
THE MODEL PRAYER

(Part 2)

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QUESTIONS:

- 1) In the model prayer, what comes first?
- 2) What sort of "*tone*" begins in v11?
- 3) What is "*daily bread*"?
- 4) What Bible expression signifies luxuries?
- 5) Why was God pleased with Solomon?
- 6) What will a classified ad do in Malaysia?
- 7) What comes after "*give us*" in the model prayer?
- 8) What's the difference between a "*trespass*" and a "*debt*"?
- 9) If the unworthy servant had paid back his debt, how long would he have had to work?

INTRODUCTION

Matthew 6:9-15 (KJV)

⁹ After this manner therefore pray ye:

Our Father which art in heaven,

Hallowed be thy name.

¹⁰ Thy kingdom come.

Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread.

¹² And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

¹⁵ But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Jesus was both a negative and positive teacher. He taught men:

- vv1-4 – How not to give alms
- vv5-8 – How not to pray
- vv16-18 – How not to fast

But now He teaches in a positive way about how to pray.

PRAYER WORKS

One overall concept is repeated throughout the sacred Scriptures: **Prayer works.**

- Abraham's servant prayed and Rebekah appeared.
- Jacob prayed and Esau's mind was changed from 20 yrs. of revenge.
- Moses prayed and Amalek was struck.
- Joshua prayed and Achan was found.
- Hannah prayed and Samuel was born.
- David prayed and Ahithophel hanged himself.
- Isaiah and Hezekiah prayed and 185,000 Assyrians were slain in 12 hours.
- Jonah prayed and the fish vomited him up.
- Daniel prayed and the lions got lockjaw.
- Nehemiah prayed and the king's heart was softened.
- Elijah prayed and a three year famine came / he prayed again and it came a flash flood.
- Elisha prayed and a child was raised from the dead.
- Christians prayed and Peter was released from prison.

Sometimes our prayers are not answered because we are not praying right. Jesus is going to teach us how to pray so our prayers will be answered.

Isalah 65:24

²⁴ "It shall come to pass
That before they call, I will answer;
And while they are still speaking, I will hear.

John 16:23

²³ "... Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Now, the first part of the model prayer focuses on God and His glory:

- "Thy name"
- "Thy kingdom"
- "Thy will"

The second part now turns to the Christian and his needs:

- "Give us"
- "Forgive us"
- "Lead us"
- "Deliver us"

Jesus taught that God and His kingdom should always come first:

Matthew 6:33

³³ "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

That's exactly what we find in this model prayer. God and His kingdom are first and foremost before we are taught to ask for our needs.

Once God is given His proper place, then we have the proper perspective toward ourselves.

A SHIFT IN TONE

As we study this model prayer we can detect a definite shift in tone.

vv9-10: have ***a mandatory sound*** to them

(What they say MUST be done. God could have it no other way.)

vv11-13: have a sound of ***begging*** to them

(What these verses request are not mandatory. We do not **DESERVE** the blessings prayed for. God does not **OWE** it to us.)

TEXT (1)

Matthew 6:11 (KJV)

¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread.

The **FIRST THING** in the list of petitions is for **something physical**.

If I do not acknowledge God in my daily physical life, I have no right to ask for spiritual blessings.

If we cannot thank God and trust in God to provide bread to sustain physical life, do we really think He can provide for spiritual life?

Luke 16:10

¹⁰ "... he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.

PRAYING REGULARLY

Next, Jesus establishes a "**minimum**" requirement for prayer.

"this day" – Jesus expected His disciples to pray daily to God.

In the Bible men prayed at all sorts of different times:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • <i>early in the mornings</i> | • <i>at midnight</i> |
| • <i>midmornings</i> | • <i>day and night</i> |
| • <i>three times a day</i> | • <i>today</i> |
| • <i>in the evening</i> | • <i>often</i> |
| • <i>before meals</i> | • <i>when they were young</i> |
| • <i>after meals</i> | • <i>when they were old</i> |
| • <i>at the ninth hour</i> | • <i>in trouble</i> |
| • <i>at bedtime</i> | • <i>always</i> |

But the point is, God's people prayed EVERY day.

ILL: None of us parents would appreciate a child who comes to us only when he wants something. Yet, this is how some treat God.

ISRAEL'S MANNA

You will remember that the Israelites learned about "*daily rations*." They gathered manna daily, and when it was measured, they had only enough for that day.

Exodus 16:18

¹⁸ So when they measured it by omers, he who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack. Every man had gathered according to each one's need.

"Daily bread" was simply *bread sufficient for one day*.

- God warned Israel not to gather more than a single day's ration of manna (Ex 16:19-20).
- The only time Israel was allowed to gather more than a day's supply of manna was on the 6th day of the week in preparation for the Sabbath (Ex 16:5, 24).

Q: Why did God allow Israel to have only one day's supply of food?

A: He wanted them to learn that "*man does not live by bread alone.*"

Deuteronomy 8:3

³ "So [God] humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.

These Israelites learned that they were dependent upon God. Every day when they went out and gathered up manna they were reminded that:

- They had no food stored up.
- There was no food available in the desert.
- Only a loving God could have provided for them under these conditions.

God knew that when Israel finally inherited their promised land, many would forget Him:

Deuteronomy 8:17-18

¹⁷ "[Beware lest] you say in your heart, '**My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.**'

¹⁸ "And you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.

The model prayer which Jesus gave recognizes this important fact and we are instructed to ask God only for a day's ration of bread.

THE "DAILY DISTRIBUTION"

In the early church, when money was given out to poor church members, only enough money was given to buy enough food for one day.

Acts 6:1

¹ Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in **the daily distribution**.

- They did not give the poor a week's worth of money at one time.
- They did not give them a month's worth of money at one time.
- They gave them daily just enough to supply their needs for one day.

We need to rethink how we give money out of the treasury. Sometimes our giving is not after the pattern given in the scriptures.

SIGNIFICANCE OF "BREAD"

"bread" – *signified necessities* – the staff of life.

Luxuries were symbolized in the Bible as "*milk and honey*":

Numbers 14:8

⁸ "If the LORD delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, 'a land which flows with milk and honey.'

This meant a land full of luxuries – provisions that far exceeded what was necessary.

Jesus did **not** tell us to pray for "*milk and honey*." He told us to pray for bread, that is:

- **Necessary things ... and**
- Only in **moderation**

To ask for more than bread was viewed unfavorably by God.

One time Israel became dissatisfied with simply bread and they clamored for some meat.

Numbers 21:5-6

⁵ And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread."

("We're sick and tired of just necessities! We'd like a steak now and then!")

⁶ So the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died.

It is wrong to request extravagant things.

ILL: You will remember that special mention was made that God was pleased when **Solomon did NOT ask for wealth** (1 Kings 3:10-12), but only for what was necessary to rule – wisdom.

We are to pray only for those necessary things that will enable us to perform our duties toward God and man.

MEN PREOCCUPIED WITH BREAD

Here's the point: Jesus does not want us to become preoccupied with bread. We have work to do for God and we cannot afford to become preoccupied with bread.

Matthew 6:25

²⁵ "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?"

1 Timothy 6:8

⁸ And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.

Does that describe us?

Genesis 28:20-21

²⁰ Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on,

²¹ "so that I come back to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God.

Jacob requested only those things that were necessary for life: food and raiment. With that he was "content."

A lot of brethren need to learn to pray for:

- daily
- bread

Some have become obsessed with "milk and honey."

- Some miss church to work.
- Some travel on business and miss church.
- Some work all day on job and none for church.
- Some mothers neglect their children and duties at home to work.

Titus 2:5

⁵ [wives are] ... **homemakers**, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

Why don't women do this? Because of bread? NO.

- Because the boat might go back to the bank.
- Because they would be reduced to one old car.
- Because they can't eat out every night.

The apostles said:

Acts 6:2 (RSV)

² ... It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables.

It's not right for fathers and mothers to allow milk & honey to dominate their lives. Nor bread.

The prophet wrote:

Proverbs 30:7-9

⁷ Two things I request of You
(Deprive me not before I die):

⁸ Remove falsehood and lies far from me;
Give me neither poverty nor riches;

Feed me with the food allotted to me;

⁹ Lest I be full and deny You,
And say, "Who is the LORD?"
Or lest I be poor and steal,
And profane the name of my God.

Abundance always tempts men to leave God and trust in themselves. That's why:

- **America is not a harvest field** for the gospel anymore.
- Third world nations are harvest fields for the gospel.

ILL: OPA field reports: "*Fields are white unto harvest.*"

The fields are not "*white unto harvest*" here in America. We are a fat nation indulging in every pleasure the heart can imagine.

The USA is a "gleaning field" (with a stray soul here and there), but it is not a "harvest field."

- Men are not obeying the gospel in mass numbers in this country.
- We can scarcely get men to attend one night of a gospel meeting.

ILL: Brother Bill Paige told of the time he spent in Malaysia. He would place a small classified ad in the newspaper for a gospel meeting and the phone would ring off the hook.

ILL: A bad meeting in Honduras or Zambia means that only four or five people were baptized instead of the usual 20 or 30.

What's the difference? **WEALTH.**

"OUR" BREAD IMPLIES: WORK

Jesus taught us to pray for "*our*" daily bread.

"our bread" – *Bread we worked for*. Bread we eat without laboring for is not "our" bread.

Q: How will God answer this prayer? Will a loaf miraculously appear on the kitchen table? Will He send ravens to feed us?

A: God answers this prayer through natural means. We pray, and then get up and go to work.

2 Thessalonians 3:10

¹⁰ For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.

Where is a faithful Christian who prayed for daily bread and was denied it? I say he does not exist.

Psalms 37:25

²⁵ I have been young, and now am old;
Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken,
Nor his descendants begging bread.

"OUR" BREAD IMPLIES: SHARE

NOTE: Jesus did not teach, "*Give me this day my daily bread.*"

By using the plural pronoun Jesus implied that I must share bread.

(There are children starving in this world.)

The problem in this world is not that there is insufficient bread to go around. There is plenty to spare. The problem is not supply, but rather distribution.

We cannot pray this model prayer without sharing.

James 1:27

²⁷ Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

TEXT (2)

Matthew 6:12 (KJV)

¹² And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

First it is "*give us*" then it is "*forgive us.*"

"give us" – the cry of a needy child

"forgive us" – the cry of a sinful child

After we ask God for food that we might live, we immediately confess that we have no right to live.

Now, before one can pray for forgiveness, he must acknowledge his need to pray for it. A man must have a sense of sin to pray this.

One man said:

"Sin is not nowadays a popular word. Men and women rather resent being called, or treated as, hell-deserving sinners" (Barclay, 219)

NOTE: If a prostitute came to our services and we told her she was lost and deserving of hell she would agree and ask what to do to be saved. But if a "respectable citizen" (lawyer, doctor, banker) he would be outraged.

It's time we humbled ourselves down. Not a person here is deserving of heaven.

Romans 3:10-12

¹⁰ As it is written:

"There is none righteous, no, not one;

¹¹ There is none who understands;

There is none who seeks after God.

¹² They have all turned aside;

They have together become unprofitable;

There is none who does good, no, not one."

We are saved by grace, not by works (Eph 2:8-9).

We must see sin for what it is: ***An insult to God. Rebellion to divine government.***

GOD'S PEOPLE ONLY

Next, we must understand this prayer can only be prayed by God's people. Only a disciple of Jesus can pray for forgiveness.

John 13:10

¹⁰ Jesus said to [Peter], "He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean ...

The disciples of Jesus need their feet washed occasionally, but an alien sinner needs a bath.

Acts 22:16

¹⁶ ... Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.'

DEBTS

But what is it we need forgiveness of?

"debts" (ὀφείλημα) – "*a debt, a due, a delinquency*" (Greenfield)

This is a broader term than "trespass" which occurs later (vv14-15).

- **trespass** = a sin of **commission**
- **debt** = a sin of **omission**

Not working for God is just as serious as working against God.

"AS WE FORGAVE"

There is a "string attached" to this request for forgiveness: "*as we forgive our debtors.*"

"forgive" (ἀφεῖς) – 1st aorist tense, indicating past action ⇨ literally: "*as we forgave ...*"

- **Point action** – once & for all
- **Past action**

We have already forgiven those who owe us before we ask God to forgive us.

This part of the prayer is so important that Jesus will return to discuss it in vv14-15.

NOTE: The text does not say, "*Forgive us BECAUSE we forgave others*" – as though we DESERVE forgiveness.

The prayer is, "*Forgive us in proportion as we have forgiven others.*"

These are frightening words. If we pray them, and have NOT really forgiven others, we are in effect asking God not to forgive us.

TEXT (3)

Matthew 6:13 (KJV)

¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: ...

"lead us not" – because *we do not trust ourselves*

"deliver us" – because *we trust You*

"lead us not" – views trials and temptation *before they occur*

"deliver us" – views trials *after they occur*

We are praying we would not enter temptation to begin with, but in the event we are tempted, we pray God will rescue us from it.

We are acknowledging that the Devil is too powerful for us and we are praying that God will fight on our behalf.

AVOIDING TEMPTATION

When we pray for "*daily bread*" we must then get up and go to work.

When we pray not to be "*led into temptation*" we must actively avoid temptation.

- If I have a **drinking problem**, I won't decide to "use a little wine for my stomach's sake."
- If I have a **lust problem** I won't watch many TV shows or movies. I won't read many magazines or listen to many songs.

We must do what we can to avoid the appeals to sin.

TEXT (4)

The prayer closes by saying:

Matthew 6:13 (KJV)

¹³ ... For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

These are familiar words. Where have I heard that before?

1 Chronicles 29:11

¹¹ Yours, O LORD, is the greatness,
The power and the glory,
The victory and the majesty;
For all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours;
Yours is the kingdom, O LORD,
And You are exalted as head over all.

"Thine is the kingdom"

Therefore God has the control of seeing that the kingdom goes forth throughout the world.

"Thine is the power"

- Therefore God is able to give us daily bread.
- He is able to forgive our sins.
- He is able to lead us.
- He is able to deliver us.

"Thine is the glory"

The reason why God will send forth His kingdom and provide our needs – to glorify Himself.

"Forever"

It has always been this way; it always will be this way.

"AMEN"

Later, Jesus would add a "signature" to prayer. Rather than ending the prayer with a simple, "Amen," we are taught to offer prayer to God in the Lord's name:

John 16:23-24

²³ "... Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you.

²⁴ "Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

Perhaps I am being too "old fashioned," but I still believe we must say, "*In Jesus name*" before we say, "*Amen.*"

(I don't believe a plain "Amen" will suffice)

Jesus is our only mediator (1 Tim 2:5) and God wants us to confess this every time we pray.

TEXT (5)

The Lord concluded the model prayer with a stern warning:

Matthew 6:14-15

¹⁴ "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

¹⁵ "But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

ARGUMENT: "*Once saved, always saved.*"

NO. The passage to heaven is not a free ride. These words are to disciples of Christ, and if we refuse to forgive men at anytime, we forfeit our salvation.

THE UNFORGIVING SERVANT **(Part 1)**

Jesus tells a parable in **Mt 18** to illustrate His point. He tells about a wicked servant who owed the king of the country 10,000 talents. He was a real rat.

- A day's wages was a denarius (15 cents).
- A talent was \$961
- It would take 6,400 days (17 years) to earn one talent.
- This servant owed 10,000 talents.

How did he come to owe this much? Probably pilfering thru the King's treasury.

But what's worse is: He had none of it left.

ILL: Reminds me of these professional athletes who earn millions and have none of it left after a year.

But the servant promised he would pay it all back in time.

(That's stupid. He would have to live 17,000 yrs. to pay it all back.)

But the king graciously forgave the entire debt.

NOTE: This illustrates how much God is willing to forgive us. He would forgive us if we owed Him 17,000 years worth of wages.

THE UNFORGIVING SERVANT **(Part 2)**

But there is a second part to the story. This same servant went and found a fellow servant who owed him 100 pence (Denarii) – or about \$15.

(It would take him a little over 3 months to repay his debt.)

But this unforgiving servant refused to forgive his fellow servant.

- He choked him.
- He threw him into prison.

I wonder how he expected a man to pay back a debt while in prison?

Matthew 18:32-35

³² "Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me.'

³³ 'Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?'

³⁴ "And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.

³⁵ "So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."

Listen to that. Jesus is saying if we don't forgive our debtors we will be tormented in hell till we pay all that we owe to God.

ARGUMENT: "I thought we couldn't pay for our own sins. I thought only Jesus' blood can pay the debt we owe."

A: That's just the point. We can't ever repay God.

(Jesus is saying we will be tormented in hell day and night forever and ever.)

If ever the Scriptures taught everlasting, unending torment in a Devil's hell, this passage certainly does.

Can we honestly stand before the Lord on Judgment Day and expect mercy when we refused to give it ourselves?

NOTE: The reason we hold grudges and cannot seem to forgive others is because we have never really known the debt we owe to God.

We have never come to realize our own sinfulness and unworthiness.

CONCLUSION

And so it was that the Lord ended His teachings on prayer – at least for a time.

In reflecting on this model prayer, I find I cannot say:

"**our**" if I live only for myself

"**Father**" if I do not live each day like His child

"**Who art in heaven**" if I am laying up no treasure there

"**hallowed be Thy name**" if I am not striving for holiness

"**Thy kingdom come**" if I do not work to spread the gospel

"**Thy will be done**" if I am disobedient to His word

"**in earth as it is in heaven**" if I'll not serve Him here and now

"**give us this day our daily bread**" if I'm dishonest, or lazy

"**forgive our debts**" if I harbor a grudge

"**lead us not into temptation**" if I deliberately place myself in its path

"**deliver us from evil**" if I do not put on the whole armor of God

"**Thine is the kingdom**" if I do not give the King the loyalty due Him

I cannot:

attribute to Him **power** if I fear what men may do

ascribe to him **glory** if I'm seeking honor for myself

And I cannot say:

"**forever**" if the horizons of my life are bound completely by time

May God help us not to be hypocrites in ***how we pray***, or in ***what we pray***.