

In *Matthew 6:5-8*, the Lord showed His disciples the errors of hypocritical and self-righteous prayer. Now in *5:9-13*, He shows them the essentials of true prayer that are acceptable to God. This prayer has traditionally been called “The Lord’s Prayer,” but that is misleading. It is the model prayer. As the Advocate and Intercessor of His people, the Lord Himself did pray unto His Father for His people. One of the greatest examples is found in John 17. If any passage could be called “The Lord’s Prayer,” it is this one. God’s Word shows us the keys to all true and acceptable prayer: (1) FAITH IN CHRIST, praying upon the ground of His blood and righteousness alone; (2) WORSHIP, praying to the true and living God as He reveals Himself in His Word and in Christ; (3) THANKSGIVING, praying to acknowledge our love and gratitude for God’s grace towards us in Christ; and (4) SUBMISSION, praying that God’s will be done no matter what we desire here on earth. Let’s consider the model prayer found here in *Matthew 5:9-13*.

(Matt. 6:9-13) - “After this manner therefore pray ye” - In *Luke 11:1* the disciples ask the Lord to teach them to pray - *“And it came to pass, that, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, one of His disciples said unto Him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught His disciples.”* The Lord answered, *“When you pray, say, ...” (Luke 11:2)*. The Lord said that this is the way to pray. True prayer is not vain repetition of prescribed words, but it is the worship and groaning of sinners, from a regenerate heart, begging for mercy and help from God (*Heb. 4:14-16*). Sometimes we plan what we will say in prayer; sometimes it is spontaneous; and sometimes it is with groanings that cannot be uttered (*Rom. 8:26*). True prayer is never simply chanting or repeating words as if there is some magic or power in saying certain words. The Word (and words) of God is powerful as they are empowered by the Holy Spirit to enlighten us to the truth of His glory in Christ and all things connected with His glory (*Rom. 1:16-17*). But there is no power in merely saying or repeating words, not even the words of Scripture. A person can repeat this model prayer and still not know the Lord. Consider each statement in this model prayer.

-- *“OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN”* - True prayer that is acceptable to God is founded upon a right and special love relationship between the Father and His children by God’s grace all based on the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ (*Eph. 2:18; Heb. 4:14-16*). True prayer is an expression of our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ by whom we come unto God as our heavenly Father (ABBA) (*Prov. 15:29; John 6:44-45; Rom. 8:14-17; Gal. 4:4-6*). Those who approach God upon any ground other than the merits of Christ’s righteousness imputed are rejected and know neither the Father nor the Son. True prayer is also an acknowledgement that our God and Father is in the heavens (*Psalm 115:1-3*). He is above us (*Isa. 66:1*). *“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17)*. Salvation and all of its blessings are of the Lord. They do not come from man below but from God above (*John 1:17*). This acknowledges that God is the sovereign and powerful Creator and Ruler, not only of the heavens and the earth, but also of the kingdom of heaven in the salvation of His people.

-- *“HALLOWED BE THY NAME”* - *“Hallowed”* means “holy,” which shows how God is unique and separate from all others. There is no one like our God. He reveals His holiness in His “name.” God has many names, but He is ONE God, and all of His names identify and distinguish Him in His glory. True prayer is an act of worship acknowledging and loving the fact that God is who He says He is. Again, His name identifies and distinguishes Him to be God alone with no rivals or equals. He is a just God who always does what is right and good

and wise (Gen. 18:5; Rom. 2:2). He is a sovereign, merciful, loving, and gracious God who delights to show mercy in the salvation of His chosen people (Mic. 7:18; Rom. 9:15-16). But God will not pervert His justice in order to show mercy, love, or grace. His name is glorified in the Person and finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, for it is in Christ that God is both a just God and a Savior. It is in Christ that we have fellowship with God (2 Pet. 1:4; 1 John 1:3), for Christ is the very righteousness of God, His righteousness imputed to us by which we stand before God forgiven of all our sins and declared just in His sight. The merit of Christ is the ground of true and acceptable prayer.

-- **“THY KINGDOM COME”** - John the Baptist preached *“the kingdom of heaven is at hand”* (Matt. 3:2). The Lord Himself said, *“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand”* (Matt. 4:17). In the beatitudes He described those who are citizens of the kingdom of heaven. He went on to show the righteousness required to enter the kingdom of heaven which is HIS righteousness which He by Himself worked out on the cross for His people - His righteousness imputed to them. He also taught that sinners personally and spiritually enter this kingdom when they are born again by the Holy Spirit (John 3:3-7). Christ showed that He is the Messiah sent forth from God, and He had come to establish this kingdom by His work as the Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer of God’s elect, Jew and Gentile. He instructs us as His disciples both to recognize that we are not citizens of this world but of the kingdom of heaven, and to pray for the success and furtherance of the Gospel for the conversion of God’s elect in whom the kingdom of God would greatly appear. His kingdom is revealed on earth in His church, the pillar and ground of truth.

-- **“THY WILL BE DONE”** - As we are instructed to let our petitions and desires be expressed in prayer to God (Php. 4:6), we are to recognize that our desires are to be in submission to God’s sovereign, wise, and good will. God is our Father, and we are His children. He always knows what is best for us, even when we do not know. We often pray for things that we think would be beneficial to our physical and spiritual well-being but would not be helpful for us. God knows this, and He works all things for His glory and our good after the counsel of His own will (Rom. 8:28; Eph. 1:11). **“IN EARTH, AS IT IS IN HEAVEN”** - God is the God both of heaven and earth. He is actively involved in providence. He is not, as some flippantly say, “the man upstairs,” or some kind of aloof deity that only works on earth if we pray enough to get His attention. Prayer does not change God’s mind, but it is a privilege and means which God has chosen to bless His people and accomplish His sovereign will in the lives of His people and life here on this earth. Prayer is an act of faith and worship, and it is an acknowledgement that God is in control.

-- **“GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD”** - *“Bread”* here is symbolic of all the necessities of physical life and eternal life. In true prayer we are to acknowledge that our spiritual life and well-being, as well as our physical life and well-being, are totally gifts from God and of God’s power and goodness towards us. We know that salvation is gained and maintained by God’s grace through Christ Jesus Who is our Bread of life (John 6:35-48). God also freely gives us what we need to sustain us physically for each day He gives us here on earth. In true prayer we need to acknowledge that we have never earned or deserved any of the blessings we have from God. For example, we may come up with a great idea and work hard to succeed, and it may result in making a lot of money. But know that it was God who gave you your mental and physical abilities, along with the opportunity to do all this. By nature, we have no spiritual abilities, but in salvation it is God who gives us the knowledge and desire to come to Christ for salvation. Salvation is not by our will, goodness, or power; it is all of God’s grace (John 1:11-13; Eph. 2:8-10).