

The Lord's Prayer: A Model

Matthew 6:9-13

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.

1. *Our Father* – The right to be called the sons of God has been given to every Christian. To anyone who puts their faith in Christ, they are also united to him by being made a part of God's family. Therefore, God is your father and in every sense of the word. Jesus uses this word to address God in order to communicate the depth of relationship that exists between God and his children. The term father is a intimate term denoting personal knowledge of God and personal relationship with him.

2. *Hallowed be your name* – God is holy and his name is holy. At the heart of his holiness is his allocentrism, which means that God is *others-centered*. God's allocentrism is to be contrasted with our autocentrism which is focus on self and the root of the flesh. God's allocentrism connects God's love for you with the way he interacts with you. This means that God is without sin and will never sin against you. His name is hallowed. We are to be in awe, amazed, and in wonder at who he is: morally pure, just, righteous judge, peaceful, forgiving, truthful, faithful, generous, abounding in love, without malice, perfect, loves what is good, hates what is evil, gracious, kind, joyful, longsuffering and patient, wrathful, vengeful, etc.

3. *Your kingdom come your will be done on earth as it is in heaven* – This is where we focus on the heart of God and his desires. We seek to do what he wants over what we want. This is where we choose God over ourselves, recognizing that the choice we make is what makes us free. We choose God over slavery, and we believe his kingdom is better than ours, and his future is better than the one we would create. We express regard for his wisdom and his position of authority. We honor his kingship and his right to rule and reign over his creation.

4. *Give us this day our daily bread* – We are dependent on God and he seeks to meet our needs. Typically, we place this in slot number 2 after our initial greeting, "Our Father". When we spend most of our time in prayer with requests, and when we emphasize our requests over our relationship with our Father, the holiness of his name, and his supreme authority, we get prayer out of order. If asking God to fix our problems or meet our needs (give us this day our bread) takes precedence over "hallowed be your name" and "your kingdom come, your will be done", our prayer life tends to be stunted and our relationship with our Father immature. We want to move away from bargaining with God or negotiating with him to get him to fix our problems. When we treat God as more of a sidekick for our agenda than a Father who is God we never rightly deal with our fear and idolatry. He invites us to come and plead for our daily bread. He desires to hear our requests and meet our needs, but we cannot love the "bread" more than we love and worship him.

5. *Forgive our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors* – Here we see the connection between repentance and forgiveness. If we see that God has a right to speak into our lives, then we should welcome his input and his voice. As we experience his forgiveness, so then we are equipped and

expected to forgive those who have sinned against us, recognizing that a person's sin against us is only a fraction of the total debt we owed that has been forgiven by Christ.

6. *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil* – This does not imply that God tempts men. God does not lead men into sin. What is being said here is the antithesis of that, directing our attention to God as more powerful than our temptations and desires, and his deliverance from evil as very real. Evil exists, and Jesus faced it for us so that we do not have to face that great temptation or bear the weight of evil. We come to our Father who is greater than our desires, seeing having him as better than our devotion to self. He will not lead you into temptation. He will deliver you from evil; and he has, through the cross, and nothing can separate you from his love; as Romans 8 says: ³⁸For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.