

Teach Us To Pray: On Earth As It Is In Heaven

Luke 11:2-4; Matthew 26:39; John 15:18; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 John 2:29

The Lord's Prayer: When we read the Sermon on the Mount, there's something interesting right at the center of the center—almost like the bullseye of the message. If you compare the sections before and after it, you realize that the Lord's Prayer sits right smack dab in the middle.

And here's what's interesting: in contrast to the long, elaborate prayers made to pagan gods, Jesus gives His disciples a prayer that's short, simple, and straight to the point. God invites us to talk with Him, yes—but not to just ramble on or try to “butter Him up” with fancy words. He doesn't need us to impress Him.

Now, that doesn't mean we just say a quick prayer and then rush off into the rest of our day. When you look at the model prayer in Luke chapter 11, it's almost the same as the one in Matthew—just in slightly different words. Read Luke 11:2-4. It's like Jesus is showing us: this isn't about memorizing one exact set of words—it's about a sequence of ideas, a template for how to talk to the Father.

Here's how the John and Tim from the Bible Project translate it:

Our Father Who is in the skies,

May Your name be recognized as holy.

May Your Kingdom come, and may Your will be done, as it is in the skies, so also on the land.

Our daily provision of bread, give to us today.

And forgive us our debts, just as we have also forgiven those indebted to us.

And don't lead us to be tested, but deliver us from the evil one. Amen.

If you break it down, there are twelve lines divided into six pairs—two sets of three requests each. The first set is all about the Father: Addressing the Father in the skies with three requests for Him and His kingdom and the “venue” where we want to see those requests fulfilled—on earth as in heaven.

The second set is about us: Our daily needs, our forgiveness, and our protection from testing and evil.

Habit of Prayer: In Judaism, prayer was about habit, repetition, and ritual. It wasn't a one-time event, but something you did morning, noon, and night—woven into the very fabric of your life. It wasn't about the exact wording but about keeping that sequence of ideas in your heart every single day.

Think about it—Jesus and His disciples probably prayed this prayer three times a day, just like many faithful Jews still do. They stopped what they were doing to pray, and those repeated moments formed them. Their physical posture, their movement, their daily rhythm—it all shaped the way they saw the world.

Habitual prayer orients your heart, mind, actions, and perspective towards God. When the disciples in Luke ask, “Lord, teach us to pray,” it's not because they didn't know how to

pray—they wanted His prayer. They wanted the prayer their Rabbi prayed, the one that shaped His desires.

It's not just a form of prayer—it's formative. Over time, it focuses our hearts in a certain direction. It's Jesus sharing His own heart with us—His own way of praying. You even see parts of it echoing later, in the Garden of Gethsemane in Matthew 26:39. This prayer shaped how Jesus prayed in every situation—and it's meant to do the same for us.

Your Kingdom Come, Your Will Be Done: Read Matthew 6:10. Not my will, not my desires, but Your will and Your desire. What God wants—the desire of His heart—is for His kingdom to come, for His will to be done here on earth. He wants us to be His representatives. He wants to give us His wisdom. He wants to give us life—shalom, goodness, wholeness.

But here's the question: is what He wants, what I want? If I'm honest, my desires can be distorted and those desires can push me toward actions that don't line up with God's will. Part of what the Lord's Prayer does is heal our desires. When I pray, "Your kingdom come, Your will be done," I'm not just asking for God to change the world—I'm asking Him to change me. His rule arriving also means there's a rule by which I live.

If you wanted to sum it up, this prayer could sound like:

"May we carry Your name with faithfulness.

May we realize Your will.

May our desires be Your desires.

May we follow Your rule."

This is really the story of the Bible—God's will and rule being accomplished on the earth through His image-bearers. But what happens when His image-bearers develop their own contrary desires? That's the central conflict of the story. And that's exactly where Jesus steps in.

Call To Action: The Lord's Prayer makes perfect sense in that light—because it's His prayer, and He's inviting us into it. Jesus came to take decisive action in this conflict between two kingdoms—the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world.

But be warned - this can be a dangerous prayer. When your heart and mind start to become shaped around seeing the world through the lens of God's Kingdom, you will become dissatisfied with the world around you. This prayer becomes your call to action to build God's Kingdom in the middle of the brokenness of the world. And that comes with challenges. Read John 15:18.

The word for following God's will or desires is righteousness. Righteousness refers to a state of being morally right or just in accordance with God's will and standards. It's often associated with a right relationship with God and living according to His commandments and principles.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:21. God sent Jesus to show us what true righteousness is, and give us a path to righteousness. *'If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him.'* (1 John 2:29)

This prayer trains us to see life as a series of opportunities for heaven to invade earth. And when Jesus prayed “Not my will but Yours” in the Garden, it wasn’t abstract—it was about how He was going to become King. The Father’s kingdom would arrive not through force, but through suffering and self-giving love.

He invites us to live—and to desire—the same way, but if we want to make a difference in God’s Kingdom here on earth as it is in heaven we must become righteous too, inviting God’s will and desires into our lives and leaving our old selfish ways behind.

Discussion Questions:

- In Jewish literature, the design of the text was significant. The central part of a text would often be the focus or would reveal a deeper meaning.
 - Why do you think the Lord’s Prayer is the central part of the Sermon on the Mount?
 - The central line within the Lord’s Prayer is “Your will be done”. What is the significance of this being the center of the center?
- Often when we pray, we give God a list of our desires or how we would like things to turn out. How does the prayer “Your Kingdom come, Your will be done” change us and our prayers?
- How do you feel about this prayer being call to action from you? How will heartfelt praying of this prayer change you?

Reference:

[How Does Jesus Teach Us to Pray? \(The Lord’s Prayer Pt. 1\)](#)

[Sermon on the Mount E21: What Does “Hallowed Be Thy Name” Mean?](#)