

# The Lord's Prayer

A 30-DAY DEVOTIONAL

*Adapted from the teaching of Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth*



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# The Lord's Prayer

A 30-DAY DEVOTIONAL

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Dear Friend,

The Lord's Prayer is familiar to most of us. Even many people who have no claim to a relationship with Christ can recite it. No matter how frequently you may have repeated it, I hope you'll take a fresh look at this prayer—the one Jesus used to teach His disciples *how* to pray.

I have to confess that prayer has always been a difficult area of my spiritual life and one where I need the Lord's help. This booklet outlines what the Lord has shown me through a deeper study of these few verses in Matthew and includes tools to help you incorporate its truths into your own prayer life.

It's my hope that you will take time to do your own study and meditation of the Lord's Prayer. It is simple, short, and to the point, but covers almost any petition a person could think of. I trust it will become a model for your own prayers and that its truths will become even more deeply woven into the fabric of your life.

Seeking Him with you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy". The script is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'N' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'y'.

Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth

*“Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name.  
Your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our debts,  
as we also have forgiven our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.”*

**— MATTHEW 6:9-13 —**

*Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.”*

—LUKE 11:1—

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The Lord’s Prayer is much more than a way to pray. Jesus is teaching us the way to live and to think—the way to live our whole lives.

The prayer begins with, “Our Father in heaven.” It starts with worship. In this model prayer, Jesus teaches us that praise should precede petition. This is the pattern of prayers all through Scripture. Prayer before petition; worship before asking.

So Jesus begins by focusing on God and His glory, and only then does He move on to other requests. There are no personal pronouns in this first part of the Lord’s Prayer, because it’s all ultimately about our heavenly Father—His name, His kingdom, His will.

When we come to prayer, it’s important that our petitions begin with God’s glory. Before we pray for our own needs and concerns, we need to pray for God’s concerns, for what is of paramount importance to Him. Our instinct is to start with requests that are urgent or foremost on our hearts. But according to the way Jesus taught, there’s a better starting place. No matter how urgent or desperate our petition, the starting place is our Father.

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## MAKING IT PERSONAL

If our prayer life reveals what matters most to us, what does your prayer life say about your priorities?

*We, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.*

—ROMANS 12:5—

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Throughout the Lord's Prayer, there is not one singular pronoun. We don't see the words "me," "my," or "I." Instead, nine times we read "our," "us," and "we." This is not a self-centered prayer.

When we pray the Lord's Prayer, we're praying in communion and relationship with all other believers in Christ. They are our brothers and our sisters; He is *our* Father. We may pray alone or with other people, but we're never approaching God alone. Rather we're approaching Him as members of His entire family.

So as we come to God, we want to not just be mindful of how something affects us; we need to be mindful that there are other children in this family. We can't express our own concerns, needs, or desires to God apart from consideration of our brothers' and sisters' needs.

That gives a whole new scope and magnitude to prayer. It is something private and personal, but there's an expansiveness about praying "Our Father" and realizing that we are praying with other believers in China, Iraq, the Sudan, and South America. We are lifting up not only our own needs to the Lord but the needs of believers all over the world. We may not know who they are or what they're going through, but God knows, and we're coming together to His throne through prayer.

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## MAKING IT PERSONAL

Do you only pray for those close to you, or do you consider the entire family of God in your requests? How should knowing that each time you come before God you're praying with other believers around the world affect your prayer life?

*“Pray then like this: Our Father in heaven.”*

—MATTHEW 6:9—

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Throughout the entire Old Testament, God is referred to as Father only fourteen times, always with regard to the nation of Israel. Jews in Jesus’ day understood that God was the Father of their nation collectively, but they had never dared to call God “our Father” personally. He was too high and holy for that.

But then Jesus stepped into this environment and taught His disciples to pray “Our Father.” He used the Aramaic word for father—*abba*—which is tender, familiar, and warm. To the people of this time, it was amazing that anyone would have the audacity to talk to God that way! And then to act as if He had a relationship with God that was personal and intimate—that was unthinkable.

But Jesus wasn’t acting. He had that kind of intimate relationship with God, and He came and revealed to those startled believers, who had come out of the Old Testament era, a relationship with God that they had never before experienced.

Not everyone can pray, “Our Father.” Only those who are His children through faith in Jesus Christ can. Jesus said, “No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). Through Christ and His death on the cross, He has opened up the way for us to have a relationship with God as our Father, giving us the freedom and boldness to approach God with our requests—all because we have a family relationship.

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## MAKING IT PERSONAL

When you pray, “Our Father in heaven,” are you conscious of Who you’re praying to? Do you approach Him as your Abba, Father, or do you approach Him as someone who is distant and far off?



*Since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh . . . let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.*

—HEBREWS 10:19-22—

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If you or I were to walk up to the White House today, there is no way we could get in to see the President. But when we approach the throne room of the God of the universe, we have immediate access *all the time*. In every circumstance and situation, we can cry out to Him, if He is our Father.

If you're a child of God, you have access to the throne of God through Christ's death on the cross for your sins.

To be able to call Him our Father means that when we approach Him, we don't have to cower in fear. We can come in confidence and walk right up to Him. Through faith in Christ, we're made children of God. Once we are His children and know Him as Father, we can be confident that He will do as we ask in any matter that He has declared to be His will.

That doesn't mean He will give us everything or anything we ask for. But it does mean He will grant us anything that is in accordance with His character, His will, and for our good. He will never withhold any good thing from us.

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## MAKING IT PERSONAL

When you go before God with your requests, how do you approach Him—with confidence that He will hear you or with uncertainty and fear? How does knowing He will give you anything you ask according to His will change how you pray?

*The LORD looks down from heaven; he sees all the children of man; from where he sits enthroned he looks out on all the inhabitants of the earth.*

—PSALM 33:13-14—

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Heaven is understood in Scripture as the place of all authority, power, and greatness. It speaks of the exalted position of God. So when we pray, “Our Father in *heaven*,” we’re praying to a Father who is lifted up. He is high above everything going on here on this planet; above all wars, conflicts, issues, suffering, and death.

This doesn’t mean God doesn’t care or isn’t involved. He came to earth to deal with these issues and has identified with us in our suffering, but He exists in a realm all His own, way above all that.

Because God is in heaven, He has a different perspective on this planet and can see the whole thing. As He looks down on us, He knows our hearts, issues, and struggles. And He knows how everything fits together in this grand, cosmic, redemptive plan.

Psalm 57:2-3 says, “I cry out to God Most High, to God who fulfills his purpose for me. He will send from heaven and save me.” Because He is our Father in heaven, He has the power to help us when we pray, to do something about our needs.

This God in heaven is not just high and lifted up; He’s also here in our world, in our home, in our situations, seeing our tears, knowing our struggles, knowing the issues we face. He is a very present help in time of trouble.

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## MAKING IT PERSONAL

How does knowing that God is in heaven affect how you approach Him in prayer? How does it help you in the circumstances you face today?

*May his name endure forever, his fame continue as long as the sun! May people be blessed in him, all nations call him blessed!*

—PSALM 72:17—

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If I would look at your prayer list, what request is listed at the top? The first petition in the Lord's Prayer tells us what should be the number one concern on our list. At the heart of every other request we make to God, this should be the central theme:

*"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name" (Matt. 6:9).*

This isn't language most of us are used to, and we may be tempted to skip over it. But Jesus put it first, and it is of supreme importance.

When we pray, "Hallowed be your name," we're asking that God will be glorified, that He will be set apart and recognized as holy.

Our response to pressure gives the world a view of God. When we let ourselves be overwhelmed by our circumstances rather than filled with a vision of God, we are not "hallowing" His name.

So when we say, "Hallowed be your name," we're really asking that—in the midst of the pressures and difficult circumstances of life—God's name would be glorified in us. We're asking that other people would look at our lives and marvel, "God is great. His grace is great, and I can trust Him the way she trusts Him."

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## MAKING IT PERSONAL

What view of God do you give others by your response to life's pressures? How can you choose to "hallow" His name through your everyday life?

*I therefore, a prisoner for the LORD, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called.*

—EPHESIANS 4:1—

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Jesus lived His life for the glory of God. So if we want to be like Jesus—if we want God's name to be revered in every sphere of our lives—we will strive to hallow God's name, just as He did throughout His life.

But practically, how can we do this? First, we can hallow His name *in our hearts* by choosing thoughts, desires, priorities, and prayers that are worthy of Him—in all the inner workings of our hearts where no one else sees.

Second, we can hallow God's name *in our talk*. So often we talk carelessly about our heavenly Father; we use His name glibly and throw out spiritual phrases flippantly and thoughtlessly.

And third, we can hallow Him *in our walk*. God takes it seriously when we fail to uphold Him as holy before others. Moses was denied entrance into the Promised Land because of such behavior (Num. 20:2–13). We need to ask ourselves if there's anything in our lives that's failing to uphold God as holy before our family, friends, coworkers, or anyone else we encounter.

As Bible commentator William Barclay has said, “The name of God can only be hallowed when every action of our life is a witness to our faith in Him, and when we continuously bring credit to the name we bear.”

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## MAKING IT PERSONAL

Take some time to reflect on how you do at hallowing God's name through your heart, your talk, and your walk. What specific things did God show you? How can showing reverence to His name make an impact on those around you?

*“Your kingdom come.”*

—MATTHEW 6:10—

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The shortest petition in the Lord’s Prayer is just three words, but it’s one that has huge significance.

The kingdom of God is a thread that runs throughout the entire Scripture. Luke 4 tells us that Jesus came to preach the kingdom of God (v. 43). The book of Matthew alone has approximately forty references to the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven.

The kingdom of God is not a geographical territory, but speaks of the sovereign control and rule of God. To pray for His kingdom to come is to acknowledge and submit to His rule in every matter, large or small. It’s to honor Him as the King.

God is King over all the earth. He always has been, and He always will be. All other powers and rulers are subject to Him. They may seem powerful in the world today, but they only have that power insofar as God allows them to.

God’s kingdom also has a personal aspect. For those of us who have received Christ, He reigns and rules in our hearts. And as that happens, our lives should reflect His kingdom, His kingdom values, and the principles of His kingdom. What the King is like should be evident through us.

Whether you’re driving your kids to school, mowing the lawn, working in a bank or a doctor’s office, relaxing at home, cheering at your kids’ sporting events, or sitting in church—at all times and in all situations, our lives should reflect what it means to love the King and His kingdom.

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## MAKING IT PERSONAL

Is there any area of your life where you’re not letting God rule? How would things be different if your heart were completely surrendered to His reign?

*“The LORD will reign forever and ever.”*

—EXODUS 15:18—

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Although God is the King over all the earth, most people don't acknowledge His reign. Currently, this world is under the reign of Satan. But that is temporary.

One day all kingdoms of this world will be conquered by Christ and brought into complete submission to Him. So as we pray, “Your kingdom come,” we want to see His sovereignty exercised in every place of the universe. We long for the day when every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

But what does this prayer mean for you and me, right here, right now?

First, we need to ask ourselves whose kingdom we're building and seeking. Do you pray (and mean), “Your kingdom come” in both the big and little details of life? Do you seek to have things your way, or do you want God's way?

Second, we can have hope. History shows that rulers, philosophers, and people in all walks of life have tried to build their own kingdoms and destroy the kingdom of God. But that will never happen, because Christ is King, and His kingdom will endure forever.

When it seems like the kingdoms of this world are prevailing against God and His rule, we can realize that we're not seeing the final picture. The unjust rulers of the world will not live forever. That ungodly husband or boss who makes your life difficult will not reign forever. Neither will we. Ultimately, God is the One who will overcome.

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## MAKING IT PERSONAL

How can you build and seek God's kingdom throughout your everyday life? How does knowing that His kingdom will prevail help you in dealing with difficult people?

*May all kings fall down before him, all nations serve him!*

—PSALM 72:11—

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As followers of Christ, we often call what's happening in our world today a culture war, but it's really a cosmic war between kingdoms. Man doesn't want to acknowledge the reign and rule of God, something that can be traced back to Genesis 3. We're born wanting to be our own god, and the whole world is self-destructing and imploding under this cosmic conflict.

It can be overwhelming to look at everything going on in our society. But it's encouraging to remember that the kingdoms of this world will not prevail against the kingdom of God. They're fighting a losing battle, one already won by Jesus Christ!

Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil by going to the cross. What Satan thought was his triumph was ultimately his doom.

The concept of the kingdom of God means we're not victims. We're not at the mercy of earthly kings and rulers and political systems and cultural programs and immorality. It means we realize history is not an endless, meaningless cycle of the triumph of evil. We understand there's a goal to all of this—that life has meaning, that history and world events are heading somewhere, that God has a purpose and a plan.

We serve King Jesus, and we pray, "Your kingdom come" with confidence that He is coming, that He is the King, that He will rule and reign. We can count on it.

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## MAKING IT PERSONAL

Do you pray for God's kingdom to rule in your marriage? In the lives of your children? In your church? In your world? Take time right now to pray for the Lord's interests to reign supreme in your heart and in the world around you.

“I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me.”

—JOHN 5:30—

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“Your will be done.” This may be the hardest four-word prayer to say—and mean it. We are born wanting our own way. But if we claim to be God’s children, we must submit to Him in all areas of life.

To pray this prayer means we relinquish our own sense of how things should be done. It means we align our hearts to His, asking, “Lord, what would please You in this situation? What would please You in my family? What would make You happy?”

It means we don’t dictate to God what we want to see happen or ask Him to bless or to fulfill our will. It’s seeking to know what He wants on a matter and then praying and asking for it to be done.

When we pray, “Your will be done,” there rises up in some of our hearts a fear that says, “What might happen if I really prayed this and meant it? Is God going to make me do something I don’t want to do?”

But according to Romans 12:2, the will of God is *good*; it’s *acceptable*; and it’s *perfect*. If we truly believe that about His will, why would we ever reject it?

It has been said that God’s will is exactly what we would choose if we knew what He knows. And if we really believe He is wise, loving, and trustworthy, then there’s nothing to fear.

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## MAKING IT PERSONAL

How can you be intentional about seeking to know what would please God? Is there anything you’re holding back, saying, “I want to have it my way rather than God’s way”?



*“Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”*

—MATTHEW 6:10—

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When Jesus taught His disciples to pray these words, He was teaching them to pray that the will of God be done throughout the entire earth.

It’s important that we pray for God’s will to be done in our own lives, but He also wants us to have His heart for the whole world.

When we pray this prayer, we’re asking that every person in the entire world be brought into obedience to the will of God. We’re praying that unbelievers, whether they live next door or thousands of miles away, be brought to repentance and faith in Christ. When we pray this prayer, we’re actively seeking after God’s will for our families, our workplaces, in every sphere of our lives, in every relationship, in every person we know, and in every nation.

God doesn’t intend for us to sit back in our own little safe and secure world and wait for the rapture. He’s left us here for a purpose, to be His ambassadors and part of advancing His kingdom on this earth.

And while it’s easy to feel helpless in the face of huge global crises and social ills or to feel paralyzed in the face of encroaching evil, we forget something when we do. Whether the problems are in our homes or next door or around the world, we need to remember how powerful God is and that our strength lies in prayer.

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## MAKING IT PERSONAL

Make it a priority to pray for God’s will—not just in your own life and community—but throughout the whole earth. Ask Him to raise up an army of praying people who will cry out to Him.

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.”

—MATTHEW 7:7-8—

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Do you actually ask God to meet your needs? This sounds so basic, but it's such a simple concept that we sometimes miss it. Throughout the Lord's Prayer and other parts of the Gospels, Jesus urges us to ask our heavenly Father for the things we need—not just to hope He will provide—but to take the step of *asking* Him to provide for our daily needs. Then we're to *expect* Him to meet those needs.

But Jesus says God already knows what we need before we ask Him (Matt. 6:8). That raises the obvious question: Why ask if He already knows?

We don't tell God our needs in order to inform Him, but because He is our Father who wants a relationship with us. He wants us to keep going to Him, communicating with Him, needing Him, and desiring Him.

God knows what we really need. He knows what's good for us, and those are the things for which we should pray and which we can rightly expect Him to provide.

When we come before Him, we don't have to plead or beg or be frantic. We just need to ask. God wants to bless us, but He wants us to express our need. He wants us to ask Him specifically.

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## MAKING IT PERSONAL

What needs do you have today? Ask God—humbly and not in a demanding way—and then expect Him to provide.

*Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me, lest I be full and deny you and say, "Who is the LORD?" or lest I be poor and steal and profane the name of my God.*

—PROVERBS 30:8-9—

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The writer of this Proverb recognized that we can dishonor God's name as a result of having wealth or poverty. Basically he's saying, "I don't want any circumstance in life, whether abundance or lack, to put me in a position where I would do something other than honor the name of God." He doesn't want too much, and he doesn't want too little.

This writer is describing a life of moderation; a life not given to excess, and one that is content with God's provision of basic necessities. Choosing that kind of self-controlled, moderate, temperate lifestyle is a means of guarding our hearts.

This ties in with the Lord's Prayer. When we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," we're asking God for the basic, simple necessities of life. God may be pleased to bless us with far more than we need, but we're told to ask for only what's essential. Jesus is teaching us to say, "Lord, I want as much as is sufficient for each day."

Whether we are wealthy or poor by the world's standards, if we have nothing else but God as our portion and allotment for this day, we are still rich.

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## MAKING IT PERSONAL

When you pray, are you asking God to provide for what you need or what you want? How can you honor His name by how you respond to His provision for your life?

*“Give us this day our daily bread.”*

—MATTHEW 6:11—

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It is difficult for us in the affluent West to feel the need to pray for daily bread. While many in our society really do have that need, for most of us reading this, our freezers have enough food to last awhile.

When we already have most of our basic needs met, it’s hard to have a sense of utter dependence on God. But when we ask Him for daily bread, we’re recognizing that He is our provider and that we wouldn’t be able to survive apart from Him.

Whether we’re barely scraping by or we can easily make our mortgage payment, all of us as God’s children are supposed to ask for daily bread. As we do, we recognize we still need Him for everything, including those necessities that may be so plenteous in our lives.

Something as simple as food—and every other provision—should be received with a grateful heart, realizing that apart from God we would starve. We need to realize that even if our freezer is full, we are dependent on Him.

The child of God who doesn’t ask God to meet her basic needs is unlikely to recognize that He is the source of every good gift. As a result, we may become ungrateful and tend to take things for granted. Then when the provision or the plenty is removed or delayed, our hearts can become bitter.

There’s nothing wrong with having plenty if we recognize where it came from and keep a heart that’s grateful, humble, and dependent on our heavenly Father.

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## MAKING IT PERSONAL

Do you ask God for daily bread? Take time to ask Him for your basic needs today; then when He does send provision—whether big or small, expected or unexpected—thank Him for it.

“Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself.”

—MATTHEW 6:34—

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When we ask God to “give us this day our daily bread,” what are we really saying? There are several attitudes implied with this petition.

First, there’s *the attitude of gratitude*—gratitude for past provision. This petition for daily bread is a humble, grateful, acknowledgment of God’s faithful provision in the past. “All I have needed Thy hand has provided.”

Then this petition implies an *attitude of contentment*—contentment with whatever God provides for today. This is the realization that God has already provided for me today all that I need for my present peace and happiness; I don’t need anything more.

And lastly, there’s an *implication of faith*—faith that God will provide not only for today, but that tomorrow He will provide what is needed for tomorrow. If we are grateful and contented, if we believe and trust God, then there’s no room for worry, anxiety, or fear.

If we have God as our King, how can we be anxious? There’s something wrong with the picture of fearful, anxious, worrying children of God. When people see how we operate in our relationships and responsibilities, we want them to be challenged to trust our heavenly Father for their every need, without anxiety or care.

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## MAKING IT PERSONAL

Are you grateful for past provision? Are you content with what God has provided for you today? Are you trusting Him to provide for tomorrow? Confess any areas of life where you have anxiety or fear, and ask God to help you trust Him to provide for your every need.

*The LORD said to Moses, “Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day’s portion every day.”*

—EXODUS 16:4—

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When the children of Israel were in the wilderness in the Old Testament, God provided daily bread for His people. In Exodus 16, God brought them to a place where they had no provision. These two to three million Jews couldn’t see where their next meal was coming from. If God didn’t come through, they would starve.

So God said, “I’m going to send manna”—His own special recipe. Nobody else could have made it. But God provided it daily. It could be counted on, and it never failed to come the entire forty years the children of Israel spent in the wilderness. Each day (except for the Sabbath), they went out and gathered this bread from heaven, getting however much they needed for themselves and their families.

The prayer, “Give us this day our daily bread,” has in mind our physical needs. But it certainly also relates to God’s provision for our spiritual, emotional, mental, and relational needs. It’s a prayer for sustenance, strength, grace, and wisdom. God sends those to us in daily portions and allotments.

We don’t need grace today for the trials we’ll face tomorrow. We don’t need wisdom today for the problems we’ll have next month. So we’re encouraged to ask God for what is sufficient for today, trusting that when tomorrow comes, He will provide all that is needed.

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## MAKING IT PERSONAL

Are you worried and concerned about issues and problems beyond today? Ask God to provide what you need right now—and to trust Him to provide the rest when it is needed.

*“Forgive us our debts.”*

—MATTHEW 6:12—

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A great longing of the human heart is to know peace, pardon, and release from guilt. But only the gospel of Jesus Christ provides a means by which fallen sinful man can be reconciled to God. This petition in the Lord’s Prayer deals with the fundamental problem of every human being who has ever lived on this planet—sin.

In Matthew 6:12, sin is defined as a debt. We’re asking God to forgive us of our indebtedness to Him. We tend to think of the effect our sin has on us (and it does!), but at its heart, we need to remember that our sin is against God. He is the One to whom we are indebted.

If we don’t often find ourselves praying this part of the Lord’s Prayer, could it be that we don’t often see ourselves as sinners in need of God’s forgiveness? Implicit in this prayer is asking God to make us more sensitive to our sin and to help us see it as He does. We need Him to give us a penitent heart, to help us realize how great our need is to ask for His forgiveness.

Whether we tend to minimize sin, or we tend to minimize the grace of God, the cure is to get a fresh view of Christ, go to the cross, and see the price tag for our sin.

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## MAKING IT PERSONAL

When was the last time you experienced deep conviction and sincere brokenness over your sin? Ask God to help you see your sin as He sees it and to understand how great your need is for forgiveness.

*Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.*

—PSALM 32:1—

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Right after Jesus taught His disciples to ask for their daily bread, He followed it with a petition for forgiveness. Why would He put a request for something so practical and simple as daily bread in the same sentence as a request for something as profound as forgiveness for sins?

It's obvious we can't live without daily bread. If you go a prolonged period of time without food, ultimately you'll die. In the same way, we cannot live without forgiveness. Just as food, water, and air are essential for our bodies to survive, it's essential for our souls to have forgiveness.

In fact, we need forgiveness more than we need food. Food just feeds our physical bodies, which are only temporal. But forgiveness sustains our souls, which will live forever. Forgiveness is necessary for us to have access to a holy God, to have a relationship with Him, and to approach Him debt-free.

Both these requests—"give us our daily bread" and "forgive us our debts"—show we are utterly dependent on something other than ourselves. Only God can ultimately provide the things we need to sustain our bodies and souls.

He is the Source of our provision. He provides our daily bread. He is the source of our pardon for sin. So when we say the Lord's Prayer, we're acknowledging our desperate need for our heavenly Father. We're saying, "Lord, I can't live without these things that only You can supply."

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## MAKING IT PERSONAL

How is forgiveness essential for your everyday life? Do you daily pray for pardon from sin? Ask God to help you experience the joy that comes through His forgiveness.



*“Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.”*

—MATTHEW 6:12—

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Most of us find it easier to see how others are indebted to us than to see how we are indebted to God. We’re more conscious of what other people have done to sin against us than we are of how we have sinned against our heavenly Father.

That’s why we pray first, “Forgive us our debts,” so that we may be as conscious of our own sins in broken relationships as we are of the other person’s sins.

There are two essential ways of dealing with other people’s sins against us:

1. We can keep the debtor on the hook and hold out for payment. Or . . .
2. We can press the delete button. We can write those debts off and forgive them.

Jesus taught us to pray, “Forgive us our debts as we forgive everyone who is indebted to us.” We cannot hold back pardon from anyone and expect God to forgive us. Our pardon must extend to everyone who has sinned against us and to all of their sins—comprehensive, complete coverage of all our debtors and all their debts.

As long as we’re in this body and this world, we’re not going to stop sinning entirely. There will always be sins for which we need to be forgiven, and there will always be sins we need to forgive on the part of others.

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## MAKING IT PERSONAL

Is there anyone you need to forgive? Ask God to search your heart for any bitterness or unforgiveness you may be holding on to. Then choose to release those debts and find the freedom that comes with forgiveness.

“If you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

—MATTHEW 6:14-15—

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As kind of a P.S. to the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus shows there’s a clear connection between our willingness to forgive others and our ability to receive and experience God’s forgiveness for our sins.

When we don’t forgive, when we hold onto hurt and refuse to release others from that debt, we affect our capacity to receive and experience God’s grace and forgiveness.

When we do so, we end up in prison ourselves. This explains, at least in part, why so many Christians live with chronic discouragement, depression, unresolved guilt, anger, and emotional issues.

Does this mean that God’s forgiveness is conditional? That if we don’t forgive others, then we won’t be able to be forgiven?

Jesus isn’t saying that you’ll lose your salvation or you can’t get salvation until you’re willing to extend forgiveness to others. But He is saying that unforgiveness can cause you to lose your *fellowship* with God. It will keep us from experiencing the reality of His grace and forgiveness in our hearts. In order to have that ongoing, open fellowship with God as believers, we need to follow the directive of 1 John 1:9: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.” In order to experience that forgiveness, we must forgive those who have sinned against us.

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## MAKING IT PERSONAL

How have you seen unforgiveness affect your fellowship with God? How have you seen it put people in “prison”?

*“And lead us not into temptation.”*

—MATTHEW 6:13—

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This request is one of the most difficult phrases in the Lord’s Prayer to understand. Does it mean that God sometimes tempts us to sin, or He is somehow responsible if we fall into temptation?

James 1:13 tells us that God never tempts us to do evil. However, we see in other places in Scripture that He sometimes places us in situations where our faith is tested. He may even lead us to a place where He knows we will be tempted by Satan. God tests us to strengthen our faith and make us more dependent on Him.

So what are we asking for when we pray, “Lead us not into temptation”? First, we’re asking for help when temptation does come. We’re asking God to stand by us and help us in our time of need.

Second, it’s a prayer not to escape temptation but to have victory over it. We’re asking, “Lord, don’t let me be overcome by the temptation.”

And third, we’re asking God to protect us from situations where we would likely be tempted. We’re saying in effect, “Please don’t lead us into a trial that would cause us to be tempted beyond our ability to resist.”

The heart of this prayer is, “Lord, we want You to be magnified and Your name to be hallowed. So as we walk through this life, don’t lead us anywhere where You won’t give us the grace to deal with what we’re going to face.”

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## MAKING IT PERSONAL

Ask God to help you be on guard against the dangers of temptation to lead you away from Him. Ask that He would do whatever is necessary to keep you from being overcome by the sin that you don’t want to fall into.

*God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.*

—1 CORINTHIANS 10:13—

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Think about a time when you were in a situation where you knew there was something you shouldn't do or say, somewhere you shouldn't go, or something you shouldn't be involved in.

You knew it, but you felt overwhelmed by the temptation. Is God responsible in those situations? Or is Satan so powerful that you just can't win? Temptation actually has its source in desires within our own hearts. The situation we were in just brought those desires to the surface and exposed them.

So when it comes to our own sin, we are fully responsible. God does not tempt us, and Satan cannot tempt us beyond what God allows him to do. But we also need to realize that we can't resist temptation in our own strength. The petition in the Lord's Prayer, "Lead us not into temptation," is an acknowledgment that we need help. It's a cry of dependence upon the Lord.

But here's the good news: Even though we can't resist on our own, God is able to keep us from falling into sin. And He always makes provision for His children to resist temptation.

That way of escape may be the grace to endure a difficult situation. But no matter what the circumstance, we need to recognize our need for God's protection, cry out to Him for grace, and cooperate with Him in resisting the evil one and running from sin.

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## MAKING IT PERSONAL

Do you try to stay clear of sin, or do you allow yourself to be put in situations where you will be tempted? Ask God to show you what practical steps you can take to avoid temptation.

*“Deliver us from evil.”*

—MATTHEW 6:12—

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How often have we fallen into sin because we never asked God to deliver us from it? We didn't say, “Lord, I can't do this without You. Help me make right choices. Help me not to make little compromises. Oh, God, keep me from evil.”

We need deliverance from evil and from the evil one—not just once, but again and again. The more you love Christ and the more you grow in your relationship with Him, the more you will be protected from sinful desires. But there's never a time this side of heaven when we can afford to let down our guard or to be less than vigilant in our battle against evil. And don't think there's anyone who doesn't need this. Until we are delivered from this body of sin and we're in heaven in the presence of Christ, we will never be immune to temptation or to the potential for falling.

In our warfare against sin and Satan, prayer is a key weapon. We need to develop a lifestyle of praying the Lord's Prayer, not just saying it in church aloud with the congregation. This prayer should be on our breath and in our consciousness all the time.

Pray before you get tempted. Pray when you're in the middle of temptation. And pray when you fall prey to the temptation. Prayer is key to protection, not only for ourselves but also for those we love and for the Body of Christ collectively.

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## MAKING IT PERSONAL

Are you crying out for God to deliver you from evil? How can you develop a lifestyle of praying for protection for yourself? For your loved ones? For Christians around the world?

*Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!*

—ROMANS 7:24–25—

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To be delivered from the evil one and to live a godly life requires constant watchfulness and vigilance on our part. We need to guard our hearts and make constant choices to put off our old self and put on our new self.

Ask yourself: Do I truly want to be protected from evil, or is there a part of me that wants to toy with sin or skate around the edges of it? Do we really want to be completely delivered from sin, or do we just want relief from the consequences of our sin? As we pray the Lord's Prayer, we need to ask God to help us say "no" to all sin and give us the desire to be completely, totally, and absolutely delivered from all evil.

The good news is that deliverance is available. We don't have to succumb to sin or to Satan's power. Christ can deliver us, because He was assaulted by temptation, and yet at every point He said "yes" to the Father and "no" to what might have been the tempter's plan for Him (Heb. 4:15).

The greatest strategy in resisting temptation is putting our eyes on Christ and realizing He has paid the price for our deliverance. He succeeded at obeying the will of the Father when He was under temptation, and He will deliver us. Whatever your lifelong slavery may be, whatever you may struggle with, the hope for your deliverance is Christ.

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## MAKING IT PERSONAL

How can you look to Christ to deliver you from sin instead of struggling to win the battle in your own efforts?

*“For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”*

—MATTHEW 6:13 NASB—

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This conclusion to the Lord’s Prayer isn’t in most of the most reliable manuscripts of the original New Testament. But it is certainly consistent with the rest of Scripture.

“Yours is the kingdom.” When we say these words, we’re declaring that God is the King here and now, whether people recognize it or not. He’s the sovereign Lord and King of His Church, of this world, of all creation, and of all the universe. He made everything, He owns everything, and He has the right to rule over it all.

As we make this affirmation, it means the kingdom isn’t ours. We’re not in control, and God has the right to do what He wants with our lives, our families, and our world.

It also means the kingdom doesn’t belong to Satan or the rulers of this world, even though it may seem at times that wicked people are in control. We live in a kingdom in rebellion, but it’s still God’s kingdom.

If we really believe the kingdom is God’s, we will obey Him and surrender to Him as King. We will trust He is in control of all the events of this world, as well as those of our own personal worlds. We will proclaim His kingdom, His reign, and His rule in every way possible.

When we know that His is the kingdom, we can live in hope and confidence of God’s ultimate reign and rule over all creation.

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## MAKING IT PERSONAL

Do you give God the reverence and respect that is due a king? What difference should knowing that this is His kingdom make in how you approach situations with your family? In your workplace? In the world?

*Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us.*

—EPHESIANS 3:20—

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Where do you first look for help in solving life's troubling issues? Do you turn to your mate? To a book? Do you go to a counselor or to your pastor? Those sources may help, but should we not look to the One who has all power?

At the end of the Lord's Prayer, we see this statement: "Yours is . . . the power." The power of God is incomprehensible, incomparable, and irresistible. There is nothing like it in all the universe. Jeremiah 32:27 says, "Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is anything too hard for me?"

So when we come to God and ask Him to meet our practical, daily needs, for pardon for our past sins, and for protection from evil, we will never, ever tax His power. No matter what circumstance or situation we or our loved ones may face, God has the power to protect us from it and help us through it.

God's power is sustaining power. In Him, all things hold together (Col. 1:17). It's His power that keeps us, guards us, and preserves us—and it will until the end.

God created us by His power, and it's that same power that will strengthen us, deliver us, and transform us. Through His power, even the coldest, hardest heart can be revived.

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## MAKING IT PERSONAL

How have you seen God's power at work in the world around you? In your own heart and life? How can you rely on His power for whatever you face today?



*Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name.*

—PSALM 29:2—

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“For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.” At any given point in our lives, we are either living that way, or we’re living as if those things belong to us instead of God. So many times rather than saying, “Yours is the glory,” our lives instead are saying, “Mine is the glory.”

The purpose of every created thing in this world is to give God the glory due His name. That’s the end of all things, “that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:10–11).

To give God the glory due His name means we have a high opinion of Him, that we think right thoughts about Him. It means we recognize His glorious presence and praise Him for the qualities that His acts reveal. It’s to recognize where God is at work, where He is moving, and to praise Him for it.

Ultimately, we are to reflect God’s glory to others around us. As His qualities are seen in our lives, He is glorified in us. As we display His ways, His beauty, His grace, and His deeds, then we become reflectors of His glory, much as the moon reflects the light of the sun. Our goal is to make Him known to the people of this world.

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## MAKING IT PERSONAL

Ask God to examine your heart and show you whether you’re living for His glory or for your own. As others observe your life, what does it reflect to the world about God?

*“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.”*

—REVELATION 11:15 —

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As we lift up the benediction of the Lord’s Prayer, we are acknowledging that God’s kingdom is forever, His power is forever, and His glory is forever. Those things cannot be said of anyone else in the universe.

The fact that God is forever means He is unchanging. He was there in the beginning, He’s been here ever since, and He’ll be here long after everything He’s created is gone. And in that whole time span, He will never have changed.

The Scriptures describe several aspects of God that will endure forever. They include His name (Ps. 72:17), His righteousness (Ps. 111:3), His faithfulness (Ps. 117:2), His Word (Isa. 40:8), His glory (Ps. 104:31), His counsel (Ps. 33:11), His reign (Ps. 45:6), and His steadfast love (Ps. 106:1). These aspects of God endure past our sins and our failures. His mercies never come to an end.

Because the Lord is forever, He will outlast every problem we have, every pain we bear, and every stress and strain we carry on our hearts. When we have exhausted our own endurance, strength, and power, His has only just begun to be expressed to us and through us.

Because He is forever, we can cry out to Him and say, “Lord, I’m failing. I don’t know that I can keep hanging on. Help me to cling to Your power and glory that endure for all eternity.”

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## MAKING IT PERSONAL

How does knowing that God is forever affect your perspective on your current struggles? How does it change how you look at what’s happening in the world around you?

*The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.*

— REVELATION 22:21 —

We might be tempted to skip over the last word of the Lord's Prayer, but every single word in Scripture is inspired and important. *Amen* is more than just a word we tack on to the end of a prayer. It's actually a direct transliteration of a Hebrew word that means "firmness" or "truth." It refers to something reliable, true, and absolutely certain.

When we say "amen," we're saying we're in wholehearted agreement that what has just been said is the truth, or we're affirming our certainty that what has just been prayed is in accordance with God's will.

So when we say, "For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen," what we're saying is "yes" to all of the Lord's Prayer.

- Yes, Lord, I want Your name to be hallowed. I want to give reverence to Your name.
- Yes, I want Your kingdom to come.
- Yes, I want Your will to be done above everything else.
- Yes, I need daily bread, and I believe You will supply it.
- Yes, I need forgiveness and the grace to forgive others as You have pardoned me through Jesus Christ.
- Yes, I need help against temptation.
- Yes, I need to be delivered from evil.
- Yes, I acknowledge You are the sovereign Lord and Ruler of the universe, that all the kingdom, all the power, and all the glory belong to You forever.
- Yes, Lord. Let it be so. It will be so.

And all God's people said . . . *amen*.

## MAKING IT PERSONAL

Can you truly in your heart say "amen" to each part of the Lord's Prayer? What has God taught you through this study?











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