

Lord, Teach Us To Pray
A Bible Study Taken From

***The
Lord's
Prayer***



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“LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY”

Introduction

Prayer in its simplest form is communication with God. To many people that means talking to God. True, that is one important aspect of it. But prayer is not intended to be only one-sided. Prayer is a two-way communication, the most important part of which is not my talking to God but my listening to what God has to say to me. As one person has said, “Prayer is that spiritual exercise by which I bring myself into such communion with God until I become possessed with God’s thought; with God’s plan and with God’s passion for the world.

Prayer can take many forms. It can be praise, petition, intercession, communion, meditation or any combination of the above. Whatever the form, the focus is to be on God; the entrance into His presence is through Jesus Christ and special enablement for effective prayer is provided by the Holy Spirit.

There is more talk of prayer and more sermons about prayer than there is actual prayer being offered. The reason is obvious; it can be hard work. While this is true, God intends the end of prayer to be a “delight.” The road to that “end” is first by way of “desire” (which God prompts and to which only the sensitive respond), and then by “discipline” (which is established by the determined will of the individual). The Holy Spirit’s enablement always waits upon the human will.

In **Luke 11**, Christ’s disciples pressed upon Him an urgent request. In the passage, Jesus had been praying and apparently the disciples were watching. Something about the intimacy and intensity of that prayer captivated them and prompted longings for a similar experience. Out of that setting, one of the disciples implored the Master, “**Lord, teach us to pray**” (v.1). In response to that request, Jesus gave them what is often called the “Lord’s Prayer,” but is more properly the “Disciples’ Prayer.” Christ’s intercession in **John 17** is appropriately the “Lord’s Prayer.”

It is my opinion that this prayer ought to mean more to believers than a solemn repetition at significant functions. While there is no doubt it has value when repeated, I believe Christ’s primary intention was that it serve as a model. It is because of this conviction that I want to use this prayer as the substance for my Bible teaching this week.

An ineffectual prayer life is the common problem of many otherwise good believers. Not only do they struggle with meaningful subject matter but they are hard pressed to spend more than a few minutes, at best, in the pursuit. Christ’s rebuke to His three disciples in the garden would be appropriate, “**Could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak**” (Matthew 26:40b, 41).

Some years ago, Dr. Paul Yonggi Cho, pastor of Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul, Korea preached for Dr. W. A. Criswell while he was pastoring First Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas. After his morning message, Dr. Criswell asked Dr. Cho, “How do you pray for such extended periods of time?” Dr. Cho responded, “I pray through a procedure like a jogger jogs over a track. When he reaches a certain demarcation, he knows how far he’s come and how far he has yet to go.”

I have seized upon this idea in the development of this series of lessons. I have adapted the model of the Disciple’s Prayer as though it were a jogging trail for the intercessor. I have called it “A Running Track for Your Prayer Time.” The prayer is divided into segments that stretch over a theoretical five-mile track. In each mile, a different part of the model is prayed through according to the following plan:

Start Up – **“Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name”**

Mile One – **“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.”**

Mile Two – **“Give us this day our daily bread.”**

Mile Three – **“And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”**

Mile Four – **“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil (the evil one).”**

Mile Five – **“For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever. Amen.”**

Using this outline as a “running track” for your prayer time, you will have no difficulty in praying at least one hour.

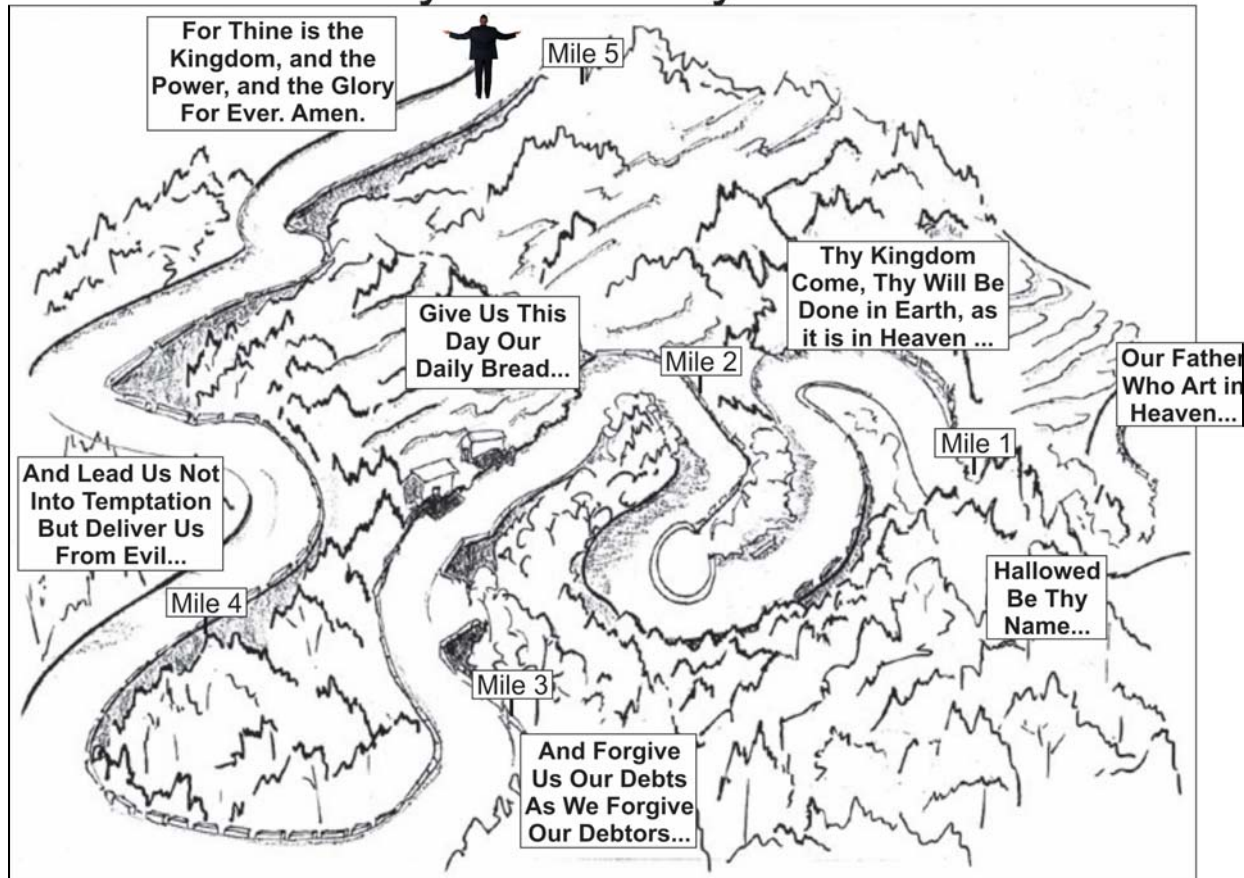
In the Disciples’ Prayer, the Lord shares six principles pertaining to the past, present and future of His disciples. Three are petitions relating to the Father: (1) that we reverence His name; (2) that His kingdom (Lordship) be established and (3) that His will be perfectly followed on earth as it is in Heaven. The last three are petitions relating to human needs: (1) physical sustenance; (2) spiritual forgiveness and (3) moral leadership.

Let us turn now to our study with the earnest request, “Lord, teach us to pray.”

A RUNNING TRACK FOR YOUR PRAYER TIME



Could you not tarry one hour?



I. **START: “OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN, HALLOWED BE THY NAME”**

- A. Picture Calvary and thank God that by virtue of the blood of Jesus...
 1. You can call God “Father”
 2. You know God is above all gods, challenges and needs
- B. Realize that God who is in heaven is also inhabiting the temple of your body by His Spirit and thank Him for
 1. His knowledge of your needs
 2. His ability to intervene in your circumstances
 3. The way in which He has faithfully responded to your calls in the past
- C. Hallow the name of God by praising Him for the 5 benefits of the new covenant.
 1. **SALVATION** – Forgiveness of sin past, present and future
 2. **SPIRIT** – Fullness of the Spirit (Holy Spirit baptism)
 3. **SOUNDNESS** – Healing of spirit, soul and body
 4. **SUCCESS** – Provision for godly success and prosperity
 5. **SECURITY** – Safety and protection

II. MILE ONE: “THY KINGDOM COME. THY WILL BE DONE IN EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN”

- A. Submit to His Lordship in all things.
- B. Acknowledge His will for “this earth.”
- C. “Pray out” His priorities.
 - 1. For yourself
 - 2. For your family (spouse, children, kinfolk)
 - 3. For your church (pastor, pastoral staff, boards and committees, classes and groups, faithfulness of the people, the harvest and members God brings to mind)
 - 4. For your nation and leaders (city, state, county, nation and the harvest for each)

III. MILE TWO: “GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD”

- A. Thank God for being concerned about your “daily bread.”
- B. Practice these principles in praying for “needs”
 - 1. Know you are in God’s will (His Word is His will).
 - 2. Believe God wants you to have your needs met.
 - 3. Ask Him for specific needs (be tenacious in faith).
 - 4. Give, in return, to God.

IV. MILE THREE: “AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS”

- A. Ask God to forgive you.
- B. Forgive and release others.
- C. Set your will to forgive those who may sin against you.

V. MILE FOUR: “AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL (the evil one)”

- A. Clothe the inward man with the whole armor of God
 - 1. Girdle of TRUTH
 - 2. Breastplate of RIGHTEOUSNESS
 - 3. Shoes of the PREPERATION (readiness) of the gospel of PEACE
 - 4. Shield of FAITH
 - 5. Helmet of SALVATION
 - 6. Sword of the SPIRIT which is the WORD OF GOD
- B. Protect outer areas with a hedge of protection (“**You are my refuge and my God**”)
 - 1. Because the Lord is your habitation
 - 2. Because the Lord has set His love upon you
 - 3. Because the Lord knows your name

VI. MILE FIVE: “FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, AND THE POWER, AND THE GLORY, FOR EVER. AMEN.”

- A. Make faith declarations
- B. Close by returning to praising and magnifying God

***** FINISH *** YOU HAVE PRAYED AT LEAST ONE HOUR *****

Lesson One
“RELATING TO GOD”

INTRODUCTION:

A. Does prayer make a difference?

ILLUSTRATION: Hudson Taylor told of a missionary couple who were in charge of ten stations. They wrote to their home secretary, confessing their absolute lack of progress, and urging him to find intercessors for each station. After a while, in seven of the stations, opposition melted, spiritual revival broke out, and there was growth. But in three there was no change. When they returned home on their next furlough, the secretary cleared up the mystery. He had succeeded in getting intercessors for only seven of the ten stations.

QUOTATION: “When God intends great mercy for His people, He first sets them praying.” – Matthew Henry

ILLUSTRATION: Dr. Paul Cho, a man who himself prays from 3 – 6 hours per day and teaches his church to spend extended hours in daily prayer, has said, “Something supernatural happens in the heavenlies when you pray an hour.”

B. In this study, I will be using the Disciples’ Prayer as taken from the King James Translation in **Matthew 6**. It is familiar to all Christians.

C. Our portion for today in starting up and getting ready to “run” our prayer track is: **“Our Father which (who) art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.”** In its entirety, this phrase is like an invocation breathed from the heart upon entering into God’s presence. Such entrances should be with thanksgiving and praise (**Ps. 100:4**).

I. RECOGNIZING GOD AS PERSONAL – “OUR FATHER”

A. Looking into the text:

1. **“Father”** was the most common title Jesus used in referring to God. It was intended to be a title of identification, closeness and intimacy.
2. To understand God as Father, we must endeavor to comprehend Him as Jesus understood Him. While there are many characterizing virtues, let us look at but three: (a) He is love – as evidenced by scriptural declaration (**1 John 4:8**) and Divine provision for estranged humanity (**2 Cor. 5:19**); (b) He understands us (**Ps. 103:13, 14**) and (c) He never changes (**Mal. 3:6; Like 15:11-32; James 1:17**). Note especially the **Luke** passage, no matter the profligate acts of the prodigal or the spoiled attitudes of the elder brother, the father’s attitudes toward the two boys never altered.

B. Considering applications: (1) Open your prayer time with warm thoughts of what it means to have a Heavenly Father who truly loves you and is constantly looking out for your best. (2) Picture Calvary and thank God you can call Him “Father” by virtue of the blood of Jesus. (3) If you are having trouble with the imagery of “Father” because of past hurts from an inadequate human model, confess this to God and ask Him to show you how to forgive past offenders and how to allow needs to be met joyfully God’s way. (4) Acknowledge that the relationship of

Father-child presupposes certain considerations, so find ways of expressing positive responses in communication with your Father as to (a) respect and deference; (b) identification in nature; (c) dependence and (d) obedience.

II. SEEING GOD AS TRANSCENDENT – “WHO ART IN HEAVEN”

A. Looking at the text:

1. Notice the contrast in these two statements: (a) **“Our Father,”** is one of nearness to us suggesting loving familiarity, (b) **“which art in heaven”** is one of distance from us suggesting transcendence, awe and reverence.
2. Three heavens are mentioned in Scripture: (a) the first heaven which is our atmospheric heaven (**Is. 55:10**); (b) the third Heaven which is the realm of God (**Hab. 2:20; Ps. 103:19**) and (c) the second Heaven or “middle heaven” where the rulers of darkness endeavor to enforce their will upon man and creation (**Eph. 2:2; 6:12**)
3. God is to be seen for who He is. He is more than a “buddy” or “the Man Upstairs.” He is the holy, awesome and infinite Creator who is above and beyond all His creation. He is transcendent above all gods, circumstances and things. Because He is, He can intervene triumphantly in any situation.

B. Considering applications:

1. Realize that God who is in heaven is also inhabiting the temple of your body by His Spirit.
2. Thank Him for (a) His knowledge of your needs; (b) His ability to intervene in your circumstances and (c) the way in which He has faithfully responded to your calls in the past.

III. MAKING GOD SPECIAL – “HALLOWED BE THY NAME”

OBSERVATION: This heading is misleading for we cannot “make” God more than He is and we cannot take from Him anything that would detract. He is already absolutely complete and holy. At the same time, there is something that is left up to us; we must honor and hallow Him in our own hearts in ways that will make Him special to us.

A. Looking at the text:

1. The point of reference is to **“Thy name.”** The reference implies the person, title, power, authority, character and very reputation of God.
2. So enormous was the respect of the ancient Hebrews for the name of God that they dared not even formulate it with their lips nor attempt to put it into human language. It was presented in writing by the letters Y H W H. Later these were expanded to Y A H W E H. This became the name of Jehovah or Yahweh and in our English translations it is usually represented by the expression **“the Lord.”**

3. In **Exodus 3:14**, when Moses asked God for His name by which he might identify Him to the Children of Israel in Egypt, He said, **“I AM THAT I AM.”** It is the covenant name by which He promises to be with and for Israel in all the ages to follow.
4. Putting the phrase **“Thy name”** into plain language, Jesus was saying, “Father, may Your person, Your identity, Your character, Your reputation, Your very being always be honored.”

B. Considering applications:

1. A good exercise in hallowing the name of God in prayer is to recall names by which God is known and rejoice in the significance of those names to you, quoting Scriptures that have to do with the virtue or blessings suggested by the name. For example, from names like El Shaddai, “the Almighty” to references like Shepherd or Savior.
2. Hallow the name of God by praising Him for the five benefits of the new covenant: (a) Sin and Salvation (forgiveness of sin past, present and future); (b) Spirit (the fullness of the Spirit through the Holy Spirit baptism); (c) Soundness (wholeness in spirit, soul and body); (d) Success (provision for godly success and prosperity) and (e) Security (safety and protection).

CONCLUSION:

- A. You have moved through the invocation portion of the Disciples’ Prayer and are on your way.
- B. As you finish praying through this portion, you have arrived at the “one-mile marker” on your prayer track.

Lesson Two
“FOCUSING ON THE HEART OF PRAYER”

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Prayer and worship are the most vital spiritual activities to which we can give ourselves in this life. As to prayer, Christ taught it was more important to seek Him and His righteousness than anything else (**Matt. 6:33**).

QUOTATION: In a society filled with urgencies and emergencies, to many prayer appears to be an unnatural form of behavior. Without fully realizing it, we have accepted the idea that “doing things” is more important than prayer and have come to think of prayer as something for times when there is nothing urgent to do. While we might agree verbally and intellectually with someone who stresses the importance of prayer, we have become children of an impatient world to such an extent that our behavior often expresses the view that prayer is a waste of time.” – Henri Nouwen

- B. In this portion we begin the matter of petition according to God’s priorities and will, **“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”**

I. ESTABLISHING HIS LORDSHIP – “THY KINGDOM COME”

- A. Looking into the text:

1. What did Christ mean by **“Thy kingdom”**?

- a. The disciples’ view was too narrow. Weary of the yoke of Rome, they looked for a deliverer and interpreted Old Testament references like “David’s throne,” “kingdom,” and “Jesse’s lineage” accordingly.
- b. Contemporary views are baffling. (1) To some, the “kingdom of heaven” differs from the “kingdom of God” and Matthew’s writings should be looked at differently than the writings of Mark, Luke or John; (2) to some “kingdom” refers to a future rule upon earth which only has significance to the Jews who are awaiting their Messiah; (3) to some “kingdom” refers to the increasing social activity and spiritual outreach of the church in this age until the kingdom is established and (4) to others it has only an inward, spiritual application.
- c. Jesus’ meaning was specific. When asked by the Pharisees when the Kingdom of God was coming, He answered, **“The kingdom of God does not come that you can watch closely for it. Nor shall they say, ‘See here!’ for the kingdom of God is within you!” (Luke 17:20, 21 – Weymouth)**. When Jesus prayed this simple request to His Father, **“Thy kingdom come,”** He was not only thinking of the Messianic kingdom, but He was inviting His disciples to establish God’s kingdom in their hearts and lives.

2. The “kingdom of God” in this text is simply the rule of God in our lives.

- a. The qualities of that rule will be characterized by the qualities of **Romans 14:17**.
- b. When I truly pray, **“Thy kingdom come”** I am establishing His Lordship over all things in my life. I am thereby relinquishing the rule of my own life; giving up the governing of my own affairs; abstaining from making my own decisions in order to allow God, by His indwelling Spirit, to decide for me what I shall do.

B. Considering applications:

1. Because the Kingdom of God is within you, you will make it your business to see that nothing enters to harm or offend your Sovereign: (a) as to your body (allow nothing that corrupts); (b) as to your mind (monitor things that you read or watch so that impressions by way of the eye gate will not distort); (c) as to your feelings and sensory perceptions (refuse to handle, fondle, or fantasize about that which leads to damaging imaginations or activities) and (d) as to your innermost mind, will and spirit (guard against subversive ideas, suggestions, attitudes or human philosophies contrary to Christ’s teachings).
2. Envision Christ’s rulership over you as reigning supreme over all of your life: (a) thank God for positive examples that come to mind and (b) deal with areas where the Spirit points out needs.

II. YIELDING TO HIS WILL – “THY WILL BE DONE”

A. Looking at the text:

OBSERVATION: Perhaps countless people have repeated these words without having the faintest idea what God’s will is. In addition, it is more sobering to reflect that equally vast numbers have repeated them without any intention whatever of seeing to it that the Father’s will is done...even if they did know it.

1. What is the will of God?
 - a. It is simply God’s intentions; what he plans and purposes.
 - b. If we are going to know God’s will we are going to have to read the Book in which His will is included. God’s will and Word always agree.
2. How important is God’s will?
 - a. It was the central theme of Christ’s coming, life and expression (**John 6:38; Matt. 26:39**).
 - b. It must be the central theme of our lives, as well. To ignore and repudiate His will is to ignore and repudiate Him. It is not enough to know His will; we must also do it (**Matt. 7:21**).
3. Is the will of God good for me? (a) It offers eternal provision for the believer (**2 Cor. 5:19; 2 Pet. 3:9**) and (b) it assures us of God’s positive desire for our future (**Jer. 29:11**).

4. How can we perform God's will? **“Let this mind (attitude) be in you which was also in Christ Jesus...For it is God (by His Spirit) who worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:5, 13).**

B. Considering applications:

1. Allow the Holy Spirit to search your heart for unyieldedness to His will (**Ps. 139:23, 24**).
2. Confess any rebelliousness or lack.
3. Forsake anything you find that is contrary, will to do what you know God would have you do and ask Him to express His will through you.

III. DOING HIS SERVICE – “IN EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN”

A. Looking into the text:

OBSERVATION: It is one thing to understand the importance of Christ's Lordship and the nature of His will, but it is quite another thing to do anything about it.

1. Yes, there is coming a day when God's will will be established in the earth through His Messianic reign.
2. But here the thought is, “Heavenly Father, may your will be done in this bit of earth (my earthen vessel) here and now, just as it will be done someday in the whole earth.
3. It is here that we align our priorities with God's. When this truly happens, we begin living out His will, and we begin to commune with the Spirit in a dimension we have not hitherto known. God speaks to us as we move forward in doing His will.

B. Considering applications:

1. Here is how we can pray to “set His will on earth.”
 - a. Pray for yourself. Get yourself right first and the rest will follow.
 - b. Pray for your family. First, for your mate and then for your children.
 - c. Pray for your church (pastor, associates, committees, leaders, congregation's faithfulness and harvest).
 - d. Pray for the nation (city, state, nation).
 - e. Pray for the nations (missionaries, international ministries, world leaders, etc.).

CONCLUSION: You have now reached the “two-mile marker” on your “running track for your prayer time.”

Lesson Three
“CONCERNING NEEDS AND PROVISIONS”

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Prayer has many dimensions and provides for the pouring out of God’s spiritual blessings in the life...but is praying for personal needs a legitimate expression, too?
- B. It is not wrong to be concerned about your needs and to pray about them (**Phil. 4:6, 19**) as long as (1) you do not get them out of priority (focusing on them instead of focusing on God, His holiness and your resultant relationship with Him), or (2) requests are not presented from selfish or unChristlike motivations.
- C. In this portion of the Disciples’ Prayer, we turn our focus from God and His worthiness to man and his needs. This should not seem strange for it is very much like our Lord to be concerned about all of life and sanctify even the mundane with His presence.
- D. Let us look at our portion of the Disciples’ Prayer for this lesson: **“Give us this day our daily bread.”**

I. GOD IS CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR DAILY BREAD

- A. Nothing is common with God. It is one of our human tendencies to tuck things away into tidy compartments. We call some things sacred and others secular. The fact is, everything touched by the presence of God possesses sacred significance. This is why all through Scripture, people are commanded to live their lives ever conscious of Christ’s abiding presence. When we do this, the most mundane assumes enormous significance.

INSIGHT: Brother Lawrence stated this idea well when he wrote, “I can even pick up a straw from the ground and do it to the glory of God.” Is not this what Paul meant in **1 Corinthians 10:31**: **“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God”?**

- B. Christ’s provision for food in His model prayer is a comforting reminder of God’s encompassing care.
 - 1. Provision for food for the life of man according to Scripture. (a) Initially, God gave Adam all that was needed to support and sustain life without working for it, but after the fall, the arrangement was altered because of the curse (**Gen. 3:9**). (b) Throughout Scripture God gives assurance of His concern for this aspect of man’s wellbeing (**Ps. 37:25; 136:25; Prov. 13:23; Phil. 4:19**), but He does not excuse the lazy and irresponsible (**2 Thess. 3:10**).

II. GOD IS CONCERNED ABOUT THE DAILY BREAD OF ALL HIS CHILDREN

- A. We should pray for all of God’s children to have bread. It is not enough to pray generic prayers for the hungry. We should pray specifically for those we know have needs...and in some cases, give legs to our prayers.

- B. But our Lord's use of words proves that God does not wish to play favorites and we are not to play favorites. Note that Jesus said, **"Give us this day our daily bread."** He did not model selfishness or suggest that we were to seek for that which would be consumed only on ourselves. Stating the prayer in the plural makes it clear we are to embrace others in our interpretation of the passage. When Christ was among men, it was touching to see His concern for the hungry crowds. He did not spare either Himself or His disciples in meeting physical needs (**Matt. 13**).

III. GOD IS CONCERNED ABOUT ALL YOUR NEEDS

- A. Prayer for your **"daily bread"** has a wider significance. Because bread is the only physical need mentioned, it is not to be understood to be the only one of our physical needs about which God is concerned. Because bread is considered to be the staff of life, its mention includes all needs pertaining to our lives and daily sustenance.
- B. Note four ingredients for effective prayer for needs.
1. You must know that you are in God's will. It requires (a) a personal prayer life; (b) awareness of God's Word; (c) accountability to others (especially the Church and those that are over us in the Lord) and (d) doing the will of God you already know to do.
 2. You must believe God wants you to have your needs met (**Phil. 4:19**). It is God's will to raise up men and women who are not hung-up on materialism (though God doesn't mind sharing His bounty) so that they might be the instruments of provision for the work of God (**2 Cor. 9:8** – Amplified Bible). God is calling His people forth to walk at a faith level of personal abundance so that there may be **"meat in mine house"** (**Mal. 3:10**). Note how many times in the Word when God talks about money and provision for His children, He talks about abundance.
 3. You must ask specifically...and do it daily.
 4. You must give to God (a) in tithes (**Mal. 3:10**) and (b) in giving of all kinds (**Luke 6:38**). Note that the context of this verse (**6:27-36**) deals with giving of all kinds. All giving must be done as unto the Lord...and the results must be left with Him!

CONCLUSION: You have now reached the "three-mile marker" on your "running track for your prayer time."

Lesson Four
“DEALING WITH UNFORGIVENESS”

INTRODUCTION

- A. Today we talk about that part of the Disciples’ Prayer that speaks of the imperative of seeking forgiveness of others as well as God. For most people, it is the most difficult phrase in the prayer, “**forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors**” (**Matt. 6:12**).
- B. Nothing will so thwart prayer’s effectiveness as a spirit of unforgiveness or the guilt that rises out of such an experience.

I. THE FACT OF OFFENSES

- A. The reality of offenses: We have all been offended and we have all offended.
- B. The nature of offenses: Offenses are violations of another. The offense may be (1) against God or (2) it may be against another person. An offense may be in action, expression, unfaithfulness, disloyalty, evil intent, etc.
- C. The sinfulness of offenses: Offenses are sins whether toward God or man...and all of us have been guilty (**Isa. 53:6; Rom. 3:23; Gal. 6:1**).
INSIGHT: God may be defined as being both sovereign (He takes counsel from no one for He does that which He purposes) and holy (He is pure, sinless, perfect and complete). The only acceptable responses for man to a sovereign and holy God are (1) submission with a servant-heart to avoid disobedience or violation of His authority and (2) commitment to righteousness to avoid being a transgressor or worker of iniquity. Whether we violate His authority or His holiness, both are sin and both are equally offensive to God and damaging to our spiritual relationship.
 - 1. When we draw apart to seek God...and really see Him, we never fail to see the shocking contrast between His holiness and sovereignty and our sinfulness and willfulness. It prompts us to leave the pew of the Pharisee and run to the side of the tax collector who beat his breast and cried, **God be merciful to me a sinner**” (**Luke 18:13**).
 - 2. The focus of offense in this prayer, however, is as it relates to another human being. God is very concerned about our horizontal relationships in life and will not overlook violations where there is an unwillingness to make them right (**Matt. 6:12, 14, 15**).

II. THE PROBLEM WITH OFFENSES

- A. Offenses precipitate broken relationships. This is true as it relates to God...but there is a remedy (**I John 1:7, 9; 2:1, 2**). This can be true as it relates to our fellow man. In this regard (1) we are told they will come (**Matt. 18:7a**); (2) we are warned against causing them (**Matt. 18:7b, 6**); (3) we are counseled about the grievous wounds they cause (**Prov. 18:19**) and (4) we are promised a hiding place in God so secure that we can be made impervious to offenses ourselves (**Ps. 119:165**).
- B. Offenses give occasion for the “cancer of bitterness” to attach itself to the life. Bitterness is the first step in backsliding (**Heb. 12:14, 15**), and left unchecked will

choke out the vitality of spiritual life. Because of the potential bitterness has for great harm, we are to be ruthless in dealing with it (**Eph. 4:31, 32**, Amplified). Like cancer, bitterness, if unremedied eventually kills all it touches.

III. GOD'S REMEDY FOR OFFENSES

- A. Past Offenses: There is only one realistic approach in dealing with past offenses and that is forgiving the offender. While it is not easy to do, its potential is to be both unlimited (**Matt. 18:21, 22**) and thorough (patterned after God's forgiveness – **Jer. 31:34**), True forgiveness means you no longer expect or demand the offender to change as a prerequisite to receiving your forgiveness. This frees you to see others as those who have made mistakes rather than as offenders who have hurt you, enabling you to move forward in positive healing and restoration. Five steps to forgiveness are: (1) Seek God's forgiveness: You cannot truly forgive another if you have not been forgiven. This provision, however, is conditioned by your forgiving of others. (2) Evaluation: You need to be aware of how someone's offense has threatened you and what part you have played in keeping the resentment alive. In this you may see how your expectation of fair treatment is a block to your ability to forgive. (3) Acceptance of personal responsibility: Acknowledge that your evaluations and decisions have been faulty; will to free the offender from the results of your presumptive judgments and ask God to forgive you for your wrong attitudes. (4) Depend on Christ: Depend on Christ for the ability to forgive what you cannot. As you make a quality decision of the will, you can expect His enablement to follow. (5) Take positive action: If in the process you find yourself having harbored sinful thoughts, go to this person and seek his forgiveness. Totally release the person from guilt or punishment in the offense. Finally, pray for this person and find ways to bless his/her life.
- B. Present Offenses: When we have been offended, we have one of two Biblical options. (1) We may forgive them, as above, or (2) we may follow the pattern for dealing with an offense given in **Matthew 18:15-17**. In this pattern, when a trespass has been committed against you, you go to the offender alone, addressing your grievance with the spirit of Christ with the desire to **"gain"** your brother. Pray for the person as you go. If that person will not receive you, take one or two more. If he/she will still not receive, it is to be turned over to the church for discipline or disposition.
- C. Future Offenses: Maintain a positive attitude towards others. Don't anticipate confrontations and project defensive attitudes. Rather, at the beginning of each day set your will in prayer to forgive any and all offenses that may come. Don't let anyone get between you and Jesus or steal your joy.

CONCLUSION:

- A. You have reached the "fourth mile marker" on the "running track for your prayer time."
B. The big issue in this message, based on the second human need petition of the Disciples' Prayer, is forgiveness. It is a matter so important that it is not to be ignored or rejected. The vitality of your relationship with God is dependent on it (**Matt. 6:14, 15; Mark 11:25, 26**). If there is a need for forgiveness, deal with it immediately and depend on the help of the Holy Spirit to help you to do what you cannot otherwise do (**Phil. 2:13**).

Lesson Five
“MOVING FROM VICTORY TO GLORY”

INTRODUCTION:

ILLUSTRATION: In the colonial days, America’s greatest theologian, Jonathan Edwards, wrote a small book with this lengthy title: A Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of All God’s People in Extraordinary Prayer for the Revival of Religion and the Advancement of Christ’s Kingdom on Earth, Pursuant to Scripture Promises and Prophecies Concerning the Last Time. Jonathan Edwards knew way back then that the spread of the kingdom of God occurs when Christians are revived and revival is released on a community. I believe God wants to pour out one last, mighty wave of His glory before His return...and I don’t want to miss it. If it should come to America, it will only come in response to personal and corporate prayer!

- A. We have been looking at the six principles presented in the Disciples’ Prayer.
 - 1. Petitions relating to God: (a) Reverencing God, (b) Establishing Divine Lordship, (c) Perfecting God’s Will in Our Earth
 - 2. Petitions relating to needs: (a) Physical Sustenance, (b) Spiritual Forgiveness, (c) Moral Leadership and Victory
- B. Today we look at the sixth principle addressed in the words: **“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen” (Matthew 6:13).**

I. OVERCOMING TEMPTATION – “And lead us not into temptation”

- A. Looking at the text: Some difficulty is caused by the English rendering **“lead us not into temptation.”** It is clear from other Scripture that God does not tempt (**James 1:13**). Temptations rise out of the vortex of our fallen situation (**James 1:14**). God, however, does bring His people (Abraham, Christ, etc.) into circumstances fitted and designed to try them, or test the strength of their faith (**James 1:2, 3, 12**). But it is not appropriate to say that God leads into temptation.
- B. Looking at the principle:
 - 1. Temptations which assail God’s children originate with our own lusts (**James 1:14**) and the deceiver, Satan (**Matt. 4:1**). If we are to be successful in overcoming temptation, we need to know the anatomy of temptation and failure so that we might be victorious (from **Gen. 3:4-8**): (1) Deception that the situation is not serious (**v. 4**); (2) Appeal to the self (**v. 5**); (3) Compelling desire aroused (**v. 6**); (4) Toying and yielding (**v. 6**); (5) Consequences of yielding (**v. 7**); (6) Seeking to hide (**v. 8**).
 - 2. Temptation of itself is not necessarily an evil experience. It is part and parcel of our Father’s plan for producing people of strong character and Christ-like qualities. When He created us as freewill beings, He knew we would be confronted with never ending choices for good or evil. Character thereby becomes the sum total of

the choices made in a life fraught with temptation. It is a disciplining we undergo as we mature. And...we can rest assured that He has made provision for our victory (**1 Cor. 10:13**).

II. TRIUMPHING OVER THE EVIL ONE – “But deliver us from evil”

- A. Looking into the text: Rather than translating this, **deliver us from evil,**” many translations render it, **“deliver”** or **“save”** us **“from the evil one.”** Christian conflict is essentially a contest with the evil one. It is not just a matter of coping with sin but a matter of being tempted by Satan through our fallen self and its natural inclination to sin.
- B. Looking at the principle: There are many positive ways by which our Heavenly Father delivers us from the evil one: (1) Remember, Christ is always within (**1 John 4:4**); (2) Use your God-given sense (**1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:22**); (3) Put on the whole armor of God (**Eph. 6:11-18**) which is, in effect, a putting on of Christ (**Rom. 13:14**):
- a) The girdle (belt) of truth (**John 14:6**)
 - b) The breastplate of righteousness (**1 Cor. 1:30**)
 - c) The sandals of peace (**Eph. 2:14**)
 - d) The shield of faith (**Rom. 12:3; Eph. 2:8**)
 - e) The helmet of salvation (**Luke 2:30, 31**)
 - f) The sword of the Spirit (**Eph. 6:17; John 1:1-3, 14**)
- (4) Submit yourself to the Lord (**James 4:6, 7; Rom. 6:11**); (5) Resist the temptation and the tempter (**Rom. 6:16; James 4:7, 8**) and (6) Be confident of God’s investment in you and His assurance of victory (**Phil. 1:6; Jude 24, 25**).

III. GIVING HONOR TO OUR DESERVING LORD – “For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever. Amen.”

- A. Looking into the text:
1. The textual problem: There is extensive, scholarly debate as to whether this benediction really belongs in the text. Some say the oldest manuscripts do not contain it, and others contend that it is found in the majority of the manuscripts back to the early part of the second century. I include it, not to take issue with scholarship, but to share what most people consider to be an important part of the text. It is a fitting doxology for the prayer and our Father is deserving of all possible adulation.
 2. The theme presented: (a) **“Thine is the kingdom”** – God gives and saves like a king...and all belongs to Him; (b) **“Thine is the power”** – God maintains and supports that kingdom to make good on all promises and engagements to Himself and His people (**Heb. 1:3**) and (3) **“Thine is the glory”** – God is the end of all that which is given to and done for (**Rom. 11:36**).
- B. Looking at the principle:
1. He is King. The kingship of heaven and earth is vested in our Father. Everything that exists does so by virtue of His express permission and ordained will. One day He shall declare His Son to be King of kings and Lord of lords and all creation shall be in subservience to Him (**Phil. 2:9-11; 1 Cor. 15:24-28**).

2. We need to praise Him properly. Unless we praise Him properly and profusely: (a) we deprive our Father of deep delight (**Luke 19:28-40**) and (b) we impoverish ourselves.
- The more we praise Him in open and true gratitude, the more we are, in turn, blessed of the Father.
 - The more we praise Him the more we take on of His character and goodness (**Rom. 8:29; Ps. 17:15; 2 Cor. 3:18**).

CONCLUSION

- A. The prayer ends with two significant expressions: (1) **“for ever”** – He will reign forever and our prayer is to be offered forever; (2) **“Amen”** (“so be it”) – With God it is a grant; with us it is a summary desire and petition.
- B. We have now concluded the Disciples’ Prayer and when you pray through it you will have concluded your “Running Track for Your Prayer Time.”