

Lenten Study - The Lord's Prayer
Session 1 – 3/9/2022

BIBLICAL FOUNDATION

Matthew 6:5-15

⁵“And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ⁶But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

⁷“When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

⁹“Pray then in this way:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.**

¹⁰ **Your kingdom come.**

**Your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.**

¹¹ **Give us this day our daily bread.**

¹² **And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.**

¹³ **And do not bring us to the time of trial,
but rescue us from the evil one.**

¹⁴ **For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; ¹⁵but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.** (NRSV)

Luke 11:1-10

11 He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.” ² He said to them, “When you pray, say:

Father, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.

³ **Give us each day our daily bread.**

⁴ **And forgive us our sins,
for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.**

And do not bring us to the time of trial.”

⁵ And he said to them, “Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; ⁶for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him.’ ⁷ And he answers from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.’ ⁸ I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.

⁹“So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. (NRSV)

Discussion:

Adam Hamilton's grandmother taught him the Lord's Prayer. How did you first learn the Lord's Prayer? With whom, if anyone, in your life do you associate it, and why?

Hamilton states, “No other prayer is more important to Christians than this prayer.” Do you agree? Why or why not?

Of the Lord's Prayer, Hamilton writes, “We know it, but often we don't know it. we pray it, but all too often we don't actually pray it.” what does that mean? Do you agree? Why or why not?

Prayer: **Holy God, as you rule over all in heaven and on earth, so rule our time together by Your Spirit. In our reading, in our discussing, and in our praying, direct our minds and hearts toward you, that we may praise your glorious name in all we say and do. Amen.**

WATCH THE LORD'S PRAYER VIDEO

Discuss: Matthew's version

What prompts Jesus to give the Lord's Prayer in this Scripture?

A devout Jew, Jesus didn't mention synagogues to criticize Jewish prayer in general (vs. 5), but to criticize an attention-seeking attitude. How does the Lord's Prayer encourage our attention, when praying, to remain on God where it belongs?

Jesus also criticized long-winded, meaningless prayers (vs. 7). How does the Lord's Prayer help us avoid such prayer?

Why do you think Jesus elaborates on the prayer's final petition (vs. 14-15)?

Discuss: Luke's version

What prompts Jesus to give the Lord's Prayer in this Scripture?

What differences between Luke's and Matthews' versions of Jesus' prayer do you notice? What significance, if any, do you find in them?

What attitudes toward prayer does Jesus teach in the parable immediately following the Lord's Prayer (vs. 4-10)? How do they compare with those in Matthew 5?

Hamilton says the Lord's Prayer, "like all prayer, is less about informing God of things we want or need, and more about shaping our own heart and life. Based on their settings for the Lord's Prayer, how do you imagine Matthew and Luke would respond? Why?"

CALLING GOD "OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN

List "names/images" of God in the Bible.

Discuss:

What qualities did this name, "Father," evoke for Jesus? Are they qualities you associate with fathers and fatherhood? Why or why not?

Hamilton wonders whether Jesus' memories of his adoptive father Joseph influenced Jesus' addressing God as Father. Review the following Scripture verses:

Matthew 1:18-25

Matthew 2:13-23

Luke 2:21-24

Luke 2:39-51

How might Joseph's qualities have influenced Jesus' view of God?

"Your earthly father is not the pattern for God's fatherhood," writes Hamilton, "but *God is the pattern and example of what a father is meant to be.*" How important or helpful do you find this distinction, and why?

How does addressing God as "our Father" rather than "my Father" shape our view of God and of other people?

Hamilton discusses several ways of understanding God's location "in heaven." Which of these do you find most meaningful? Most surprising? Why?

Do you think Jesus' encouragement to pray to God as "Our Father in heaven" is an instruction or an invitation, an obligation or an option? Why? How does the Lord's Prayer help us determine what other names, if any, we can or should use to address God?

CLOSING THE SESSION

Hamilton mentions the *Didache*, a first- or second-century church document that indicates some early Christians prayed the Lord's Prayer three times daily (9 am, noon, 3 pm). Consider adopting this discipline for the duration of this study—it will let the Lord's Prayer shape and sustain you.

Additional Bible passages

Matthew 1:18-25

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. ²⁰ But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³ "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means, "God is with us." ²⁴ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, ²⁵ but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

Matthew 1:18-25

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Luke 2:21-24

²¹ After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

²² When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"), ²⁴ and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

Luke 2:39-51

³⁹ When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰ The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

⁴¹ Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. ⁴² And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. ⁴³ When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. ⁴⁴ Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵ When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. ⁴⁶ After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸ When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety." ⁴⁹ He said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" ⁵⁰ But they did not understand what he said to them. ⁵¹ Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart.