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## Praying the Lord's Prayer for Spiritual Breakthrough

Elmer L. Towns

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PRAYING  
THE  
LORD'S  
PRAYER  
FOR SPIRITUAL  
BREAKTHROUGH

DAILY PRAYING  
THE LORD'S PRAYER  
AS A PATHWAY INTO  
HIS PRESENCE

ELMER L. TOWNS

## **In Appreciation**

- TO: Pastor Lawrence Williams, my childhood Presbyterian pastor who told us each week, “Let us stand and pray as our Lord commanded . . .”  
Thank you for giving me a love for the Lord’s Prayer.**
- TO: The Public School teachers of Waters Avenue School in Savannah, Georgia, who ask all pupils, Jews, Catholics, and Protestant daily, “Let us say the Lord’s Prayer . . .”  
Thank you for giving me a rich heritage.**
- TO: David Yonggi Cho, pastor of over 750,000 people in the world’s largest church-  
Thank you for teaching me to pray daily the Lord’s Prayer.**
- TO: The Pastor’s Bible Class, Thomas Road Baptist Church where I taught the material of this book in seven successive weeks.  
Thank you for the opportunity of ministry.**
- TO: Linda Elliott, Susie Butler and Amy Sue Marston, my secretaries, thank you for typing and editing the manuscript.**

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*The Lord's Prayer*

9 "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,  
forever. Amen.

-Matthew 6:9-13

## FORWARD

By

David Yonggi Cho

Yoido Full Gospel Church

Recognized as the largest church in the world and the largest church in Christian history  
Seoul, S. Korea

This book was born in a breakfast meeting with Dr. Towns several years ago. We are friends, and I have had him speak to my people during our prayer meeting in 1978. Dr. Towns told me that he wanted to be more godly and to have more power in prayer. At that breakfast meeting he asked me, “How would you advise me to be more effective in prayer?”

I told him,

“Each day I pray the rounds. Like a runner who jogs around and around a race track to get physically fit, I pray the rounds several times each day.”

Dr. Towns knows church history, so he knew what I meant. “To pray the rounds daily is to pray the Lord’s prayer several times each day.”

I believe when a person sincerely prays the Lord’s prayer each day, that person has covered the basic ways to worship God, and the basic ways to grow and protect his spiritual life. Like seed within fruit, the Lord’s prayer contains every requirement for which a Christian may pray each day.

I told Dr. Towns to pray the Lord’s prayer several times at the beginning of each day. Once was not enough. I told him to emphasize a different petition each time he prayed the Lord’s prayer.

When someone prays the Lord’s prayer, they have covered every type of petition that will touch every aspect of their life. That doesn’t mean they have prayed for every need in their life. It doesn’t mean they have finished praying. After I pray the Lord’s prayer each day, I spend two hours a day in prayer touching many other requests.

Sometimes people must pray day and night, and they do not use the Lord’s prayer over and over. They have many requests, but the Lord’s prayer is a good place to start one’s

intercession. People pray all weekend at our Prayer Mountain and use the Lord's prayer to begin their intercession. It is an important aspect of prayer.

When I say the Lord's prayer touches every type of petition, I mean you will worship, ask for guidance, yield to God, ask for petitions, ask for forgiveness, seek victory over sin and end up in spiritual warfare where you ask for protection from the evil one.

May multitudes read this book and begin daily to correctly pray the Lord's prayer. If that happens, God's people will be revived and His church will do exploits.

Yours in the tender mercies of God,

Dr. David Yonggi Cho



## INTRODUCTION

### How I Pray Daily The Lord's Prayer

My eyes popped open. From between the warm flannel sheets I peeked at the digital alarm clock. The illuminated numbers tell me it's 5:55 a.m. My muscles ache because I got to bed late. Again I didn't get enough sleep. My body is half asleep, but my mind is already in gear. I begin thinking about all the things I have to do today.

So I reach over and turn off the alarm. My clock is set for 6:00 a.m. each morning, but my mind is programmed to awake a few minutes before 6:00.

I stretch under the sheets, then fold the covers to my waist. The rush of cool air on my chest awakens me. My mind and body are now on the same page. I'm ready to start praying. Even before I get out of bed I begin praying the Lord's Prayer. Some have told me they can't pray in bed. They claim they would go back to sleep if they didn't get out of the warm bed. But once my eyes open, my mind starts percolating. I can't go back to sleep so I'm thinking even before I get out of bed. Instinctively, I begin to pray,

OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN . . . may Your name be hallowed in my duties today . . . as Your name is hallowed in heaven.

THY KINGDOM COME . . . may you reign in my life on earth as You rule heaven.

THY WILL BE DONE . . . in my studying . . ., teaching . . ., counseling . . ., as Your will is done perfectly in heaven.

GIVE ME DAILY BREAD . . . for my physical strength . . . for all my needs this day.

FORGIVE ME MY SINS . . . and the consequences of my sins . . . including my actions and intent . . ., and forgive others as you have forgiven me.

LEAD ME NOT INTO TEMPTATION . . . don't let sin overwhelm me but give me victory today.

DELIVER ME FROM THE EVIL ONE . . . protect me from physical and spiritual harm.

FOR THINE ART THE KINGDOM . . . I recognize Your sovereign control of my life.

FOR THINE ART THE POWER . . . I recognize Your ability to do these things.

FOR THINE IS THE GLORY . . . I give You credit for every answer.

In Jesus' name . . .

Amen.

Before I get out of bed, I usually pray the Lord's Prayer. It takes about a minute. Now I'm spiritually ready to begin my day. However, laying in bed is not my main prayer time, nor is it the main time I pray the Lord's Prayer. This is just my "waking up" prayer to get my day started right.

I turn the covers all the way back and slip on flannel sweat pants, then put on a flannel sweat shirt. A bathrobe is not warm enough for me. Going downstairs, I fix a pot of coffee; enough for me and my wife, Ruth. I take my vitamin pills, then jog out to the mail box for the morning paper. Returning, I pour my coffee, (no sugar but a little cream), and I turn the TV on to Headline News to get the overnight events of the world. In about 15 minutes I've finished my coffee, read the paper, and I know what's happening in the world.

Some may criticize me for not going straight to my office for Bible study and prayer. If that is your pattern, please continue. Some of you may not have time for Bible study in the morning, so praying the Lord's Prayer in bed is better than not praying at all.

After I finish my paper and coffee, I'm ready to go up the stairs to awaken my wife. Before I do, I pour two cups of coffee, another cup for me to drink while I read my Bible, and a

cup for my wife. I wake her up, put her coffee on the night stand along with the morning paper. When my roses are blooming (the rosebush was given to my grandmother by my great grandfather in 1886) I bring my wife a yellow Carolina rose to brighten her day.

I then go to my office for my devotions with God. I do not have a set routine for my daily devotions. Sometimes I begin with prayer, usually starting with the Lord's Prayer. Sometimes, I begin reading Scriptures—I try to read through the entire Bible each year. Sometimes I begin opening my hymn book to sing prayer hymns to God. It's easy to find prayer hymns, they end with the Amen refrain. Sometimes I begin digging into a single passage of Scripture, for the Bible class I teach. But usually, I begin my daily devotions praying the Lord's Prayer.

#### BRINGING GOD TO HOLIDAY INN

One morning I woke up in a Holiday Inn. Holiday Inn rooms are drab olive green and grey . . . the same color scheme . . . the same room arrangement. A Holiday Inn room is not warm like my home. This particular day, the sun was hidden by a cloudy overcast, there was moisture in the air that had the scent of rain. Water dripped off the roof into a puddle outside my glass door. My muscles and joints ached because I had flown in late and not gotten enough sleep. My coffee, breakfast and morning paper hadn't completely awakened me. I didn't feel like God was in that Holiday Inn room.

God did feel like He was a million miles away and the overcast sky shut Him out. Forcing myself to read the Bible did not make me feel like He was present. Reading the Bible did not get my motor going. God felt hidden from me. So, I knelt by my Holiday Inn bed, looked to God in heaven and worshipped Him.

“Our Father who art in heaven . . .”

I paused to remember that He was an awesome God with power to create the world . . . .

run the world . . . but most importantly,

“You are my Father that cares for me . . .,” I praised Him for his goodness. “God, You love me and look after me, as much as I take care of my family.

“Hallowed be your name . . .”

The word Hallowed means “Holy.” So I prayed, “God be holy in my thoughts . . . be holy in my conversations . . . be holy in this day.”

Next, I began singing the hymn “Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty. Early in the morning, my song shall rise to thee.”

As I praise God, I begin to feel His presence creep into the room, like fog creeping over a city park. The otherwise drab Holiday Inn room began to brighten up. My outlook for the day warms up. The weather outside was threatening, but I felt snug (you don’t pray to feel any thing, but feeling can be a by-product of prayer). Praying the Lord's Prayer, I worship God. I am not praying about my concerns, but I am focusing on God. I have learned that when I worship God, He comes to receive my worship.

**WHEN YOU WORSHIP GOD,  
HE WILL COME TO YOU**

Jesus taught us, “The Father seeks us to worship Him” (John 4:23). So when I worship God in obedience to the Bible, God visits a Holiday Inn room to receive the worship I am pouring out to Him.

Most people think God dwells in heaven. But the Bible teaches, “The Lord dwells in the praises of His people” (Ps. 22:3-author’s translation). Since God likes to be praised, He comes to hear what people are saying who are worshipping Him.

If you praise God with your whole heart,  
He will visit you to receive the praises you give.

So God visited that drab holiday Inn room on that drab day. His presence filled my morning and I felt Him. When I don't feel God, I worship him, and He comes to receive my worship. This all happens just because I begin my day praying the Lord's Prayer.

### THE SEVEN PETITIONS

The Lord's Prayer has seven petitions. The first petition is Worship of God . . . "Hallowed by thy name." I've just told you that the presence of God comes when you correctly worship Him. But there are several other benefits to you from the first petition you'll find in Chapter Three.

When you pray the second petition, "Thy kingdom come . . ." you are asking for help in living each day by kingdom rules. But there are many other benefits you'll find in Chapter Four.

Chapter Five explains God has a plan for your life and if you'll wholeheartedly pray "Thy will be done . . ." He will help you find the best way to live.

The first three petitions are called the "Thy Petitions," because they center on God . . . i.e. Thy name be hallowed, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done. To properly pray, you begin by focusing on God and His agenda.

The fourth is the hinge petition, because it is attached to the "Thy Petitions." "Like a hinge is attached to a door that swings both ways, this petition is attached to God's glory and man's spirituality. The hinge petition is "Give us this day our daily bread." Bread is a symbol word that stands for your physical life. You need physical life to glorify God and you need physical life to live spiritually. Once God gives you bread for your physical needs through the hinge petition, you are now ready to pray the final three petitions, that are called the "Us

Petitions," i.e. Lead us not into temptation, forgive us, and deliver us.

There are many roots in each of these seven petitions, just as the tree that reaches to heaven is supported by an unseen roots system that reach into the ground. There are many benefits to you as you pray each petition. Carefully studying this book will transform your life. You will walk closer to God, you will get many answers to prayer.

THY PETITIONS "In Heaven"	PRAYING FOR GOD'S GLORY 1. Thy name be hallowed, 2. Thy Kingdom come, 3. Thy will be done.
<i>Semi-Conclusion:</i>	<i>On Earth as it is in heaven.</i>
THE HINGE	4. Give us our daily bread.
US PETITIONS "On Earth"	PRAYING FOR OUR SPIRITUALITY 5. Forgive us our debt, 6. Lead us not into temptation, 7. Deliver us from the Evil One.
Benediction:	Thine is the Kingdom, power, and all the glory.

I did not write this book to examine the meaning of each phrase of the Lord's Prayer . . . although you will gain some deep insights from the book. I wrote this book to help you to talk to God . . . using the Lord's Prayer.

I did not write this book so you would memorize and repeat the Lord's Prayer mechanically each day, although I want to motivate you to pray it several times each day. I wrote this book so you would live and experience the Lord's Prayer.

Also, I did not write this book as a tool to help you get things from God, although properly praying the Lord's Prayer will help you get answers from God. I wrote this book to change your life. A friend of mine is an Episcopal Pastor who challenges his congregation every Sunday morning,

"I know God . . . and this morning at this worship service, you can know God."

Then standing in the clerical robes of his church he offers the greatest challenge ever given a human audience that attempts to know God. He says,

"This week I have touched God, and this morning you can touch God. But more importantly, "God can touch you."

I have written this book so that when you experience daily the Lord's Prayer, "You can touch God, but most importantly, right here and now . . . God can touch you."

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Elmer L. Towns

Written in my home in the Blue Ridge Mountains, Virginia

Spring 1997

THE LORD'S PRAYER FOR ME

My Heavenly Father, may your name be holy in me,  
May your Kingdom rule my life,  
May your will control me,  
May you be sovereign on earth as you are in heaven,  
Give me daily bread for today's need,  
Forgive my debts as I forgive my debtors,  
Lead me not into temptation,  
Protect me from the Evil One,  
Your kingdom rules in my life, Your power can do anything,  
and Your glory is forever and ever,  
Amen.



## CHAPTER ONE

### BEFORE YOU PRAY: HOW LONG IS ENOUGH?

I stuffed myself into a tiny black closet. The walls and door squeezed in upon me but I didn't care. I knelt and faced the north corner. I was preparing for an unknown experience that was not dangerous, but I didn't know what to expect, nor did I know what to do.

I was a 17 year old college freshmen, but being stuffed into a closet was not college hazing. I was not joining a fraternity, nor had anyone forced me into the closet.

The hardwood floor pained my knees. My bony knees were not use to one hour of kneeling. I was not being punished by the administration or a teacher. I had chosen to enter the closet of my free will and planned to kneel there for an hour . . . maybe two hours or more.

As a freshmen in college, I enrolled in an introductory course dealing with spirituality. The teacher had promised we would experience God before mid-terms. Because I was interested in spirituality, I wholeheartedly completed all the reading assignments. The one assignment I most looked forward to was to pray for one hour. We were told to spend one hour alone with God in prayer. The instructor explained that we had to pray "one hour" because Jesus asked His disciples,

"Could you not watch with me one hour?"

Some of the students grumbled and I've often wondered if they might have fudged on the time. But not me. Because I wanted to be spiritual, I meticulously prepared to pray one hour. I

set aside a Tuesday afternoon, 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. because the dormitory was usually quiet at this time. My roommate usually was on the sports field, so he was usually not in the room.

I had been assigned to room 427 in Legters Hall. Each room had tall ceilings and a fireplace. It had been built before the days of modern plumbing, but a glistening white sink hung on the wall in each entryway for casual washing. All plumbing and electrical wires were stretched visibly down the hall and along the walls. I called the dorm an elegant lady with a wrinkled face. The building was beautiful when she was constructed, but she had been born 120 years earlier. I gave you a complete description of my dorm so you would realize it had only one tiny closet, one very small closet for me and my roommate. I squeezed into that closet because I read the words of Jesus,

"When ye enter into your closet to pray . . . "

Since I wanted to be spiritual, I took the command literally. Taking my coats and trousers off the hangers, I laid them on my bed. I didn't remove my roommates clothes, although I did remove his shoes and my shoes . . . and all the dirty socks. It's hard to put your mind on Christ when your nose is filled with foot odor.

The closet was only as deep as a coat hanger. I planned to kneel facing the north corner on my end of the closet, my feet would extend under my roommates clothes. That's another reason why I had to remove his shoes.

I plan to shut myself in the closet for one hour because Jesus said,

"When ye enter the closet, shut the door . . . "

I got the closet prepared 15 minutes early. My prayer requests were written in a notebook, so I rehearsed my list because I knew I couldn't see in the dark. Obviously, a beautiful old lady with a wrinkled face wouldn't have a light in each closet. I placed the most important prayer request first on my list. If I had time, I planned to cover the less important requests in my second hour.

I had read stories of all-night prayer meetings. When I prayed before going to bed at night, it wasn't long. I had heard about monks who prayed several hours each day. I knew I couldn't do that. I wondered how long I could pray.

The college had printed a large print cardboard "BUSY" sign for each room. When we hung out a "BUSY" sign it meant we were studying, praying or sleeping. No one was suppose to violate a "BUSY" sign.

At 1:59 p.m. I hung out the "BUSY" sign. The closet was too small to turn around, so I backed into the closet, faced north, knelt down and closed the door. It was impossible to stand and close the door.

The closet was inky black. The heavy oak door fit snugly. Because I was facing the north end of the closet, I couldn't see the traces of light under the door.

The silence gripped me. I was more alone than I had ever been. I had entered the world of silence, the sounds of normal afternoon dormitory life couldn't penetrate the thick masonry walls. The clothes in the closet absorbed any noise that happened to leak in around the edges of the door.

I was more alone with God than I had ever been in my life. I closed my eyes to pray, but that wasn't necessary. The black closet was the same if my eyes were open or shut. I wondered if God was in the blackness. I wondered if God would meet me there. I almost wanted to say,

### TOUCHING GOD IN THE DARKNESS

"Hello God . . . are you there?"

But I had been raised in a Presbyterian Sunday School. I knew to be reverent when I entered the church sanctuary. I had heard many prayers in that little Presbyterian church. So I began,

"Dear Father . . . "

I prayed in that closet, just the way I had done in all my other prayers. I jumped right into the list of things I wanted from God or the things that I wanted God to do for me. If I had known the formula of the Lord's Prayer, I would have worshipped God. But I was young, and people with a childish spirit run to their Father and ask, "What'd ya' bring me?" Children are always asking for something.

Little did I know then that when you only ask for things, you cut short your prayer time. One can only beg for things so long.

After praying for a long time my knees began to hurt. I rocked from one knee to the other. Since I was skinny, my knees were bony. The ache in my knee cap was my first distraction to prayer. I wished I had put a small rug or towel on the floor. I even wished for some dirty socks to kneel on to ease the pain.

Returning to my prayer list, I forgot about my pain. I prayed intently through more requests. I felt I was talking to God. I felt he was listening to me.

As I got toward the end of my prayer list, I wondered about the time. I checked my watch but couldn't see the hands. That was before the days of luminous watches. Even though my eyes were dilated, I couldn't see anything. Questioning the time was my second distraction.

Since my mind was fresh, I decided to pray all the way through my list of requests again . . . no matter how long it took. If I had to, I'd stay much longer than one hour.

When I finished praying through my list a second time, I continued talking to God about things in general. Then my mind wandered to sports . . . to classes . . . to girls. I began to think about softball and found myself wanting to be on the athletic field. I came to myself, shook my head and realized I was not praying. Thinking about softball was my third distraction.

I decided to pray through my list a third time. This time I prayed through the list much faster. I didn't want to miss the evening meal.

When I didn't have anything else to pray about I decided to end my prayer. I had spent the large part of the afternoon in the closet. Since the closet was small, I had to open the door and back out.

I blinked . . . rubbed my eyes . . . then massaged my aching knees. Walking over to the bedside table, I picked up my small travel clock that I had received as a high school graduation gift. I couldn't believe my eyes. I put it to my ear to see if the clock was still ticking. It was.

I had only prayed 17 minutes.

This was a blow to my young male ego. I knew I could run faster or farther than anyone in college. All I had to do was to make up my mind and force myself to do it. I felt I could do anything I set my mind to do. I had set my mind to pray one hour, but had only prayed 17 minutes. I was deflated at my failure.

Let's talk about you. Where are you in your walk with God? Maybe you never think at all about prayer. Begin praying the Lord's Prayer, it only takes a minute. Maybe you dream of praying all day, or you dream of spending one hour with God. But you just don't have the time. You just never get around to praying one hour. Don't try to do too much. Begin with the Lord's Prayer. You're doing what Jesus commanded. You can start with a one-minute prayer.

My professor in the class on spirituality had given me an assignment to pray for one hour. The only place in the Bible that tells us how long to pray comes from the question Jesus asked, "Could you not watch with me one hour?"

Notice, Jesus didn't command people to pray one hour, but He talked about "watching one hour." Maybe there is a difference between "watching one hour" and "praying to God one hour?" A few people can pray for one hour, but this book is not written to help you with long prayers. I've written this book to help you talk to God. You can pray the Lord's Prayer in one minute, and if prayed properly that one minute can change your life.

Praying the Lord's Prayer is not about how long we pray. As a point of focus, just before Jesus told His disciples to pray the words of the Lord's Prayer, he said,

"When ye pray, use not vain repetitions . . . for they (the heathen) think

that they shall be heard for their much speaking." - Matthew 6:7

In this command, Jesus warns against two things. First, he doesn't want us to just repeat the words of any prayer over and over. Second, He doesn't want us to think the Father hears us because we talk to Him in long speeches. The effective prayer is not measured by how loud you pray, or how long you pray, or ever if you say the words of the Lord's Prayer over and over (repetitions). Your prayer will be effective if you are sincere (your approach) and if you ask for the right things (what you say).

But even when you don't pray the Lord's Prayer, and you don't rightly approach God; your prayers may get what you need. Jesus tells us, "Your Father knoweth what things you have need of before you ask him" (Matt. 6:8).

There is another reason why I only prayed 17 minutes when I thought I had prayed for one or two hours. It had to do with what I was saying in prayer. I had gone to God with a grocery list of needs, I ran through the list quickly. Prayers can become mechanical when you just pray for a list of people and things. But on the other hand, if I had begun with worship, I possibly could never run out of things to say. There is so much about God to praise, that you could just keep going and going, like the "Energizer Bunny."

<b>HOW TO BEGIN PRAISING GOD</b>
Try thanking God for all He's done in your life. Try worshipping God for all He's created. Try praising God for all He did in the Bible. Try magnifying God for all you have in Christ.

Learning to talk to God with the Lord's Prayer will help in all your praying. The Lord's Prayer will teach you to begin worshipping God as you talk to Him. Babies run to a parent because they need something. As they grow into adulthood, they learn to talk to their parents, to understand them and how love is reciprocal. As we mature spiritually, we learn to communicate with our Heavenly Father and listen to Him.

Some days I get hung up on the first petition, and spend most of my prayer-time with "Hallowed be Thy name." I wrote the book *My Father's Names* (Regal Books, Ventura, CA, 1-800-235-3415) that lists over 120 names of God. One day I prayed through the appendix that listed every name of God. I thanked God for every name and what it meant to me. It took me over one hour to just "worship and hallow all His many names."

Some people try to pray for one hour, or for a long time. Their mind goes blank. When they don't know what to say, their mind wanders to their job, television, or something they are worrying about. The blank mind with nothing to think causes the body to go to sleep. That's why so many people start praying and fall asleep.

God knows our weaknesses and one of the reasons why He gave us the Lord's Prayer was



to help us pray . . . to keep us from going to sleep . . . to keep our minds focused on praying . . .  
to give us success in our prayers.

It only takes one minute to touch God, and be touched by Him. The monk in the monastery can spend one hour praying each day, or much longer. But most Americans can't. Even though most Americans get paid for 40 hours of work, statistics tell us it will take approximately 54 hours of time out of our schedule to spend 40 hours in work. That's considering commuting to and from the job, lunch time, work and phone calls from home, plus other job related necessities. This means we have less time than ever before. We're all busy.

TIME IS THE CURRENCY OF TODAY'S WORLD

You can pray the Lord's Prayer as you drive the expressway or as you sit in an elevated train. Since you can pray the Lord's Prayer in one minute, why don't you make it the first thing you do when you sit down at your desk each day?

You may dream about praying one hour as I tried to do as a freshmen. You may dream about the benefits of talking to God for a longer time, but by continually waiting to pray one hour, you have put off praying at all. Begin with what you can do.

It is very probable,  
That the dream of the impossible,  
Becomes a barrier of the actual,  
That keeps you from doing what is possible.

Lord's Prayer-Chapter One

### THREE LEVELS OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

There are three levels to praying the Lord's Prayer. First, the *lip level*, which means you let your petitions flow over your lips, whether softly spoken or prayed out loud. The *lip level*, focuses your mind and body. The second is the *mind level*, when you pray the Lord's Prayer inwardly. When your mind belongs to you, pray the Lord's Prayer between sales or when you are not doing a task that requires thought. Third, the *heart level* is the cry of passion or deep love. Heart prayer is usually done privately, because the face reflects the heart. You shouldn't cry, laugh or smile in an inappropriate place, your business associates won't understand.

You must pray the Lord's Prayer at all three levels. When you meet alone with God, or in your church with others, pray aloud. At other times, pray it inwardly. God who knows your thoughts, will hear your request. For those special occasions when only you and God are present, pray passionately with your heart.

Make a decision now to begin praying the Lord's Prayer tomorrow morning when the alarm rings. Then as you commute to work, or even during work, pray the Lord's Prayer at least once, perhaps more than once.

Begin spending a few minutes with God today. Begin with the Lord's Prayer. If you have the privacy of your bedroom or a private family room, open your Bible to Matthew 6:9-13. Then following the words that Jesus gave to us, pray the Lord's Prayer, slowly . . . reverently . . . and meaningfully. Don't give a speech to God. Don't just read words from a book, tell God what each of the seven petitions means to you and what you want Him to do for you.

Develop a pattern for prayer. Don't automatically reach for the radio in the car. Pray the Lord's Prayer each day when you head for work. Maybe there's a particular place where you need strength. That could be the place to start.

An office manager once told me everything at her job was wonderful. She said she did a good job and was satisfied with her production and she felt comfortable managing those under her; except, she hated it when she was called into the plant manager's office. He was perpetually grouchy. He always saw the problems and complained. He never saw the growing efficiency charts.

"Pray the Lord's Prayer on the way to his office," I told her. I suggested she pray that God's name be hallowed in their plant, that God's kingdom come, and that God's will be done.

"It changed me," she said.

Praying the Lord's Prayer took away her fear and gave her new boldness. Instead of being defensive with her plant manager, she became positive.

"Let me help you get a better perspective," she told her plant manager.

"I got faith from the Lord's Prayer," she said. "It gave me courage to aggressively suggest new ways for him to look at things."

"Now I always say the Lord's Prayer walking from my desk to his office," was her testimony.

We need to look for places to pray the Lord's Prayer where we have daily problems. But more than the tension spots. We need to look for times like waiting for the bus, waiting at the

copier or other down times when our thoughts belong to us.

The Secret of Your Future  
Lies  
In Your Daily Routine.

Determine to pray the Lord's Prayer each day at approximately the same time and place.

Get in the habit of talking to God about your life.

#### SEVEN THINGS YOU GET

If you pray the Lord's Prayer daily, you will get seven things that will change your life and re-direct your future.

First, you will magnify God each day, which means you are praying "Hallowed be Thy name." As you worship God each day, you grow as a Christian because you are learning about Him . . . you are becoming comfortable around Him . . . you learn what He expects of you.

Also, God rewards you with His presence. "Anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards them that earnestly seek Him" (Heb. 11:6, NIV). Your reward for daily praying the Lord's Prayer is more than money. God rewards you with Himself . . . His assurance . . . and His guidance.

When I was a kid, I'd greet my Father at the door with the typical child's question, "What'd ya' bring me?" He would always reply,

"Myself."

Lord's Prayer-Chapter One

I didn't fully appreciate my Father's response, until I meet kids from single parent homes who don't have a father who comes home every night.

Second, you will live by better principles when you pray the Lord's Prayer. When you pray, "Thy Kingdom come," you are asking for God to bring His Kingdom principles and Kingdom agenda into your life. You will have a better life when you live by God's rules . . . when you love them . . . obey them . . . you will prosper from them. You will grow to be like God when you honestly pray. "Thy kingdom come in my life on earth as Your kingdom reigns in heaven."

Third, God will guide you for that day. When you pray, "Thy will be done," you are asking God to guide you into His plan and purpose for your life.

The fourth result of praying the Lord's Prayer each day is getting more answers from God. The pro golfer Lee Trevino held up a golf ball in a commercial and boasted,

"This ball will take strokes off your game."

"Wow!" I thought. "I've gotta get some."

Then Lee Trevino laughed with a playful smile and said, "This golf ball will take strokes off your golf game, but you've gotta hit it 300 times a day."

The secret was not the ball.

The secret was practice . . . practice . . . practice. But not just hitting the ball. You had to hit it correctly and continually until you learn how to hit it correctly and continually.

The Lord's Prayer is like a golf ball. Just praying it one time won't get you answers, or to

use golf vernacular. It won't take strokes off the game of life.

You have to pray correctly . . . with all your heart . . . according to the will of God . . . according to God's formula. When you do that, you'll get answers. But to pray it one time is not enough. You have to pray correctly and continually, to get answers.

Fifth, you feel clean when you pray the Lord's Prayer. When you ask God, "Forgive us our debts . . .," you must not only get forgiveness, but you can know immediately that you are forgiven. You can feel forgiven.

If I paid off your credit card bill, your debt would be forgiven on the computer. You wouldn't owe anything, but if I didn't tell you about it, you would still "feel" in debt. When you think your debt is too high you don't charge anything on your card. Your feelings about debt keep you in bondage to the debt you think you owe. You need two things to be free. First you need to be out of debt and second, you need to feel financially free. When you properly pray the Lord's Prayer, you can be free of sin and feel it.

Everyone wants to rise above their circumstances and be victorious over problems. The sixth thing the Lord's Prayer gives you, is victory. When you pray, "Lead us not into temptation . . .," you ask God to keep you from situations that would destroy you.

The last petition gives you protection. When you pray, "Deliver us from the Evil One," you are asking God to put a protective shield around your life.

PRAYER CHECKLIST	HOW ARE YOU DOING?		
Can you pray one minute? (List when or where you will pray.)	Lousy	Average	Great
1. When you first get up  2. Prayer time  3. On way to work  4.  5.  6.  7.			

### JOURNALING

Some who are serious about talking to God, keep a journal. It's something like kids keeping a diary at camp, a record of their experiences, both good and bad, plus their impressions. Each chapter will make suggestions about what experiences and impressions you should write.

This chapter discusses the length of prayer and the place of prayer. Let the following questions guide your entries.

1. How effective are your short prayers? If you can't get into the spirit of prayer in one minute say so. Write your impressions of what prayer does to you.
2. Where is it most effective to pray? Least effective?

3. What is happening to you because you pray the Lord's Prayer several times each day?

THREE STEP BIBLE STUDY

WHERE TO PRAY & HOW LONG TO PRAY

The following three step Bible study is designed to help you study the Bible. Step one, read the question, trying to answer it. Step two, read the Bible verse that's printed in the box. Try to determine how the Word of God answers your question. Step three, write the answer in the space provided.

1. What is a good time of day for you to begin praying and why then?

"O God, You are my God; early will I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water." - Psalm 63:1 NKJV

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2. What other times of day can I pray the Lord's Prayer? What time is best for you?

"Evening and morning, and at noon I will pray; and cry aloud, and He shall hear my voice." - Psalm 55:17

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3. What are the benefits of a fixed time for prayer? Notice how Daniel had regular times for prayer. What would this do for you? (Read Daniel 6:1-24)

"When Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did beforetime." - Daniel 6:10

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4. What can be your response in times of danger or discouragement?

"And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailor to keep them securely. Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.  
- Acts 16:23-25

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5. How should you respond in prayer to opportunity?

"The King said to me, for what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven. And I said to the king . . ." - Nehemiah 2:4,5

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6. When can you stop praying?

"Pray without ceasing." - I Thessalonians 5:17

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7. What things should be on your prayer list?

"But in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your request be made known to God." - Philippians 4:6

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8. For whom should you pray? Why?

"I exhort therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority."  
- I Timothy 2:1,2

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FOCUS OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

Honor	THY	Name
Come	THY	Kingdom
Done	THY	Will

Give us Bread

Forgive	US	Trespasses
Lead	US	Not into temptation
Deliver	US	From evil

CHAPTER TWO  
BEGINNING TO PRAY: APPROACH GOD RIGHT  
CALL GOD YOUR FATHER

My wife and I were standing on the boardwalk at Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, when I felt a tug on my right pocket. I looked down to see a little guy tugging on my yellow windbreaker pocket. He was watching intently the swirling fluffy pink cotton candy in the vendor's stall. He was not looking at me. Pointing he asked,

"Can I have some ... ?"

My wife Ruth was also watching the vendor twist the paper cone to lift cotton candy out of the swirling sugar.

"Please ... can I have some?"? the black headed little guy kept asking.

I smiled to myself, knowing what was happening. I'm a grandfather that likes to buy children goodies. I would have been happy to buy him some gooey cotton candy.

But he was someone else's child.

He was irresistible, his black hair hung in bangs over his forehead. The Chicago Cubs T-shirt was too big and his brown skin suggested an Hispanic descent.

"Please . . ." the words trailed off.

"OK . . ."

He pulled his hand away when he heard me speak. He didn't recognize my voice.

"Big or little? . . . I asked looking down at him.

He bashfully shrugged his shoulders, one hand holding the fingers of the other. He had just begged, "Please . . .," now I couldn't get him to talk.

His father had seen what happened and came through the crowd. It was easy to see how the little boy had mistaken me for his father. We both wore similar yellow windbreakers. Even though I offered, the father insisted on paying for the pink cotton candy.

There are three lessons we can learn from the Myrtle Beach boardwalk. First, everyone who tugs on the pocket of our heavenly father is not His child. Second, God wants to do things for everyone, but can't because all are not His children. Third, when you become a child of God, you can get cotton candy from Him.

Jesus taught us a new way to address God. He taught us to call God "Our Father" and He taught us that we could have a unique relationship to the heavenly Father.

My father was a drinking man, so there was some unpleasant memories because of his alcoholism. But there was one relationship we had, that's still special to me. Just about every Saturday he gave me a quarter to go to the movies.

My father worked as a clerk at White Hardware Company for 42 years. Mother went downtown on Saturday evening when he got paid, or else she would not have gotten the money needed to run the house. He would spend it all on liquor. They always fussed over money, but my father liked to give me a quarter for the movies.

We lived about two miles from the heart of downtown Savannah, Georgia, and it would take about an hour to walk the distance. I crossed a pasture, jumped a couple of creeks, and cut through the historical district to Drayton and St. Julian Street where the store was located. I'd walk up to my Dad,

"I want a quarter for the movies."

He never tried to give me less or hold back. It would have been understandable. It only cost a dime to get in the Matinee. He could have given me just a dime for the movies. But I always got a dime for the movies and a nickel for popcorn, a nickel for a Dr. Pepper, and a nickel for a candy bar. My Dad wanted me to have a great time so he always gave me a quarter.

Never once did he give me more than a quarter. Maybe he only gave me what I asked.

“I want a quarter for the movies.”

I still see him taking a handful of change out of his pocket. Holding the change down by his pocket because he was near-sighted, he’d put a finger to his mouth as he studied the coins. He must have been counting them. Then he’d take a quarter and hold it out by the edge.

“Here,” he’d say. “Have a good time.”

I never once got halfway to town and questioned if my father would give me a quarter. He always had done it, so I always expected it. He never once turned me down. A couple of times when I got there before he got his paycheck, he borrowed a quarter to give me.

I never asked for more than a quarter. I never asked for less than a quarter. It never once occurred to me to ask for more or less. I asked for what I knew he wanted to give. I asked for a quarter.

We should have the same relationship with our heavenly Father. We should ask for what we know He will give, we should ask in faith, and we should take the initiative to go to Him.

When you begin the Lord's Prayer, "Our Father who art in heaven," you are following the revolutionary approach to prayer that Jesus taught. This new title “God” that is included in the Lord's Prayer suggests the following ideas.

FOUR ESSENTIALS ABOUT GOD
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. That the God of Heaven is a Father.</li><li>2. That the Father allows immediate access to himself.</li><li>3. That I can have an intimate relationship with the Father.</li><li>4. That the Lord's Prayer is a means of approaching the Father.</li></ol>

I listen to the way people begin their prayers. It tells me a lot about the way they think. When a person begins, "Dear God . . ." it tells me God is impersonal to him. When someone prays, "Dear Lord . . ." they acknowledge God's power, but still He is impersonal. Once I went to a prayer meeting just to hear the prayer of Dr. W. A. Criswell, beloved pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas. He knelt, reverently lifted his face to heaven as though he were looking into the face of God. Then he began simply, "Master . . ." That was his favorite name for God.

But my favorite name for God is different. Of all the names people use to address God, I like best the name, "Father."

#### THE GOD OF HEAVEN IS A FATHER

The Old Testament Jews did not think of God as an intimate Father, He was the LORD God Almighty, the One who dwelleth between the cherubim (Psalm 80: 1), He was the God who came down to earth in the Shekinah Glory Cloud, a whirlwind of fire as bright and awesome as any display of power Israel had ever seen, a fearful God exacting punishment on the transgressor. God told Moses, "Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud that the people may hear when I speak with thee" (Exodus 19:9). When God came to Mount Sinai, He warned, "Take heed to yourselves that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever touches the mount shall surely be put to death" (Exodus 19:12).

The Lord God of the Old Testament was to be feared because He killed Uzzah when he reached out and touched the ark of the covenant (II Samuel 6:6).



The Lord God of the Old Testament was to be feared because He punished Moses for disobedience, so that Moses never entered the Promise Land (Numbers 20:7-13).

The Lord God of the Old Testament was to be feared because He allowed Nebuchadnezzar to destroy Jerusalem because the Jews worshipped idols and committed fornication (II Chronicles 36:15-21). Even during the New Testament they saw God through His judgmental nature.

*Our God Is A Consuming Fire*  
Hebrews 12:29

Jesus came teaching them to call God by a new name. He told them when they prayed to say, "Our Father." Jesus gave them a new revelation about the Lord God of Israel. God was no longer far off. Jesus taught them they could approach the Father. Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life, no man cometh unto the Father but by Me" (John 14:6). Jesus promised we could get close to the Father, like a little girl cuddling up in her daddy's lap. And as father takes a storybook and reads to her, so we can be intimate with the Father.

A little boy asked for cotton candy on the boardwalk, and daddy buys him some. Why? Because there is a relationship. The father loves the son, and the little boy trusts the father . . . he trusts him so much that he can ask him for cotton candy.

The Old Testament Jews did not ask God for personal things. They brought their blood sacrifice to the altar at the door to the Tabernacle. They killed the best of their lambs for God.

"For without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins" (Hebrews 9:22). The Old Testament Jews came fearfully to God because they knew the sinfulness of their hearts.

But Jesus changed the way people came to God. Jesus is, "The Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). So we come to Jesus for forgiveness. We are accepted in Jesus who told us, "Whosoever cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37).

How do you believe in Jesus? John, the gospel writer says, "But as many as received Him (Jesus), to them gave he right to become the children of God" (John 1: 12 NKJ). We become God's child and enter God's family when we believe in Jesus. When you become a child of God, you can call Him Father.

When you ask Jesus into your life, you ask Him to cleanse you of sin . . . you ask Him to give you peace . . . you ask Him to forgive your past mistakes . . . you ask Him to take control of your living.

Jesus gave a new name to the Lord God Almighty. Jesus called Him Father. Now I am a father and my children call me affectionately, "Dad." They don't call me father to my face, they use that title only when talking to other people. The word *father* is really a title, any man who has children has the title *father*. My name is Elmer Towns, my title is *father*.

The first person of the Trinity has a name, His name is more than a title, His name is Father. Jesus said, "I am come in my Father's name" (John 5:43).

Jesus prayed, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee" (John 17:25). Then Jesus explains, "I have declared unto them Thy name" (John 17:26). There are hundreds of titles to God, but none as intimate as His name, Father. You could call Him God

. . . Almighty . . . the Lord of Host . . . Rock ... or even Jehovah Rapha (the Lord, our Healer).

God has many titles, and each title reveals a different task that He does for His people. He is the Lord of Host, which means He is God of the fighting angels, and He is Jehovah Rohi, The Lord Is My Shepherd and He is El Shaddai, the One Who Is More Than Enough To Meet Our Needs. The more we understand His many titles, the more we understand what He does for us.

You can understand me by understanding my many names and titles. I am called professor at Liberty University because I teach students. Also, I am Dean of the School of Religion, because I administer faculty. I also have the title Reverend because I was ordained and set apart for ministry. Sometimes people refer to me as Dr. Towns, in recognition of my academic degree. In my first church they called me "Preacher" because I was too young to be called Reverend, and too immature to be called pastor. The only thing I did well was preach so they called me "Preacher." My children call me "Dad," my wife calls me "Honey," and my grandchildren call me "Doc," a term of endearment. Each title I wear like a hat, each title tells who I am and the things I do.

When God is our Father, we can say what Paul said, "We cry Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15). The Greek word for father is *patre* however here Paul uses a different word, *abba* which is an Aramaic word, the spoken language of Jesus, Paul and others who lived in Palestine. So Paul uses the colloquial *abba*, which to us in America is Papa or Daddy, i.e., a term of endearment. Paul is telling us that we can use terms of endearment with the Father. God is our Father who is near and dear to us.

When we pray "Our Father, " we are suggesting there is a world of people who do not know God as their Father. Jesus told the Pharisees of His day, "If God were your Father, you would love me" (John 8:42). Obviously the Pharisees hated Jesus, they had previously tried to kill

Him, and finally they would get Roman soldiers to nail Him to a cross. But Jesus knew the hearts of the Pharisees, he said to the Pharisees, "Ye are of your father the Devil" (John 8:44).

There are two families in the world. First, the family of God where His children call Him Father. Second, there is the family of the world, these children cannot call God their Father. The children of the world cannot effectively pray the Lord's Prayer until they come to the Father by Jesus. Then they can get results to their prayers when they say, "Our Father."

However, we need to stop and talk about those who can't pray the Lord's Prayer. They are the children of God in the sense of creation. Because God created mankind, all people are created by God. Therefore all people are children of God by creation. In this sense Paul explains, "If haply they might feel after Him (the Father) and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us: for in Him we live, and move and have our being" (Acts 17:27,28). So there are two points in this statement. First, we are God's children because He created us. Second, God is close to people and they need to reach out to receive God into their lives.

#### THE FATHER ALLOWS IMMEDIATE ACCESS TO HIMSELF

You can pray anywhere, "Our Father who art in heaven." You can be on a break in the cafeteria, or driving the expressway. You can be jogging, or riding you mower cutting the grass. No matter where you are praying, you have immediate access into the throne room of heaven.

Obviously, you don't travel through space, nor are you transported in a trance or vision. Your physical body stays where you are, but your prayers enter into God's throne room. Your prayers enter heaven. You pray, "Our Father who art in heaven" and you have His attention. God in heaven hears you.

God is everywhere. He is inside the smallest atom for "by him all things are held together" (Colossians 1: 17 author's translation), and "He holds all things together by His powerful word" (Hebrews 1:3). He inhabits the farthest star, "If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there" (Psalms 139:8). God is everywhere, which means God is there. So no matter where you are, God hears you.

God is near you ... over you ... around you . . . and inside you. So He can hear everything you pray. When you pray out loud, God hears because He is there, while He is in heaven. When you pray inwardly, He hears because "Thou understandest my thoughts" (Psalms 139:2).

When you pray on the jogging path, God can hear your prayers because "Thou (God) compasseth my path" (Psalms 139:3). When you first wake in the morning to pray the Lord's Prayer while still under the covers, God hears. "Thou (God) compasseth..... my lying down" (Psalms 139:3).

A little kid runs into his daddy's room at night because of a threatening thunderstorm. You can pray the Lord's Prayer when you are scared. And just like the father tucks his child into his bed, so you can have immediate access to the heavenly Father.

The little kid who gets up early in the morning and hears his parents talking, he runs and jumps on his father's bed to get in on the fun. He rollicks with him in the covers and they laugh

together. And just like the earthly father welcomes his child, so our Heavenly Father lets us run anytime into His presence for fellowship.

Because we use a new name with God, means we have a new access to Him. Because God is our Father, we have immediate access to Him.

#### I CAN HAVE AN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FATHER

Jesus promised us a new intimate relationship with Him and the Father. Jesus prayed, “That they (all believers) may be one as Thou, Father art in Me, and I in Thee, that they may be one with us” (John 17:21).

Jesus did not mean we lose our identity and consciousness in God. We are in God and He is in us, but we are still two separate persons. Jesus was explaining that we can have an intimate relationship with the Father.

Because of our intimacy with God, Jesus told us to address Him, “Our Father.”

Jesus could have told us, “when you pray, say O God.” That would have shown His absolute power over us, but Jesus wanted us to know something more than God’s awesome power.

Jesus could have told us, “When you pray say My Lord.” That would have shown His sovereignty over us. But Jesus wanted us to know something more than the Lord’s control of our lives.

Jesus could have told us, “When you pray, say Dear Master.” That would have shown His guidance. But Jesus wanted to show more than the way that the Master directs and guides our lives.

Jesus could have told us, “When you pray, say My Shepherd.” That would have shown His care over us. But Jesus wanted to show us greater protection than a shepherd’s care for his animals.

Jesus could have told us, “When you pray, say Hail King.” That would have shown His rule over us. But Jesus wanted to show a better way for Him to contact us.

Jesus used one of the most intimate relationship that God has with His people. Jesus told us to call Him, “Our Father.” When you begin to pray, you are like a little child who walks into the King. The guards do not stop him, none of the executive staff interferes with the King’s child. The child has immediate access to the King because they are related. The child has immediate access to the King because he is the father. When you say, “Our Father,” you know that you belong to Him, and He belongs to you.

What is the relationship of Father to child. It is a relationship of *intimacy*.

How do you feel when you are intimate with someone, either parent . . . spouse . . . friend . . . or brother/sister? When you are intimate, you feel at *one* with them. You feel together, you think together, you love the same things and you like to go places together. Intimacy is *oneness*.

## THE LORD’S PRAYER IS A MEANS OF APPROACHING THE FATHER

Have you ever thought why the Lord’s Prayer begins, “Our Father?” Why not “A” Father? Jesus could have compared our relationship with God to a relationship that a child has with a Father. But Jesus didn’t call God, “A Father.”

Jesus could have called God, “The” Father. The preposition “the” would have pointed out the uniqueness of God the Father. It would have meant, God was the only Father. But Jesus didn’t call God, “The Father.”

Jesus could have told us to get God’s attention by calling out “Oh God.” There was a popular Hollywood movie by that title. But we don’t begin our prayers with “Oh God” as though He’s sleeping and needs to be awoken. Also, God is not on a weekend vacation. He’s here.

Why did Jesus tell His disciples to use the plural pronoun “Our” when addressing God. Why did He introduce this prayer, “Our Father?” Was it because the disciples as a group asked Jesus, “Teach us to pray” (Luke 11:1). So Jesus gave a corporate group a prayer that they could use corporately. That means the 12 disciples could gather together and begin praying together, “Our Father.”

There are some who think that the Lord’s Prayer has the plural pronouns “our, us, and we” because it should be prayed in a group, as congregations today pray corporately the Lord’s Prayer.

All of these views are interesting, but look at the one who is teaching them how to pray, i.e. it was Jesus. Jesus taught us to pray, “Our Father.” Those who heard what Jesus said realized He was inviting them to join Him in prayer. He meant for us to pray with Him. When I proposed to my wife, I told her about where we would live. I called it our home. When I used the phrase, “Our house” I meant it belonged to both of us.

The title deed has both of our names and signatures. So the phrase “Our” means my house and my wife’s house.



When you pray “Our Father” it means, you are coming with Jesus to the Father. Even though it is appropriate to pray the Lord’s Prayer with others in a public worship service, God does not hear your prayers just because you come with others, even if the others are more godly than you. God hears your prayers because you come with Jesus Christ.

When you come to God praying, “Our Father” it is like saying, “Jesus and I are coming in prayer.” Because Jesus is in my heart, it is “both of us.”

Jesus told His disciples, “Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do” (John 14:13). So most of our prayers are ended with the conclusion, “In Jesus name.”

But we do not end the Lord’s Prayer with the conclusion, “In Jesus name.” I have never heard anyone add that to the end of the Lord’s Prayer. Why?

Because when we begin the Lord’s Prayer “Our Father” we are including in that introduction, the same idea that is included in the conclusion “In Jesus name.” Both the introduction and conclusion means the same thing. They mean that we make our prayers based on Jesus righteousness, and not our own. God the Father will hear our prayers because they are based on the righteousness of Jesus Christ His Son. Our prayers are not made on our ability to pray, or our sincerity.

Also, when we come to the Father with Jesus Christ, we came through His blood that gives us access to Him. Paul describes this process, “For through Christ we . . . have access unto the Father” (Eph. 2:12).

There are many prayers recorded in the Bible, each one has different words to approach God and different titles to call God. Many were great prayers because of their great answers.

But the Lord’s Prayer is the greatest prayer, taught to us by the greatest person for the greatest width of request, with the greatest title of God. And because there is simplicity in greatness, when you pray, say, “Our Father who art in heaven,” the simplest prayer with the greatest influence.

PRAYER CHECKLIST	HOW ARE YOU DOING?		
Our Father Who art in heaven (List how you want to approach the Father)	Lousy	Average	Great
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			

### JOURNALING

Each day you will approach the Father in a different way. You will have different needs, different moods, and different circumstances. Write out how you approached God. Later when you read over the various ways you approached God, you will broaden your understanding of how to come to God. Obviously, we all come to the Father through Jesus Christ, but we apply it differently.

1. What do you mean with the word "Our"?

2. What does the name "Father" mean to you? To your understanding of God? To the way you approach Him?
3. Describe each day's approach to God?
4. What does praying the Lord's Prayer do to your feelings? Thinking? Actions?

THREE STEP BIBLE STUDY

I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY

The title of this bible study is taken from the first line of the Apostle's Creed. It states that the Almighty God of the Old Testament is our Father. Step One, read the following questions to get you thinking about the meaning of the Lord's Prayer. Step Two, study the verses to determine their meaning. Step Three, write your answers in the space provided.

1. Note the first recorded words of Christ in Scripture. His parents has lost him in the temple at Jerusalem. He was 12 years old. When his parents found Jesus, they asked where he had been. What do we know about the relationship between Jesus and God from His answer?

“And he (Jesus) said unto them, how is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?” - Luke 2:49

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2. What privilege do you have because you are a child of God?

“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you. That ye may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.”  
- I John 1:3

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3. What relationship do you have with the Father?

“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry Abba, Father.” - Rom. 8:15

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4. What assurance can you have from the Father?

“Holy Father, keep through thine own name, these whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.” - John 17:11

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5. What can you get from the Father? What will this do for you?

“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom, and revelation in the knowledge of him.” - Ephesians 1:17

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6. What does the Father give to His children?

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of light, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” - James 1:17

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7. What does the Father do for His own?

“Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ and called.” - Jude 1

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8. What happens to your relationship with the Father if you sin?

“My little children, these things I write unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” - I John 2:1

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Lord's Prayer-Chapter 2

FEELINGS FROM THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our . . . Family feeling

Father . . . Intimate feeling

Hallowed be thy name . . . Reverent feeling

Thy Kingdom come . . . Majestic feeling

Thy will be done . . . Submissive feeling

Give us bread . . . Reliant feeling

Forgive us our debt . . Cleansed feeling

Lead us not into temptation . . . Victorious feeling

Deliver us from the Evil One . . . Triumphant feeling

Thine is the Kingdom . . . Dependent feeling

And the power . . . Magnificent feeling

And the glory . . . Exalted feeling

Amen . . . Completed feeling

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE FIRST PETITION-THY NAME BE HALLOWED

#### WORSHIP TOUCHES GOD

I almost missed one of the greatest worship experiences of my life. I was speaking to the South Dakota Salvation Army offices, near Rapid City, South Dakota. I arranged with my host officer to drive me over to see the carvings of the presidents on Mount Rushmore after my evening message.

The trip would take 30 minutes from the lodge where we were staying, so I was told to cut my sermon short. But I got into my message and spoke a little longer than expected. I was told to leave immediately after my sermon, but some officers had questions. So I hung around to talk.

I was told the lights went out on Mount Rushmore at 11:00 pm.

At 11:00 pm, we were a couple of miles away. I could see the glare of the spotlights, like one sees the lights of a city illuminate the sky at night.

Suddenly the horizon went dark.

"We'll see the presidents by moonlight," I told my host to keep driving.

We arrived at the reception center as visitors and workers were driving away. We followed the sidewalk around to the back of the reception center for a panorama view of Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, and Roosevelt.

Suddenly a huge black cloud covered the moon and we had difficulty following the



sidewalk. The thunder cloud was so dark we couldn't see each other.

"JUST MY LUCK," I thought. "I SPOKE TOO LONG AND NOW THIS BLACK CLOUD COVERS MY VIEW."

I was very disappointed. I felt I would probably never get back to Mount Rushmore again.

Then God intervened . . .

A flash of silver lightning hit behind Rushmore . . . momentarily I saw the white outline of four Presidents' heads as the bolt lit up the western sky.

The sky fell black again. I could see nothing.

Then the entire sky overhead lit up like an electric spider web. Lightning ran across the horizon. Lights seem to come from every direction.

I saw the four faces.

"DO IT AGAIN GOD," I silently prayed.

He did.

Another gigantic splash of lightning spread out over the vast South Dakota sky for several seconds. I could see each face clearly.

Then blackness settled over Mount Rushmore. Nothing could be seen, I couldn't even see the Salvation Army officers standing next to me.

I was standing reverently before God. I felt the place was as holy as one quietly enters a church sanctuary. I could feel the majesty of God's presence. In that reverent atmosphere, I

worshipped God.

That evening my sanctuary was the observation platform at Mount Rushmore. God's prompting was His lightning. I waited for another lightning flash to study the features of another President. Then I thought;

"JUST AS I STRAIN TO SEE RUSHMORE, WE STRAIN TO SEE GOD IN THIS BLACK WORLD OF SIN."

I realized we see God quickly and momentarily in lightning flashes. But we never see Him perfectly and completely because we are limited. God is perfect.

"HOW DO I SEE GOD?" I asked myself.

Then I answered my question. Not talking to the Salvation Army Captain, but to myself. He was lost in his own thought world. I thought:

"I SEE GOD IN THE BIBLE . . . "

"IN MIRACLES . . . "

"IN NATURE . . . "

Then it dawned on me in that electrical storm in the South Dakota, Black Hills,

"I SEE GOD IN HIS MANY NAMES . . . "

Each name of God is like a lightening flash that reveals something about God, just as I learned something about a president from the lightening that evening. As I tried to interpret the stone sculptures before me, I also tried to understand the God of heaven who was putting on a lightning show for me.

"HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME CREATOR GOD . . . ," I meditated. "FOR YOU CREATED THE BLACK HILLS."

"HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME LORD," I thought on His kindness to people.

"HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME MASTER," I submitted to His rulership as the Master of my life.

"HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME ALMIGHTY," I recognized His power in the flashing lightning and thunder rolling up the valleys.

"HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME FATHER," I praised Him for loving me and taking care of me.

The blackness between flashes of light seemed even blacker. Maybe it was because when we see God's light, everything else is night. And as "night unto night sheweth knowledge" (Ps. 19:2), so the blackness of Rushmore illuminated the golden glow of God.

The lightning storm passed over Rushmore and the flashes became less frequent. But God is eternal light. I felt comfortable in the darkness because "The darkness God called night" (Gen. 1:5).

The lightning flickered only momentarily and we could no longer see anything. I couldn't see the officers standing with me. But inside my mind, I could see clearly. I could see God.

As we rode home in silence that evening, my host and I realized that we had the best show that Mount Rushmore could ever put on. We had not seen the mountain through the eyes of the U.S. Park Service, but we saw it through God's eyes.

When you begin praying, "Hallowed be Thy name," you recognize five truths about God.

<b>FIVE ESSENTIALS ABOUT HONORING GOD'S NAME</b>
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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. That God has a name.</li><li>2. That God's name is holy.</li><li>3. That God wants praise from us.</li><li>4. That I can praise his name with the Lord's prayer.</li><li>5. That God will not force anyone to praise his name.</li></ol> |
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When you know the following five things about God's name, you can better approach Him in prayer. You need to approach God like a salesman properly using a customer's name . . . like a boyfriend properly calls out the name of the one he loves . . . like a mother tenderly teaching her child his/her name . . . like a subject addressing his queen . . . like God is important to you.

#### GOD HAS A NAME

My mother was a McFadden, who was proud of her name and heritage. As a little boy, she would take me to the McFadden's Family Cemetery near Sardinia, South Carolina. She stood me before the large, 10-foot tall McFadden granite history stone that told how John McFadden came to America in 1730 to pioneer that part of South Carolina. Mother would preach to me, "Remember who you are." She reminded me, "Be proud of your name." Then to

motivate me she would say, “Remember you are a Towns . . . you can do anything you set your mind to.” Therefore growing up, my family name was important to me. Even though I studied McFadden history to know my grandparents on my mother's side, the name she took in marriage became important to her . . . and to me. “Remember, you are a Towns.”

When you hallow God’s name, you esteem Him for who He is, not just reverence His title. When we say today, “That person has made a name for himself,” we do not mean that he has created a unique spelling of his name. We mean they have developed a reputation that is back of their name. When we describe a person who has a “good name” we speak about a person who has a good reputation.

When you begin your prayer, “Our Father” you begin on an intimate relationship, i.e. that of a father and a child. God is not an angry judge to punish you, nor is He aloof to ignore you, nor is He too busy to hear you. God is not some far off deity in heaven; God is your father who can be approached. Prayer should be like a child jumping on a father’s lap to say, “I love you.”

Therefore, the Lord's Prayer is for God, not just for you. Begin with "Hallowed be Thy name." Begin with God and His need . . . He needs to be glorified.

The word "Hallowed" should remind us of the "Hallowed hills" of a university or the "Hallowed Halls of Justice." "Hallowed" means respect that has grown over time.

Why does someone hallow a precious gem? It's because the gem is expensive . . . it's one of a kind . . . it's passed from generation to generation . . . it has history . . . it's given as an engagement promise of love and fidelity.

When you pray, "Hallowed be Thy name," you recognize how meaningful God is to you and your life.

Some people pray, "Hallowed be Thy name?" Like the statement, "God save the queen," or "God bless America?" They think it is like an American saluting the flag, or someone crossing themselves in front of the altar, or two gentlemen shaking hands when they meet? When Jesus told us to pray, "Hallowed be Thy name" He used such a rich, full, exhaustive phrase, that it is almost impossible to explain with human words. But Jesus knew we were human, so He was stretching us to aspire to a new level of worship.

When you pray, "Hallowed be Thy name" you climb to a new level of respect for God, and reverence for His person. You are ascending into the very heart of God to recognize who He is, and what He has done for us.

What's in a name? Since we given so little meaning to names, we must look at "names" as the Hebrews use them. God has three primary names in the Old Testament, His first name is Elhoim, i.e. God the Mighty Creator. With this name we say, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). His second name is, "Yahweh" which is translated, "The Lord Who is the Covenant Keeping One." There are two names but one God. "The Lord our God is one Lord" (Deut. 6:4). Then God has a third name, i.e. "Adonai," which is translated, Master. As our Master, He is the one who rules our life.

In the time of Jesus, the Jews so revered the name Lord, that they would not say the name Yahweh, because it was holy. They took the consonants out of Yahweh and the vowels out

of Adonai, put them together and made a new word that we call Jehovah. They called God by this new name, Jehovah. This way, they wouldn't say the real name of God. When they wrote the Scriptures, they wouldn't write God's name with a pen that has written other words. They wrote His name with a new pen, then broke it so it could never be used again.

But these same Jews who were so reverent with His name, blasphemed God by their self-serving legalism. They outwardly conformed to the law, but their hearts did not worship God. Therefore, Jesus told them to pray, "Hallowed be Thy name." He was telling them to make the presence of God real in their hearts.

When you pray, "Hallowed be Thy name," you are placing God on the throne of your heart.

When you begin your prayers, "Hallowed be Thy name" you are not rushing into His presence to demand something, nor are you concerned about your own ability to pray, or your sin. You come into His presence recognizing who God is and what He can do for you. When you pray, "Hallowed by Thy name" you're not making a deal with God nor are you placing conditions on God for answers to prayer. Too many people say, "God if I stop a sin, will you answer my prayer." Or they pray, "God, I will do something good for you (like going to church or giving money) if you'll answer my prayer." Some people even think that God will do what I ask if I pray a long time . . . like one hour . . . or one day. All of these motivations are wrong. Your prayer is a platform to magnify God. When you pray the Lord's Prayer, you put His glory on display in your life.

When you pray, "Hallowed be Thy name," recognize His names in the Lord's Prayer. He is your Father, which means He is close to you and intimate. But He is also your King, the powerful Creator and Ruler of the Universe, the One who has established the laws of nature and has decreed future events by eternal fiat.

So in the Lord's Prayer, you enter the family room of a Father-God who is concerned about your "hurts." But you also enter reverently and fearfully into the throne room of a God-King who demands obedience and reverence.

### GOD'S NAME IS HOLY

Hallowed is an old word that has little meaning to people today. When people think of *hallowed* they think of morbid sanctuaries . . . or mournful music . . . or halos on saints or naive in front of the church where they're not supposed to go.

We use the word *hallowed* in our Bible and in our prayer, but we need to examine its meaning. Hallowed comes from the word *hagios* which is the root word for holy. When you pray "Hallowed be Thy name" you are saying "Let your name be holy on earth as your name is holy in heaven." The noun *hagios* means, "to be holy" and the verb *hagioio* means, "to separate." This means God is separate from anything on earth that is worldly, profane or sinful. God is holy. Our prayer should be like the angels who cry,

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory" (Is. 6:3).

Therefore, when you pray, "Hallowed be Thy name" you are setting God apart in your thinking and feeling. You are treating him with all the respect that is due his character. When



you *hallow* the name of God, you are giving Him honor which He deserves. Worship is giving to God the worthship that is due to Him.

To understand how God's name can be glorified, notice the prayer of Moses. "Show me Thy glory" (Exodus 33:18). Moses was praying on top of Mt. Sinai praying when the power of God came down in the Shekinah glory cloud. Already, Moses had seen more of God's glory than any other man, yet he asks, "Show me Thy glory." How did God do this? "The Lord descended in a cloud and stood with him there and proclaimed the name of the Lord" (Exodus 34:8). And what is the name that God proclaimed? "And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth. Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgressions" (Exodus 34:6). God told Moses that His name was the composite of all His attributes, i.e. His name is who He is. So when you pray, "Hallowed be Thy name" you are recognizing all of His attributes, you are recognizing who He is. All that God is embodied in His name and when you hallow His name, you lift up his person.

#### GOD WANTS PRAISE FROM US

Jesus told us, "The Father seeketh such to worship Him" (John 4:24). In this statement, He was suggesting how we should begin our prayers. We begin, "Hallowed be Thy name" because that's what God wants and that's what He has asked us to do.

Therefore, God's glory is greater than your problems . . . greater than your needs . . . greater than your fears . . . and greater than anything you want to do for God. Begin your prayers

with "Hallowed be Thy name" because the most important thing in prayer is that God's name be magnified and exalted.

What does God get out of your prayers? When we begin praying, we become God-conscious. Ask yourself what does God need from me?

Because He can perform miracles, He doesn't need our help . . .

Because He is all knowing, He doesn't need our advice . . .

Because He is all powerful, He doesn't need our help . . .

Because He is rich, He doesn't need our money . . .

Because He is God, He wants our worship.

Think of the Lord's Prayer as communion. It's talking with God. How would an ordinary citizen feel if he could talk to the President of the United States? Most would be overwhelmed with the moment. We would be intimidated because he is so powerful and we are so ordinary. We could be intimidated when we enter God's presence, but if we enter on His conditions, and on His invitation, we begin praying, "Hallowed be Thy name."

You are invited to come, Jesus said, "Come unto me" (Matt. 11:28).

"The Spirit . . . say, come . . . let him that thirst come" (Rev. 22:17).

"The Father seeketh such to worship Him" (Jer. 4:24).

I CAN PRAISE HIS NAME WITH THE LORD'S PRAYER

Lord's Prayer-Chapter Three

Americans are very eager to treat God in a friendly way because we are friendly people. Many of our American churches have lost the sense of holy and reverence with our informal approach to God. We stick out our hand and ask God, "How ya doing?" Or, we yell across, "Good morning Lord."

Informality has its place, because God is family. But Jesus told us to begin, "Hallowed (holy) be Thy name."

The purpose of the Lord's Prayer is to set God in His rightful place in our life. It's not primarily about getting things.

It's not primarily about dealing with sins. It is about putting God on the throne of our life on earth, as He sits upon His throne in heaven.

When you pray, "Hallowed by Thy name," you are giving God a platform in your life from which He can manifest His glory. When you honestly make this petition, you focus your mind on the Person of God; and keep it there until you understand the greatness of who God is and what He can do for you.

You don't pray the Lord's Prayer to impress God with your spirituality or with your ability to pray. First, like booting up a computer screen, display God to your mind, and then worship Him.

In the introduction, I told of trying to pray for one hour, and I thought I prayed for a couple of hours. But when I looked at my travel clock, I had prayed only 17 minutes. Now I can pray longer because it's not a "sales pitch" to the Almighty. I talk to God. I worship Him for

Himself. Because God is so big and has so many attributes, it takes a long time to praise Him for all that He is to me.

### GOD WILL NOT FORCE ANYONE TO PRAISE HIM

The Lord's Prayer teaches the sovereignty of God the King, but it also teaches that people have a free will. Adam could choose to eat . . . David could choose adultery . . . Abraham could choose to lie . . . Peter could choose to deny . . . and Judas could choose to betray . . . and they all chose wrong.

Worship is a choice.

The Psalms command God's people to "Worship the Lord in the beauty of His holiness" (Ps. 96:9).

The Psalms command the unsaved, "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands" (Ps. 100:1).

The command is to worship God, but many don't do it. Some are ignorant, even though their inner heart knows God. Some are rebellious, because of sin. Some are too busy, because of the cares of this world. Some have forgotten, because other things crowd out Jesus.

The Lord is waiting on the phone, but we must pick up the receiver to talk to Him. Begin praying this day, "Hallowed be Thy name." Pray it several times this day.

### WORSHIP IS A TWO-WAY STREET

Praise is a two-way street. Your needs are met when you glorify the Father. When you go to God with your worship, He comes to help us in our problems.

Lord's Prayer-Chapter Three

When you need understanding . . . praise your Father through the perfect person of Jesus Christ. Say, "Our Father," and your Father who gave life to you . . . will understand you.

When you feel lonely . . . praise your Father through Jesus Christ our intercessor. Say, "Our Father," and your Father who knows your nature, can be your help and also your friend.

When you have failed . . . praise your Father through the blood of Jesus Christ. Say, "Our Father," and your Father who knows your failure even before you tell Him . . . will forgive you and encourage you how to do it right.

God reaches down to touch you as you reach up to touch Him.

PRAYER CHECKLIST	HOW ARE YOU DOING?		
Hallowed be thy name (List what you want to praise)	Lousy	Average	Great
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			

### JOURNALING

If you are serious about growing as a believer, keep a record of how you worship God.

Evaluate yourself. Compare one week with a previous seven days. Are you growing in your understanding of God or in your worship of God? Use the following questions to guide your journaling.

1. What words are you using to worship God? (i.e. praise, magnify, hallowed, exalt, lift up, revive, etc.)
2. What are the different names of God that you use to worship Him?
3. Are you using hymns to worship God? What hymns? What are you learning from the hymns?
4. Are you growing in your understanding of worship? How?
5. How are you changing your worship expression?

THREE STEP BIBLE STUDY  
THY NAME BE HALLOWED

The Bible study shows you why God's name is special and how you can make it "hallowed" in your life. Step One, read the questions to get you thinking about God's name. Step Two, analyze the verses with each question to see what the Bible says about the question. Step Three, write your answers in the space provided.

1. God's name stands for the person of God. What should be your response to God's name?

"Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and forevermore" (Ps. 113:2).

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2. How serious is God about our misuse of His name?

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain" (Ex. 20:17).

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3. How should all people respond to God's name?

"Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and do all that He calleth to thee for, that all people of the earth may know thy name to fear thee as do thy people Israel; and that they may know that this house (Solomon's Temple) which I have builded, is called by thy name" (I Kings 8:43).

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4. What happens among non-Christians when God's name is glorified?

"That your name will be great forever. Then men will say, the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel is Israel's God" (I Chronicles 17:24).

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5. What should be the Christian's response to God's name?

"Stand up and bless the Lord your God forever and ever; and blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise" (Nehemiah 9:5).

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6. What can be said for God's name and what is our attitude?

" Holy and reverent is His name" (Ps. 111:9). "And one (Seraphim) cried to another, and said, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Host; the whole earth is full of His glory" (Is 6:3).



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7. When we “hallow” God’s name, we worship His person. How does God want us to treat His name?

"The hour cometh and now is, when the worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is spirit: and they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23, 24).

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RELATIONSHIPS IN THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father . . . Father and child

Hallowed be thy name . . . God and worshipper

Thy Kingdom come . . . King and subject

Thy will be done . . . Master and servant

Give us bread . . . Provider and recipient

Forgive us our sins . . . Savior and sinner

Lead us not into temptation . . . Guide and follower

Deliver us from evil . . . Protector and Deliverer

For thine is the Kingdom . . . Sovereign and subject

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE SECOND PETITION: THY KINGDOM COME

#### LEARNING KINGDOM PRINCIPLES

The small son was playing in his french fries, dipping the end in ketchup, then waving it like a baton. His father was enjoying the moment. Mother had gone to a seminar, so for lunch he bought his son a hamburger and french fries. But the young boy was more interested in playing with the french fries, then eating them.

"Eat your french fries . . .," the father coaxed.

But the son continued to wave his "french fry" baton, and the band played on. The father looked at his watch, but he did not have anywhere he had to be. It was his habit to hurry about everything. After lunch, they were just going back home.

Then almost by instinct, the father reached over and did what most fathers have done. He took one french fry out of his son's package.

"No!" the son quickly slapped the fathers hand. Then raising his voice, he repeated, "No!"

"WHO DOES HE THINK HE IS?" the stunned father thought, but said nothing. Surveying the situation, the father thought further,

"HE'S MY SON . . . I SHOULD BE ABLE TO EAT THE FRENCH FRIES THAT HE WONT EAT!"

Apparently no one saw the little boy slap at his fathers hand. No one heard what the little boy said.

"I BOUGHT THESE FRENCH FRIES . . . " the father thought to himself. "HE OUGHT TO GIVE ME JUST ONE FRENCH FRY BECAUSE I BOUGHT THEM."

But that was not the case. The little boy had already forgotten the incident. He had already gone back to leading his "make-believe" band. But the father had not forgotten what happened. He thought to himself,

"I COULD GET MAD AND NEVER BUY HIM ANOTHER FRENCH FRY IN HIS LIFE."

But the father was not mad at his son. He was more surprised than anything. He was not the type to get even, if anything he was a mild guy. He continued to think.

"I COULD BURY HIM IN FRENCH FRIES AND SMOTHER HIM IN KETCHUP BECAUSE I LOVE HIM SO MUCH."

The father sat at the plastic chair, watching his son dip another fry in ketchup, and lead the band. The little guy had no idea of the ramifications his father had just thought.

We are like little children playing with our life when our heavenly Father reaches over to take one of our french fries. God wants a couple hours of worship on Sunday, or He wants us to support our church with our money. We slap God's hand telling Him,

"No! Keep your hand out of my life."

God doesn't want to take all our french fries from us. He wants just a taste, but we say "No!"

The question of the little boy and his father is a question about our heavenly father and His children,

"Who owns your french fries?"

When we pray, "Thy kingdom come" we recognize God is the ruler of our lives. We recognize that, "God owns our french fries."

The second petition "Thy kingdom come" teaches us five main truths.

FIVE ESSENTIAL FACTS ABOUT GOD'S KINGDOM
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. That God is our Ruler-King.</li><li>2. That God has a kingdom that He rules.</li><li>3. That God's kingdom does not exist here and now.</li><li>4. That God's kingdom can come here and now.</li><li>5. That the Lord's Prayer can bring God's Kingdom.</li></ol>

When you bow to pray the Lord's Prayer, you first pray, "Our Father who art in heaven." You recognize that God is your Father who is close and intimate, who cares for you. In the second petition, you pray, "Thy kingdom come." You recognize God is the lofty One who rules from the "throne of heaven." You recognize that He also rules your life. In the third petition, you pray, "Thy will be done." You recognize God is your Father who has a plan for your life, and you recognize God is your King who has a plan for your life. As a King, God wants to rule your life with His principles for His purpose.

#### GOD IS OUR RULER-KING

What do people expect from a King? This is a difficult thought for us who live in a democracy. We don't look to a king because we believe in the vote of the people. Our Declaration of Independence begins, "We the people." People in a democracy rule themselves. There are three branches of American government, or three sources of power. These are

identified as the three functions of government. First, the Legislative (Congress) determines rules by which we live. Second, the Judicial (Courts and Judge) interpret and apply our laws to specific cases. Third, the Executive Branch of Government (President) administers government for us.

God is our king. David said, "Thou art my king, O God" (Psalm 44:4). As king, God rules His kingdom, just as the American democracy is ruled by the three branches of government. First, God determines the rules of His kingdom in heaven, as well as on earth. Second, God judges the rule breaker and rewards those who keep his law. Finally, God is the Executive Administrator of His kingdom. He administers His kingdom.

#### GOD HAS A KINGDOM HE RULES

When you pray, "Thy Kingdom Come," first you are inviting God to rule in your heart by His principles. That makes His kingdom internal and personal. He is your personal King and you are His subject. You are praying, "Thy kingdom rule in my heart, as thy kingdom is ruled in heaven. Obviously, because we are imperfect people, God's rule is not perfect. But the standard is always there. We should allow God to rule us today, as God will rule us after we enter heaven.

HOW GOD RULES IN HEAVEN
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Right purpose,</li><li>2. Right motive,</li><li>3. Right timing,</li><li>4. Right decisions,</li><li>5. Right sensitivity,</li><li>6. Right respect,</li><li>7. Right according to His standards.</li></ol>



The rule of God on earth is called the Kingdom of God. Not everyone is a member of God's kingdom. A person must join the kingdom and pledge allegiance to the King. Someone enters the kingdom when they are born again. Jesus said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). You must have a spiritual birth to enter into His kingdom. Receiving Jesus as your Savior is the same as believing in Him. "As many as received Him (Christ), to them He gave authority to become the children of God" (John 1:12, NKJB).

After we enter the kingdom, we must please God who is our King. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things (earthly necessities) would be added to you" (Matthew 6:33).

Also, when you pray "Thy kingdom come," you are asking for the spread of the Gospel to those who do not belong to Christ. "Thy kingdom come," is a prayer for soul winning and evangelism. You are praying for the kingdom to be expanded into the lives of people who become rightly related to the king. As you think of unsaved friends and relatives, you are praying for their salvation every time you ask, "Thy kingdom come."

There is a corporate sense of expanding God's kingdom. You can pray for the evangelization of a neighborhood where your church is attempting to establish a new mission church. You may not actually know any one in that neighborhood. But, when you pray "Thy Kingdom come" you are asking for that new church to be effective.

When you pray, "Thy Kingdom come" you are asking for foreign missionaries who preach the gospel to those who have never heard the gospel of Jesus Christ. You are asking for God's Kingdom to come in "foreign mission fields." The song writer described this action.

"Jesus shall reign where 'err the sun,  
Shall it's successive journeys run.  
His kingdom spread from shore to shore,  
Where moon shall wax and wane no more."

-Isaac Watts

There is another aspect of praying "Thy kingdom come." You are asking for the return of Jesus to establish His kingdom on this earth. This prayer recognizes that God's kingdom is not presently ruling on earth. When you pray "Thy kingdom come," you are asking for the second coming of Jesus to this earth.

If you pray, "Thy Kingdom come," God will give you a crown. "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord shall give me in that day . . . and unto all those that love his appearing" (II Timothy 4:8). You are expressing love for God's coming Kingdom when you ask for it to come. The last prayer in the Bible is an echo of this petition in the Lord's prayer, "Even so come Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20).

When the King comes, all earthly kings will no longer rule. God will be King-Ruler. "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever" (Revelation 11:15). All persecution will cease, for Pharaoh who persecuted God's people will be gone. All death will cease, like King Senecherib who destroyed the Northern Kingdom of Israel will be gone. All hatred and racial prejudice will cease, like King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon will be gone, all criticism and attacks on the church will cease, like for King Herod who tried to kill the baby Jesus will be gone.

**GOD'S KINGDOM DOES NOT EXIST HERE AND NOW**



You admit God's kingdom is not here when you pray, "Thy kingdom come." God wants to rule His earth, but people have rejected Him. People always seem to reject God.

God called His people in the Old Testament to follow Him. He delivered them from slavery out of Egypt. They walked through the Red Sea on dry land and for 40 years in the wilderness, God took care of His people. He fed them manna and gave them water from the rock to drink. He promised them the land of Canaan and gave it to them.

Once in the land, God wanted to be their king. His people cried out, "Give us a king to judge us, like the nation" (I Samuel 8:5). God interpreted their request as unbelief and rebellion.

"They have rejected me, that I should not rule over them" (I Samuel 8:6).

God sent them another king. It was His Son who was born in a manger in Bethlehem. Wise men from the east asked, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him" (Matthew 2:2). The Jewish King Herod tried to kill the baby king.

Jesus came preaching, "The kingdom is at hand" (Matthew 4:17), but He was rejected by the Jews. Jesus was tried before a Roman judge. The Jews yelled, "Away with Him, crucify Him . . . we have no king but Caesar" (John 19:15).

They crowned their King with thorns and crucified Him. Sovereignly, God guided Pilate to write the reason for his execution on the cross, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews" (John 19:19). They crowned their King with thorns and crucified Him.

Today Jesus does not have an outward kingdom. He does not have an earthly kingdom. He rules in the hearts of those who accept Him and yield themselves to Him. Paul points to Him,

"Now unto the King, eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God be honor, and glory forever and ever, Amen" (I Timothy 1:17).

CHARACTERISTICS OF TODAY'S KINGDOM
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Inward rule.</li><li>2. Invisible rule.</li><li>3. Rule of love.</li><li>4. Rule by self discipline.</li><li>5. Rule of grace.</li></ol>

#### GOD'S KINGDOM CAN COME HERE AND NOW

When you pray "Thy kingdom come," you are asking for something that is not here to come into existence. You are asking for God's Kingdom to manifest itself through your life.

There are many reasons why people pray for the kingdom to come. Some of these reasons are not always the right reason. Some, when facing a painful death by cancer, pray "Thy kingdom come." They can't take any more pain. They want a quick painless death.

Some face pressures at the job. They are miserable . . . not enough money . . . not enough time . . . not enough energy to get them through the day. They pray "Thy Kingdom come" because they want God's peace and happiness.

Some are frustrated and defeated. They've gone through bankruptcy . . . they's gone through more than one divorce . . . their kids haven't turned out right . . . they've failed everyone. They pray "Thy kingdom come" because they want a second start, they want a "born again"

opportunity to try all over again. They wonder if God is the One that will give them the second chance.

Some are addicts . . . they are helpless slaves to drugs . . . or helpless slaves to alcohol . . . they are sexual addicts. These are the people that can't say "no!" to a habit; they can't say "yes" to God. Like Paul they weep, "For the good that I would, I do not, and the evil which I would not, that I do" (Romans 7:19). They pray "Thy kingdom come" wanting God to enter their life to give them the ability to do right.

Then there are some who want God's rule in their lives. They have never been in jail and they are not an addict to anything. They do not have a deadly disease, nor is there an emergency in their lives. They pray "Thy kingdom come" because they love God and want the principles of Jesus to rule in their lives. They haven't been disobedient, they just want to love God more.

There are some who walk with Christ, who slip into a Bible class with the Word of God under their arm. They open it's pages to the lesson, they pray "Thy kingdom come in my life." They are asking for God to teach them how to live by His principles. They want His kingdom to come in their life in a better way in the coming week, better than the previous week.

Anyone can sign up for the kingdom. Jesus said, "If anyone wants to follow me, they should stop living for themselves and follow My principles daily" (Luke 9:23, authors paraphrase). The business man can stop dedicating his life to money and follow Christ. Then applying the principles of vocation, he will be a better businessman. The mother who selfishly lives for her family can follow Christ. Then with a higher standard of Christ's love, she will be a better mother. The politician who seeks fame and position can follow Christ. Then serving the kingdom of God, he can serve the office better than ever.

Children can pray "Thy kingdom come in my life," for Jesus said, "Permit the little children to come to me" (Matthew 19:14, authors translation).

Teenagers can pray "Thy kingdom come in my life," because John said, "I have written unto young men, because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you" (I John 2:14).

Senior citizens can pray, "Thy kingdom come in my life," because Paul writes about the "aged man" (Titus 2:2) and "aged women" (Titus 2:3).

### THE LORD'S PRAYER CAN BRING GOD'S KINGDOM

Implied in the Lord's Prayer is that you can make a difference. If you pray, "Thy Kingdom come," God can send His kingdom to be manifested on earth, as it is manifested in heaven.

But also, Jesus seems to imply that if we don't pray "Thy kingdom come," then it probably won't come. The kingdom coming to earth is a choice.

Your choice.

You can help bring in God's kingdom. Yet God does it by Himself, when He wants to do it. The eternal tension between God's work and man's responsibility is seen in this prayer. God is sovereign; He can and will bring His kingdom to earth without us. But God has commanded us to pray, "Thy kingdom come." God sometimes allows people to mess up His work when they serve Him (i.e. Joseph's brothers tried to kill him, they sold Joseph as a slave so that he ended up in Egypt. But God worked it out for Joseph to save his brothers and his family, Genesis 51:12). We were predestined before the foundations of the earth (Ephesians 1:5), and the blood of Christ was shed for our sins in eternity past (I Peter 1:18-20), yet we must repent, receive Christ, and we

are warned that wrong decisions will lead to God's judgment (Hebrews 2:1-4). Your choice is imperative.

When you pray "Thy kingdom come," you have decided to live for God . . . you have decided to live by His principles . . . you have decided to glorify God in your life. Life is a choice, and you have chosen the kingdom.

When you pray "Thy kingdom come," usually you don't get it all at once. The prayer is like educating a child, it takes 12 years of school to obtain a high school diploma. It may take God 12 years to bring His kingdom principles into your life, because you need to learn a lot of lessons for God's kingdom to come in your life.

When you pray "Thy kingdom come," you plant a seed. The kingdom doesn't come into your life immediately, just like a newly planted seed doesn't produce fruit overnight. Even Jesus recognized the slow but sure plan of growth. "First the blade, then the ear, after that the full kernel in the ear" (Mark 4:28). It takes time for kingdom principles to produce fruit in your life.

PRAYER CHECKLIST	HOW ARE YOU DOING?		
Thy Kingdom Come (List how you want God to rule your life.)	Lousy	Average	Great
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			

### JOURNALING

Each day you will pray for God's kingdom to come in your life. Make a list of ways you want God's kingdom to come in your life. As you pray for these, describe the answer in your journal, both positive answers, and things God doesn't seem to be doing. When you analyze the "non-answers" you may find out why God is not answering your prayers.

God brings His kingdom into your life by teaching you kingdom principles and helping you live by His standards. Each day write the new kingdom principles you are learning in sentences. Then apply the kingdom principles to other areas of your life. Write out how you are applying them.

1. What kingdom principles are you learning?
2. In what areas of your life are you applying them?
3. How well are you doing in applying them?
4. What is God teaching you as you pray, "Thy kingdom come?"

**THREE STEP BIBLE STUDY**  
**FINDING KINGDOM PRINCIPLES FOR LIVING**

The following three step Bible study is designed to help you apply Kingdom principles to your life. When you pray, “Thy Kingdom come,” for what are you asking?

- 1. A King has money responsibilities to his followers. What obligations does God have to us?

"Harken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God; for unto thee will I cry"  
(Psalm 5:2).

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- 2. What is one of your obligations to our King-God?

"So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty: for He is thy Lord; and worship thou Him"  
(Psalm 45:11).

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- 3. How can you enter God’s Kingdom and become His follower?

"Jesus answered and said unto him, ‘Verily, Verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God’” (John 3:3).

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4. What is your obligation as a follower of the King?

"But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33).

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5. Is God's Kingdom physical and do you live in a physical Kingdom? Why?

"Jesus answered, 'My Kingdom is not of this world; if my Kingdom were of this world, then would my servant fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from here'" (John 18:36).

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6. If you don't live in a physical kingdom, what rules does the Kingdom of God have over



you?

"For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:17).

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7. Every kingdom has punishment for breaking its laws. What are the laws of God's Kingdom and how will He punish the law breakers?

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like; of the which I told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God" (Galatians 3:19-22).

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8. What are the rewards of God's Kingdom?

"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; Who hath delivered us from the powers of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son: in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:12-14).

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9. When shall God's spiritual rule in our hearts because a physical Kingdom?

"And the seventh angel sounded (the trumpet); and there were great voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever'" (Revelation 11:15).

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10. What shall be your response when God's Kingdom is manifested physically?

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every other name; that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:9-11).

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### **THE LORD'S PRAYER IS NOT ABOUT POSTURE**

God's people prayed standing, kneeling, lying, with folded hands, uplifted hands, bowed heads, lifted heads, eyes closed, eyes open, etc. The Lord's Prayer is about an open heart to God.

### **THE LORD'S PRAYER IS NOT ABOUT A PLACE**

God's people prayed on a mountain, in a field, in a boat, in a house, in the temple, in battle, doing their job, walking into their home, walking out of their home, etc. The Lord's prayer is to be prayed anywhere.

### **THE LORD'S PRAYER IS NOT ABOUT A TIME**

God's people prayed in the morning, noon, evening, and at night upon their bed; before meals, before harvest, during work, in worship. The Lord's prayer is for any time of the day, any time in your physical growth, and any time in your spiritual growth.

### **THE LORD'S PRAYER IS EVERYONE'S PRAYER**

The Lord's Prayer should be prayed by all people, at all times, in all circumstances, in all places, in all weather, in all houses, in all of the outdoors, in all work, in all play, in all relationships, in all trouble, in all places of happiness; because the Lord's Prayer is the all-everything prayer.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE THIRD PETITION: THY WILL BE DONE SUBMITTING TO GOD'S PLAN FOR YOUR LIFE

The dining room floor had a coat of winter dirt, not to mention some leaves and dust bunnies in the corner. Mopping was difficult because the porous concrete soaked up the soapy water from my mop. The old cotton mop left strings of white lint on the floor.

About midnight, my buddies left for bed, leaving me to finish the large dining room by myself. Ben Lippen Camp, Asheville, NC, had been closed for the winter and I was one of three college boys hired to get everything ready for summer campers. Because I was a workaholic, my buddies laughed,

"Finish it for us, we'll see you in the morning."

I was whistling while I worked.

Then I saw it, right in the middle of the room. It was tacked to a post. It was a dark blue poster with silver letters. I read it and stopped dead in my tracks. Leaning on the mop handle, I was fascinated with the message because it answered the biggest question in my thinking. I didn't know what to do with my life. The dark blue sign read,

GOD
HAS
A
PLAN
FOR YOUR
LIFE

"GOD'S PLAN IS FOR ME TO FINISH MOPPING THE FLOOR," I thought.

Then I wondered what else God wanted me to do.

"Humm . . ."

The thought of God's plan for my life intrigued me. So I asked,

"WHAT DOES GOD WANT ME TO DO WHEN I FINISH MOPPING THE FLOOR?"

"Humm . . ."

"GOD WANTS ME TO DO A GOOD JOB BY PICKING UP THE WHITE LINT."

"Humm . . ."

"GOD WANTS ME TO GET A GOOD NIGHT OF SLEEP SO I CAN WORK HARD  
TOMORROW!"

"Humm . . ."

"GOD WANTS ME TO BE A GOOD CAMP COUNSELOR THIS SUMMER."

"Humm . . ."

"GOD WANTS ME TO GET A GOOD EDUCATION SO I CAN SERVE HIM  
BETTER."

I stood in front of this blue and silver poster for almost half an hour. I thought of all the things God wanted me to do. I thought of all the things I had not done. That was a discouraging thought.

Then I thought about all the things I had to do. I had to sleep, eat, exercise, learn, and go to the bathroom. Because God created his people who had to do these things . . . they must be God's plan for my life.

"WHAT ABOUT THE TEN COMMANDMENTS?" I thought.

I recognized God's plan involved telling the truth, being sexually pure, not stealing, obeying my parents and not making graven images . . . whatever that meant. I didn't know what a "graven image" was, but given God told me not to have one . . . you can bet your last dollar I wouldn't buy one.

"WHAT ABOUT MY VOCATION?," I thought.

Since God had a plan for my life, that night I yielded my future to God. Many people have heard a seminar, and in response; they have gone to a church altar to pray.

That night past midnight, I heard a sermon from a blue tattered sign in a camp dining room. My church altar was the handle of a map. I bowed my head over the end of that map and yielded my life to God.

Often, my mind drifts back to that silver and blue poster. I think about my late-night encounter that gave direction to my life. I now wish that I had taken the poster down to keep it on my desk. I would like to have it to constantly remind me of my obligation to God's purpose for my life. But I don't have it.

In the next two weeks, someone threw away the blue sign. It was greasy. The silver painting was cracked. The corners were frayed. While the sign was old and unattractive to youthful campers, the message gripped me, just like the Lord's Prayer catches me.

When you pray "Thy will be done," you are not just asking God to guide the economic future of a nation, nor are you asking for a military victory of a war. You are asking for God's will to be done in your life on earth, as God's will is done in heaven. This petition of the Lord's

Prayer is based on the premise:

GOD  
HAS  
A  
PLAN  
FOR YOUR  
LIFE

When you pray "Thy will be done," you are admitting five truths about His will.

FIVE ESSENTIAL FACTS ABOUT GOD'S WILL

1. That God has a plan for your personal life.
2. That doing God's plan is good for you.
3. That you can find and do God's will now.
4. That God's plan is not forced on you.
5. That the Lord's Prayer will help you find God's plan.

When you pray "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven," you realize there is a great difference between the two places. In heaven, angels don't pray about His will, angels just do God's will. In heaven God's will is done instantly, not later. In heaven, God's will is done enthusiastically, not half-heartedly. In heaven God's will is done completely, not partially. In heaven, God's will is done perfectly, not like we do it on earth.

GOD HAS A PLAN FOR YOUR PERSONAL LIFE

When you pray "Thy will be done," realize what you are asking. If you recognize God as your Father, it's like saying, "We'll go on our vacation where you want us go." You're telling



your Father to make plans for you. If you recognize God as your king, when you pray "Thy will be done," you are surrendering your will to your sovereign.

When you pray "Thy will be done," you should know what you mean by God's will. Otherwise, you don't know what you're getting. The will of God could mean two things. First, the will of God could mean His overall plan for your life, like a blueprint that an architect follows in constructing a building. So you are praying, "Thy long-range blueprint for my life be done." You are asking God to build your life as He might construct a building using His plans.

There is a second meaning of God's will. It could be the decision-making ability of God. When you pray "Thy will be done," you are asking God to guide your decisions by His decision-making ability. In the middle of a battle, the commander will make a series of decisions to deploy troops, move artillery, and bring up supplies. The commander has an overall plan or strategy. That's the "Big Picture." The commander also makes daily decisions. This is how he guides his troops to victory. So when you pray, "Thy will be done" you are asking for God's decisions to be effective in your life based on His "big picture" and you are asking for His guidance in your life for the problems of that day.

WHAT IS GOD'S WILL	
A noun:	like a blueprint for your life. (Big Picture)
A verb:	God's on-going decisions to guide your life. (Guidance)

There are several expressions of God's will. First, there is the automatic will of God. These are like the laws by which God runs the universe. These are His strategies, or the laws of

nature. God's will is automatically done, like when you breathe. You don't have to make a decision to breathe. You automatically breathe, because breathing is an expression of human nature. God's plan included a respiration system for each of us, and God's plan included the creation of air to breathe.

God has an automatic will that is automatically done, without make a conscious decision. The laws of nature automatically happen without God having to exercise a decision-making act each time something happens. When a pencil rolls off a table, it automatically falls down because of the law of gravity. The natural laws of this universe are run by the automatic will of God. So are the laws of heaven. God says, "Surely, as I have thought, so shall it come to pass, and as I have purposed, so shall it stand" (Isaiah 14:24).

Some times you don't need to pray, "Thy will be done." It will automatically happen. You don't need to pray for water to boil at 220° Fahrenheit. You don't have to pray for water to run down to the sea. "The Lord of Hosts hath purposed and who shall disannul it?" (Isaiah 14:27).

There is a second will of God that is called His desire. This "will of God" is what He wants done, but it is not always done. God wants certain things done that don't happen. As an illustration, God wants everyone to believe in Him . . . everyone. "For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:17). "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise . . . He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9). God does not want anyone to reject Him, but people do not honor His desire.

The shortest verse in the Bible says, "Jesus wept" (John 11:35). Many know this is the shortest verse, but few ever ask why God's Son cried. Jesus shed tears because of His grief for the sisters of Lazarus who died and because of other weeping friends. But Jesus cried when He faced mockery and rejection by an unbelieving crowd. Jesus wanted everyone to receive Him, but they rejected Him. God's will was thwarted.

When you pray "Thy will be done," you are wanting to accomplish the desires of God that might not be done.

The third will of God is what He commands. When a mother says, "Clean up your room!" That command was her will, or her desire. When a father says, "No" to a son, that decision is an expression of the Father's will. God commands His children, "Be ye holy, for I am holy" (I Peter 1:16). It is God's will that His children obey Him completely in every way, in every day. So the children of God must be holy. Those who are not holy disobey God. When we pray "Thy will be done," you are asking for His help to carry out His commands. We are asking God to help us become holy in response to this command.

But the Bible contains many commands, some we know about, some we have never read. To do God's will, we must learn them and do them.

#### DOING GOD'S PLAN IS GOOD FOR YOU

Some people think the will of God is like a box of Cracker Jacks. Only once in a while do we get the prize, most of the time we get a handful of ordinary stuff.

Some people think the will of God is like a bag of marbles. It's something He can pull out . . . shine up . . . show off . . . and use in a game to win some more marbles.

Some people think the will of God is like Santa's bag. It's full of candy and toys, but He only comes once a year to good little boys and girls, because He knows who is naughty or nice.

Some people think the will of God is a 911 emergency number to use in case of fire or emergencies.

Other people think the will of God is the red telephone on the President's desk, to be used as a last resort.

Be not influenced by this world, but be supernaturally changed by a new way of thinking so you can do the will of God that is good, and appropriate and perfect.

(Romans 12:2, authors translation)

God wants you to do His will because it is good . . . good for you . . . good for the family . . . good for God. When a parent wants a child to get home from a date by midnight, that decision was not made to hurt the child. It's good for the child to have "limits" and to learn to obey them. It builds character that will help the child later in life. Limits on a child helps the parent sleep better and relieves them of worry. When a young person comes home on time, it's good for the whole family. If one is late, it breaks up family harmony and family plans.

The will of God is appropriate for you. God does not ask you to be the center on His basketball team when you're only 5'10" tall. God doesn't ask you to teach a Bible class when He's given you spiritual gifts of administration and management. Like the tattered silver and blue poster in the dining room, "GOD HAS A PLAN FOR YOUR LIFE."

When you pray "Thy will be done," you are like children that can't do what their fathers' ask. A father wants his child to ride a new bicycle that was given at Christmas. In essence, the child tries to do what the father wants done. But the child keeps falling. So the child asks, "Help me . . ." In essence, the child tries to do what the father wants done. The child is not asking for the father to ride the bike. The child is not asking his father to make him ride the bike. He is asking, "Help me do your will." The father steadies the bike, guides the bike and pushes the bike. The father keeps his son from falling. All the time the child thinks he is riding the bike. Actually, the father runs along side his son, helping the young son do what the father wants.

The petition, "Thy will be done" is in the aorist tense in the original language, which means point action. When you ask "Thy will be done," you must be willing to do it "right now." A mother tells a child to come in from play for dinner. But the child continues to play. The mother goes to the door and announces,

"I want you to come in the house this very minute."

She means instant obedience. When you pray "Thy will be done," you should have faith to expect God to do His will instantly through your life. But don't expect God to do instantaneously what you are not willing to do.

#### YOU CAN FIND AND DO GOD'S WILL NOW

The third petition of the Lord's Prayer is a request that God's will be done in your life. Notice, you do not ask God to do His will, you do not ask God to bless your will, nor do you ask God to change His will. You are asking God to help you find and do His will in your life.

Before you become a Christian, you sit on the throne of your life. Like a king, you ruled your life and pleased yourself. The issue of salvation is who will sit on the throne of your life?

Will you sit on your heart's throne, or will you let Christ sit on the throne of your life. When you become a believer, you let Christ take control of your life. You let Christ make all the decisions and as a result, you live for Christ. You say with Paul, "For me to live is Christ . . ." (Philippians 1:21). Salvation is a picture of our will saying "YES" to let Christ sit on the throne of our life. Then we must daily pray "Thy will be done." When we make that prayer daily, it is a conscious decision to let Christ direct your life. Each day we say "yes." That means the Christian life is one big "YES" at the beginning, followed by a daily small "yes."

So each day when you pray "Thy will be done," you are praying at least four things.

<b>FOUR THINGS ABOUT GOD'S PLAN FOR YOUR LIFE</b>
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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Help me find Thy plan.</li><li>2. Help me understand Thy plan.</li><li>3. Help me submit to Thy plan.</li><li>4. Help me accomplish Thy plan.</li></ol> |
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When you pray "Thy will be done," you may be asking God to help you find His plan for you in the Bible and understand it. David understood that the Word of God had some things in it that he didn't understand. He prayed, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law" (Psalm 119:18).

When you pray "Thy will be done," it may be a prayer of yielding your will to God's will. The driving instructor can tell her student how to drive a car, show videos on proper driving and even take the student on an instructional driving course to model proper driving techniques. But

there comes a time when the keys are given to the student. The steering wheel is turned over to the student. The control of the car is yielded to the student.

You may know God has a plan for your life, and understand what it means. You may have listened to Bible lessons on God's plan for your life and even had a mentor explain the practical steps of how God's plan should be lived. But there comes a time when you yield your life to God. You let go. He takes over. Then you understand, "Thy will be done."

You don't pray to bend God's will,  
But prayer bends your will to His.

#### GOD'S PLAN IS NOT FORCED ON ANYONE

God has a plan for this universe, it's run by His natural laws. God has a plan for people, they live by the principles of psychology, sociology, nutrition, hygiene, and good mental health. Some refuse to live by God's universal laws and suffer consequences . . . natural results that come directly from breaking known laws.

God has laws about sexual purity, and those who come in contact with AIDS will probably contract AIDS. Some mistakenly say God punished them, as though God pushed a button in heaven and they were infected. What really happened is they broke certain health laws by contracting AIDS and were infected. God may have originally initiated laws of sanitation, but He had nothing personally to do with their getting the disease. They stepped across the health line.

Sometimes you have not done God's will because you didn't know what He wanted. Suppose you didn't get a raise that you expected. You get mad. But you didn't get your raise because you didn't know what the organization expected. Your supervisor says you have not

filled out the paper forms, so you didn't get a raise. When the supervisor shows you how to fill out the paper work, you do it. In the same way, when you pray "Thy will be done . . . you ask God to show you what to do."

THE SUBMISSION OF YOURSELF TO GOD  
IS THE BEGINNING OF YOUR  
PRAYER LIFE

Sometimes when you pray "Thy will be done," you are saying God doesn't accept the world the way it is. God doesn't like crime, ignorance, and disease. God doesn't want lying politicians or corrupt businesses. So when you pray "Thy will be done," you are asking God to change the world. Or, you are praying for God to help you change the world according to His plan.

Many Christians see so much corruption about them that they just throw up their hands in despair. But Jesus didn't do that. When Jesus saw corrupt money changers in the temple, he threw them out. In the spirit of "Thy will be done," Jesus cleansed the temple twice, at the beginning and end of his earthly ministry.

PRAYER IS A CALL  
TO  
CHANGE THE WORLD

When you pray "Thy will be done," you also submit your attitude to God. Some people do God's will, but they do it with the wrong attitude. In submission to God they go to church, but they wish they were elsewhere during the service. When bowing in prayer, they desire sinful things. When you pray "Thy will be done," you yield your attitude to God.

Lord's Prayer-Chapter Five



Some people drop their money in the plate on Sunday, but resentfully think, "I could make a bundle in the stock market with that." Their selfishness leads to resentment. When you pray "Thy will be done," you are asking God to overcome your resentment.

Some give money to God when they need a new car, or a new suit, or something else they want. Resentfully they think, "The church should give money to me, instead of my giving to it." Lack of trusting God leads to resentment. When you pray "Thy will be done," you yield your money to God.

Some fight giving time to God. Instead of sitting in church, they think "I could be on the golf course." Others rationalize, "I work hard to provide for my family, I don't like giving up Sunday family time to attend church." When you pray "Thy will be done," you deal with any resentment about giving your time to God.

Some also have the problem of inward rebellion. They know they must do God's will, but they only surrender outwardly. They think, "I can't beat God, so I might as well surrender." A little boy kept standing in kindergarten, even though the teacher asked him to sit down. She pressured him, "Everyone else is sitting down, can't you sit down?" When the boy continued to stand, a teacher helper put her hand on the little boy's shoulder to keep him sitting. In desperation he blurted out, "I may be sitting on the outside, but I'm standing on the inside."

Some have outwardly submitted to God's will, but inwardly they stubbornly stand up to God. When they pray "Thy will be done," they must inwardly surrender to God's will as well as outwardly doing it.

PRAAYER CHANGES YOU  
BEFORE  
IT CHANGES GOD.

Some have passive resignation. Like a fatalist, they believe God caused every problem. "Whatever will be . . . will be." These fatalist don't eagerly pray "Thy will be done." Nor are these people happy with God's will. They are like a couple who has been married for over 40 years. The wife jabbars constantly, and the husband sulks in silence. She continues to babble and he's given up trying to change her. He has surrendered. When you pray "Thy will be done," it is not passive surrender because you can't do anything about it. You actively submit to God's plan with joyful anticipation to do it.

Prayer is a personal discipline  
that transforms us  
into dedicated disciples.

Some have theological problems with the Lord's Prayer. They believe God's will only involves what happens in heaven, and not what happens to us on earth. They believe God's will only involves Bible times, and not today. If you theology has limited your prayer life, then you have bad theology. When you pray "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," you are asking for . . . God's intervention . . . here . . . now . . . personally . . . for you.

Others with bad theology teach that the Lord's Prayer is only for those under the Old Testament law or for a future Theocratic Kingdom. They are applying the Lord's Prayer to a Jewish dispensation. They claim Jesus taught this prayer before He died, making this an Old

Testament prayer. The history of the Christian church teaches the Lord's Prayer is for the Christian church. It is for today . . . it is for those who live in the United States . . . it is for anyone in the world today.

The Lord's prayer is for all believers, including the disciples under the Old Testament and those who live under it in the New Testament. Jesus knew His disciples would be the foundations of the church (Eph. 2:20). When they asked, "Teach us to pray" (Luke 18:1), He gave them the Lord's Prayer which transcends all dispensational barriers.

#### THE LORD'S PRAYER CAN HELP US FIND GOD'S WILL

You can find God's plan for your life if you will pray daily, "Thy will be done." Not just repeating the words, but you must seek it with all your heart. Jesus told us "Seek ye first the kingdom of God."

To some the plan of God comes slowly and gradually, like the coming of a new day. The sun doesn't bust on the scene suddenly. There's a faint trace of light to drive away the shadows long before you are able to read the morning newspaper by the faint light in the East. So God's plan comes slowly to someone in the bondage of sin. But as they continue praying daily, "Thy will be done," God leads them into His plan for their life.

To others, the plan of God is like turning on the light in a dark room. Young people have gone to church without a clue or direction for their life. But in one missionary conference, their whole life is focused. They walk out of the meeting heading for the mission field. They know God has called them that evening, and they obeyed.

The Lord's Prayer teaches us not to rush into God's presence like children . . . babbling about our problems . . . or anticipating a gift. We are taught to come into God's presence to

glorify Him . . . to acknowledge His agenda . . . to seek His will. The Lord's Prayer teaches us to pray "Thy will be done" and to let God reveal His plan in our life.

PRAYER CHECKLIST	HOW ARE YOU DOING?		
Thy Will Be Done (List what you do to get God's will.)	Lousy	Average	Great
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			

### JOURNALING

If you are serious about finding and doing God's will, you ought to keep record of how you are doing. Just as a good track record will give direction to the future, you will better understand God's will when you look back on your present struggles to find God's plan for your life. Answer some of the following questions each day.

1. What principles are you discovering that help you find God's plan for your life?
2. What do you know for sure that God wants you to do?
3. What do you know for sure that God doesn't want you to do? How do you know this?
4. How is your life changing because you are discovering God's plan for your life?

**THREE STEP BIBLE STUDY**  
**HOW TO FIND GOD'S WILL**

The following Bible study is designed to help you pray "Thy will be done" and get God's will in your life. Step One, read the question, trying to answer it. Step Two, read the Bible verse that is printed in the box, trying to determine how it answers the question. Step Three, write the answers in the space provided.

- 1. Since God's will is knowable, what is your response?

"The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way" (Proverbs 25:9). "Be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:17).

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- 2. What is God's will for you concerning this world?

"Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father" (Galatians 1:3,4).

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3. What is the will of God for your physical life?

"I beseech you therefore, brethren by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service, and be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God" (Romans 12:1,2).

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4. God's will is that you overcome temptation (I Corinthians 10:12) and overcome the world (I John 5:4), what does He promise you if you are victorious?

"And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever" (I John 2:17).

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5. How can you find the will of God for your life?

"If anyone wants to know God's will, that person should find out what God wants him to know" (John 7:17 - author's translation).

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6. Where can you find the will of God?

"Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of all he created" (James 1:17).

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7. When you are not sure of your actions, what should be your response?

"Then Paul answered, what mean ye to weep and break mine heart? For I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased saying, the will of the Lord be done" (Acts 21:13,14).

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8. Paul said he hoped to go to Rome by the will of God (Romans 1:10; cf 15:32). He also planned to go to Corinth with the same attitude. What was his attitude?

"But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will" (I Corinthians 4:19).

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9. We plan to do things according to the will of God, but sometimes they don't work out. What should be your prayer when planning to do God's will?

"Go to now, ye that say, today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain. Where err ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this or that" (James 4:13-15).

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THE LORD'S PRAYER  
THE ALL INCLUSIVE PRAYER

To pray by all believers,  
To pray by all ages,  
To pray in all centuries,  
To pray in all locations,  
To pray at all times,  
To pray in all churches,  
To pray in all levels of maturity,  
To pray in all circumstances,  
To pray with all your heart.  
It is all you need to pray.

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE HINGE: IN EARTH VS. IN HEAVEN

#### WRAPPING UP THE "THY" SECTION

Because the Lord's Prayer is perfect symmetry, it has seven petitions that are divided into two sections of three petitions each. The middle petition is a hinge petition that holds the two sections together. The first three petitions are called the "Thy" petitions because they center on God's glory. The last three petitions center on our spirituality. They are called the "Us" petitions.

At the end of the first three "Thy" petitions, you'll find a semi-conclusion that wraps up the first section. A conclusion sums up what has been said, but this is not the final summary, nor is it the last conclusion. Since it comes in the middle of the Lord's Prayer, it is called a "semi-conclusion." It gives you an opportunity to wrap up your thoughts before you go on.

## BALANCING THE LORD'S PRAYER

INTRODUCTION:

OUR FATHER

THY Section "In Heaven"	1.	Thy Name Hallowed	- worship
	2.	Thy Kingdom Come	- guidance
	3.	Thy Will be Done	- yield

*Semi-Conclusion:*      *On Earth as it is in heaven.*

Hinge:                      4.      Give us daily bread      - provisions

US Section "On Earth"	5.	Forgive us	- pardon
	6.	Lead us not	- victory
	7.	Deliver us	- protection

Benediction:              Thine is the Kingdom, power, and all the glory.

The semi-conclusion is "on earth as it is in heaven." Jesus told us to ask for three things to be done "on earth as they are done in heaven." You ask for God to be glorified on sinful earth as He is worshipped in the perfection of heaven. You ask for God's principles to rule the stubborn earth as He reigns in heaven. You ask for God's perfect will be done on this imperfect earth as it is done in heaven.

Why did Jesus add the semi-conclusion? Not to show us how far short we come in our prayer. You can look around to see God is not always glorified on this earth. The semi-conclusion shows you how much you need to ask. It's to stretch your prayers . . . to stretch your faith . . . to stretch your expectations. The semi-conclusion challenges you to pray so things on earth will be like they are in heaven.

"Don't ask for earthly toast," Jesus is telling us, "Ask for a heavenly banquet." The semi-conclusion wants the best from God. Don't be satisfied with the bicycle, ask for a limousine.

How is God's will done in heaven. Heaven is a perfect place with no sin, no corruption, no sickness and no tears. There are no selfish agendas in heaven, only instantaneous obedience. So how is the will of God done in heaven?

*Instantaneously*, God's decisions are immediately carried out in heaven, so your petitions are to be done now.

*Completely*, God's purposes are fulfilled in heaven in every way, so that is your standard for obedience today.

*Purposefully*, God's duties are the only priority in heaven, so you give all intention to His will for today.

*Continuously*, God's will is always being done in heaven, so God's will is your schedule for today.

*Gladly*, God's plan is being happily done, in heaven, so that is your attitude for today.

*Eagerly*, God's blueprint is anxiously sought by those in heaven, so that must be your passion for today.

*Wholeheartedly*, God's formula captivates every part of those in heaven, so you must seek it with your whole being for today and everyday of your life.

The first half of the Lord's Prayer is centered on God. These are called the "Thy" petitions. When you talk to God, you must focus on Him. First, "THY name be hallowed." Second, "THY kingdom come." Third, "THY will be done."

WE PETITIONS
<p>ACKNOWLEDGING GOD'S TOTAL SOVEREIGNTY</p> <p>Because God is holy . . . Thy name be hallowed.</p> <p>Because God rules . . . Thy Kingdom come.</p> <p>Because God is sovereign . . . Thy will be done.</p>

The "Thy" sections show that prayer is talking to God, not selfishly running into God's presence to beg for things you need. You tell God you want His name glorified on earth, as He is the center of worship in heaven. You tell God you want His principles done on earth as He reigns in heaven. You tell God, you submit to His plan and purpose as everything in heaven submits to His will.

The fourth petition is the hinge petition. A hinge is attached to two things to hold them together, the hinge petition is attached to the "Thy" petitions and the "Us" petitions. The hinge holds both sections together. The hinge petition is "Give us this day our daily bread."

You cannot focus on the "Thy" petitions without a strong body. So you ask for "bread" to make you physically strong. "Bread" is a symbol word that stands for all the physical things we need in this life. The hinge petition asks for a strong physical life.

The hinge is attached to the last three petitions which is prayer for our spiritual walk with God. You can't ask for the last three petitions until you establish the priorities of the first three petitions. The hinge petition is a request for physical ability to do things both "in earth" and "in heaven." You can ask for "bread" only after you worship His name, live by Kingdom principles and submit to His will to be done in your life. Next, you ask for "bread" to have the physical ability to fulfill a spiritual walk with God on this earth, i.e. to be forgiven of sin, to be victorious over sin and to be protected from the Evil One.

The hinge separates the heavenly petitions from the earthly petitions, yet as only a hinge uniquely ties things together, the hinge helps you to live on earth by heavenly standards.

US PETITIONS
ACKNOWLEDGING OUR TOTAL DEPENDENCE ON GOD
Because we need . . . Give us bread.
Because we sin . . . Forgive us our debts.
Because we stray . . . Lord, lead us not into temptation.
Because we are helpless . . . Deliver us from the Evil One.

You hallow God's name (first section) when you are forgiven, victorious and protected from evil (last section).

You let God's kingdom rule come on earth (first section) when you are forgiven, victorious and protected from the Evil One (second section).

You do God's will (first section) when you properly deal with past sins, you are not led into future sins, and you are protected daily from the Evil One (second section).

A hinge allows doors to open . . . and close. The hinge of the Lord's Prayer opens up the mysteries of God so you can see how every petition interacts with one another.

The hinge allows you like a child to swing in . . . and out. A child swinging on a door can pretend he is on an airplane or sailing a five masted pirate's sailing ship. The swinging door allows us to go anywhere we want to go.

When you grab the semi-conclusion, you pray to God on earth as though you were "in heaven." You grab the hinge and ask God "in heaven" to answer for you even though you are living, "on earth."

The hinge is real and you ask for real things. You don't live in your imagination, nor can you "make up" the conditions of prayer. The child swinging on the door never really flies and never really sails. They only do it in their mind. Eventually, every child must come down "to earth" and live in the real world. So we pray as though we are "in heaven," but we must live "on earth."

We must pray as though,  
it all depends on God.  
We must live as though,  
it all depends on us.

This prayer checklist gives you an opportunity to review how you are applying the first three petitions of the Lord's Prayer. Take a moment to assess your spiritual growth.

PRAYER CHECKLIST	HOW ARE YOU DOING?		
In earth as it is in heaven (List how you want answers to your requests on earth.)	Lousy	Average	Great
1. Has God's name been hallowed in your life?  2. Have you asked and seen God's kingdom come in your life?  3. Have you submitted to God's will and has it been done on earth?  .			

**JOURNALING**

If you are serious about touching God by daily praying the Lord's Prayer, you should have kept a record as you have prayed the first three petitions. Now is a good time to review your progress. Look over your past journal entries and answer the following questions:

1. What have you learned about worshipping God? How have you praised God? What has worship done to your personal growth and walk with God?
2. What have you learned about the principles by which God directs His kingdom work in the world today? List some of the principles of prayer you've learned. Since we should be living by God's principles, in what areas do you need to learn and grow?
3. You should do the will of God every day. What has praying daily the Lord's Prayer taught you about God's will? Write some clear aspects of God's will that you've learned. In what areas of God's will for your life do you need to learn and grow?

<p style="text-align: center;">THREE STEP BIBLE STUDY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">REVIEWING THE "THY" PETITIONS</p>
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The following Bible study is designed to help you review the "thy" petitions so that you will gain insight and apply these truths to your life. Step 1, read the question and try to answer it. Step 2, read the Bible verse printed in the box, then try to determine how the scriptures answer the question. Step 3, write the answers in the space provided.

1. What should be our first concern when we begin praying the Lord's Prayer?

"Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed (holy) be thy name" - Matthew 6:9. "Father, glorify thy name. Then come there a voice from heaven, saying I have both glorified it and will glorify it again" - John 12:28.



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2. When we say “Our Father” we come in prayer with Jesus. How did Jesus approach prayer?

“Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son may glorify Thee . . . that they may know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” - John 17:1,3.

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3. When we pray “Thy kingdom come,” we are asking for the kingdom principles to rule our life. What characterizes the kingdom principles?

“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” - Romans 14:17.

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4. The prayer “Thy kingdom come” means God’s rule should control our life on earth as it does in heaven. What is our attitude?

“Seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after; and our Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you” - Luke 12:29-31

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5. The prayer “Thy will be done” is a prayer of submission. What should be our attitude?

“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” - Luke 9:23.

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6. What should we yield to God?

“Don’t yield the members of your body as instruments of unrighteousness to do sin, but yield your whole self to God, as someone who is alive from the dead, and yield your bodily members as instruments of righteousness to God” - Romans 6:13 Author’s Translation.

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7. Does God rule in heaven or on earth?

“The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all” - Psalm 103:19.

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8. What is happening in heaven?

“Even thou art Lord alone; Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all things that are therein. The seas, and all that is therein, and thou preserveth them all: and the host of heaven worship thee” - Nehemiah 9:6.

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9. Everything on earth does not do God’s will as it is done in heaven. What shall be our response?

“Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever, Amen” - Hebrews 13:20,21.

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## LORD'S PRAYER

THY PETITIONS	HINGE	US PETITIONS
To Glorify God	For my Needs	For my Growth in Grace
The Purpose of Prayer	Provision of Prayer	Plan of Prayer
Father / Kings / Master	Bread	Savior / Guide / Protector
Eternity	Now	Past / Present / Future
My Worship of God	My needs supplied	My relationship with God
<b>PRAISE</b>	<b>PROMISE</b>	<b>PERSONAL</b>
Prostrate Before Him	With out-stretched hands	With bended neck
Looking up	Looking without	Looking within
With my hands toward God	With my hands on the plough	With my hands in His
God the Father / King	God the Farmer/provider	God the Savior / Protector
With other worshippers in the Temple	With other workers in the world	With other walkers in this journey
In Psalms praising God	In Proverbs working in God	In Romans fellowshiping with God
Doctrine of God	Doctrine of Man	Doctrine of Salvation
Man directed by God	God directed to Man	God and Man directed to each other

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE FOURTH PETITION: GIVE US BREAD

#### ASKING FOR THINGS

Our evening meal was a tuna casserole, not my favorite but it was cheap. A can of tuna cost about a quarter and noodles were a nickel a package (1953 prices). The proverbial cupboard was bare.

My wife Ruth and I bowed our heads to thank God for our daily bread. In front of us were a few slices of bread, ice tea, and a jello salad, a simple meal that would end that day of our lives. God had always taken care of us and we had enough "daily bread" for that day.

Nothing for tomorrow. It was about three days until the next payday.

I was a senior in college, studying for the ministry. I drove a school bus for \$1.00 per hour, not the best of jobs in 1953, but it was all I could get to fit my hours. Between studying for classes and working in a church, there was not much time to make money. I brought home about \$20 a week. In 1953, I felt my wife shouldn't work, so Ruth was a full-time student with me.

"Thank you for this food," I prayed over the tuna casserole. I was truly thankful for that day and knew God would take care of tomorrow. But I didn't know how. I told God,

"You know our need," I hesitated, looking for words. "We don't have any money."

You don't need long prayers for God to answer. God can hear the shortest cry for help and do something.

"Give us daily bread . . ."

No sooner had I said "Amen" than we saw a laundry truck drive up to our place. Ruth went to the front door, our laundry man was a neighbor and our landlord. He didn't own our house, he just collected rent for the owner.

"I don't have any dry cleaning today," Ruth told the laundry man, and with a smile she added, "and if we gave you dirty clothes, we couldn't pay for it."

"On no . . .," he told her, "I didn't come to pick up cleaning." He explained that he had been going over our rental account the previous night.

"I came to bring your money," he explained. "I didn't pay you for unplugging the pipes," he told Ruth.

Reaching into his pocket, he took out \$25.00 and handed it to Ruth. There had been a hard freeze when we first moved into our Minnesota home four months earlier. The temperature plunged to 40° below zero and the bathroom pipes froze. I borrowed a blow torch from the school bus company to thaw them.

"I should have paid you three months ago," the laundry man told Ruth. We put the \$25.00 next to the tuna casserole and prayed again.

"Thank you for our daily bread."

God provided miraculously for us, but he used a job I did earlier. I had worked all day to thaw the pipes. God's timing is always perfect. Three months earlier I had done what I had to do, we needed water. In our hour of need, God reminded the laundry man about the \$25.00 he owed us.

When we pray "Give us this day our daily bread," we are asking for more than "bread," although the petition includes our daily food. Bread is a symbol word that stands for all our

physical needs. Bread gives us strength to walk . . . work . . . dig . . . or type at the word processor. Bread gives us stamina that drives us to close a business deal. Bread keeps our minds clear to think and make long range plans for our employers. Bread gives the teacher energy to deal with restless children. Bread stands for more than food, it stands for the results we get from eating food. It stands for all the physical things we need in life.

Bread is a symbol word that stands for money . . . for time . . . for a job . . . for material things. Bread stands for the roof over our head and the clothes on our back. It stands for a car to give us basic transportation, or subway money to get us to work. Bread stands for fuel oil in the winter. . . for air conditioning in the summer.

When you ask God for daily bread, you are asking for all the things you need to live. It stands for a job to earn money . . . for physical healing so you can work . . . for a raise so you can properly support your family. Bread stands for every physical need in your life.

When you pray "Give us this day our daily bread," you recognize five factors about your needs in relationship to God.

FIVE ESSENTIAL FACTS ABOUT OUR DAILY NEEDS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. That we have daily needs.</li><li>2. That God supplies our needs.</li><li>3. That we must ask God to supply our needs.</li><li>4. That our needs are supplied one day at a time.</li><li>5. That we don't have to pray for everything, but we have to pray about everything.</li></ol>

A salesman who attended my Bible class always wore a hat to work, even though he worked in the appliance section of the department store. Everyone knew him as the tall man with the straw hat, white shirt and tie, with the sleeves rolled up past the elbows. People thought he wore the straw hat everywhere because he was bald. But that was not the case.

He had an infectious smile and liked talking to people. But the best thing about him was that he was a good salesman. He had a "patterned" way of closing a sale. When people said "No," he'd shake his head like he didn't believe what he just heard. Then he'd take off that straw hat, wipe his brow with his forearm and look inside his hat. Then pausing, he'd stare into his hat for a few seconds. Then he answered the objection and made the sale. No one ever asked what he was doing when he looked in his hat. It was just a habit that he had acquired. Then holding the hat for the rest of the presentation, he usually closed the sale. He didn't put his hat back on till the customer left.

I taught lessons on the Lord's Prayer in my Bible class several years ago. That bald headed man didn't wear his hat in church. He came up to tell me the secret of his sales ability, but made me promise not to tell anyone. Most of his customers were non-Christians and he didn't want them attaching any "magic" to his practice of removing his hat when he closed a sale. He wore his hat for one reason he told me. He had a prayer written out inside the hat band. When he looked in his hat, he was praying what was written there,

"Give us this day our daily bread."

He explained that every sale was his "daily bread" to feed his family. He prayed that prayer while looking in the hat, then he continued praying the Lord's Prayer till the sale was finalized.



## GROWING MORE BREAD BUT HUNGRIER

Most Americans who buy this book are not realistically hungry. They don't pray, "Give me a meal today or I'll go hungry." America is a land of abundance. We have many restaurants, fast food outlets, and grocery stores. If anything, most Americans pray, "Lord, help me lose weight." However, that is not the complete picture. There are homeless Americans who do not have enough to eat, and around the world, there are millions who go to bed hungry. When many pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," it's an intense problem to them.

When you walk into the supermarket, there is sliced bread, whole wheat bread, rye bread, multi-grain bread, and rolls of various kinds. Bread is sold in various brands, various sizes, and various prices. You can buy homemade bread, day-old bread and bread from the freezer ready to cook in your oven. So when we pray "Give us bread," it is rather a remote and strange prayer.

Why?

Because we have taken bread for granted. There's a lot of bread to go around.

In our technological and scientific world, we have produced more bread than we could ever imagine. Our agricultural explorations have produced more ears per corn stalk, more cornstalks that can grow closer together, and more kernels of corn per ear, producing a greater yield than any nation in the world, than any time in history. Now they're trying to develop corn that will recycle itself each year so farmers don't have to plant it. Maybe they'll harvest corn like picking fruit off a tree. They are producing corn that will produce nitrogen to naturally fertilize itself. All of this means we produce more corn than has ever been produced in the past.

America has enough farm machinery to harvest more corn than ever before. America has enough multi-million dollar combines, that if lined up, could harvest all of Iowa in one day.

If America harvested corn like the rest of the world, it would take 31 million people using 61 million horses to harvest Iowa in a day.

America produces enough corn to fill enough boxcars to stretch around the world several times. Our food production alone is worth \$100 billion annually, an amount that staggers the imagination. So to say, "Give us this day our daily bread" doesn't seem like a major prayer request.

But imagine if you don't have any bread. Imagine you haven't had any bread for a couple of days. Imagine if you needed bread more than anything else, then you would ask for bread with all of your heart. You would deeply pray, "Give us this day our daily bread."

America has more bread than any nation in the world, i.e. physical bread. But what about spiritual bread? Are we rightly using our physical bread for the right reasons? Can we use physical bread to feed the multitudes both physically and spiritually. Perhaps one hunger feeds the other, but which one comes first?

#### WE HAVE DAILY NEEDS

When God created people, He did not make them like a perpetual motion machine that needed no fuel, no maintenance, and no supervision. A perpetual motion machine doesn't need a person to run it. It needs nothing.

God didn't create self-sufficient people. He created individuals that needed air to breathe, and food to give them energy. They need shelter from the elements and clothes to keep them warm. They need love to make them whole and social relationships to make them happy.

God created people with needs. They need food, shelter, clothes. Perhaps God made people with needs so that when they get away from Him, their “needs” would make them turn to Him.

People need to look outside themselves to get food or clothing. If a person didn't have any needs, they could go hide in a hole to hibernate like a polar bear all winter. But a person hibernating in a hole cannot bring glory to God. That person has no purpose for living.

As a small boy, my mother taught me the Westminster Catechism. We attended a small Presbyterian church where the children lined up in front of Sunday School to recite the children's catechism, the boys on one side of the room and the girls on the other side. It was always the boys against the girls. When we missed an answer, we had to sit down. Albert Freurdt always won. I never won. Today Albert is a Professor of Church History at the Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, Mississippi. I always wanted the first question because it was easy.

WESTMINSTER CATECHISM	
Q.	"What is the chief end of man?"
A.	"The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever."

But my last name is Towns, so I always was at the end of the line and got the tough questions. That question I faced in my Sunday School is the basic question of life, "Why am I here?" We are on this earth to bring glory to God, which we do in several ways. One of the ways is how we take care of ourselves and provide for our needs.

God made us with needs so we would look to him to supply these needs.

If we didn't need bread, most people wouldn't work. But in our toil and sweat we find meaning, happiness and money to buy bread.

If we didn't need bread, most people would sit down and do nothing. We don't glorify God by doing nothing.

If we didn't need bread, we wouldn't create new ways of doing things, we wouldn't invent easier ways of doing things, we wouldn't use all the intelligence God has given us.

Because we have needs, we grow . . . we get better . . . we reach out to others . . . we produce . . . we do what God originally told Adam to do in the garden. "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over it" (Genesis 1:28).

And then to make sure people understood what He meant, God explained where bread comes from, "Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat" (Genesis 1:29).

#### GOD SUPPLIES OUR NEEDS

Most people eat bread to satisfy their personal needs . . . to make them grow . . . to make them feel better . . . to give them strength . . . or to overcome hunger. While all this is true, there is a bigger goal. Paul tell us, "Whether therefore you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (I Corinthians 10:31). You should eat bread to glorify God. Because He provided everything. He is glorified every time you eat. That's because He created it, He gave it life to grow, He gave man intelligence to harvest it, and He gets glory when we cook it and bow our heads before a meal to thank Him for it. Eating is for the glory of God; therefore, remember where you got your bread, who gave bread to you, and what is the purpose of bread.

When you pray "Give us this day our daily bread," you are not yanking on a string to get God's attention. Too often we treat prayer as yanking on the puppet strings for our Divine Giver to say please, "give us bread."

Some people wrongly pray like spoiled children, "GIVE ME BREAD NOW." They expect God like an obedient parent to immediately give what they demand. This lowers God below the human level. This approach to the Lord's Prayer is blasphemous. This makes God like a welfare office, or He becomes our 911 phone call.

Praying "Give us this day our daily bread" is a faith-statement that is broader than asking for a sandwich. Since "bread" is a symbol word, you are asking God to bless your work so you can grow corn to make bread, or you are asking God to bless your work so you can make money to buy bread. You are asking God to give you the cause (how you get physical things) and give you the results (the food you need to eat).

Then when you pray "Give us this day our daily bread," you are talking with God about your needs. You are getting God in His rightful place in your life. Prayer is a platform to glorify God.

When you prayed the first three petitions, you set God in His rightful place in the heavens and in your heart on the earth. In the first three petitions, you prayed that God's name would be hallowed, that His kingdom principles would come, and that His will would be done both in heaven and on the earth. How can these three petitions be done on the earth? When you pray "Give us bread," you are asking for bread that is grown on this earth. Hence, when you ask for bread, you are recognizing that God is the source, and that you are worshipping His name by the supply of bread. Secondly, you are asking for God's Kingdom principles to come on earth by providing food. When you pray "Thy will be done," you ask for God's plan in your life, which is working for bread, cooking bread and then eating it to be strong so you can do His will.

When you pray "Give us bread," you are bringing God into your daily struggle for survival. When you pray "Forgive us our debts," you bring God into your daily struggle with sin. When you pray "Lead us not into temptation," you bring God into your struggle for victory. And when you pray "Deliver us from the Evil One," you bring God into your struggle for protection.

You don't approach prayer to get something for yourself, but you ask for bread to allow God to glorify Himself through supplying your needs.

### WE MUST ASK GOD TO SUPPLY OUR NEEDS

Daily bread doesn't come from a vending machine. Too often we think that if we stick in a coin, out comes the cold drink or pack of peanuts. In the same way, we think that if we stick in a prayer, out pops daily bread or anything else we want from God. Some would have us think that we could demand things from God, or we can fast to get things from God, or we can "name it to claim it" from God. But God does not operate by a vending machine strategy. The bottom line in all prayer is "Hallowed by Thy name." Prayer is not what we do . . . what we ask . . . what we beg. Prayer is a way to glorify God and worship God. Prayer recognizes the sovereignty of God.

**Prayer is declaring the majesty of God  
and  
submitting my life to His will.**

Prayer is not the persuasive words of a lawyer before a jury to get a winning verdict, whether that verdict is right or necessary. We cannot manipulate God to get the right thing or what we want.

Prayer is not like a student asking a teacher for extra time to do an assignment, or putting an apple on the teacher's desk to get a better grade. God is not a teacher who withholds a good grade. God is the sovereign ruler of the universe and when you pray the Lord's Prayer, you bring His glory into your life. Prayer is your platform to worship God.

Prayer is more than what you ask . . . More than what you do . . . More than what you say . . . Prayer is your way of living.
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God has told us to pray "Give us this day our daily bread." Jesus has said, "Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you" (Matthew 7:7).

God's plan is for us to ask.

But God does not give us everything we ask.

Some ask for too much. They ask for cake with chocolate icing, but God gives them bread, plain white bread. Why? It could be they didn't work hard enough, or it could be that was not God's purpose.

Some ask for the lottery. They want to retire and not work any longer. It's not that God doesn't want to give them money and ease. God knows they would stray from Him if they had it too easy. God has to keep some people on short financial leashes to keep them faithful to Him.

Has it ever occurred to you that God doesn't answer some peoples request for money because He can't trust them?

Some people ask today for tomorrow's bread. God's answer is "wait till tomorrow." God doesn't say "no" to some of our prayers. He says "wait." We need to learn patience and character.

Some people have asked for bread, and God never answered at all. In times of famine, Christians have starved to death. Even when they prayed for "bread," God did not answer them as they requested. Does that mean God did not hear their request for "daily bread?" Did God close His eyes to the promise that we should, "Ask . . . Seek . . . Knock?" No, God has a time for all of us to die, a time for all to go home and meet Him. In the providence of God, some Christians will die of starvation or without clothing (See Hebrews 11:35-39 for those who seemed forsaken). Always preface your request for "daily bread" with the first petition of the Lord's Prayer, i.e. "That His name be hallowed in the provision of your needs." When you want God to be glorified by the provision of your needs, you leave the results up to Him.

#### OUR NEEDS ARE SUPPLIED ONE DAY AT A TIME

The petition "Give us this day our daily bread" has a very simple, yet understandable truth. We live from day to day, we eat from day to day, because we have needs from day to day. So when you pray "Give us this day," you are telling the Father that you will walk with Him one day at a time.

The phrase "this day" stresses daily patience that should characterize your life. Think of those who are stressed out with anxiety because they face the problems of tomorrow, before tomorrow comes. Is it not true that most of the problems that you worry about never happen? So Jesus gives you a beautiful way to live. When you pray for "bread this day," you are telling God that you intend to live just one day at a time.

When you pray for "this day," you are expressing ultimate confidence in God. You are recognizing that He is your Father, and you are His child. Think of the little children playing in the yard. It is a beautiful spring day to enjoy their tricycles. They ride without thinking of who



gave them the tricycle. They romp on the grass without thinking who will cut the grass. They eat a sandwich without thinking of who will plant crops in the spring to grow in the summer for a full harvest. Putting bread on the table is the father's job. Mother's job is getting kool-aid or treats. Children have few worries because they trust their parents. When you pray for "bread this day," you are exercising ultimate confidence in your Heavenly Father to provide for your needs.

Quit worrying about what hasn't happened yet. Why? Because worrying about tomorrow is telling the Heavenly Father that you are not sure that He can provide for tomorrow's "bread." Worry is another word for doubt. You doubt God's care when you worry about provisions.

There is a difference between worrying about tomorrow and planning for tomorrow. The Bible calls the ant "exceedingly wise" because "the ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer" (Proverbs 30:24,25).

**WE DON'T HAVE TO PRAY FOR EVERYTHING  
BUT WE HAVE TO PRAY ABOUT EVERYTHING**

The Lord's Prayer doesn't say, "Give us this days bread, clothes, a roof over our heads and shoes for the kids." It only commands us to pray, "Give us bread." Because bread is the symbol word to stand for all our needs. You are to pray about your needs, but you don't have to blurt out a grocery list of needs to your Heavenly Father. Jesus gives us the reason when introducing the Lord's Prayer. "You Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him" (Matthew 6:8).

Obviously, we have many needs on our heart. When we come to the Father we should tell Him our concerns. The passage doesn't say we should not ask the Father, it says the opposite. It says He knows, "before ye ask Him" (Matthew 6:8).

When we have good health, we don't ask for good health. God knows we need good health. We thank Him for good health . . . for our jobs . . . for the enjoyable things in life.

How much bread makes up daily bread? Does God supply all we need or all we want? We can pray for necessities, but nowhere are we told to pray for luxuries. We are commanded to pray for "daily bread," but should we pray for strawberry shortcake? The book of Proverbs gives us the answer in a principle for living. "Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient (appropriate) for me" (Proverbs 30:8). How much should we pray for? Daily bread is enough to get us through one day. The writer of Proverbs says, "Convenient bread," which is enough for today. Like a convenient store, you don't go there to buy your whole week's groceries. You just go for what you need for one meal or for today. A convenience store provides for daily needs.

Why should we pray for daily bread? The writer of Proverbs continues, "Lest I be full, and deny thee, or say who is the Lord? Or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain" (Proverbs 30:9). So, we should not focus on tomorrow's bread, lest we forget God. When we have too much bread, we forget the source of bread who is God.

America has become very rich, and it seems that the richer she becomes, the less Americans attend church, pray, or are fearful of breaking His laws concerning fornication, lying, stealing or any other of the Ten Commandments. Maybe if America were poor and hungry again, as in the Great Depression, Americans would cry out to God, "Give us this day our daily bread."

Yet, the writer of Proverbs said he needed "food convenient for me." For without daily bread, "Lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain" (Proverbs 30:9). When we don't have enough bread, our hunger drives us to deny the God who gives us our necessities.

While Americans are not starving physically, we are starving in other ways. We are starved in our souls, for we steal, lie, and jealously hurt one another. We are starved in our character when we compromise our standards and deny God's rightful place in our society. We are starving in our families, when we deny love, respect and fellowship to one another.

There was a song at camp I learned as a teenager that teaches this truth. "One day at a time, sweet Jesus." However, as a youth I did not understand the full meaning of what I was singing, it was just an enjoyable tune. But the song had a prayer that comes from the Lord's Prayer, "Teach me to live one day at a time."

PRAYER CHECKLIST	HOW ARE YOU DOING?		
Give us this day our daily bread (List the things you must pray.)	Lousy	Average	Great
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			

### JOURNALING

It is a good discipline to keep a record of the prayers for which you pray. What has God answered, and why has God answered? Remember the work should be your very own. You will have some things in your list that God has not answered. Write a note to your self explaining

why God has not answered certain prayers. Compare the answers with non-answers. What can you learn?

1. Write out the things for which you pray. As you get an answer, check them off.
2. Make a list of your greatest answers to prayer last week, last month, last year.  
Why does God answer some prayers on your check list, and not others?
3. Make a list of your non-answers to prayer last week, last month, last year. Write what you learned about prayer from non-answers.
4. Describe in your words how you feel when God answers your prayers.
5. What have you learned about the person and glory of God by praying for things?

**THREE STEP BIBLE STUDY**  
**PRAYING FOR THINGS**

The following Bible study will guide you to pray for things. Step One, read the question trying to answer it. Step Two, read the Bible verse that is printed with the question. Try to determine how the Word of God answers the question. Step Three, write the answers in the space provided.

1. Why are your prayers for things not answered?

"You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive because you ask amiss (for the wrong reason) that you may spend it on your pleasure" (James 4:2,3).

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2. What is a primary condition to get your prayers for things answered?

"Now he knoweth that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth His will, him He heareth" (John 9:31).

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3. What is the principle for praying? (What is the meaning of ask, seek, and knock?)

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; for everyone that asketh, receiveth, and he that seeketh, findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Matthew 7:7,8).

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4. What is the authority by which you pray for things?

"And whatsoever ye shall ask in My (Jesus) name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it" (John 14:13,14).

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5. What should be your attitude when you pray for things?

"If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7).

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6. What relationship does the fruit of Christian character have in getting your prayers answered?

"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit shall remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you" (John 15:16).

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7. What is the role of faith or confidence in praying for things?

"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to His will, he heareth us; and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know we have the petitions we desire of Him" (1 John 5:14,15).

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8. How long should you pray for your request?

"And He (Jesus) spoke a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1).

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9. What should you expect in prayer when you meet all God's conditions?

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

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PASSION OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

Hallowed be thy name . . . the PRAISE of God.

Thy Kingdom come . . . the PURPOSE of God.

Thy will be done . . . the PLAN of God.

Give us bread . . . the PROVISION of God.

Forgive us our debt . . . the PARDON of God.

Lead us not into temptation . . . the POWER of God.

Deliver us from the Evil One . . . the PROTECTION of God.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

### THE FIFTH PETITION: FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS

### GETTING FORGIVENESS AND FEELING CLEAN

John had to try out his new slingshot. He perched tin cans on the farm fence, but missed every shot. Slingshots are not very accurate even when you make them yourself. John shot at a bird in the tree and missed. After all, he's only in the fourth grade. He shot at a rabbit and missed. He shot at the dog and missed. John was getting more frustrated by the minute.

Grandmother called him for dinner. On the way to the house, he shot at grandmother's favorite duck, this time he hit his target. He hit the duck in the head, instantly killing it. No one was in the yard. He looked both ways, no one saw him. Quickly, John grabbed a shovel and ran behind the barn to bury the duck.

After dinner, grandmother asked Sally to wash the dishes. She said her brother John wanted to wash dishes, then she whispered to him,

"Remember the duck."

Apparently, Sally saw what happened and blackmailed her brother. John washed the dishes. Next morning when grandmother asked Sally to sweep the porch, she said John wanted to sweep. Then she whispered,

"Remember the duck."

All that week Sally blackmailed her brother into doing her jobs around the house. Every time she wanted John to do her jobs, she'd whisper, "Remember the duck." When John couldn't

stand anymore guilt, he finally confessed to his grandmother that he killed her favorite duck. She replied,

"I was washing dishes at the window and saw you hit the duck," she explained, "I know you didn't mean to do it. I could see fear in your face." She explained to John, "I forgave you the moment you did it, but I wondered how long you would live with your guilt before you told me."

Many Christians are like John. We have done something terrible and someone like "the Sally's" of this world hold us in bondage. For others, "the Sally's" are internal. We are in slavery to our own guilt.

Many new believers rush into God's presence with their shopping list and begin to ask, "Give me this . . ." or "Give me that . . ." That is not the way to begin the Lord's Prayer, although you can ask God for things.

Other believers want to talk begin their prayer, "I'm sorry . . ." or "Forgive me . . ." They feel so guilty over a sin that they want to begin with confession. As much as your sin blocks your fellowship with God, that is not the way to begin the Lord's Prayer.

First you worship God, "Hallowed be Thy name." Second, you seek to live by His kingdom principles, "Thy kingdom come in my life on earth." Third, you ask for guidance, "Thy will be done."

Since you must have physical life to have spiritual life, the fourth petition is, "Give us bread for today." When you have prayed for these four things, now you are ready to deal with sin in your life. The fifth prayer is "Forgive us our debts," which introduces you to the "Us Petitions." You pray "Forgive us," then "Lead us not into temptation," and finally, "Deliver us from the Evil One."

This chapter is concerned with your sins that block your fellowship with God.

When you pray, "Forgive us our debts," you are recognizing five factors of the Christian life.

FIVE ESSENTIAL FACTS ABOUT OUR SIN
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. That God's children sin.</li><li>2. That God's children are concerned after their sin.</li><li>3. That God's children must do something about their sin.</li><li>4. That God will forgive them.</li><li>5. That forgiving others is essential.</li></ol>

When you pray, "Forgive us our debts," you are not begging for salvation as the non-Christian who feels the guilt of hell.

When you pray, "Forgive us our debts," you are not saying your sin has cast away all hope and that you are afraid of dying outside of Christ.

When you pray, "Forgive us our debts," you are a child of the Father who has not lived up to your Father's expectation. You are saying, "I'm sorry" to your Heavenly Father so you can have fellowship with Him again.

"Forgive us our debts" is not initial forgiveness, which is the sinner coming to God for salvation. Many mistakenly think this prayer is asking God to make them a Christian. Not so! When you pray, "Forgive us our debts," you already are a Christian who calls God, "Our Father." You already are a child of the King . . . you are in the kingdom. When you pray, "Forgive us our debts," you are asking for "parental forgiveness." Because you are a child of the Father, you are

related to Him by nature. You received a new nature at salvation (II Corinthians 5:17). You can call God your Father, you are a member of the family of God.

Suppose a child sneaks behind his fathers back and does what the Father told all the children not to do. Is the Father no longer the child's Father? The answer is obviously "No!" A child is a member of the Father's family by birth (the new birth). But when a child disobeys the Father, he does not break his Father/child relationship, the child breaks fellowship. The child is still a child of the Father, but the Father is disappointed. Like fathers on earth are "crushed" when their children go wrong, a Christian breaks God's heart when they disobey Him. The child feels guilt because he has let his Father down.

When you pray "Forgive us our debts," you are asking the Father God to restore your fellowship with Him (you already are His child), you are not asking for God to restore your relationship with Him.

#### GOD'S CHILDREN SIN

The Lord's Prayer teaches us that God's children don't always do God's will. The Father expects his children to be perfect, "Be ye perfect" (Matt. 5:42). A mother brags to her friends, "My children are perfect angels," but she knows better. She was late to the luncheon because her children spilt cola when sneaking it out of the refrigerator . . . she had told them "not before lunch."

The earthly father tells his son, "Don't do anything wrong" just as the Scripture tells us, "My little children, these things wrote I unto you, that ye sin not" (I John. 2:1).

When you pray "Forgive us our debts," you are admitting that you sin. None of us are perfect, "All have sinned" (Romans 3:23). None of us can come to God on our own terms.

There are several ways a child breaks fellowship with his Father.

First, you break fellowship with God by disobeying Him.

A father asked his son to wash the family car and sweep out the floor boards. But the son neglects to do it and forgot to get it washed. When the son asks the father to borrow the car for a date, he hears,

"No . . . " The wise father has a lesson to teach his son. "You didn't wash the car like I asked, so you can't borrow the car for a date."

Second, you break fellowship with God when you do the opposite of God's command. The father sent his son on an errand with the family car. He told the son, "Be careful, and get the car washed, and pick up the groceries." The son scraped a fender, drove it through mud and left burger wrappers on the floor. He forgot to pick up the groceries. He did the opposite of what the father asked. When the son asked to borrow the car for a date, he heard the same thing.

"No . . . " the father replied, "You were not careful and you didn't wash it."

Third, you break fellowship with God by ignoring Him. A son never came to family meals, never went anywhere with dad and generally ignored his father. When the big date came, he asked for the family car.

"No . . . " the father replies. "You don't spend time with the family when it means something to us. Why should I help you have fun?"

All three sons have disappointed their father. They are all the father's sons, but they have broken their fellowship with him, not their relationship.

A loving father would probably loan them the car if they said, "I'm sorry," and if they showed a change of attitude by maybe washing and waxing it.

When you pray "Forgive us our debts," you are asking forgiveness for the little petty things you sneak to do, as well as your massive rebellion that breaks God's heart. You don't want to hurt your heavenly Father, it's just that you want to do what you think is fun . . . or exciting . . . or new . . . or different . . . or to relieve boredom. You just want to do what you want to do . . . when you want to do it . . . for your own selfish reasons.

There is a reason why you pray, "Forgive us our debts." The word *debt* represents how much we owe to someone. A debt is an obligation. So you are really praying, "Forgive us our obligations."

If you borrow money, you have an obligation to repay it. If you back into someone's car, you have an obligation to repair their fender. If you spill a milkshake on someone's new coat, you have an obligation to have it cleaned. If you sin against God, you have an obligation to Him.

There are several words for "sin" in the Greek New Testament. Why does the Lord's Prayer include obligations, i.e. debts, and not some of the others?

Jesus didn't tell us to pray, "Forgive us our sin," i.e. where we missed the mark. That's because our failures were forgiven when we became a Christian.

Jesus didn't tell us to pray, "Forgive us our transgressions," i.e. where we ruthlessly, rebelled against God. Our rebellion was forgiven when we repented to become a Christian.

Jesus didn't tell us to pray, "Forgive us our lawlessness," i.e. our contempt for God's law. That's because when we recognized God's perfect law, we realized how we disobeyed God.

Jesus didn't tell us to pray, "Forgive us our moments of passion," i.e. the times we slip or fall. That's because, "If we walk in the light, . . . the blood of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). That cleansing is automatic.

Jesus didn't tell us to pray, "Forgive us our wickedness," i.e. our filthiness. That sin is forgiven when we become a Christian.

The Lord's Prayer says, "Forgive us our debts," i.e. our obligations. This means our sins and their consequences.

When you get so mad you slap your child, that's a sin against God and against the child. God forgives your anger, but what about your child? You have an obligation to your child to seek forgiveness. So you pray, "Forgive us our debts-obligations, as we forgive our debtors."

Jesus taught us to pray, "Forgive us our debts" because they involve other people. A "debt" is a sin with fine print. When you sign a contract, read the fine print. It may obligate you for more money than you agreed to in the big print.

When you tell a lie, it hurts your self-esteem, it hurts another and it offends God. When you tell a lie, there's fine print that means you are obligated to go apologize to someone.

If you cheat on your spouse, you hurt yourself, you break the seventh commandment, and you have broken your obligation to your spouse. So you pray, "Forgive me my debt-obligation to my wife." Then you must forgive others, or be forgiven by others; as God forgives you.

The Lord's Prayer is perfect. Jesus chose the perfect word for forgiveness. It is our debt-obligations that must be forgiven.

**SIX NEW TESTAMENT WORDS FOR SIN**

<i>Word</i>	<i>Greek</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Explanation</i>	<i>Scripture</i>
1. Sin	Harmartia	to miss the mark	inability to do good	Romans 3:23
2. Transgress	Parabaino	to step across the line	no restraint	
3. Lawlessness	Anomia	open flagrant rejection	contempt of law	
4. Trespass	Paratoma	to slip or fall	passion of moment	Matthew 6:14
5. Debt	Ophalomia	sin's obligation	consequences of sin	
6. Wickedness	Poneria	wicked desire	filthy	

**GOD'S CHILDREN ARE CONCERNED AFTER THEY SIN**

Not everyone feels guilty when they disobey the Father. Some take God's name in vain, then laugh. Some commit adultery because it feels good, then do it again. Some get so drunk to hide their problems that they become addictive. There is always the prodigal son who leaves home for more exciting experiences. He turns his back on his father and seemingly, never looks back.

But if you are a child of the Father, you can't sin . . . at least you can't sin continually . . . and not suffer some inner guilt.

A young Chinese girl was employed by missionaries to clean house while the missionaries were busy with their ministry in inland China. But the young girl would steal little things, it was a cultural thing. Her fetish religion taught she had the "spirit" of the missionaries when she had their possessions. So she stole personal things like buttons, handkerchiefs, and



broaches. The missionaries knew what she did and everyday went through the young girls things before she left. She had no guilt about stealing, if anything it was a prized cultural thing to do.

With time the young girl was converted and began to grow in Christ. She was taught not to steal, along with other Christian graces. After a period of time the young house girl saw a golden locket, knew it meant much to the missionary and was tempted. She wanted the locket and tried it on, then put it back on the dresser. But she returned several times to try it on, then stole it.

In the middle of the night when the missionaries were sound asleep, the young girl banged on the door. When the door was opened, she burst in, threw the locket on the floor, sobbing.

"I'm not a Christian . . .," the girl kept saying between sobs, "I'm sorry." The wife sent her husband to bed. Then in a spirit of love, she explained to the young Chinese girl what it meant to have God's nature. She explained that before the young cleaning girl was a Christian, she stole things, but stealing didn't bother her. But now that she had a new nature in Christ, she felt guilt.

If you are guilty because you have disobeyed the heavenly Father, you should pray, "Forgive us our debts." Asking for forgiveness is the Father's way of dealing with your guilt.

Sometimes you may have sinned, but you forgot about it. Sometimes you may have not been perfect . . . you may have not done all the Father's will . . . or you may have ignorantly disobeyed the Father. Pray daily, "Forgive us our debts" to take care of any sin that may have innocently crept into your life. You need to take care of any sin that you may have ignorantly committed.

No one should stubbornly refuse to pray, "Forgive us our debts" because that proud attitude may keep them from fellowship with the Father. When you pray "Forgive us our debts," God may use this prayer to reveal a hidden sin or a sin you were not aware of. That sin may have blocked your ability to talk to Him.

Sin denies God's purity, it dirties us.  
Sin ignores God's honor, it embarrasses us.  
Sin disobeys God's command, it condemns us.  
Sin violates God's law, it makes criminals of us.  
Sin corrupts God's health, it sickens us.  
Sin steals God's blessing, it robs us.  
Sin disrupts God's peace, it makes us guilty.  
For our sin we pray, Forgive us.

Guilt robs you of two things: heaven and health. First, if God is not your Father, your guilt will rob you of the Father's heavenly home. If you are not a child of the Father you need to believe in Jesus Christ. He said, "I am the way, the truth and the life, no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6).

But you may be the Father's child. You have disobeyed the Father and now you feel guilty. Lying brings an internal nausea, for no one can lie to oneself. You can lie to your friends, your mother, your wife, but you can't lie to yourself. If you are mentally healthy, you know what is true. We feel guilty when we are caught stealing. We feel guilty when we don't live up to our standards. When we are caught lying, we are embarrassed because the truth is out. We lied. Guilt produces self-doubts, anxiety, stress, and in accelerated cases leads to neurosis and phobias. Guilt is soul sickness.

When you pray daily "Forgive us our debts," you are taking a step toward mental health. When you ask for forgiveness, you are telling the truth to yourself and to God. You are restoring your self respect and your relationship with God. When you feel good about yourself, it shows in your relationships, in your job, in your walk with God; but most of all it shows in your earthly family.

However, you pray "Forgive us our debts" not just to feel better, or to grow in personal strength. You pray it to restore your fellowship with the heavenly Father . . . if it is broken . . . and to keep it healthy if you have not broken it. You pray this prayer for a healthy relationship with the Father.

The prodigal son demanded his family inheritance. He was callused to the feelings of his father and his brother. He wanted a different style of life. He turned his back on them and walked away without looking back. But everything went wrong. He lost his money, his worldly friends and his self respect. The prodigal son ended up feeding hogs. In the hog pen, his thinking turned back to his father. He thought about his father before he physically returned home. If you are far away from God, turn your thoughts to God. Pray, "Forgive me my debts" and begin the journey home.

### WHY PRAY "FORGIVE US"

Sin is the wound of the heart  
that makes you weep

Sin is the virus of mental health  
that makes your soul sick

Sin is the original pollution of the human body  
that causes your sickness and death

Sin is the misunderstanding between couples  
that breaks up marriages.

Sin is the selfishness of desire  
that destroys your character.

Sin is the suspicion of motives  
that shatters friendship.

### GOD'S CHILDREN MUST DO SOMETHING ABOUT THEIR SIN

When you pray daily "Forgive us our sins," you are beginning to do something about your guilt and broken fellowship with your Father.

The young boy who killed his grandmother's duck went to her and confessed it. The boy who refused to wash his father's car had to say, "I'm sorry." The young cleaning girl returned the locket sobbing, "I'm sorry." And the prodigal son came to his senses in the hog pen when he said, "My father's servants are better treated than this."

Simply repeating or reading the words, "Forgive us our debts" is not enough. Paul explains, "Godly sorrow worketh repentance" (II Corinthians 7:10). Godly sorrow is meaning it with your heart, meaning it so deeply you never want to do it again.

When a thief is caught and sentenced to jail, he's sorry. He may even promise never to steal again, but they are sorry about the wrong thing. Most thieves are sorry that they were caught. They are not sorry they have broken the law. That's why most thieves will steel again if given the opportunity. They are not sorry that they have broken God's law or even man's law. When a thief is only sorry that he got caught, Paul calls this, "The sorrow of the world worketh death" (II Corinthians 7:10). When a thief plans never to do it again, that's called "godly sorrow."

When you pray daily "Forgive us our debts," it must be followed with an outward change or determination to change. What you mean in your heart will change your actions. When a child tells his earthly father he is sorry for dashing out into the street, the father wants the son never to do it again. Not because the father is legalistic or wants to curb the boy's fun. The father doesn't want his son hurt in traffic. So the heavenly Father wants us to confess inwardly and repent outwardly. He doesn't want us to get hurt.

Confess inwardly Repent outwardly
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GOD WILL FORGIVE

If you confess your sins, God will forgive your sins, just because He said so. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

When you pray "Forgive us our debts," you are exercising belief or trust in God. You confess your sins because you believe God will forgive you as He promised. You confess your sins, because you know God will forgive you.

"Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity and passeth by the transgression of the remnant . . . ? He . . . delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us; . . . Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depth of the sea."  
(Micah 7:13,19).

You should pray, "Forgive us our debts" because it feels good to be clean and refreshed. It feels like a warm shower to wash away sweat and dirt after cutting the grass. It feels like a relaxing quick snooze on the couch when you first get home from a stressful day. It feels like the loving embrace of parent and child. You can get forgiveness for what you have done, and it will feel good. You don't confess to feel good, you confess to be forgiven. But forgiveness usually feels good.

We need forgiveness to be happy.  
We need forgiveness to be mentally healthy

The Bible says forgiveness is God taking away our sin (John 1:29). Forgiveness is God covering our sin (Psalm 85:2). Forgiveness is God blotting out our sin (Isaiah 43:25). Forgiveness is God forgetting our sin (Micah 7:19).

The Father already has forgiven us.  
The Father waits to cleanse us.

Why should we pray "Forgive us our debts" when all of our sins were forgiven at the cross? When you became a child of the Father, the Bible says of you, "We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins" (Ephesians 1:7). If your sins were forgiven at salvation, why pray daily, "Forgive us?"

The initial forgiveness of sins established our relationship to God. It made us children of the Father. When we pray "Forgive us," it re-establishes our fellowship with the Father. Because children don't always obey, you need to pray daily, "Forgive us our debts."

There are three aspects to forgiveness, not just one or two. First there is past forgiveness, which happened when we became children of the Father. When God forgave our past sins, our relationship with God was established. Second, there is present forgiveness which happens every time you pray "Forgive us our debts," He re-establishes our fellowship with the Father. The third is future forgiveness. This will happen when we are taken to be with the Father, whether by death or when the Lord comes. This will be our glorification when we are removed from all traces of evil and decay in this earth.

#### FORGIVING OTHERS IS ESSENTIAL

When you pray "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors," immediately you bring other people into the relationship with you and the Father. You are asking God to forgive your sins as you forgive their sins.

Some have resisted that provision, claiming "Forgive me as I forgive" sounds like legalism of the Old Testament. They say it sounds like "an eye for an eye" and places a condition on God's forgiveness. It sounds like God will forgive you only as you forgive those who sin against you. Three pictures will help us see what the Father meant.

Forgiveness is a ticket.  
Forgiveness is a circle.  
Forgiveness is our character.

When you fly a plane, you need a ticket. And like most tickets, it has two sections. The first section of the ticket says, "Good for travel." You give that section of the ticket to the clerk to get on the plane. The second section of the ticket is your boarding pass. It has your seat number; it proves you have paid the fare. The first part of the ticket says, "Good for travel - not good if detached." The second part of the ticket is your boarding pass. A boarding pass is no good without a ticket. It shows your seat and proves you have paid the price. When you get saved, your sins are forgiven. This is your ticket to heaven. But remember it is not good if detached from the boarding pass. You have to do good works, which means you must forgive others as the Father has forgiven you. The second part of your ticket to heaven guarantees the price has been paid. It says "not good for travel." Good works get won't get you to heaven. It also says, "not good if detached." When you forgive others, it demonstrates that God has forgiven you. You guarantee the first half of the ticket is good by praying, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive others."

The plane ticket tells you to pray two things. First pray each day, "Forgive us our debts" and God will forgive you. But second, it tells you, "Forgive your debtors."

We must ask forgiveness.  
We must forgive debtors.

Lord's Prayer-Chapter Eight



Forgiveness is a circle, what you give is what you get. Everything always goes in a circle and comes back to us. Jesus reminded us "to love our neighbor as we love ourselves." God doesn't want us to love ourselves only. Nor can we love our neighbor only. It's impossible to do one without the other. To be loved, we must love others. The same thing with forgiveness. To be forgiven, you must forgive.

When we pray "Forgive us our debts," we must be ready to forgive anyone who has done the same thing to us. And when we "Forgive our debtors," we must do it because God has already done His part. Notice, forgiveness begins with God. He forgives first, then we follow His example to demonstrate that we really have been forgiven. What goes around, comes around.

### WHY MUST YOU FORGIVE

A mother with two sons died, but left the younger son as the executor of the estate. In settling the estate, he spent over half the inheritance on trips to examine the assets, expensive hotels and meals that were extended stays. The older brother accused the younger of all-expensive paid vacations on his inheritance. When there's money on the table, even brothers get selfish and envious.

"I'll never forgive him," the older boasts.

The brothers didn't talk to one another for fifteen years.

If the older brother doesn't "forgive his debtors," he is in bondage to his younger brother and the way the inheritance was spent. The older brother is in debt to the younger, although the younger took the money.

If the older brother doesn't "forgive his debtors," he refuses to let the younger off the hook, but it means the older is also on the hook. He is in debt to the younger brother.

If the older brother doesn't "forgive his debtors," he is tied to his younger brother's sin and its consequences. The older brother doesn't forgive his younger brother to help the younger brother feel good. He forgives the younger brother for his healing. He doesn't want to be in debt to anyone for anything, at any time.

If the older brother doesn't "forgive his debtors," the issue is still between the brothers. But when the older brother forgives for the Father's sake, the issue is between the younger brother and God. When you forgive their debts, you are no longer their debtor, neither are you God's debtor. You are free.

Why Forgive?	
You are commanded to forgive	Romans 12:19
The example of Jesus	Luke 23:34
To prosper spiritually	Matthew 18:35
To be a testimony	Colossians 3:13
To get forgiveness	Matthew 6:15

Forgiveness is not natural to a growing baby. I gave my granddaughter Kim a gourmet cookie, just because that's what grandfathers do. My daughter Polly immediately instructed Kim, "Say thank you."

But Kim stuck out her bottom lip and refused to say "thank you." She shook her head, "No!" There is something in the human nature that doesn't want to express gratitude. My

daughter Polly repeated her exhortation two or three times, but Kim got more adamant. She wouldn't say "thank you." Kim started to put the cookie in her mouth.

Polly grabbed Kim's hand that held the cookie, to which Kim squeezed tighter, but my daughter wouldn't let her hand go until Kim showed gratitude. Finally Kim said,

"Thank you."

When Kim opened her hand, the cookie was smashed to goo. It was no longer beautiful. Sometimes we are like Kim. We refuse to be grateful for the things God has given us. When God has forgiven us, we must be grateful and forgive others.

Gratitude is the least remembered  
of all virtues,  
And the acid test of character.

PRAYER CHECKLIST	HOW ARE YOU DOING?		
Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors (List the struggles of your life and those you must forgive.)	Lousy	Average	Great
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			

### JOURNALING

It is always difficult to keep a record of one's sin. So don't write and describe your faults, habits or gross wickedness. Write your struggle with sin and how you are doing. Describe your victories, and try to go from "victory to victory." But also describe your failures, but don't stop there. Write what you do about your failures and how you plan to be victorious next time.

1. List your struggles with sin and failure. How did you feel? Why were you defeated? What do you plan to do to be victorious?

2. List your victories over sin and habits. How did you get victory? What principles did you learn? What were the results?
3. List the people you need to forgive. Why do you need to forgive them? Pray for the spiritual prosperity of each person on this list. When you pray for them, you can't feel a grudge against them. Praying for them makes forgiveness permanent.

**THREE STEP BIBLE STUDY**

**GETTING FORGIVENESS**

This Bible study is designed to show you the biblical basis to forgiveness. Step One, read the question and think through the answer. Step Two, read the Bible verse with the question to understand what it means. Try to apply the verse to the question. Step Three, write your answer in the spaces provided.

1. All Christians sin, even Paul in his old age. What can we learn about sin from Paul's testimony?

"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (I Timothy 1:15).

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2. Can we say we have not sinned? What about those who make that boast?

"If we say we have no sin (nature), we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (I John 1:8). "If we say that we have not sinned (actions), we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (I John 1:10).

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3. Even though we are sinners, what does God expect of His children?

“My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not” (I John 2:1). “He that saith he abideth in him (Jesus) ought himself also to walk, even as he walked” (I John 2:6).

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4. How can a disobedient child of God get forgiveness? What does forgiveness include?

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (I John 1:9).

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5. A child of God doesn't always live up to God's standards. Sometimes they are ignorant of God's standards. How does God take care of these kinds of sins?

“If we walk in the light, as he (Jesus) is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (I John 1:7).

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6. What should be our attitude toward those we sin against?

“Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come offer thy gift” (Matthew 5:23,24).

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7. How important is forgiving others?

“For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if ye forgive not men trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matthew 6:14,15).

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8. What is the basis for all forgiveness?

“Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye” (Colossians 3:13).

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THOSE WHO CAN'T PRAY  
THE LORD'S PRAYER

- If you don't know Christ, . . . . . you can't pray "Our Father"
- If you glorify yourself, . . . . . you can't pray "Hallowed be Thy name"
- If you reject His rules, . . . . . you can't pray "Thy kingdom come"
- If you won't submit, . . . . . you can't pray "Thy will be done"
- If your life is for here and now, . . . . . you can't pray "On earth as it is in heaven"
- If you are self-sufficient, . . . . . you can't pray "Give us our daily bread"
- If you are lazy, . . . . . you can't pray "Forgive us our debts"
- If you seek sin, . . . . . you can't pray "Lead us not into temptation"
- If you are a friend of evil, . . . . . you can't pray "Deliver us from evil"
- If you build your kingdom, . . . . . you can't pray "Thine is the kingdom"
- If you want power, . . . . . you can't pray "Thine is the power"
- If you always take credit, . . . . . you can't pray "Thine is the glory"



## CHAPTER NINE

### THE SIXTH PETITION: LEAD ME NOT INTO TEMPTATION

I thought I saw a squirrel in the top of a live Oak tree. I quietly ran to the other side, whispering to Art Winn, my high school buddy.

"Watch for him from this side."

We were squirrel hunting on our Thanksgiving break from classes. We crouched for a long time, waiting for the squirrel to come out of hiding. But the squirrel out-waited us.

We continued walking down the deep drainage ditch. We kept looking up in the tree tops for squirrels. County workers had shoveled out the ditch bottom so it was an easy walk. The autumn was cool. There were no bushes in the ditch, so we didn't have to worry about snakes.

We came to a fork, the ditch split into two directions that ran on both sides of an island field. That's a field for growing cotton that was surrounded by woods and ditches.

"I'll meet ya on the other side," Art told me. He took the right ditch, still looking up in the tree tops for squirrels. It was a 15 minute walk before we'd meet on the other side of the island field.

The sky was overcast. A cloud cover kept the squirrels out of sight. There was no sunshine to coax them out where we could find them. Then I began to hear a light rain fall on the dry leaves in the woods.

"No sun, no squirrels, and now rain," I complained.

The leaves had already fallen; so there were no leaves in the tree for protection. I figured the rain would stop shortly, so I looked for a tree with a large limb for protection from the chilly rain. There were none.

Then I saw some shelter. Under a gigantic Oak tree I saw a big hole in the side of the ditch. It was a hole underneath the tree roots that was big enough to protect me from the rain. This type of Oak has a large flat pattern of roots. The sand underneath the roots had washed out into the ditch, leaving the hole. There are no caves in central South Carolina, but there was a "hole" to keep me dry.

"ARTHUR," I yelled as loudly as I could for him to come keep dry. All I heard was rain on the dry leaves.

The hole was only big enough for me to lay on my side, it was not large enough to sit or squat. I shivered, my clothes were damp. In the corner were some dry leaves and branches the wind had blown there. I pulled them together and lit a small fire in the opposite end of the hole. I scooted around to get my shoulders and the back of my wet shirt toward the fire. Then I saw it by my right hand.

"Snake!!!" I yelled.

Reacting instinctively, I rolled out into the bottom of the ditch. It rained harder. I quickly checked my hands for a snake bite, then ripping off my shirt and pants, I rubbed every part of my body, looking for a snake bite.

"ARTHUR!!!" I yelled louder.

All I heard was soft rain in the woods. I checked again for swelling. None. I pulled my wet clothes over my body. Looking in the hole, I realized the snake was in hibernation. Carefully retrieving my gun, I shot the snake . . . several times. Not to kill it deader than dead, but to relieve my frustration. With a stick I dragged it into the bottom of the ditch. The snake was approximately 5 feet long and fat as my wrist.

Arthur and I came back the next day looking for the snake, but some scavenger animal had dragged it off during the night.

There are many dangers, some known and others unknown. Some won't walk through bushes because they are afraid of snakes. Some run when they see any snakes, poisonous or otherwise. Others pick up poisonous snakes. Others keep them as pets.

Some walk down a mountain path, not knowing how close they came to a disastrous fall. Others look at the steep rock cliff as a challenge to scale. They know it is dangerous, but they don't care. They live for thrills.

Living a Christian life is not a Sunday School picnic. There are dangers in your walk with Christ, there is an enemy that would destroy you, there is a possibility that you may fall, but God wants you to be a winner. This chapter describes things that are implied when you pray, "Lead us not into temptation."

FIVE ESSENTIAL FACTS ABOUT TEMPTATION
1. That God allows His children to be tempted. 2. That God's children can fall.

3. That God expects His children to overcome temptation.
4. That the Lord's Prayer can help overcome temptation.
5. That there is a life of victory.

When you ask God to "lead you not into temptation," you are asking God to morally guide your steps. The previous petition dealt with *past sins*, "forgive us our debts" and this petition deals with *future sins* "lead us not into temptation." The previous petition dealt with actual sins, this petition deals with potential sins, those that may happen, but in fact may not occur at all if God answers this prayer.

#### GOD ALLOWS HIS CHILDREN TO BE TEMPTED

A minister once said in a sermon, "OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS ONLY ONCE." He was talking about the good things that happen in your life. Then he noted,

"TEMPTATION KNOCKS THE DOOR DOWN."

When you pray "lead us not into temptation," you are recognizing that God is your leader. You are not asking God to give up His leadership. This prayer is not "Don't be my leader." You recognize God is your leader, and you know "The Lord is my Shepherd . . . He leadeth me" (Psalm 23:1,2).

You are not asking, "Don't lead me anywhere" for His is your leader who is guiding you. As a shepherd, God leads you constantly, "He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him" (John 11:4).

When you pray "lead us not into temptation," you are not praying "Lord, don't tempt us;"

God would never tempt us because He is good. God could never tempt us because He is holy.

“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man” (James 1:13).

<p>God would not tempt us because He is good.</p> <p>God could not tempt us, because He is holy.</p>
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Also, when you pray "lead me not into temptation," you are not praying, "Don't let me be tempted." That prayer denies the type of world in which we live. Life is a test. We are like a little boy living in a world of many signs that say, "Wet paint." Our nature wants to touch them all.

This request "lead us not into temptation" is the cry of a heart that has experienced the devastation of sin. This prayer does not come out of our *head* that has correct knowledge of sin. It comes out of a *heart* that feels threatened by sin. We have felt the destruction of sin and we don't want to feel it again. This is a *heart prayer*, not a *head prayer*. Even though this is not a precise theological statement, the heart prays, "I've been there, and I don't want to go there again."

Life is a test. God could have made us like the angels in heaven who do not sin. They cannot sin, so it would be useless for angels to pray, "Lead us not into temptation," because they

can't be tempted. They can't disobey God. They can only do good. We are a free moral creature with the power of decision.

Our life is a test. Life is also a choice. When we are tempted, we have a choice to resist or to give in. When a man looks at pornography, he has a choice to feed his lower nature or not to look. He can choose what he will think . . . what he will do . . . he has a choice to look or not look. When a woman hears a juicy bit of gossip, she has a choice whether to ignore it or tantalize herself with little tidbits of information that destroys the reputation of another. When a business person is faced with an illegal way of making a financial killing, he or she is faced with a choice. When you pray "deliver us from temptation," you are recognizing that life is a test that leads to a choice.

When you pray "lead us not into temptation," immediately a question pops into your mind. "Does God tempt me?" You are not praying, "God don't tempt me?" You are asking God not to lead you into a temptation that is too big for you. Because life is a test and choice, you will be tested. You are praying for victory, "Lord don't let me face a temptation that is too big to handle."

When you pray "lead me not into temptation," it is like the husband saying to his wife, "watch the road map and make sure I don't take a wrong turn." She would not intentionally get them lost. But as we travel the roads of life, we take the wrong turns, we miss road signs, and we get confused when we come to a complicated intersection. When we say to the wife "Don't let me take the wrong turn," we are not fussing at her for past problems. Some husbands can't

forget past mistakes. They constantly remind the wife, "Yesterday, we took a wrong turn, let's not do it again today." He is wrong because his wife would not automatically give wrong information to harm him.

So God would not lead us into temptation, but we are tempted. We have a rebellious nature, like when we like to stand closer to the edge than we should. A little child is playing when his ball rolls into the traffic. Obviously, the child is tempted to run get it. The child never sees danger and never thinks about getting hurt. The child just wants to get his ball back. But a wise parent sees danger and holds the child's hand to keep it from darting into the traffic. So we pray, "Lord keep me from darting into traffic."

This prayer "lead us not into temptation" is a genuine evidence of your conversion. When you have genuinely repented, it means you are truly sorry for past sins, (II Corinthians 7:10-11). When you received Jesus Christ as your Savior, He forgave your sins and removed any punishment. With forgiveness, you were freed from guilt. Therefore if you truly repented in the *first place*, it means you do not want to return in the *second place*. So when you pray "lead us not into temptation," you give evidence of repentance and conversion.

On the other hand, the person who continues to return to sin with the attitude, "Since God has forgiven all sins, I don't have to worry about a thing," is giving evidence that they were not converted in the first place. We can question the legitimacy of any Christian who continually goes back to the old way (II Peter 2:22).

## GOD'S CHILDREN CAN FALL

Lord's Prayer-Chapter Nine

A minister once said in his sermon that you don't need to pray, "Lord . . . lead me not into temptation." When he said that, many wondered what He meant. Then the minister explained.

"I can find it by myself."

When you pray "lead us not into temptation," you are recognizing that people fall away from God. First, *internally* people are drawn away by their sinful nature. People have lust and desires that are contrary to God. Every child is born beauty and the beast. As beauty, the child has great desires to know and honor God in his life. But children are also a beast with a destructive nature that will destroy themselves, and everything they touch, or anything that touches them. Why is it among twin boys, that one will become a great musician that lifts people and the other an alcoholic who destroys himself? Among young twin girls, one will become an unusual teacher while the other becomes a prostitute? There are two forces within every child, called the good nature and evil nature, (Ephesians 4:22-24). The child can give control to either nature, and that nature choice will determine the destiny of the child. Like Jekyll and Hyde, there was an evil nature that had an *internal* attraction to destruction. But there is also an *external* attraction to do God's will.

Satan will set a trap for every believer. That trap will be a specific temptation to trip up a person. That trap will be aimed at the weakness of the person. It is in this trap that a person will be tempted.

When you pray "lead us not into temptation," you recognize there is a place where believers are tempted to sin. You are asking God not to lead you into that trap. John calls that



trap "the world." "Love not the world (the world system) neither the things that are in the world . . . for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world" (I John 2:15-16). The world that will trap you is not a physical place, nor is it a geographical place. Your "trap" is not the world of purple mountains, trees, oceans and plains. The world that is a trap is a system of ideas, experiences and energy. The world that is a trap is like the "world of rock and roll music" that influences the way people think, experience and produces its own lifestyle. The same could be said about "the world of classical music," or "the world of stock car racing." When the Bible says, "Love not the world," it is describing "anti-God thinking", "anti-God experiences" and living contrary to God's design.

The world that is a trap is made up of three things. First, "Lust of the flesh," which means the desires of the flesh. This could include laziness, wrongly satisfying sexual appetites, or a host of addictions. God wants our body free to serve Him. Second, the lust of the eyes is desiring things that are not ours, i.e. stealing, coveting, lying, etc. The pride of life is third. It involves putting self on the throne of our life. While there is nothing wrong with pride that is self-respect , the Bible condemns pride that exalts itself against God and refuses to accept God's standards.

When people reject the Ten Commandments, they usually reject God's rule over their life because they want to fulfill their own desires (lust of the flesh). They want to live their own lifestyle rather than God's (lust of the eyes) and they think their ideas of how to live are better than God's (pride of life).

When you pray, “Lead me not into temptation” you are saying don’t lead me into the world-trap that would harm me. You are asking for a life of victory. When God answers this prayer you can say with Paul, “Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory in Christ” (II Corinthians 2:14 - author’s translation).

When you pray "lead us not into temptation," you give evidence of a changed attitude towards sin. We are not saying you will never sin again after you become a Christian. Remember, the Bible recognizes that all will fall into sin, "If we say that we have no sin (sin nature) we deceive ourselves," (John 1:8). And beyond our sin nature, "if we say that we have not sinned (continual acts of sin) we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us," (I John 1:10). So we may inadvertently trip and fall into sin. But Christ gives us a new *attitude*. He wants us to live by a new *goal*.. He wants us to aim at perfection, but realizes we live in an imperfect world where no one is perfect. But even imperfect people can aim high. This is what John meant when he said, "Whosoever is born of God sinneth not (continually)," (I John 5:18).

Also, when you pray "deliver us from temptation," you recognize the tyranny of sin. When you sin, it is not like a baby who spills his cup of milk. That's a mistake. We all make mistakes. Sin is rebellion against God and His standards. Mistakes, like spilt milk can ruin carpets, tablecloths, or even clothing that just costs us money. But sin is internal with far-deeper influences in our lives. Sin is a tyrannical master that tyrannizes us. Sin makes us addicts to alcohol or sex. Sin puts us into bondage to drugs. Sin destroys our self respect, and it puts us into prison. Sin makes us lose our temper, so we lose our friends, lose our jobs, and lose our

marriages. But when you pray "lead us not into temptation," recognize what sin can do to you and you tell God you don't want to go back into its bondage.

### GOD EXPECTS HIS CHILDREN TO OVERCOME TEMPTATION

When you are tempted to sin, you face the greatest test of life. This test is greater than any final exam in college, and greater than any bar exam faced by a lawyer, or a test faced by a professional facing certification. When you are tempted, it is a test to determine if you will be faithful to God or you will deny Him. This test will establish your character. Satan wants to destroy your virtue.

So why should we pray "lead us not into temptation?" Because, temptation gets us close to what our lower nature wants. We want to be happy, satisfied and fulfilled. We think that sin will make us happy, satisfy us and fulfill us. James noted, "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust and enticed" (James 1:14). When Jesus told us to pray "lead us not into temptation," He recognized our nature was bent to wander from God. Jesus was giving us a key to overcome our sinful nature.

When you pray "deliver us from temptation," you are asking for God to keep you from sin. Jude expressed this possibility, "Now unto Him who is able to keep you from falling," (Jude 24b). You need to know that God expects you not to sin, He can keep you from sin and you can live victoriously. But to be victorious is not the same as living sinlessly. Remember, when the Bible promises "God can keep you from falling," it is possible that God can keep you from falling."

When you pray "lead us not into temptation," you are asking for sanctification. The word sanctify means to make you holy, or to "set you apart." Paul has told the Thessalonians, "the very God of peace sanctify you holy," (I Thessalonians 5:23). Since the word sanctify means, "to set apart" when you are sanctified to God, you are set apart to glorify God and to live for Him. So when you pray "lead us not into temptation," you are asking for God to set you apart to His glory and to live for Him.

#### THE LORD'S PRAYER CAN HELP OVERCOME TEMPTATION

When you pray "lead us not into temptation," you are establishing a watchful attitude over your spiritual life. This is the same prayer He gave to His disciples in the garden after He found them sleeping; "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41).

When you pray "lead us not into temptation," you are asking for deliverance from both a crisis and a process. Technically, Jesus used the word *prosmos* in referring to temptation, which means process. This means, don't put me into a place of seduction where I wrestle with temptation everyday. When a football team beats its cross town rival, it doesn't have to beat them everyday to be the best team. They schedule one game a year, and the winner is the best team. So when we face temptation, we are praying "lead us not to be continually tempted by a particular sin." This means life is a process. When we get victory over one sin, there always seems to be another temptation waiting to trip us up. Therefore the Jewish expression, "from victory to victory," is implied in this prayer. You are praying, "Lord, give me a victory today,"

and tomorrow again you will pray, "Lord, give me a victory today."

When you pray "lead me not into temptation," you are asking for deliverance in a crisis. Perhaps you have never been tempted to steal. But you get the opportunity to walk away with a million dollars . . . no one would know . . . absolutely no one would know . . . positively no way of getting caught. When you pray "deliver us from temptation," you are asking for deliverance from a massive crisis that would destroy your soul. All you have to do is say a simple "yes."

When you pray "lead us not into temptation," you are like a night watchmen that discovers a blazing inferno in the warehouse. You don't try to fight the fire yourself, you run to call the fire department to fight the fire. You get help. So when you pray "lead me not into temptation," you are getting God's help to deal with a potential trap in your life.

When you pray "lead us not into temptation," you might want to say, "help me to run as fast as I can to get away from temptation." For some reason, the word *lead* implies a slow walk. However, because you have been there before, you know how dangerous the situation. Paul told Timothy, "Flee these things" (I Timothy 6:11). Obviously, the word flee means to dash, as a person would race away from a burning car before the fuel tank explodes.

When you pray "lead us not into temptation," you are claiming victory. In the spirit of I Corinthians 10:13, you are asking for God to lead you to a place where you could overcome temptation. You recognize, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted of that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Corinthians 10:13).

When you pray "lead us not into temptation," you recognize that if you boastfully think you can stand against temptation, you will fall. Paul warns the believer, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall" (I Corinthians 10:12). When you pray, "lead me not into temptation," you exercise the humility of self distrust. You know that in yourself you can fall, but you ask God to lead you away from temptation so you won't fall. Because you don't trust your mouth, you take precautions what you say, (Romans 3:13). Because you don't trust your feet, you take precautions where you go, (Romans 3:15). Because you don't trust your eyes, you take precautions what you see, (Romans 3:18). Because you don't trust your mind, you take precautions what you read, (Romans 3:11). And because you don't trust your heart, you take precautions with your desires (Jeremiah 17:9; Matthew 15:17-20).

When you pray "lead us not into temptation," you are asking God to keep you from the place of temptation. Jesus used the Greek preposition *EIS* that means, "into." "Don't lead me into temptation." There are many prepositions that the Lord could have used when teaching on the Lord's Prayer. The Lord could have used the Greek preposition *EN* which means, "Don't lead us into the very middle of temptation." The Lord could have used the Greek word *EPI*, which means don't lead us around the edge of temptation. That would mean that we could come near to temptation by walking about it. The Lord could have used the preposition *PARA*, which means, "Don't lead us around the outside of temptation." This is illustrated by a person walking around a house. Nor did the Lord use the preposition *DIA*, which means "leads us through the middle of temptation." That would be leading us into temptation and out of temptation. But the Lord said,

"Do not lead us *EIS*," which means "lead us not into temptations influence with the purpose of sin reaching or touching us."

### THERE IS A LIFE OF VICTORY

When you pray "lead us not into temptation," you are recognizing the leadership of God to give you victory in a moral test. Sometimes, that test will come to you as a young Christian. What may seem insurmountable; with God's help can be overcome. Later on in our life that same test returns to us, and this time it doesn't phase us. That temptation is a paper tiger that is toothless. That test is no longer suited to our spiritual maturity. So the test means nothing. But put that shoe on the other foot. A test that is suited to your spiritual maturity later in life, may have destroyed you as a young believer.

God is like a school teacher. In the first grade you were tested to see if you could print letters. In the middle grades, you were tested to see if you could write sentences, paragraphs, even a short paper. But by the time you got to college, you should be able to write a term paper, supporting your arguments with quotations from authorities. So a teacher tests the college student on college material. And in the same way you pray, "Lead us not into temptations that will kill us." It is another way of praying, "Lead us into temptations that we are able to withstand." A loving God, like a conscientious teacher, gives tests that we are able to pass.

Another thing that God does when we pray "lead us not into temptation," is that He controls the amount of temptation. When you are a young Christian, you perhaps could only handle one temptation at a time. But as you become older, you can handle many temptations at

one time. The beginning golfer only works at one aspect of his game at a time. He works on driving, chipping, or putting. But later, the mature golfer is working on his grip, stance, swing and rhythm, all at the same time. Our Heavenly Father doesn't put more on us than we can withstand.

When you pray "lead us not into temptation," you are praying the same prayer that Jesus prayed in His High Priestly prayer. The night before He died Jesus prayed, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that though shouldest keep them from the evil one" (John 17:15).

PRAYER CHECKLIST	HOW ARE YOU DOING?		
Lead Us Not Into Temptation (List areas where you want victory.)	Lousy	Average	Great
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			



## JOURNALING

Keeping a journal is a serious attempt to grow as a Christian. You write down your impressions so that later you can learn from them. You will want to write down your struggles, with temptations. Just keeping a record of when you fall will not necessarily strengthen you. However, keep a record of your experiences, both positive and negative.

1. Write the things you have done to overcome temptation. Include your prayers, your Bible reading and what you did to be victorious.
2. Try to describe how you feel when you were victorious over sin and what that feeling did for you. What were Bible verses that were meaningful to you when you were enjoying your victorious experiences.
3. What happened to you as you prayed the Lord's Prayer? How was it effective in your life?

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>THREE STEP BIBLE STUDY</b> <b>FACING AND OVERCOMING TEMPTATION</b></p>
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This Bible study will help you understand the things that trip you up in your Christian life. Step One, read the question to understand the problems you face. Step Two, read the Bible verses to understand what God says about the topic. Try to apply the meaning of each verse to your life. Step Three, write your answers in the spaces provided.

1. Where does sin enter your life?

"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

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2. What is your role model when you are tempted?

"For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15).

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3. How did Jesus overcome temptation?

"Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil . . ." (Matthew 4:1). "But he (Jesus) answered and said, It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

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4. What is an inner secret to your victory over temptation?

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119:11)

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5. What attitude can you assume to protect yourself from temptation?

"To put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires, to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness" (Ephesians 4:22-24 NIV).

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6. What is an outer response to temptation?

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you"  
(James 4:7).

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7. What is God's promise to you when tempted?

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Corinthians 10:13).

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8. What is the reward to those who successfully overcome temptation?

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him" (James 1:12).

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## CHAPTER TEN

### THE SEVENTH PETITION-DELIVER ME FROM EVIL

In the summer of 1995, I drove into a Nazarene campground near Springfield, Illinois. I was asked about taking an additional message because a denominational official didn't arrive. He was traveling to the same camp with his wife. He was traveling the same Interstate that I was traveling, but he had one of the most unusual accidents that can't be explained naturally. A lug bolt came off a speeding tractor-trailer truck tire with such force that it came through the windshield like a rifle bullet. "My husband's been shot," his wife thought as she wrestled the car to a stop.

His chest was punctured like a rifle wound. In a world where Ripley's truth is stranger than fiction, that bolt could have hit or missed the speaker. I could have been on the highway and the lug bolt could have hit me instead of the conference speaker. He could have been taking my place. It could have killed me. That morning, I had prayed the Lord's Prayer, meditating on the petitions, "Deliver me from the Evil One, who would destroy me."

I conducted a seminar in a Holiday Inn, Hollywood, California. There were about 150 people in the conference room. We had discussed the work of God, the delegates were all Christians because the day had gone so well, I knew many would come up to ask me to pray with them individually. Instead of a benediction, which would have closed the meeting, I told them I wanted to dedicate them to God's service. I asked all to kneel by their chair for a closing prayer of dedication. For some reason, I walked over to the end chair on the first row near the window to kneel down. I didn't pray near the center of the room where I had been standing.

After offering a prayer of dedication for the seminar delegates, I concluded my prayer with the Lord's Prayer. I did not pray it word for word as some churches do on Sunday morning. I paraphrased the words of the Lord's Prayer, applying it to the audience. When I came to the last petition, I prayed;

“Deliver us from the Evil One who would harm us in a traffic accident on the way home.”

“Deliver us from the Evil One who would destroy our health by disease or germs.”

“Deliver us from the Evil One who would hurt us in ways we don't even think about.”

When I concluded my prayer, I stood; and walked away from the window toward the lectern. While walking from the spot, the entire window frame fell out of the casing, crashing on the chair I had just left. Shattered glass flew in every direction.

The audience yelled.

No one was hurt by the glass. The heavy Spanish ornate frame was smashed over the chair where I had just knelt. I don't think it was heavy enough to kill me. But, I have no idea what would have happened to me if I had not moved.

Most of those present said they believed God protected me because of the Lord's Prayer I had just prayed. Since Satan has tried to destroy everyone belonging to God, each one should pray daily the Lord's Prayer for God's protection. Since we don't know what dangers we will face each new day, we need God's blanket to protect us.

“A verse a day, keeps the Devil away,” is an old Sunday school slogan that sounds nice to children. But it may take more than just reaching a Bible verse every day to be protected from danger.

When you pray "Deliver us from the Evil One," you are confessing that you believe there is One who will harm you, while the traditional King James Bible readily says, "Deliver us from evil," the New King James Version reads, “Deliver us from the Evil One,” and capitalizes the references to Satan. This suggest the Christian life is more than attending worship, or more than getting the power of positive thinking. When you use the phrase "Deliver us from the Evil One," you are admitting that this life is a struggling with an enemy that opposes you. Therefore, this chapter is about warfare . . . fighting . . . combat . . . winning . . . or losing.

When you pray "Deliver us from the Evil One," you confess your belief in five essential facts about the Evil One. When you know how to pray the Lord’s Prayer you can successfully fight the enemy. You can protect yourself from defeat. You win the battle for control of your soul.

FOUR ESSENTIAL FACTS ABOUT THE EVIL ONE	
1.	That the Evil One exists.
2.	That the Evil One is in spirited conflict with you.
3.	That God is your deliverer.
4.	That you can USE THE LORD’S PRAYER for deliverance.

Every new soldier goes through basic training, sometimes called Boot Camp. In Boot Camp a new soldier learns how to fight the enemy. Mastering the first three petitions of the Lord's Prayer is similar to learning the initial lessons of Boot Camp, for they teach you the basic focus of the Christian life. You learn to first worship God, i.e. "Hallowed by Thy name." Second you learn to obey the Kings principles, "Thy Kingdom come." Third, you submit to orders, "Thy will be done."

Next the new soldier gets nutrition for combat, when he asks for necessities, "Give us daily bread."

The final three petitions take us into conflict with our enemy. In the fifth petition you get forgiveness from defeats when you pray, "Forgive us our debts." The sixth petition gives you victory when you pray, "Lead us not into temptation." The last petition gives you protection when you pray, "Deliver us from the Evil One."

#### BELIEF IN THE EXISTENCE OF THE EVIL ONE

The Christian life is not a Sunday school picnic with games and Kool-Aid. We have an enemy who tries relentlessly to destroy us. Life is a battlefield between competitive forces. Because the enemy hates God, he hates us and fights against us.

Paul understood that when believers give into sin, they become tools of Satan. It is the Enemy's way of hurting God's work and ultimately hurting God. He told the Corinthians, "The people you forgave for sinning against your church, I forgive; because Satan gets to us if we have



an unforgiving spirit. I forgive them because I live in Christ. I am not ignorant of Satan's devices to get to me" (II Cor. 2:10, 11, Author's Translation).

When Satan gets to us,  
He gets to God.

Week after week a man stood up to pray at his church's prayer meeting. Typically, he closed his prayer with the phrase,

"Clean all the cobwebs out of my life."

After listening to this man's continual request, the night came when a friend blurted out in prayer,

"Lord, kill the spider instead!"

How often do we find ourselves dealing with "cobwebs" while ignoring the "spider" in our lives? Our main adversary **is** greater than a spider; it is the Evil One. At Boot Camp, new soldiers learn who their enemies are and how the enemy will attack them. In the same way, Children of God need to know about their enemy. The problem is that we live in a culture filled with fairy tales or false information about the Evil One. If we were to ask a dozen different people what they thought about the Evil One, we may get a dozen different answers.

During the Middle Ages, people enjoyed religious plays for entertainment. Over the years the devil was played by one dressed in a red suit with horns and a pitchfork. Even today people think the devil is evil-looking. When portrayed in movies, he has a sinister appearance.

Because of the recent increasing interest in the occult, Satan has become a box office attraction at the movies. Also, we see a **growing** cult of Satan worshipers. People are prepared

to give Satan control over their lives to a greater or lesser degree. The interest and influence of Satan is *growing* from simple things like movies and certain teenage music videos, to more serious things such as witches' covens and stores that sell artifacts that relate to satanism.

Another group denies the existence of Satan completely. Someone noted that if you take the *d* out of devil, you make it evil. Also, certain factions deny the supernatural aspect of the devil, while others recognize the existence of Satan but deny his power. Since secrecy is one of the characteristics of Satan, it is understandable why so many Christians are deceived concerning his nature and work. Satan has blinded people about it. He is effective when he keeps himself hidden from public sight.

The Evil One has many names. John described him, "The great dragon . . . that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world" (Rev. 12:9). Jesus called him, "A liar . . . the father of lies" (John 8:44).

#### THE EVIL ONE IS IN CONFLICT WITH US

Years ago, an artist painted a portrait of the devil playing a young man in a game of chess. The painting hung in the Art Museum of Cincinnati, Ohio. The story book of the painting claimed the devil had challenged a young chess player to a game. If the young man won, he would be eternally free from the influence of evil. If he lost, the devil would possess his soul. The picture showed the determination of the devil to win. Chess experts who saw the picture realized in just four short moves the young man would lose. The picture visualizes torment in

the face of the man as the devil is moving his queen to announce checkmate. The young man has his hand over his rook, amazed and disheartened at what appears to be his ultimate loss.

For years the picture in a Cincinnati art gallery, communicated doom and despondency. As the viewers passed the portrait, they saw the hopelessness of the young man's situation. Some of the world's finest chess players stood amazed at the artist's brilliance at chess and the application to life.

Finally, one person who studied the picture was convinced someone could beat the devil in a chess game. He arranged for an aging chess master, Paul Murphy, to come from New York to study the picture. A crowd gathered to see if the chess master could solve the dilemma. He sat attempting moves, only to see the futility of those attempts. Then suddenly the old chess masters eyes lit up as he realized there was an unthought-of combination, which not only saved the young man's king, but placed the devil in checkmate. When he explained the solution, the people shouted,

"Young man, make that move!"

Many Christians feel they must give up to the Evil One. Others are terrorized by thoughts of the devil's influence on them. But the Bible, on the other hand, claims, "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is the world" (1 John 4:4).

All of Satan's works are against God. At times he actively opposes the work or plan of God. On other occasions, he simply imitates God so as to draw Christians away from the simple plan of God.

When you pray, "Deliver us from the Evil One," you are turning your protection over to God. You are not giving into the threats of your opponent. You have refused to live in fear of the Evil One. You ask God to shield your life.

### GOD IS YOUR DELIVERER

It should be more natural for us to defeat Satan than the reverse. God has revealed certain principles in his Word that can protect the Christian against defeat. But more than insulating you against evil, these principles should make you victorious. The Bible clearly states, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Cor. 10:13). That "way to escape" is found by applying biblical principles to each temptation.

The *principle of respect*. Too often Christians rely on fleshly strength to deliver them from Satan. Though Jesus is greater than the devil (1 John 4:4), we must still have a healthy respect for our enemy. If a good football team becomes overconfident, they may lose to a lesser team. Overconfidence will cause a team to play carelessly, allowing the opposition to do things they could not otherwise accomplish.

A master is not afraid of a poisonous rattle snake, but will respect the snake and not put himself in danger. He knows how to handle the snake and how to avoid being bitten. We must respect the Evil One, and not be afraid of him. We must fear God (Deuteronomy 31:12). It is God who holds our destiny in His hands.

The *principle of removal*. It has often been said that one bad apple will spoil the whole barrel. This principle also applies to a confrontation with the devil. A wise Christian should evaluate his life and avoid those areas where he is most likely to be tempted. Paul reminds us to "abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:22). He also says, "Flee these things" ( ).

A little boy met his father at the front door and announced to the proud dad,

"I beat a snake today . . ."

The father was surprised at the boldness of his son, also he was surprised that his son knew how to rid the yard of snakes. So he asked his son,

"Did you beat the snake with a stick or a rock?"

"I beat him running . . ."

You should not attempt to attack the Evil One, nor enter into conflict with the evil forces. There are some who know how to deal with the Evil One in spiritual warfare, but the average child of God should not do it without training and wisdom.

The *principle of resistance*. A Christian is disobedient if he passively entertains Satan or his influence. "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you"

(James 4:7). It is possible for God's children to protect themselves from the Evil One by taking definite actions. The apostle Peter advised the believer that he should not give in to Satan, but "resist steadfastly in the faith" (1 Pet. 5:9). We would not be defeated if we would quote the name of Jesus Christ and refuse to listen to temptation from the Evil One. When Jesus was tempted, he gained the victory by using the Scriptures resist the devil (Matt. 4:1-11).

The principle *of* readiness. The Boy Scouts have a motto, "Be prepared." That principle is the watchword of the tempted Christian. "Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation Mark 14:38). Paul advised the Ephesians, "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Eph. 6:11). The prepared Christian will recognize his weak areas and strengthen them.

OUR STRATEGY
Respect our Enemy Remove from evil Resist Danger Ready attitude.

When you pray, "Deliver us from the Evil One," you have made a decision to let God protect you. That decision does two things for you. First, it empowers your will to obey God. When you decide to ask God's help, you put yourself on God's side against the Evil One.

You don't have the power to obey, Until you make a decision to obey.
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Second, you bring God into your experience. God is wiser than you and He knows how to defend you. God is more powerful than you and He has power to defend you. The Psalmist had this confidence, “The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil . . . The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in” (Psalm 121:7,8).

PRAYER CHECKLIST	HOW ARE YOU DOING?		
Deliver us from the Evil One. List those for whom you pray.	Lousy	Average	Great
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			

### JOURNALING

Each day you should ask God for spiritual protection for yourself and others around you. Make a list of those for whom you pray. Also, note the ways you think God has answered by protecting you.

1. What are the areas you need protection? Usually, “track record” is a good way to determine how the enemy has attacked you. How you have been attacked in the past is

prediction of future problems. When you write these out, you become more aware of where you need protection in the future.

2. Relate how God has delivered you or protected you. This can be spiritual, intellectual, psychological, social, or physical.
3. Describe how some days the prayer is more intense than others.
4. What does praying, "Deliver us from the Evil One" do to your feelings? Confidence? Fears?

<p>THREE STEP BIBLE STUDY</p> <p>FOR PROTECTION FROM THE EVIL ONE</p>
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This lesson will show you how God protects His children from harm. Step One, read the question to understand the problem that faces you. Step Two, read the Bible verse to understand what God says about the issue. Then try to apply the answer to your life. Step Three, write your answer in the space provided.

1. Who seeks to harm Christians?

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary, the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

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2. How does the enemy attack non-Christians?

"Then cometh the Devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved" (Luke 8:12).

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3. What else does the enemy do to non-Christians?

"The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Corinthians 4:4).

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4. How would Satan trick you?

"False prophets . . . transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness" (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

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5. What else would the enemy do to you and how will God help you?

"And the Lord said, 'Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may Sift you as wheat; But I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not'" (Luke 22:31,32).

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6. What should be your attitude toward the attacks of the enemy?

"Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:11,12).

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7. What promise does the believer have against the enemy?

"Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

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8. What promises will encourage you?

"The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil; He shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even forever more" (Psalm 121:7,8).

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MARTIN LUTHER'S MORNING PRAYER

*We give thanks to thee, Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, thy dear Son, that thou hast protected us through the night from all danger and harm; and we beseech thee to preserve and keep us, this day also, from all sin and evil, that in all our thoughts, words, and deeds, we may serve and please thee, into thy hands we commend our bodies and souls; and all that is ours. Let thy holy angel have charge concerning us, that the Wicked One have no power over us. Amen.*

CHAPTER ELEVEN

BENEDICTION: HOW TO FINISH RIGHT

When you finish your prayer with the statement, "For Thine is the kingdom, . . . the power, . . . and the glory," you are making three positive statements to God. These statements can become positive attitudes that can change your life, and lead to a greater life of prayer.

THE ESSENTIAL FACTS ABOUT THE BENEDICTION	
Kingdom:	His right to answer prayer in His way
Power:	His ability to give you what you ask
Glory:	His credit for your prayer

FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM

When you pray "For Thine is the kingdom," you have finished the seven petitions and you are entering the benediction to the Lord's Prayer. You are wrapping up your prayer to God. When making a business sale, it is important how you begin AND how you finish. The success of my sales presentation, is getting the order. The success of any prayer is getting and answer from God.

Because you pray "Thine is the kingdom," you recognize God's rule over your life.

Because you pray "Thine is the kingdom," you recognize God is the sovereign ruler of the earth.

Because you pray "Thine is the kingdom," you acknowledge God is the source of answered prayers.

Because you pray "Thine is the kingdom," you recognize God has the right to refuse your prayer.

Because you pray "Thine is the kingdom," you recognize God can and will answer your prayers the way He chooses.

When you acknowledge "Thine is the kingdom," you are telling God that He is the King over your life and you are submitting to be a follower in His kingdom.

#### FOR THINE IS THE POWER

When you conclude your prayers "Thine is the power," you are acknowledging God's awesome ability to answer your prayers.

Because you pray "Thine is the power," you recognize that you are God's servant and He is your boss.

Because you pray "Thine is the power," you yield yourself to whatever answer God will send.

Because you pray "Thine is the power," you recognize God is the creator and ruler of this world.

Because you pray "Thine is the power," you recognize people were made in God's image and are accountable to His natural and supernatural laws.

Because you pray "Thine is the kingdom," you recognize God's control over your life, including it's pain, plus it's enjoyment.

Because you pray "Thine is the power," you recognize God's sovereignty to do what He desires, when He wants to do something, the way He sees fit.

When you acknowledge "Thine is the power," you realize that God may give you what you ask if it is His will. He will not answer when it is contrary to His laws and purpose. He may wait because the timing is wrong. But, God will never turn you down because He can't do what you ask, unless you ask Him to do something wrong, or contrary to His nature. As an illustration, you can never ask God to make a lie into the truth, or to make 2 plus 2 equal 3, or to make a rock too big for Him to lift.

When you acknowledge "For Thine is the power," you are telling God to answer according to His omnipotent ability. God may perform a miracle to answer your request. A miracle transcends the laws by which He governs the world, or He may suspend the laws to give you what you ask. God may answer by changing the internal attitude of people. Jacob wrestled with God all night in prayer because he was afraid his brother would kill him. God answered by changing the pent up anger that his brother Esau had stored up for 20 years. God may answer in an abundant amount of ways, but no matter how God answers, our response can only be, "Thine is the power."

#### FOR THINE IS THE GLORY

When you pray, "Thine is the glory," you recognize that God must get credit for all our answers to prayer, all we are, all we have and all we do. When you finish praying, you recognize several facts.

Because you prayed "Thine is the glory," you confess that any answers that you get are not because of your intercessory ability, nor are you admitting that God heard you because there is anything good in you.

Because you prayed "Thine is the glory," you confess that God gets all of the credit for any answers that come.

Because you prayed "Thine is the glory," you reject any credit that comes to you for correctly praying the Lord's Prayer, or because you prayed daily the Lord's Prayer.

Sometimes people want a reputation as an intercessor with God, others want to be known for their great faith, or their Godly piety. Since "the heart is deceitful," some pray to the King of heaven for answers, but they want to be known as "King-makers." They want to make God do what they ask. They treat God like a dog who fetches a stick, and then they take credit for having such a wonderful "stick-fetcher."

When you pray "Thine is the glory," you must completely take your hands off the request, you must let God do it in His own way, and whatever the answer, all credit goes to God.

#### THE BENEDICTION

When you properly finish the Lord's Prayer using the benediction that Jesus gave, you will have three responses from your heart.

THREE ESSENTIALS TO TAKE AWAY
1. Faith: to believe God will answer.
2. Hope: that your future will be bright.
3. Praise: that God receives your worship.

#### FAITH: TO BELIEVE GOD WILL ANSWER

Your prayer, "Thine is the kingdom," is a statement that God rules the world so He has a strategy to answer your request. You are looking to God's principles to accomplish your prayer.

#### Lord's Prayer-Benediction



Since faith is trust in God, you conclude your prayer by trusting Him to give you what you need, when you need it, the way you need it.

But you also trust God's ability when you pray "Thine is the power." Many people believe in God and know He has worked in the past. But they are not sure God can do anything now. They close their eyes to pray, but peek to see how He's doing, or to see if He's doing anything at all. They always want to help God out, as though He is not able to answer by Himself. But, when you conclude "Thine is the power," you are telling God that you believe He is able to do it by Himself.

Also, you make a faith-statement when you pray "Thine is the glory." You are saying that the answer is coming, so you are praising God for answers to prayer before they get there. It's like a little child that says, "May I have some cookies?" Then before cookies are given, the child says, "Thank you for the cookies." When you pray "Thine is the glory," you are telling God "Thank you" for the answer before it comes.

#### HOPE: THAT YOUR FUTURE WILL BE BRIGHT

"Thine is the kingdom" is a "hope-builder." Your prayer should build up hope . . . hope in God . . . hope in your calling . . . hope in God's work . . . hope in the future. Hope is a healing medicine for depressed believers. Hope is soul aspirin for those with chronic discouragement.

When you pray "For Thine is the kingdom," you express hope in God's reign and rule. You are telling God you know that, "All things will work together for good to them that love Him" (Romans 8:28).

Your hope also grows when you honestly pray "Thine is the power." You are not looking for answers from your ability, but from God's ability. When a football team is struggling against

a stronger team, they lose hope. With loss of hope comes poor play execution and poor performance. When a football team doesn't have hope, they usually get their brains beat out. But one prayer can make a difference. A team gets hope when they see a big tackle coming back in from an injury, or their quarterback coming into the game that's previously led them to victory. Someone with more strength than they have will give a team hope. With renewed hope, they will play better. They'll even play above their heads and can achieve beyond their ability.

When you honestly tell God "Thine is the power," you are renewing your hope. Then with greater hope you'll work harder, achieve more and win spiritual victories beyond your ability. Your "revived hope" only describes what you will do. Think of what God can do and will do. Your hope releases your faith, and together, you release God to do exploits. Paul tells us, "We are workmen together with God" (I Corinthians 3:9). David tells us, "Through God we shall do valiantly, for He it is that shall tread down our enemies" (Psalm 60:12). That Psalm was David's prayer for strength to defeat the giant Goliath.

The spontaneous expression of hope will bring glory to God, because it is like a child in trouble who expresses infinite confidence in his father to fix things. Your expectant attitude, therefore magnifies God. Remember when you magnify God, you do not make Him bigger or better. Your worship is like putting on reading glasses. Your glasses don't make the letters larger on the paper. Reading glasses make the print larger in your eyes and mind. After you magnify God, you see Him "bigger" so you understand things better.

#### **PRAISE: THAT GOD RECEIVES YOUR WORSHIP**

You end the Lord's Prayer as you began it . . . with praise and worship. Remember, when you worship God, no matter where you are . . . He will come to receive your praise. The Psalmist

said, "The Lord inhabits the praises of Israel" (Psalm 22:3). The farmer was told in the movie Field of Dreams, "If you build it, they will come." So when you worship God, you can be sure He will come to receive your praise. You end the Lord's Prayer in His presence just as you began it. God didn't get bored and go to sleep. He didn't get busy and turn His attention elsewhere, nor did He wander off to leave you talking to the ceiling.

#### FOREVER AND EVER

"Forever" is a wonderful thought to end your worship. Actually you are praying, "Thine is the kingdom . . . forever," which means God's kingdom principles will not change, nor will they be canceled for bad weather like a plane reservation. And when you pray, "Thine is the power . . . forever," you know that God's ability today will not be short-circuited by a power shortage. The phrase, "Thine is the glory . . . forever," reminds us that when our prayers are answered it is of God's will, by God's power, and for God's glory.

When you say "forever and ever" at the end of the Lord's Prayer, you recognize God's eternity. God existed from the beginning and will never end. The Bible says, "In the beginning God . . ." and nothing ends without God. He is forever.

When you confess "forever and ever," you are recognizing the eternal nature of the One to whom you pray the Lord's Prayer.

When you acknowledge "forever and ever," you are identifying your request with the eternal plan and purpose of God.

When you conclude "forever and ever," you are asking God for permanent results from the Lord's Prayer.

AMEN

Lord's Prayer-Benediction

There are many endings in life. We tell our friends "Goodbye" or "So long." Sometimes we say, "God bless you" or we just wave. Since it's important how we leave people, it's imperative how we "sign off" with God. Christians end their prayer saying "Amen," which means "so be it," or "so let it stand," or "my prayer stands before God on the basis of what it is . . . so be it. "

When you end the Lord's Prayer, you tell God:

"I've prayed sincerely . . . so my prayer stands."

OR

"I've prayed according to Your pattern . . . so my prayer stands."

OR

"I've committed my answer to You . . . so my prayer stands."

OR

"I've prayed Your words which is the best anyone can do . . . so my prayer stands."

Amen!!

### KEEPING A PRAYER JOURNAL

If you have been keeping a journal since reading this book, you can review your spiritual journey of praying daily the Lord's Prayer. Go back and review the lessons you have learned and the answers to prayer that you've received. Put into words these lessons and these answers to prayer.

This chapter discusses how to end praying the Lord's Prayer. Write out how you've been ending your daily prayer. Then, after reading this chapter, write how you intend to end your prayers.

Lord's Prayer-Benediction

1. What are the lessons you have learned by daily praying the Lord's Prayer?
2. How are you praying differently the Lord's Prayer?
3. What are some answers that you've received since you have prayed daily the Lord's Prayer?
4. What has been your attitude as you have ended praying the Lord's Prayer?
5. What new things have you learned to "wrap up" your daily praying of the Lord's Prayer?

The following "prayer checklist" is another way to use your prayer journal.

PRAYER CHECKLIST	HOW ARE YOU DOING?		
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, Amen. (List how you have ended praying.)	Lousy	Average	Great
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Has God been given sovereign control?</li> <li>2. Do you recognize what God can do?</li> <li>3. Has God gotten credit for answers to prayer?</li> <li>4. Do you have faith God will answer?</li> <li>5. Do you have greater hope after praying?</li> <li>6. Has God been praised through your prayers?</li> </ol>			

**THREE STEP BIBLE STUDY**  
**HOW TO END PRAYING THE LORD'S PRAYER**

A regular feature in this book is the Three-Step Bible Study. In Step 1, read the question and think through the answer you might write. Step 2 consists of reading and studying the printed Bible verse to discover how the Word of God answers the question. In Step 3, write the answer in the space provided.

- 1. The conclusion of the Lord's Prayer has similar concluding requests of an Old Testament prayer. What are they?

"Thine O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in heaven, and in the earth is thine, thine is the kingdom O Lord, and thou art the exalted head above all" - I Chronicles 29:11.

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- 2. What should be our attitude when we pray "Thine is the kingdom?"

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" - Matthew 6:33.

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3. What should be our attitude when we pray, “This is the power?”

“And Jesus came and spoke unto them, saying, all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” - Matthew 6:33.

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4. Who should get credit for answers to our prayers and why should we give Him credit?

“Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor, and glory for ever and ever, Amen” - I Timothy 1:19.

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5. How can the Lord’s Prayer increase our faith to get answers from God?

“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” - Hebrews 11:6.

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6. Abraham, a man of great faith, got answers from God because of his great hope in God. Describe this hope.

“Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed, . . . which is of the seed of Abraham; who is the father of us all, . . . who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken” - Romans 4:16, 18.

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7. When we pray the Lord’s Prayer, we attach ourselves to God’s larger program. Describe this program.

“That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” - Philippians 2:10,11.

“The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever” - Revelation 11:15.

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## CONTROLLING THE LORD'S PRAYER

*What discord you would introduce into this world if God answered all your prayers. For then you would control the universe, God would not control it. So, when God doesn't answer all your prayers, maybe He's just reminding you who is in control.*

## EPILOGUE

### WHAT TO SAY WHEN YOU'VE PRAYED IT ALL

Rightly praying the Lord's Prayer each day will guarantee that you say everything to God that you need to say, and that you say it in the right way. And when you follow the sequence of petitions in the Lord's Prayer, you know you have approached God rightly because you are following His guidelines.

But just repetitiously using the Lord's Prayer will not be effective unless you have the right heart attitude. Jesus suggested that we must accompany this prayer with adoration and worship from the heart.

The Lord's Prayer is not an access code that automatically opens the door to a security area. Nor is it like a credit card so you can phone up an 800 number to get what you want. You cannot count on the Lord's Prayer to protect you like a vaccination, nor is it like a country club membership that gives you special privileges. You must believe that God exists and that God will reward those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).

When you talk to God, pray the Lord's Prayer . . . with all your heart . . . with all your mind . . . with all your spirit . . . and with all your physical being. And as Jesus who told us to love our neighbor as ourself, we must pray in concert with others in God's family. We must come with them saying, "Our Father . . ." and "Give us . . . forgive us . . . lead us . . . and deliver us."

## **ALWAYS PRAY**

Prayer is something you must always do.

So you must always be learning to pray,

you must always be practicing prayer,

and you must always be living prayer.

“Pray *without* ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

When you have finished praying the Lord's Prayer, you've said everything to God you need to say, you know everything you need to know, and you've become everything that God requires you to become. There is no more that we can pray except to conclude, "Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen!"

THE LORD'S PRAYER IS

talking,  
listening,  
opening up,  
loving,  
meditating,  
asking,  
magnifying,  
thinking,  
changing,  
waiting,  
confessing,  
worshipping,  
exalting,  
enjoying, God.

## Appendix A

### THE LORD'S PRAYER SHOULD NOT BE RECITED

1. No record of this prayer being repeated by the disciples or a New Testament church.
2. In the commands to the churches, they were never asked to say the Lord's Prayer.
3. Jesus instructed His disciples, "When you pray, use not vain repetitions."
4. The disciples asked Jesus, "Teach us to pray (verb)," (Luke 11:1). They didn't ask, "Teach us a prayer (noun)." So He gave them the Lord's Prayer as a pattern, not something to recite.
5. The Lord's Prayer is recorded in Matthew and Luke at different times in Jesus' ministry with different wording. If He intended us to memorize and repeat it, He would have used the same words.

Conclusion: It is not a prayer to just repeat, but a pattern so we will include everything we are required to pray when we talk to God.

### WHY RECITE THE LORD'S PRAYER

1. Because Jesus commanded, "When you pray, say Our Father . . . etc."
2. Because it touches every kind of prayer and we develop a full prayer life.
3. Because it fulfills all our spiritual obligations to God.
4. Because it causes us to grow in every part of our spiritual life.
5. Because our memory is not perfect and when we overlook praying for areas of our Christian life, we hurt our spiritual growth.
6. Because of the example of Godly Christians who have benefited from praying the Lord's Prayer.
7. Because the churches that prayed this prayer were established by the Apostles.
8. Because it has worked in the authors life.

## Appendix B

### WHY PRAY PUBLICLY THE LORD'S PRAYER

1. Because Jesus commanded a group: "When ye pray say, Our Father . . . "
2. Because a group of disciples asked Him, "Teach us to pray," and He answered them to begin, "Our Father."
3. Because Jesus used plural pronouns: "us," "our," and "we" to suggest more than one should pray.
4. Because Jesus didn't instruct an individual but told a group to pray, "Our Father."
5. Because there is no first person pronoun in the Lord's prayer.
6. Because congregations have prayed the Lord's Prayer since the First Century.
7. Because when a church prays the Lord's Prayer, a community of people are lifted together to God, as a corporate body.

### WHY PRAY PRIVATELY THE LORD'S PRAYER

1. Jesus said to pray, "Our Father," in response to a group request. He used plural pronouns in a historical context, not just as a prescription for corporate prayer for public meetings. It can be used individually.
2. Jesus didn't use personal pronouns such as "I," "My," and "Me" because these pronouns can develop selfish living and ego-driven prayers. Jesus used plural pronouns to develop humility in prayer. But we can pray the Lord's prayer as individuals.
3. There are no prohibitions to personally praying the Lord's Prayer.
4. Church history is filled with individuals who prayed privately the Lord's Prayer.
5. It is easier to apply the formula of the Lord's Prayer and to emphasize different petitions of the Lord's Prayer when you are not following a group's lead, but praying privately.
6. Jesus commanded, "Use not vain repetitions," which can happen by corporately reciting the Lord's Prayer. It is more personal when we recite it individually.
7. There is no illustration in the New Testament where the prayer was ever recited by a group.

## Appendix C

### CONTRASTS BETWEEN THE ACCOUNT OF THE LORD'S PRAYER IN MATTHEW AND LUKE

Matthew 6	Luke 11
1. Setting - given in the Sermon on the Mount	1. Setting - disciples ask Jesus to teach them to pray
2. Pre-context - giving money	2. Pre-context - disciples see Jesus' model of prayer
3. The opposite to bragging and begging	3. A father-child relationship
4. Against public display	4. Example of private prayer
5. To Jews in danger of meaningless repetition	5. To Gentiles who need the meaning of prayer
6. "After this manner" - a model (privately)	6. "When you pray, say" - exact repetition (publically)
7. In earth as in heaven	7. In heaven as in earth
8. Give us bread (aorist) instantly	8. Give us bread (present) continually
9. Give us bread today	9. Give us bread each day
10. Forgive us our debts	10. Forgive us our sins
11. As we forgive our debtors	11. We have already been forgiven
12. Thine is the kingdom . . . power . . . glory	12. Not in Luke's version