

A Simplified
Guide Through the
Lord's Prayer

PROVERBS 31 MINISTRIES

“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.
And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.’”

MATTHEW 6:9-13, NIV

Hi, friend,

WHAT IF PEACE IS JUST ONE PRAYER AWAY?

Sometimes it's hard to know where to start with prayer. How do we know what requests to bring to God? What happens when our prayers don't sound as eloquent as that one gal's in our small group? Or when it feels like we've run out of things to pray for, whether it's because we are weary or because we just can't think of anything?

Thankfully, in Matthew 6, Jesus teaches us how to pray even when we don't have the words. If you've been around Christian circles for a while, you may have heard this passage of Scripture called the Lord's Prayer. Maybe the church tradition you grew up in recited it each Sunday. Or if you're new to following Jesus, maybe this is something you've never heard of before.

The Lord's Prayer isn't just something to memorize. Jesus meant it to be used as a daily practice for how to converse with God. Not in a way that's legalistic or just checks a box but as a guide for our benefit. It's what the human heart needs every day: communion with God.

Jesus begins His prayer with, *"This, then, is how you should pray."* And then He lifts up God's will above His own and establishes that the Lord will provide what we need daily. After that, He walks us through praying for forgiving hearts and the ability to stand against the temptations of the enemy. This is how we should pray: for God's will, for what we need, for forgiveness, for protection.


When we participate in prayer, we find a pathway to peace. In Philippians 4:6-7, Paul points out prayer comes before peace:

*"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, **by prayer and petition**, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the **peace** of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus"* (NIV, emphasis added).

We will readily admit we struggle to do this daily, and sometimes weekly. And maybe that's the very reason why we can slip into spiritual funks so easily.

So we created this guided prayer journal just for you to really experience the power of the Lord's Prayer. Use this as your safe space for learning, processing, journaling and communicating with your heavenly Father.

Together, we can lean into what Jesus taught us and find the peace we are longing for.



IT'S
JUST ONE
PRAYER
AWAY

2. "YOUR KINGDOM COME, YOUR WILL BE DONE, ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN." (MATTHEW 6:10, NIV)

Read

The three sections here – "*your kingdom come*," "*your will be done*" and "*on earth as it is in heaven*" – are all wrapped up in a future promise. This means that as we pray, we look forward to the promise that awaits us: Jesus will one day create the new heavens and the new earth. However, this future promise comes simultaneously with present responsibility for us to participate in today.

Why is this important? Because as we pray through this section, we are trading what we may want right now for God’s will that is always best in the long run. But in the short run, this is hard. Sometimes we just want what we want – until something better becomes the new desire of our hearts. This prayer is our reminder ... our foretaste ... that God’s will is better than our desire.

It’s like sneaking into the kitchen while your mom makes dinner to “taste test” the meal. This advanced taste sets our expectations and affirms our desire and longing for the full meal promised to us. If we truly believe that God’s will is good and better than what we think we want right now, we won’t struggle to reach for lesser things to temporarily satisfy us. Back to the meal analogy: If we know the meal will be so delicious and satisfying, we won’t be nearly as tempted to fill up on candy bars in the minutes before the real food is served.

This is truly what it means for things to be "*on earth as it is in heaven*." We want to taste for ourselves His Kingdom that is to come. And we want to give others a taste of it as well through our lives of faithfulness, love and obedience to God.

Pray

Before we pray through the things weighing on our hearts, let’s pray and journal through God’s agenda first – declaring that we want His will to be done in us and through us more than anything else. We want His will in every relationship and every area of our lives. When we trade our will for God’s will, we are stepping into true surrender and trusting God to bring peace to the things that feel out of our control.

WRITE YOUR OWN PRAYER

3. "GIVE US TODAY OUR DAILY BREAD." (MATTHEW 6:11, NIV)

Read

When Jesus taught us what to pray each day, His first ask or request from God the Father was for daily bread. The Greek word for "daily" (*ἐπιούσιον*) can be best understood in this context as referring to the present of today, here and now, but also days to come.

We see a variety of forms of bread in the Bible. In the Old Testament, it came as a loaf (Leviticus 2:4) and as manna from heaven. (Deuteronomy 8:3) Bread was a daily provision from God. (Exodus 16:4) But most importantly, in the New Testament, Jesus called Himself the Bread of Life. (John 6:35) And one day, God promises we will receive bread at the heavenly banquet. (Luke 22:16; Isaiah 25:6)

So the mention of bread in the Lord's Prayer is not just intended for us to pray in hopeful anticipation for the future (the heavenly banquet) but also to pray as we are sustained by God's perfect provision in the present (manna).

In our own lives, it can feel exhausting to rely on God's provision when it's just not coming yet ... when we've asked for a solution to our problems and our pain, but we haven't seen the manna we want.

But if God isn't giving His provision to us in the way we expect right now, then we must trust there's something God knows that we don't know. We may see it in time or not until eternity. But until we see it, we can know with certainty that what He gives us truly is His good provision, whether that good is for today or is part of a much bigger plan. Even when what we see in front of us feels confusing. Even when what we see in front of us isn't at all what we thought it would look like. Even when we don't agree that this is good. We can trust Him.

Pray

Use the space below to pray and journal through things you want, desire and need from God. And then trust Him for those answers in His perfect timing. Remember, friend, Jesus is the Bread of Life. He is the most miraculous provision and the One already given to us today.

WRITE YOUR OWN PRAYER

4. "AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE ALSO HAVE FORGIVEN OUR DEBTORS." (MATTHEW 6:12, NIV)

Read

For someone living during the time of Jesus to hear the word "debt," there would have been a flood of emotions stirred up in them. You see, during those days, the weight of power within the government caused the overwhelming majority of people to be borrowers, not lenders. They knew what it was like to be under the burdensome weight of unpayable debt. What joy, what peace, what freedom, to know that Jesus had come to pay all of their spiritual debt!

Even as Christians today, when we are reminded that we have been cleared of the debt of our sin because of the blood of Jesus Christ, it should cause us to desire the same experience of freedom and forgiveness for others.

But that word "forgiveness" is complicated. It's one thing to try and wrap our heads around the forgiveness Jesus so freely offers, but it's sometimes more personally challenging to consider where we may need to extend forgiveness to someone else in our life. Someone who has deeply wounded us with their words, betrayed us, broken trust with us. Someone who used to be one of our closest friends, but now we feel an awkward distance. A strained relationship with a family member or mentor.

However the word "forgiveness" makes you feel in light of hard relationship circumstances you may be facing, we understand. And so does Jesus.

You don't have to conquer the whole forgiveness journey today with "that person." But today is a great opportunity to simply sit with the Lord and consider what forgiveness could look like. In this relationship. In your own heart. What would it look like to cooperate with the forgiveness Jesus has given to you and extend it to another person?

As you pray through this, consider the words of Colossians 3:12-14: *"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity"* (NIV).

Pray

Use the space below to thank God for the free gift of His forgiveness. As you consider anything you yourself need to confess and ask for God's forgiveness, also ask God, *Who is someone I need to forgive?* Invite His help as you begin that process today.

WRITE YOUR OWN PRAYER

5. "AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM THE EVIL ONE." (MATTHEW 6:13, NIV)

Read

The background of this verse refers to the temptation and testing Jesus experienced in the wilderness (see Matthew 4). Jesus was tested, in a sense, by God the Father, and He was also tempted by the devil.

The enemy is real, and he will tempt us, attempting to lure us away from God. However, we pray that God would give us strength and deliver us from the evil one so that we may walk in step with Jesus. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

Before Jesus died, He promised the Holy Spirit would come. (John 14:25-27) When we put our faith in Jesus, we are given the Holy Spirit to help us fight against the enemy. The Holy Spirit helps us not to give in to temptation. "For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death." (Romans 8:2, ESV)

We don't have to live as slaves to our sin. Galatians 5:19-25 tells us, "The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit" (NIV).

When we lean on the power of the Holy Spirit for strength, we, too, can live by the fruit of the Spirit instead of giving in to the desires of the flesh.

Pray

To close out the Lord's Prayer, pray from the place of victory we have as believers, and take your stand against the enemy. Ask God for His protection against temptation and the schemes of the evil one, and rejoice in the peace that comes from trusting Him.

WRITE YOUR OWN PRAYER

“Do *not* be anxious about anything,
but in every situation, by *prayer*
and *petition*, with *thanksgiving*,
present your requests to God. And the
peace of God, which *transcends* all
understanding, will *guard* your hearts
and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7, NIV (EMPHASIS ADDED)