

Jesus' Teaching on Prayer

THE LORD'S PRAYER



*Know God's Power & Forgiveness
Through the Seven Petitions*



ROSE
PUBLISHING

Lord, Teach Us to Pray

Jesus' disciples had seen him pray many times. Sometimes he prayed all night and sometimes his prayers were just one sentence. But Jesus' followers made the connection between Jesus' intense prayer life and the power he showed in every aspect of life. They must have realized that prayer was the link. Finally, one disciple asked Jesus to teach them how to pray. Jesus gave them a deceptively simple, childlike prayer which has come to be known as "The Lord's Prayer." The prayer is recorded in Luke 11:2-4 and Matthew 6:9-13. Matthew's version highlights seven key parts:

*Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.*

—Matthew 6:9-13

In this pattern, Jesus provided his followers with guidelines for prayer based on the attributes or characteristics of God.

The two main sections of the prayer divide with the words "your" and "our."

1. The first part centers on God, putting God in his rightful place in our priorities. Only by focusing on the patient and loving Father can we find the attitude that puts our own needs in perspective.
2. The second part focuses on our needs—body, soul, and spirit—and the needs of others. In just three brief requests, Jesus targets all of human behavior and character and reminds us that we always need him. It's been said that if these three requests are prayed properly, nothing more need be said. Only in moment-by-moment dependence on God will we experience the good things God wants to provide.

The Lord's Prayer is a dangerous, life-changing prayer.

Jesus' enemies eventually killed him for asserting his close tie to God through addressing God as "Father." Until Jesus gave his followers the right to be called children of God, this would have been blasphemy.

Twenty-first-century Christians may take the privilege for granted, but the prayer is still a dangerous one: We do, in one sense, "take our lives in our hands" and offer them up again and again as sacrifice to the One who gave us all in the first place, receiving all of Life in return.

GOD'S
ATTRIBUTE

WHAT DOES
IT MEAN?

SCRIPTURE

APPLICATION

Our Father in heaven (NIV)

Our Father which art in heaven (KJV)

GOD'S FATHERLY LOVE

God is a loving and compassionate Father who gives life, provides for and protects those who trust him. Like a caring human father, God wants a close relationship with his children. Addressing God as “Our Father” plunges the person praying into a relationship. A child approaching a loving father knows that father will give careful attention to the child’s requests and will be lovingly inclined towards the child’s best interests. The child knows the father will answer. This is how Jesus tells us to approach God—as trusting children of a patient, tender father.



But to all who believed him [Jesus] and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.

—John 1:12, 13 (New Living Translation)

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! —1 John 3:1

Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

—Hebrews 4:16



During Jesus’ time, people understood God to be awesome, majestic, and far away in the unreachable heavens. Though the Old Testament uses the metaphor of fatherhood when talking of God, no one would have dreamed of addressing God as “Father” in prayer. Jesus’ use of the name “Abba” (like our “Daddy”) must have stunned his disciples.

In fact, Jesus’ use of the family name was so shocking to the religious leaders of his day that eventually he was accused of blasphemy and crucified for identifying himself as God’s Son!

Jesus taught his followers that they should address God as “Father,” and that their loving Father would care for all the needs of those who trust in him (see Matthew 7:7-11). Then, not only did Jesus encourage that relationship of trust, but he willingly died a horrible death to purchase the right of believers in Christ to be called children of God! It’s hard to comprehend that the God who has all the power in the universe will listen to our prayers because of the actions of his Son, Jesus!

Hallowed be your name (NIV)

Hallowed be thy name (KJV)

GOD'S HOLINESS

To hallow means to make holy. To “hallow” God’s name means to honor it as holy and sacred. When we pray, we enter the presence of God with reverence, worship, and thanksgiving. We thank God not only for what he’s done, but also for who he is. God’s greatness and glory alone are worthy of praise and thankfulness. Thanksgiving recognizes that everything we have belongs to God, whether it be our talents, possessions, jobs, or children.



*Exalt the Lord our God and worship at his holy mountain,
for the Lord our God is holy. —Psalm 99:9*

*You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not
hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name. —Exodus 20:7*

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

—1 Corinthians 10:31

The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.

—Psalm 24:1

Traditionally, God’s people, the Jews, never said or wrote the name of God. To do so was considered not keeping the name of God holy. God’s name represents his character, his plan, and his will. We often think of cursing as a common misuse of God’s name, but what about attitudes of the heart? Lack of respect or indifference by one who professes love for God may be just as much a sin. Revelations 3:15, 16 shows God’s attitude toward indifference: “I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.”

Jesus encouraged his followers to use God’s name in honorable ways and for purposes that deepen and endear our bonds to him. Part of showing reverence for the holy name of God is thanking him for who he is and for what he’s done. Many Psalms praise and worship God’s holy name (see Psalms 100 and 148). Our greatest reverence, though, is shown by the stories our lives reveal. Our Father’s name is most hallowed when we live in ways that attract others to him. (See 1 Corinthians 10:31, Matthew 5:16.)