for the Kingdom to come into the earth just as it is in Heaven and we are to pray for the will of God to be accomplished in the earth just as it is in Heaven. But wait, you might say, isn't the will of God always accomplished? In the overall sense this is true; however, in the earth there are competing wills that are in conflict with the will of God. These are the will of the Enemy and the will of man. The will of God must come into existence, be done, to supplant the opposing wills. That is our prayer, not my will not the will of the devil but thy will be done.

Give us this day our daily bread: We are not told to pray for abundance but to trust God for our daily need. Just as the manna fell daily in the wilderness for the Israelites, God's provision is daily for us. Remember, one of the principles of prayer is that God knows our needs before we ask.

Forgive us our debts: Overall our sins have been forgiven in Christ Jesus. We have been made white by His blood. However, in this prayer this phrase is conditional upon the one that follows it.

As we forgive our debtors: As we have freely received forgiveness from the Lord for our trespasses, we must freely give forgiveness to those who have trespassed against us. There is no greater hindrance to our prayers than harboring unforgiveness toward others.

And do not lead us into temptation: We need to consider this carefully for we know the Scriptures tell us that God does not tempt anyone.

James 1:13 LITV (Literal Translation)

(13) Let no one being tempted say, I am tempted from God. For God is not tempted by evil, and He tempts no one.

Why, then, should we pray that we would not be led into temptation? The answer is given in the next verse in James.

James 1:14 NASB

(14) But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.

The source of our entry into temptation is our lust. Temptation is circumstances that entice the lust in us so that it is expressed. So, a fuller rendering of the meaning of “do not lead us into temptation” is “let there be nothing in me that needs to be put to the test”. [see “[Circumstances of Temptation](#)” *Lesson 5 of the Process of Change Series for further study of this topic*]

but deliver us from evil: In the original language the phrase, from evil, could just as easily be rendered as “from the evil one”. In Luke 22:31 Jesus told Peter that Satan wanted to sift him like wheat. But, Jesus said, “I have prayed for you...”. This is the meaning of this, deliver us from the desire of the our enemy.

For Yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.: This is acknowledgment of the Lord's Kingship, power, and glory. It is forever. It is an acknowledgment that all that we ask is within His Kingdom and within His power.