

## **The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:5-15, NKJV)**

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Technically speaking, this is better referred to as "The Disciples Prayer" or "The Model Prayer" rather than "The Lord's Prayer", since Jesus, being sinless and therefore having no sins needing forgiveness, would not have prayed these words Himself. His prayer in John 17, known as the "High Priestly Prayer" is most appropriately called "The Lord's Prayer." Nevertheless, we call it "The Lord's Prayer" because it is His in the sense that He prescribed it. In this passage, Jesus teaches His disciples of all ages the manner after which they should pray.

*"And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward"* (Matthew 6:5). The motive of some is to be seen by men. Such have their reward of earthly notoriety, but that is the only reward they will receive. There will be no heavenly reward. The context is that of the ostentatious manner in which the religious Jews in that day would pray the Shema (Deut. 6:4-9; expanded, Deut. 11:13-21; Num. 15:37-41) and/or the Shemoneh Esrei (18 different prayers, done by rote memory). These prayers preceded by Scripture were fine in and of themselves, but they were to be directed to the attention of God and not men. Jesus calls people who pray this way with earthly motives "hypocrites". **Discuss: In what settings might this occur today?**

*"But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly"* (Matthew 6:6). Although public prayer has its place when it is done with the right motives and in the right spirit, prayer is primarily a private means of personal communion with God. Praying privately before God excludes earthly reward as a motive, and maximizes heavenly reward. The open reward will sometimes be known only to the one who prays, and sometimes publicly known, but the one who has prayed privately and received the reward will clearly know from whence it came. **Discuss: Can you think of an example of this in your life?**

*"And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words"* (Matthew 6:7). First, prayer should be concise and to the point. Second, God does not require the same petition being repeated in the same prayer. Praying the Rosary is a clear violation of this verse. **Discuss: Do Protestant Christians violate this verse also, and if so, in what way?**

*"Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him"* (Matthew 6:8). Since God knows what we need before we ask him, why

bother praying at all? First, prayer is act of worship, which is mandatory for believers (John 4:24). Second, prayer opens up intimate communion with God. Third, answered prayer strengthens faith. **Discuss: How does Matthew 6:33 apply to this verse?**

*"In this manner, therefore, pray"* (Matthew 6:9). Jesus gives us a model prayer, a perfect example of a prayer pleasing to God the Father. It is given us a pattern to follow, but praying its words is acceptable. We cannot go wrong with praying God's words. **Discuss: In what ways might it be beneficial to use Scripture when we pray to God?**

The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) consists of six or seven petitions, as the last petition can be broken into two parts. Augustine counts seven. The Heidelberg Catechism counts six. Both works, along with the Westminster Catechism and John MacArthur's Commentary of Matthew, have been consulted in preparing this study.

1. *"Our Father in heaven,"* is He to whom prayer is generally addressed. Prayer is to the Father, through the Son (1 Timothy 2:5), and in the Spirit (Romans 8:26). We pray with childlike trust (Matthew 7:9-11). To acknowledge that God is in heaven exalts His majesty (Jeremiah 23:23-24). *"Hallowed be Your name."* Hallowed means holy, sanctified, set apart, to be revered. God's name is to be honored and praised (Psalm 115:1).
2. *"Your kingdom come."* God's authority and will are desired. What kingdom is spoken of here? Is it the invisible, messianic, or eternal, or some other kingdom? Although God's Kingdom in all its aspects and phases may be applied here, the main thrust of the petition is that God reigns as King over our lives, governing them by His Word and Spirit. **Discuss: What problems does this verse present for those who see the Sermon on the Mount as applicable for the Messianic Kingdom dispensation only?**
3. *"Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."* This petition implies surrender of self will, and a desire for the promotion of God's perfect will (Matthew 16:24; Psalm 103:20-22). **Discuss: What barriers stand in the way of the answer to this petition?**
4. *"Give us this day our daily bread."* We are to pray for both physical and spiritual food (Psalm 104:27-28; Acts 14:17; John 6:35; Job 23:12). As God answers this prayer, our trust and confidence in God's ability and willingness to grant us this bread is increased.
5. *"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."* As we experience God's grace and forgiveness, we 'pay it forward' to others (Psalm 32:1). *"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses"* (Matthew 6:14-15). Refusal to forgive results in a loss of peace now, loss of communion with God, and unanswered

prayer. **Discuss: To what extent should we pray that God does things conditionally (based upon our willingness to respond the same way)? Consider Galatians 6:7-8 in this light.**

6. *“And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”* God will not author temptation, but He will allow it (James 1:13; 1 Corinthians 10:13). Let us recognize that we cannot stand against the world, the flesh, and the devil apart from divine help. **Discuss: How might God answer this petition specifically?**

*“For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen”* (Matthew 6:13). God in His infinite power and love is both able and willing to answer the prayers of His children (Mark 10:27; Romans 10:13; Philippians 4:19). “Amen” means ‘so be it’. This word expresses a willingness to accept God’s will and response to our prayer, knowing that the ‘Father knows best’ (Psalm 135:6; 2 Corinthians 1:20).