

JESUS' BLUEPRINT for PRAYER



Haddon W. Robinson



introduction

Jesus' Blueprint for Prayer

One of the biggest problems in our relationship with God is thinking that we can depend on Him on our own terms. This independent dependence often shows up in the way we pray. While most people do pray, relatively few people pray to God on His terms. This booklet is about

praying the way God wants us to pray.

The Lord's Prayer, one of the most familiar of all prayers, has been much repeated but little understood. Haddon Robinson, former teacher on Our Daily Bread Ministries' *Discover the Word* daily radio program, cuts through the confusion and shows us that Jesus gave a blueprint for prayer that remains just as relevant today as it was 2,000 years ago.

Mart DeHaan

contents

one

Why Pray?.....5

two

Jesus' Model for Prayer.....7

three

Following the Model29

EDITORS: Tim Gustafson, J.R. Hudberg
COVER IMAGE: Lincoln Rogers/iStockPhoto
COVER DESIGN: Stan Myers
INTERIOR DESIGN: Steve Gier

Adapted from *What Jesus Said About Successful Living* by Haddon Robinson.
Copyright © 1991 by Haddon Robinson. Used by permission of
Discovery House.

Interior Images: (p.1) Lincoln Rogers via iStockPhoto; (p.5) Zefe via Pixabay.com;
(p.7) praying hands by Albrecht Dürer/Public Domain; (p.29) JclK8888 via
MorgueFile.com.

All Scripture, unless otherwise indicated, is taken from the New King James
Version®. Copyright © 1982, by Thomas Nelson, Inc.
Used by permission. All rights reserved..

© 1989, 2016 Our Daily Bread Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI
All rights reserved.
Printed in USA



one

Why Pray?

Most people thinking about prayer eventually ask, “Why pray at all?” Is the basic purpose of prayer to get things from God? Certainly the Bible assures us that God hears us and gives us what we need. But is that the basic reason Jesus taught us to pray?

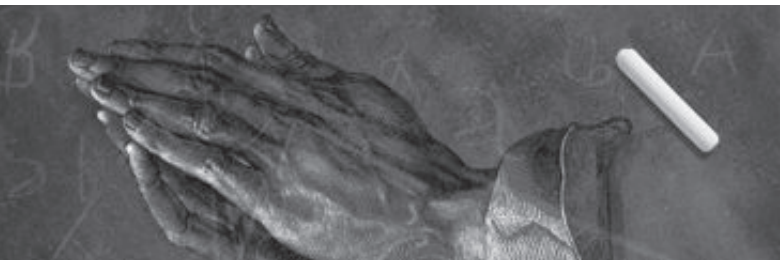
George MacDonald offered this rationale for prayer:

What if God knows prayer to be the thing we need first and most? What if the main object in God’s idea of prayer is a supplying of our great, our

endless need—the need of Himself? . . . Hunger may drive the runaway child home, and he may or may not be fed at once, but he needs his parents more than his dinner. Communion with God is the one need of the soul beyond all other need. Prayer is the beginning of that communion, of talking with God, a coming-to-one with Him, which is the sole end of prayer, yea, of existence itself. . . . We must ask that we may receive, but that we should receive what we ask in respect to our lower needs is not God's end in making us pray. He could give us everything without that. To bring His child to His knee, God withholds that men may ask.

When we pray, we often concentrate on the gifts in God's hand and ignore the hand of God Himself. We pray fervently for the new job or for the return of health. When we gain the prize, we are delighted. And then we have little more to do with God. If we are only after the gifts, God's hand serves only as a way to pay the rent, heal the sickness, or get through the crisis. After the need has been met, the hand itself means little to us.

While God in His grace does give good gifts to His children, He offers us more than that; He offers us Himself. Those who are satisfied merely with the trinkets in the Father's hand miss the best reward of prayer—the reward of communicating and communing with the God of the universe.



two

Jesus' Model For Prayer

admire men and women who give prayer high priority in their lives. Frankly, prayer has proved to be the most demanding discipline of my life. At different times I have found it strenuous, boring, frustrating, and confusing. Over the years a solid prayer life has been more intermittent than persistent. To admit my lifelong struggle with prayer is something I do with great uneasiness. Out of my experience I have learned that you cannot simply “say your prayers.” Prayer—real prayer—is tough, hard business.

For me, prayer serves as preparation for the battle,

but for Jesus, it was the battle itself. In the life of Jesus, prayer was the work, and ministry was the prize. Having prayed, He went about His ministry as an honor student might go to receive a reward, or as a marathon runner might accept the gold medal.

Where was it that Jesus sweat great drops of blood? Not in Pilate's Hall, nor on His way to Golgotha to be crucified. It was in the Garden of Gethsemane.▮ There He "offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death" (HEBREWS 5:7). Had I been there and witnessed that struggle, I would have worried about the future. "If He is so broken up when all He is doing is praying," I might have said, "what will He do when He faces a real crisis? Why can't He approach this ordeal with the calm confidence of His three sleeping friends?" Yet, when the test came, Jesus walked to the cross with courage, and His three friends fell apart and fell away.

▮ *Three of the gospel accounts record **Jesus' anguished prayer** to His Father— Matthew 26:36–46; Mark 14:32–42; and Luke 22:40–46. Luke 22:44 says, "His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground."*

In Luke 11, after Jesus had spent time praying, one of His disciples asked Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." Two things are worth noting about the request. First, one section of John

the Baptist's curriculum in disciple-making focused on teaching his followers to pray. Second, that was what Jesus' followers asked Him to do for them. They had been with Him now for over 2 years.▮ They had front row seats when He taught and preached. They witnessed His miracles. Yet, as far as we know, they never took Him aside and asked, "Lord, teach us to preach," or "Lord, show us how to minister." They did come and request, "Teach us to pray."

▮ *Jesus taught this prayer at least **two different times**—once in the Sermon on the Mount (MATTHEW 6:9–13), and here in Luke 11. In the first instance, Jesus pointed out how the repetitious prayers of the heathen were useless (vv. 7–8).*

We usually ask an expert to give us the best he has to offer. When we're with a successful banker, we ask, "Teach us to invest." From a gifted scholar we request, "Teach us to do research." To a professional golfer we say, "Teach us to putt." Jesus' disciples asked Him, "Teach us to pray."

Because prayer was central to His ministry, He wanted it to be vital in theirs, so He responded by giving them what is commonly called "The Lord's Prayer." Actually, the prayer is misnamed because the Lord Himself could not have prayed this prayer. As the Son of God without sin, He could not have joined in the petition, "Forgive us our sins." Perhaps the prayer should be labeled, "The Disciples' Prayer," since

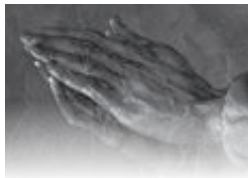
it is a primer on prayer for people like us. It serves us in praying as an outline serves a minister when he preaches a sermon or as a blueprint serves a builder when he constructs a building. It guides us as we go.

The prayer given to us by Luke opens with an address to God: “Father.” The prayer then has two major sections. First, we are to talk to the Father about the Father—His person, His program, and His purpose: “Hallowed be Your Name,” “Your kingdom come,” “Your will be done.” Then we speak to the Father about His family—the children’s need for provision, pardon, and protection: “Give us day by day our daily bread,” “Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us,” and “Do not lead us into temptation.”

While I still have much to learn about prayer, this model prayer of Jesus has ordered my prayer life. Of course, you may deserve high grades in the subject. But if not, perhaps you can pick up some pointers that will teach you to pray.

God’s Paternity: “Our Father”

At the outset we need to know who we are praying to. According to Jesus, when we come to the God of the universe in prayer, we can call Him Father. Bound up in the word *Father* is a summary of the entire Christian faith. When Christians bow before God and call Him Father, they are acknowledging that at the heart of the universe there is not only ultimate



When Christians bow before God and call Him Father, they are acknowledging that at the heart of the universe there is not only ultimate power but ultimate love.

power but ultimate love.

There are some who hold to a view called the “Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.” This does not reflect the teaching of the Bible, however. It’s true that God is the Creator of all, and in that sense everyone is “the offspring of God” (ACTS 17:29). But the relationship a creature has with its Creator is not the relationship of the Father to His children. Our relationship with God as our Father comes only through our relationship with Jesus Christ. John 1:12 says: “As many as received Him [Christ], to them He gave the right to become

children of God, to those who believe in His name.”

It is a wonderful privilege to call God Father—a privilege we easily take for granted. In the Old Testament, the people of God did not individually address Him as Father. The word *Father* for God was rarely used, and when it was it always referred to the relationship of God to the nation of Israel. As far as we know, none of the outstanding Old Testament saints—Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David, Daniel—ever dared to address God as his Father. Yet in the

New Testament, at least 275 times, that is how we are instructed to speak to God. Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, when we come to the sovereign majesty of the universe the word that should fall readily from our lips is *Father*.

The address "Our Father in heaven" as given in the Lord's Prayer not only recognizes the intimacy that we have with God as our Father but also speaks of the awe we should have as we come to Him in prayer. Jesus is saying that this One to whom we come as Father is the sovereign God of heaven, the God of all power, the God of all authority.

The Bible does not prioritize one of these aspects of God but keeps the tension between intimacy and awe. The writer of Hebrews said: "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (4:16).

The fact that we come to a throne should fill us with awe. But because it is a throne of *grace*, it is approachable. The almighty God of the universe has allowed us, because of Jesus Christ, to approach Him in prayer and address Him as Father.

God's Person: "Hallowed Be Your Name"

When we pray, Jesus told us to say, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name" (LUKE 11:2). In Hebrew thought, a name was extremely significant. In Psalm 9:10 we read, "Those who know Your name

will put their trust in You.” The psalmist was not claiming that those who could pronounce God’s name would trust in Him. He was saying that those who knew God’s character and His power would put their trust in Him. So when we pray “hallowed be Your name,” we are talking about the character and person of God. To *hallow* means “to sanctify, to set apart, to make special.” When we say, “hallowed be Your name,” we are praying that God may be God to us, that He will be set apart in our prayers in such a way that it will be clear that we reverence God.

We often pray for God to increase our devotion and depth of spiritual life, but none of the petitions found in this prayer are for personal holiness. The first step in spiritual growth is not to pray for inner feeling or inner change but that God will indeed be God in our lives. The focus of the spiritual life is not experience; it is God. We have the command to be holy as He is holy¹ because the spiritual life begins when we allow God to be God in all aspects of life—personal, family, business, recreation—and to let Him set us apart for His good purposes.



The first step in spiritual growth is not to pray for inner feeling or inner change but that God will indeed be God in our lives.

↗ In 1 Peter 1:16 the apostle Peter draws from several places in the Old Testament when he says **“Be holy, for I am holy.”** (LEVITICUS 11:44–45; 19:2; 20:7). Peter’s larger point was that if we call God our Father, we have a holy obligation to live as His children.

Sometimes our prayers are dangerously close to a blasphemous distortion. We often pray as if God were deaf and we have to shout to make Him hear us, as if He were ignorant and we have to explain to make Him understand, and as if He were callous and we have to cajole to get Him to respond. Our prayers reveal a very inadequate idea of God.

This is also reflected when names on earth are more significant to us than the name of God in heaven. We can be more in awe of an employer, a professor, a loved one, a friend, or a government official than we are of the God in heaven. We can fear a person more than we reverence and respect the God to whom we pray.

His preeminence should be true not only in our own inner life but also in our prayers for others. We should not pray primarily that others will be delivered from sin but that they will come to know God. The ultimate goal of evangelism is not only that people will be won to Jesus Christ, but that people in the world who profane the name of God will come to understand who He really is—the God of holiness, grace, and righteousness. And out of that, they will hallow His

name. That is the essence of evangelism—people everywhere allowing God to be God in their lives.

God's Program: "Your Kingdom Come"

The second request that we direct to the Father about the Father is devoted to the person of God and to the program of God: "Your kingdom come." Jesus was speaking here about His future messianic reign on the earth. All through Scripture, the story of the Bible looks forward to the Messiah, Jesus Christ, who will rule in righteousness when the kingdom of this world will become the kingdom of our God and of His Christ (SEE REVELATION 11:15).[▶]

*▶ **Revelation** speaks of seven angels who will play loud trumpets that herald amazing signs and terrible judgment upon the earth. The last angel will declare: "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever."*

This concern for God's rule on the earth is basic to our view of history. In the witness of the Bible, history is "His story," and history is headed somewhere—the return of Jesus Christ. The Bible anticipates that day when the angels and the redeemed will sing together. Before us shines that light, and the darker the age, the brighter seems the glow.

So when we pray "Your kingdom come" we look toward that glad time when God's messianic

kingdom prophesied throughout the Old Testament will be established by Jesus' return to earth. As we pray, we direct our gaze to the day when the kingdom of this world will become the kingdom of our God and of His Christ. We look forward to the climax of history when God's will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven.

When we pray "Your kingdom come" we also ask for something else. We plead that on the small bit of earth we occupy now, we submit our will to God's will. If we long for the time in the future when Christ's kingdom will be established on earth—enough to pray sincerely for it—then we must be willing to permit all of the little kingdoms that matter to us to be pulled down. If we want God's rule over all men and women at some future time, then it follows that we desire that He will work His will out in our lives now.

When we pray "Your kingdom come" we acknowledge God's right to rule all people, including us. I cannot pray these words with integrity unless I am sufficiently concerned about God's sovereignty to make my life His throne and make it my daily purpose to bring every individual whose life I touch



*History is
"His story," and
history is headed
somewhere—
the return of
Jesus Christ.*

into willing and glad submission to Him. We dare not pray for His rule over others unless we honestly desire His rule over us.

When I was in my twenties, I used to hear sermons in which I was exhorted to desire the second coming of Christ. Well, I wanted Him to come, but not immediately. I had some things I wanted to do before He came back. I wanted to get married, to have children, and to establish a ministry. After I got all that done, it would be all right for Him to return. However, nothing should take precedence over His coming. And that is as it should be in all of our lives. That is what it means to pray, “Your kingdom come.”

God’s Purpose: “Your Will Be Done”

We are to pray for the person of God, that His name will be hallowed; for the program of God, that His kingdom will come; and for the purpose of God, that His will is accomplished on earth as it is in heaven.

Praying for His will to be done provides a foundation for our prayers. We are basically asking that God’s will be done in our lives and in the world. We often get it upside down, though, and pray as if we expect God to change the way He is running the universe because we have given Him our petitions. This is prayer at its worst, treating God like a genie in a lamp. When we rub it and make a wish, we expect God to change the universe to give us what we want.

We must recognize the importance of conforming

our will to His will. We shouldn't pray for something and then at the end say, "if it be Your will," if we don't really mean it. These words aren't something to tack on to the end of a prayer as a loophole. Prayer is not getting God to do *my* will; it is asking that *God's* will be done in my life, my family, my business, and in my relationships, as it is done in heaven.

When the Bible gives us glimpses of heaven, we see that the angels stand ready to do His bidding. In heaven, all the hosts of glory respond to His will. In the universe, all the galaxies and all their stars and planets move according to His design. It seems that only here on this third-rate planet, this dirty little tennis ball that we call earth, is there a pocket of rebellion.

To live according to God's will as is done in heaven is to do so in a combat zone. To live in a realm ruled by Satan is to recognize that this world can be hostile to God and His children. For us to do God's will on earth as it is in heaven, we must go against the current. When we pray "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" we are praying for our friends, our families, our society, but above all for ourselves.

It is possible to pray for God's will while resenting that God is God. Many people despise God because He has not made them master of their fate. But those of us who know God as Father and have a relationship with Him also know that the heart of the Almighty is gracious and kind. God is using all

things for the furtherance of His kingdom, even if it is not the way we would prefer it be done.

And so we can pray that His name will be hallowed, that He will be God to us, that His kingdom will be established on earth, that every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, and that His will be accomplished on earth as it is in heaven.

God's Provision: "Give Us Our Daily Bread"

When Jesus taught us to pray, He gave us a comprehensive blueprint to follow. The first three requests deal with God's glory praying about "Your name," "Your kingdom," and "Your will"; the last three requests have to do with us: "Give us," "forgive us," and "lead us."

Adlai Stevenson remarked, "Understanding human needs is half the job of meeting them." Perhaps the other half is the ability to meet them. God scores on both counts. He understands our needs and can truly meet them. That is why Jesus said that we are to pray to the Father about them. After praying about the cosmic and eternal, we are to pray about the temporal.

When Jesus said, "Give us day by day our daily bread," He was not suggesting a trip to the supermarket for Wonder Bread. He was making the point that we should pray for our daily needs. After all, we cannot really serve His kingdom and do His

will if we lack the strength. So it is proper to ask God for a job in order to have money so that we can provide the things we need. God knows our needs, and He is concerned about them.

We are often tempted not to bother asking God for food. “Don’t pray for groceries,” we insist. “Get out and work hard.” In fact, some of the church fathers spiritualized the bread to refer to the bread served at communion. They did this, understandably, because after praying for God’s glory, it seemed too earthly to switch to something as mundane as groceries.

Yet “daily bread” means exactly what it says. The word *bread* refers to the food that sustains our bodies. In the larger sense, of course, bread refers to all that we must have to live. Our Father in heaven concerns Himself with the items on a grocery list. Food for our next meal matters to Him.

The focus of the request is for *daily* bread. The word translated *daily* bewildered scholars for centuries. This is the only place that word occurred inside or outside the Bible. Then a few years ago, an archaeologist dug up a papyrus fragment that contained a housewife’s shopping list. Next to several items the woman had scribbled this word for *daily*. It probably meant, “enough for the coming day.” The phrase should be translated, “Give us today bread enough for tomorrow.” When prayed in the morning, it is a prayer for the needs in the hours ahead. Prayed

in the evening, it is a request for the needs of the next day. The implication is, of course, that God will supply what we need to honor Him and do His will.

Pray for bread—the necessities for life, not the luxuries. Ask for bread, not cake. Ask for the essentials to take us through tomorrow, not the next decade.

Notice also that when we pray, “Give us our daily bread,” we ask for others in the family as well as ourselves. If I pray this prayer in sincerity, it delivers me from selfishness and hoarding. If the Father supplies me with two loaves and my brother or sister with none, I understand that God has indeed answered our prayers. My extra loaf is not for storing, but for sharing.

God wants to free us up. We can bring our small requests to God. We can place before Him our need for bread, a coat, a pair of shoes—all those items that matter to us. If we need them, then they matter to our heavenly Father as well.

God's Pardon: “Forgive Us Our Sins”

Superficially, men and women don't seem to worry much about their sins. A cartoon in a newspaper pictures a psychologist listening to a patient: “Mr. Figby,” he says, “I think I can explain your feelings of guilt. You're guilty!”

After we ask the Father for provision, we ask for pardon: “Forgive us our sins.” “Forgive” follows “give.”

Jesus links the two petitions, “Give us our daily bread” with “Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us.” In that way when we think of our need for food, we will recognize our need for pardon as well. Also, as we confess our guilt, we consider how we have handled our relationships with others.

Think of how the confession of sin works. If I honestly pray for forgiveness, then I revise my estimate of myself downward on the scale by admitting my own sin and guilt. If I see

the pollution of my own life, then I see the sins of others in a different light. Without that, I can regard myself as so important, so dignified, so honorable that it would be unthinkable to forgive anyone who dared offend someone as righteous as I. That is self-righteousness.

What an unforgiving person actually prays is this: “Deal with me as I have dealt with others.” Kent Hughes shows what this might look like in his study on the Lord’s Prayer: “I beseech You, Lord, deal with me as I deal with my neighbor. He has been ungrateful to me (though not one-hundredth as ungrateful as I have



*Our forgiveness
does not cause God
to forgive us.
It is evidence
that we have
entered into God's
forgiveness.*

been to You), yet I will not overlook his ingratitude. Deal with me, Lord, as I do him.”

If you honestly know God as your Father, you are part of the forgiven fellowship. While you may find it hard to forgive some particularly damaging thing done to you, your own sin against God—for which you ask forgiveness—reveals offenses done against you as much more trivial. How in the name of grace and common sense can we ask God whose name is holy to forgive us when we, as sinners, refuse to forgive others? Our forgiveness does not cause God to forgive us. It is evidence that we have entered into God’s forgiveness.

We are never closer to God’s grace than when we admit our sin and cry out for pardon. We are never more like God than when, for Christ’s sake, we extend forgiveness fully and freely to those who have sinned against us.

God’s Protection: “Do Not Lead Us Into Temptation”

A young woman in a shopping mall sported a T-shirt that proclaimed, “Lead me not into temptation—I can find it myself.” She wanted people to chuckle as she passed by, but her one-liner raises a question. What are we praying for when we ask, “Do not lead us into temptation”?

Why should we have to ask God not to lead us into temptation? To ask Him to keep us out

of temptation would be more understandable. Professor D. A. Carson suggests that Jesus is using a figure of speech called a *litotes*, which expresses something positive by negating its opposite. For example, if I say, “This is no small matter,” I mean it is a big matter. When we pray, “Lead us not into temptation,” then, we are really crying out, “Keep me away from temptation!” We are praying, “Don’t let Satan ambush us.” We are recognizing that God has the power to lead us past all the lures to sin that confront us; and we are asking, “If the opportunity to sin presents itself, grant that I won’t have the desire. If the desire springs up, grant that I won’t have the opportunity.”

Let’s face it. We seldom want to be delivered from temptation. It promises too much fun. Someone has said, “Don’t resist temptation. It may go away and not come back.” Temptation stirs the blood and inflames the imagination. If we were revolted by it, it would not be temptation at all. Occasionally we see where temptation will take us and we may cry out for deliverance. Usually, though, temptation doesn’t seem very bad, so we play with it and invite it into our lives. When we pray about our sins, it’s not temptation that bothers us; it’s the consequence of our disobedience that we want removed.

In the context of this prayer, however, we are not merely asking God to keep us from being naughty boys and girls. The work of Satan threatens more

severe danger than that. We are surrounded by seductions to live life apart from God. In our ambitions and in our successes we are tempted to honor our own names, to build our own kingdoms, to take credit for baking our own bread, and to deny our need for forgiving grace. The enemy of our souls wants us to run away from God. Only God can make us see sin for what it is. If temptation brought chains to bind us, we might resist it on our own. Instead, it brings flowers and perfume and promises good times and satisfaction. It bribes us with wealth and popularity and entices us with promises of prosperity and unbounded freedom. Only God can keep us from its charms.

The Lord's Prayer reminds us to fear the strategies of Satan. Years ago Helmut Thielicke¹ said of postwar occupied Germany, "There is a dark, mysterious, spellbinding figure at work. Behind the temptations stands the tempter, behind the lie stands the liar, behind all the dead and bloodshed stands the 'murderer from the beginning.'"



If temptation brought chains to bind us, we might resist it on our own.

Instead, ... it bribes us with wealth and popularity. Only God can keep us from its charms.

↗ **Helmut Thielicke** (1908–1986) was a German theologian who in the 1930s opposed Nazi efforts to co-opt the German Protestant church.

When we pray “Deliver us from the evil one,” we recognize Satan’s power, affirm our weakness, and plead for the greater power of God.

God’s Preeminence: “The Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory”

The Lord’s Prayer, as we commonly recite it, concludes with a trumpet blast of praise: “For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.” Since those words seem like an appropriate and fitting way for the prayer to end, it is somewhat unsettling to discover that the sentence does not appear in the earliest and best manuscripts of either Matthew or Luke. Evidently this doxology was not part of the prayer as Jesus originally gave it. In fact, it appears for the first time in the second and third centuries.

Yet the prayer demands a conclusion. Otherwise it stops with the threat of temptation and the warning that the evil one has set his snares for us. When Christians in the young church offered up this prayer to the Father, rather than finish on a cold and frightening note, they added this affirmation of praise.

While this doxology may not have been given directly by Jesus, it can claim broad biblical support.

After King David assembled the building materials for the future temple, he declared: “Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty; . . . Yours is the kingdom” (1 CHRONICLES 29:11).

Echoes of this doxology vibrate at the end of time in the chant of the four living creatures: “Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!” (REVELATION 5:13).

The affirmation makes a fitting conclusion to the prayer: “For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen” (MATTHEW 6:13).

But is that true? Does the kingdom belong to God? Not according to the newspapers. There the capital of the kingdom may be in Washington or London or Moscow, not in heaven. Is His the power?

Not according to Rabbi Harold Kushner, who argues in *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*, that while God is all-loving, some evil events lie beyond His control. Is His the glory? Not according to the builders and shapers of technology who sing, “Glory to men on earth as we see whose buildings can go the highest.”

This doxology, however, is not an assumption that we must accept in order to pray, but rather a confidence to which repeated prayer draws us. Through prayer we experience that God actually forgives our sins—not simply shuts His eyes to our disobedience—and provides us with the power to forgive others and lead us away from Satan’s traps.

In a life of prayer we discover a Father rich and generous and inexhaustible beyond all measure: His is the kingdom and the power and the glory.

Not only do we bless God when we witness what He does through answered prayer, but we praise God because on our knees we can catch a glimpse by faith of what He will ultimately accomplish. We make all our prayers in the light of eternity. In the long-range view we discover that though wicked men and women fight against Christ's rule, His kingdom waits as the sun waits for the clouds and darkness to melt away. In the eternal perspective, while the Love which lay in a manger and hung on a Roman execution rack looks fragile, we see in it the power which endures and ultimately triumphs.

Over the rubble of man's little kingdoms shines the glory of God. When we pray as we ought, we affirm God's majesty, trumpet His power, and, through the answers to our prayer, display His glory.



*This doxology ...
is not an
assumption that
we must accept
in order to pray,
but rather a
confidence to which
repeated prayer
draws us.*



three

Following the Model

To really learn about prayer, you must pray. Take it seriously and carve out some time each day to pray. Jesus gave us a blueprint for prayer—use it that way. Begin by praying, “Our Father in heaven.” Let your mind focus on what it means to talk to the God of the universe as Father. Then pray to the Father about the Father. Pray about His person, “hallowed be Your name.” Pray about His program, “Your kingdom come.” And pray about His purpose,

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

Then pray to the Father about the family. Pray for provision, “Give us our daily bread.” Pray for pardon, “And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us.” And pray for protection, “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”

If you let this prayer serve as your blueprint, you will discover that its elements have a purifying effect on what you pray for. You won't be able to pray for things that would exalt your name, advance your kingdom, or promote your will. To ask for daily bread if you're living in defiance would be like a traitor asking for strength to betray his country. You won't be able to ask God to forgive you when you are not willing to forgive someone else. And to ask God for His protection from the evil one would be contradictory if you are cultivating temptations.

Prayer is hard work, but our communication with God is as essential to our spiritual well-being as breathing is to our physical life. 🌿

Reflections



Our mission is to make the life-changing wisdom of the Bible understandable and accessible to all.

Discovery Series presents the truth of Jesus Christ to the world in balanced, engaging, and accessible resources that show the relevance of Scripture for all areas of life. All Discovery Series booklets are available at no cost and can be used in personal study, small groups, or ministry outreach.

To partner with us in sharing God's Word, click this link to donate. Thank you for your support of Discovery Series resources and Our Daily Bread Ministries.

Many people, making even the smallest of donations, enable Our Daily Bread Ministries to reach others with the life-changing wisdom of the Bible. We are not funded or endowed by any group or denomination.

[CLICK TO DONATE](#)