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WEEK ONE

JESUS: A MODEL PRAYER

Are you satisfied with your prayer life? Does time alone with God in prayer hold the highest priority in your day, or does it get pushed aside by the urgent? Are you just saying words, or are you pouring out your heart to the Father? What is most of your prayer time focused on—asking for personal needs, worshipping God, giving thanks? Prayer is more than just asking God for things; it's about the relationship.

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones wrote, “The highest picture that you can ever have of man is to look at him on his knees waiting upon God. That is the highest achievement of man, it is his noblest activity. Man is never greater than when he is there in communion and contact with God.”¹ If we believe this is true, wouldn't we spend more time on our knees in prayer?

To be honest, I would guess most of us struggle with prayer. Busyness of life often crowds out time alone with God to pray. And when we do pray, we often bring Him our grocery list of things we want as we rush out the door. For some, prayer has become nothing more than a routine ritual out of a sense of obligation. But God wants it to be about the relationship, not a ritual.

Jesus knew He needed time alone with the Father. No matter how busy He was, He always took time to get away and pray. In Luke 11:1, one of the disciples saw Jesus praying and asked Him to teach them how to pray. Jesus answered by giving them a model to follow. We often refer to this as the “Lord’s Prayer.” This model prayer would guide the disciples (and us) through essential components of prayer and teach us how to pray like Jesus did.

We begin this study on prayer by looking at His model for praying. Ask God to teach you fresh application about prayer. Don’t just recite the words, but use them to guide you through a time of personal, powerful prayer.

“In this prayer Jesus laid down the principles governing man’s relationship to God, and these are relevant to believers in every age. It should be noted that He did not say, ‘Pray in these precise words,’ but ‘Pray, then, in this way’ (v.9).

He was giving a pattern, not an inflexible form. The exact words employed may vary greatly, while the individual prayer itself conforms to the pattern given.”²

J. OSWALD SANDERS



WEEK 1 | DAY 1

WORSHIP

How do you begin your time of prayer? I admit I often begin prayer with my list of needs, but that's not how Jesus began His model prayer. He began with worship. When we approach God the Father in adoration and worship, it brings our worries and anxieties into perspective as we focus on God. Why wouldn't we begin with worship?

The New Testament uses the Greek words *góny* (“knee”)/*gonypetéo* (“bend the knee”) that give a picture of bowing the knee in prayer to God and paying homage to Jesus. Bending the knee is a physical gesture of worship that expresses “an inner attitude of adoration, respect, and humility.”³

Let's go now on bended knee to worship Him.

*Father, I turn my focus to You, my Creator, my sovereign Lord,
my faithful God who loves me unconditionally. I bow my knees to
worship You and You alone.*

LOOKING TO GOD'S WORD

MATTHEW 6:9–13

1. Read the entire passage of Matthew 6:9–13. Today we will focus on verse 9. Write it below.

2. In this model, Jesus begins by focusing our attention on God in an attitude of worship: “Our Father.” What does the term *Father* imply? How should we respond to God as our Father?

3. What is significant about **our** Father instead of **my** Father?

4. “Our Father who is in heaven.” Why is it significant that He is in heaven?

5. “Hallowed be Your name.” What does the word *hallowed* mean?

6. What are some of God’s names? (You might begin by looking at Psalm 91:1, which gives us two names.) How can we make His name hallowed in our lives?

LOOKING UPWARD

7. What is your view of God when you pray to Him? How do you think of Him?

8. How does your relationship with your earthly father affect the way you look at and approach your heavenly Father?

9. How does worshiping God impact your life?

LOOKING DEEPER

10. Read the parallel passage in Luke 11:1–4. What instructions concerning prayer does Jesus give His disciples?

11. How does this passage differ from the Matthew passage?

LOOKING REFLECTIVELY

When we worship, we turn our focus to the One we are worshiping. All other things fade into the background—our worries and cares, other people we might look to, and things we value. Worship brings us to God in a posture of adoration and humility. We acknowledge who He is, and we praise Him for His attributes. Worship prepares our hearts to be attentive to God.

Spend time worshiping your heavenly Father. “Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name.” Use one or more of these suggestions to help you get started.

-  Sing praises to Him. Listen to worship music.
-  Praise Him as you read through a psalm or other passage focused on His attributes. (Psalm 8 is a good one to use.)
-  Be quiet for a few minutes and reflect on His character.
-  Write your own psalm of praise to Him.

“And supreme among our goals in life is that we would ‘hallow’ that name. Glorify it. Esteem it. Draw others’ attention to it. Stand amazed at it and at all it represents. . . . In placing this petition at the beginning of His model prayer, Jesus declared that no other item on our prayer list—no health concern, no relational breakdown, no financial shortfall—nothing should rank higher than this single request.”⁴

NANCY DEMOSS WOLGEMUTH



WEEK 1 | DAY 2

SURRENDER

“I Surrender All” is one of my favorite hymns. Yet when I think about the words, I realize just how hard it is to surrender all to God. My tendency is to keep things under my control instead of handing everything over to Him. I often want my way instead of seeking what He wants for me. However, Jesus guides us in this prayer to ask for the Father’s will and surrender our will to Him. He modeled this for us as He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane. Are we willing to ask for God’s will to be done, even if it may not be what we desire?

*Lord, I surrender all to You—my desires, the work of my hands, my aspirations, my possessions, my relationships, and yes, even my life.
Your will, not mine, be done.*

LOOKING TO GOD’S WORD

MATTHEW 6:9–13

1. Reread the entire passage of Matthew 6:9–13. Today we will focus on verse 10. Write it below.

2. What does it mean to pray, “Your kingdom come”?

3. We are also to pray, “Your will be done.” What heart attitude do we need in order to pray for God’s will to be done?

4. How does praying for His will to be done relate to praying for His kingdom to come? Why does He mention His will being done on earth as it is in heaven? What does this imply?

5. What specifics of God's will do the verses below give? What verses would you add to this list concerning God's will?

1 Thessalonians 4:3

1 Thessalonians 5:16–19

1 Peter 2:13–15

LOOKING UPWARD

6. How can we know God's will?

7. Do our prayers change God's will or plan? Can they? Explain your answer.

8. If not, why do we pray?

LOOKING DEEPER

9. Jesus instructed His disciples to pray for God's will to be done. He followed this model when He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane. Read Matthew 26:36–44. List your observations about Jesus' prayer in the Garden.

LOOKING REFLECTIVELY

In his commentary, John MacArthur explains what it means to pray, “Your kingdom come.” He says, “Our greatest desire should be to see the Lord reigning as King in His kingdom, to have the honor and authority that have always been His but that He has not yet come to claim. . . . To pray *Thy kingdom come* is to pray for the program of the eternal Deity to be fulfilled, for Christ to come and reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. His program and His plan should be the preoccupation of our lives and of our prayers.”⁵

-  Are you praying for God’s will on this earth to be done or your will?
-  Are you praying for His return and waiting expectantly for His eternal Kingdom? Ask Him to show you how to spend your time for Him as you wait for His coming.
-  Is Jesus Lord of your life? Have you yielded your life to His rule? If not, what area(s) are you holding onto? What are you having trouble letting go of?
-  Ask Him to give you strength and grace to surrender all to Him.
-  Sing and ponder the words to this hymn, “I Surrender All.”⁶

All to Jesus I surrender,
All to Him I freely give;
I will ever love and trust Him,
In His presence daily live.

I surrender all,
I surrender all;
All to Thee, my blessed Savior,
I surrender all.

All to Jesus I surrender,
Humbly at His feet I bow;
Worldly pleasures all forsaken,
Take me, Jesus, take me now.

“Lord, if what I ask for does not please You, neither would it please me. My desires are put into Your hands to be corrected. Strike the pen through every petition that I offer that is not right. And put in whatever I have omitted, even though I might not have desired it had I considered it . . . ‘Not as I will, but as Thou wilt.’”⁷

CHARLES SPURGEON



WEEK 1 | DAY 3

SUPPLICATION

Today's verse focuses on supplication, asking God for something. We rarely have trouble asking God, but are we asking for the right things and in the right way? God wants us to ask, but He also wants us to trust Him with the answers. Are we asking according to His will or our will? Jesus gave His disciples instructions on what to ask for in prayer. How well do our prayers line up with His instructions?

Lord, teach me how to pray and ask for things according to Your will and in a way that pleases You. Teach me how to hold things loosely and trust You for the answers.

LOOKING TO GOD'S WORD

MATTHEW 6:9-13

1. Reread the entire passage of Matthew 6:9-13. Today we will focus on verse 11. Write this verse below.

2. What is *our daily bread*?

3. Read Philippians 4:6. What instructions does Paul give concerning prayer? What are we to do, and what are we not to do?

4. Why would giving thanks be important?

5. List your observations from Philippians 4:19. How does this verse relate to Matthew 6:11?

LOOKING UPWARD

6. If God knows what we need, why should we pray for it?

7. How do we distinguish needs from desires?

8. Some Christians believe asking for God to address physical needs shows a lack of faith. How would you respond to that?

LOOKING DEEPER

9. Read Psalm 104:10–28. How does God provide for His creation? Thank Him for His provisions and the way He provides.

LOOKING REFLECTIVELY

I have lived in times when money was tight, and I wasn't sure how I was going to make ends meet. But every time I have been in need, God provided in special ways and in His perfect timing. He has never let me go without something I truly needed. He is faithful to provide for us.

 Pray for your daily bread (your personal needs) today. Acknowledge your dependence on Him to provide. (Your needs may be more than physical needs.)

 Write down ways you've seen Him provide your *daily bread* this week.

 Pray for the needs of others.

 Write out Philippians 4:19. Thank Him for being your provider.

“Prayer is not appointed for the furnishing of God with the knowledge of what we need, but it is designed as a confession to Him of our sense of the need. In this, as in everything, God's thoughts are not as ours. God requires that His gifts should be sought for.”⁸

A. W. PINK



WEEK 1 | DAY 4

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Confession is vital to spiritual growth. We will continue to sin as long as we are in these earthly bodies. And when we sin, we need to confess as soon as the Holy Spirit convicts us. God has already forgiven us through Christ's death on the cross, but our confession acknowledges we are aware of our sin and we want to turn from it. As we confess, we are expressing our gratitude for His payment for all our sins. It's also important, in light of His forgiveness of us, that we forgive others. Jesus addresses forgiveness in today's lesson.

*Lord, keep me sensitive to the Holy Spirit convicting me of sin.
Thank You for paying the penalty for my sins and forgiving me
once for all. Help me extend that forgiveness to others,
especially those who are difficult to forgive.*

LOOKING TO GOD'S WORD

MATTHEW 6:9–13

1. Reread Matthew 6:9–13. Today we will focus on verse 12. Write it below.

2. If Jesus forgave our sins through His death on the cross, why does He tell us to ask for forgiveness? What does He mean here?

3. He continues to discuss forgiveness in verses 14–15. What does Jesus mean in verse 15 when He says, “But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions”? Does this mean Jesus will only forgive us if we forgive others?

4. If we refuse to forgive someone, what does that reveal about our heart and attitude toward God?

LOOKING UPWARD

5. Can someone be a believer if he can't forgive others? Explain your answer.

6. How does it affect you if you continue to go for a period of time without confessing your sins?

7. How would you counsel someone who is struggling to believe God could forgive her sin?

LOOKING DEEPER

8. Jesus tells a parable in Matthew 18:21–35. List principles for forgiveness from these verses.

9. How does this parable relate to Matthew 6:12, 14–15?

LOOKING REFLECTIVELY

I first heard the gospel when I was a young girl. Even though I was only nine years old, I knew I was a sinner and could never be good enough to earn my salvation and forgiveness of sins on my own. Only Jesus could pay that price through His death on the cross. When I accepted Jesus as my personal Savior, I prayed to Him—thanking Him for dying on the cross for my sins and confessing my sin and inadequacy to pay the penalty myself. He forgave all my sins—past, present, and future—with His blood on the cross. He paid the penalty for me. I’m forgiven, but I still sin. And every time I sin, I need to confess to God in order to restore my fellowship with Him. My relationship with Him doesn’t change when I sin—I’m still His child. However, my fellowship with Him is hindered because of unconfessed sin.

-  Have you accepted Christ’s death on the cross for your sins? Then you are forgiven. If you haven’t, take a moment now and pray to Him, acknowledging your sin and accepting His payment for your sins on the cross. Thank Him for being your Savior and Lord.
-  Do you doubt His forgiveness for something in your past? The blood of Christ covers your sins (all of them). You are forgiven.
-  Keep short accounts with God. Do you need to confess anything? Agree with God it is sin. Name it, thank Him for His forgiveness on the cross, and turn away from it.
-  Are you struggling with forgiving someone who has hurt or wronged you? If so, ask God to help you forgive them. The feelings may not be there at first, but by faith, forgive those people with a sincere heart. Pray for them. God will work in your heart as you are obedient to forgive.
-  Meditate on Psalm 103:8–14. Write your thoughts below. What stands out to you from this psalm?

“Nothing humbles the soul like sacred and intimate communion with the Lord; yet there is a sweet joy in feeling that He knows all, and, notwithstanding, loves us still.”⁹

J. HUDSON TAYLOR

PROTECTION

Every day we face spiritual battles. Some are obvious; others are subtle. We have an enemy who doesn't want us to follow God, so he tries to distract us with his fiery darts—accusations, lies, guilt, self-doubt, discouragement. As a result, we need to pray for protection in the spiritual battle around us. Jesus emphasizes this in His instructions to the disciples concerning how to pray. We'll also look at His prayer for the disciples and other believers recorded in John 17. Jesus saw the need to pray for protection for believers from the enemy, and so should we. Are you facing a spiritual battle today? Turn to Him in prayer. Don't try fighting the battle alone.

*Lord, keep me from temptations. Help me look to You for strength
instead of trying to fight these spiritual battles on my own.
Protect me from the enemy. Keep me close to You.*

LOOKING TO GOD'S WORD

MATTHEW 6:9–13

1. Read Matthew 6:9–13 again, even out loud. Today we will focus on verse 13. Write it below.

2. Some believe this is two petitions; others say it's one. I lean toward the view it is one petition with two parts. The first part is, "Do not lead us into temptation." What do you think Jesus means by this?

3. The second part of the petition is, “Deliver us from evil.” What kind of evil is He referring to?

4. Read John 17, Jesus’ High Priestly Prayer. He prayed this prayer after He washed the disciples’ feet and before Judas’s betrayal of Him. Jesus knew this was His last night with the disciples, and He prayed for them. We can divide this prayer into three sections, according to whom He prayed for. In each section below, write down whom He prayed for and what He prayed for them.

- 17:1–5

- 17:6–19

- 17:20–26

5. What does Jesus’ prayer reveal about His heart toward the Father? Describe their relationship.

6. What does His prayer reveal about His heart toward believers?

7. In verse 17, He prays, “Sanctify them in the truth.” **Sanctify** means to “set apart for special use. A believer is to be distinct from the world’s sin, its values, and its goals.”¹⁰ What is the truth? How does the truth sanctify us, setting us apart from the world for God?

LOOKING UPWARD

8. What do you learn about prayer from Jesus’ prayer in John 17? What stands out to you? As we look at His example, what should our prayers focus on?

9. How does God strengthen and protect us from the evil one? What verses come to mind? (One I think of is 1 John 4:4.)

LOOKING DEEPER

10. Read Ephesians 6:10–13 and describe the evil we are up against.

11. What instructions does Paul give the Ephesians in Ephesians 6:18–20 concerning prayer?

LOOKING REFLECTIVELY

I hate to admit it, but I don’t always pray for protection from the enemy. It’s easy to become complacent and forget that we’re in a spiritual battle. But that’s exactly what Satan wants us to do. If we’re not thinking about the battles around us, we won’t take time to pray and put the armor of God on. Jesus guides us to pray for protection against the temptations of Satan.

 What temptations are you struggling with today? How are you handling them?

 The end of verse 13 in the NASB reads, “For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.” This is missing in early manuscripts.¹¹ However, it is a good reminder for us to begin and end our time in prayer with acknowledging God’s sovereignty and majesty.

 Spend time today using either the Lord’s Prayer in Matthew 6 or the High Priestly Prayer in John 17 to guide you through a time of prayer. Don’t just repeat the words, but let them lead you as you go before the Lord in prayer.

As we end this week’s lesson, take time to write out your own prayer in the space below or in your prayer journal. Following how Jesus modeled prayer in the verses we studied this week, write a prayer that focuses on worship, thanksgiving, surrender, confession, and protection. Or you may want to write a prayer on just one of these areas.

*“O Lord God, Thou are my protecting arm, fortress, refuge, shield, buckler.
Fight for me and my foes must flee; uphold me and I cannot fall;
Strengthen me and I stand unmoved, unmovable. Equip me and I shall
receive no wound; stand by me and Satan will depart . . .”¹²*

FROM THE VALLEY OF VISION