

The Lord's Prayer

This is the first prayer we are exposed to as children and as we grow we are taught. We have heard our parents say it often, at home and in Church. Today, I am sure, we say this prayer at least once a day when we meditate each day. But can we safely say that we understand what we say? Or is it just a prayer we repeat it from memory and not think any further?

The Lord's Prayer is a prayer that Jesus, the Son of God, taught His disciples and is recorded in Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4. Matthew 6:9-13 reads, **"This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil.'"**

Many people mistakenly understand and treat the Lord's Prayer as almost a magic formula, as if the words themselves have some specific power or influence with God.

I believe that our God is interested in our hearts when we pray. In Matthew 6:6 records Jesus saying, **"But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."** Matthew 6:7 goes on to record, **"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."** In prayer, we are to pour out our hearts to God (Philippians 4:6-7), not simply recite memorized words to God.

The Lord's Prayer should be understood as an example, a pattern of how to pray. The Lord's Prayer teaches us to pray. It gives us the **"ingredients"** that should go into a prayer. I believe it breaks down thus;

- **"Our Father in heaven" is teaching us who to address our prayers to, the Father.**
- **"Hallowed be your name" is telling us to worship God and Him alone, and to praise Him for who He is.**

- The phrase “your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” **is a reminder to us that we are to pray for God’s plan in our lives and the world, not our own plan. We are to pray for God’s will to be done, not for our desires to be accomplished.**
- We are encouraged to ask God for the things we need; in “give us today our daily bread.” “Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors” **remind us to confess our sins to God and to turn away from them – and then also to forgive others as God has forgiven us.**
- The conclusion of the Lord’s Prayer, “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil” **is a plea for help in achieving victory over sin/satan and a request for protection from the attacks of the devil.**

Thus, the Lord’s Prayer is not just a prayer that we are to memorize and recite back to God but to recite it understanding the deeper meaning in its words. It is also an example of how we should be praying to our Heavenly Father when we raise our own personal prayers.

Is there anything wrong with memorizing the Lord’s Prayer? Of course not! In fact one should know it by heart as it will help us in constructing our own prayers as we grow in wisdom and stature in the knowledge of our Heavenly Father.

Is there anything wrong with praying the Lord’s Prayer back to God? Most certainly not, as long as it is from the bottom of our hearts and we truly mean each word we say.

Remember, in prayer, God is far more interested **in us communing with Him** and speaking from our hearts to Him than how each specific word we use is constructed.

Philippians 4:6-7 declares, **“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”**