

A very wonderful day to all my family and friends. It is time to look into the Word and spend a little time with the Lord. May His blessings be on you as you consider Part 2 of the Lord's Prayer, or as I choose to call it, the Disciples' Prayer, or the Belivers' Prayer.

AS HE TAUGHT US TO PRAY – Part Two
A Devotional prepared by Dr. Robert L. Morris
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“And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. ... when you pray, ... pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. 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. Therefore, do not be like them, for your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. In this manner, therefore, pray ...” (Matthew 6:5a, 6a – 8; NKJV)

In Part 1 we looked at the concept of Acknowledging God, through Adoration, Anticipation, and Affirmation. Now, in this second part of our Devotional we will focus on Part 2 of the prayer our Lord taught us to pray, namely, Asking God. I choose to call this prayer “The Believers’ Prayer.” Please join me, as we continue learning what Jesus taught us.

Part 2. Asking God – “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 6:11-13; TNIV)
Most of us grew up on “The Lord’s Prayer” that ended with the very familiar: “For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.” The Greek text for this closing part of the prayer is omitted from many of the early Greek manuscript. However, it IS included in such major manuscripts as follows, The Sinaiticus, a mid-fourth century manuscript, extremely trustworthy and important, The Vaticanus, an early fifth century manuscript, equally important and trustworthy, and The Bezae Cantabrigiensis, again another very important and trustworthy manuscript. I have included the words of the familiar ending to the Prayer it in this brief study because of its familiarity and use in our worship services. Also, I believe it belongs in the prayer. Its use in the early days of the church would have had an appeal to the Jewish people. They were accustomed to such accolades being given to Yahweh, the Almighty God, as found in 1 Chronicles 29:11: “Yours, LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the splendor and the majesty, for everything in the heavens and on earth belongs to You. Yours, LORD, is the kingdom, and You are exalted as head over all.” (HCSB)

For what do we ask God?

(a) It is a petition for physical needs: “Give us today our daily bread.” It is appropriate for Christians to ask God for provisions to meet physical needs. In reality, it is the admission that those provisions can come only from God. In this model prayer Jesus was not satisfied that we ask only for the seemingly important things ... honoring God’s name, submission to His kingdom rule, and surrender to His sovereign will. He who fed the thousands wants us to pray for our daily needs. While Jesus said that “man must not live on bread alone,” (Matthew 4:4) He was too realistic to say that man does not live by bread at all. We pray for “spiritual bread,” but in this part of “The Believers’ Prayer” we learn that it is “spiritual” to pray for physical needs to be met. This demonstrates how blessed we are to know that God not only supplies for our needs, but He delights in our asking Him to do so. And this prompts the prayer of deepest gratitude to Him for His provisions.

(b) It is a petition for spiritual needs: “And forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors.” (Matthew 6:12; NKJV) In Luke’s Gospel we read: “And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone in debt to us.” (Luke 11:4; HCSB) In Luke’s version of this prayer we ask the Lord to forgive our sins or trespasses. The focus of Luke’s version is on our acts of commission, or doing what is wrong. In Matthew’s version we ask the Lord to forgive our “indebtedness” to Him, focusing on our acts of omission, or not doing what we should be doing. It is when we take these two together and ask God’s forgiveness for committing “those things which we ought not to have done” and for omitting “those things which we ought to have done,” that the fuller sense emerges relating to what it means to petition God for our spiritual needs. Was Matthew

correct? Was Luke correct? This is probably an irrelevant question. Surely the Holy Spirit wants both concepts to become a part of how we petition God concerning our spiritual needs.

(c) It is a petition for moral needs: “And do not bring us into temptation, but rescue us from the evil one.” (Matthew 6:13; my translation) This petition quite naturally follows the petition for forgiveness. When we ask for God’s forgiveness, we almost instinctively ask next to be kept from the very temptations and evil ... that is, the evil one, Satan, who made our petition for God’s forgiveness necessary, including as well as our failure to follow God’s leadership, and thus the focus of our guilt. Here is the heart that petitions God for His guidance that the petitioner’s life not fall into the same pits of iniquity again. Our daily life is like walking through a minefield. Therefore, we pray that we will not be led into one of Satan’s mines of over-whelming temptation. To come into something is to enter its sphere and so come under its influence. Walking in and through a myriad of temptations that we Christians face daily, presents the need for us to pray that we may never come into or under the influence of any of them. The closing instruction from Jesus in this prayer, is that we ask to be delivered from, or more accurately, rescued from the influences and power of the soul’s enemy. Three encouraging verses of Scripture help us focus on being delivered. Please allow me to put this into a little “preacherish” outline. It may assist all of us to remember Biblical truth relating to the issue of temptation – something each of us faces more often than we like.

The Greek word translated “temptation” is πειρασμός - peirasmos. It is word that is translated well by either “trial” or “temptation.” It is the word James uses in the Scriptures noted below. It is clearly understood as meaning “a test or trial designed to entice one to do what is wrong.” It is designed to lure a person to respond to its enticements by playing on either the physical, intellectual, spiritual, or emotional part of humanity, or on more than one of these. Therefore, Jesus taught us to pray: “And do not lead us into the enticing influence to do wrong, but deliver us from the evil one.” What then can we learn about the matter of temptation, something that confronts us as Christians?

(1) The Reality of Temptation. “Then Jesus was led into the desert by the Spirit to be tempted by the devil.” (Matthew 4:1)

Jesus experienced temptation; temptation is a reality. As His followers, we are not exempt from the constant onslaught of temptation. The Apostle James wrote: “Consider it great joy, my brothers, whenever you experience various trials (temptations).” (James 1:2)

(2) The Resistance to Temptation. “Blessed is a man who endures trials (temptations), because when he passes the test, he will receive the crown of life that He has promised to the ones who love Him.” (James 1:12; HCSB)

The Apostle Paul wrote strongly regarding the issue of “resistance” as it relates to our daily walk with God. He uses such words as ἐδραῖοι γίνεσθε - “be firm” or “be steadfast.” He exhorts the Corinthians believers to ἀμετακίνητοι - “be immovable.” He wrote: “Therefore, my dear brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the Lord’s work, knowing that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.” (1 Corinthians 15:58; HCSB) James also carefully notes that temptation does not come from God. (See James 1:13)

(3) The Rescue from Temptation. “Since He Himself (Jesus) was tempted (tested) and has suffered, He is able to help those who are tempted (tested).” (Hebrews 2:18; HCSB)
Again we turn to the Apostle Paul as he taught the Christians in Corinth: “No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to humanity. God is faithful and He will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation He will also provide a way of escape, so that you are able to bear it.” (1 Corinthians 10:13; HCSB)

And so, Jesus taught us to pray: “And do not lead us into the enticing influence to do wrong, but deliver us from the evil one.” He then closed this part of His instruction with those magnificent words that I firmly believe should be included: “For Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever! Amen!”

A hymn I have not heard sung in Church for many years, but one that we would do well to sing frequently, is Horatio R. Palmer's 1868 "Yield Not to Temptation." You who know this hymn will recognize that I made one slight change that I believe helps the lyrics in their communicative strength. Line 3 of verse 1 originally read: "Fight manfully onward." Some will prefer, and continue to use that language. Others may want to use the change I suggest: "Move prayerfully onward." Both are accurate.

YIELD NOT TO TEMPTATION

1. Yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin.
Each vict'ry will help you some other to win.
Move prayerfully onward; dark passions subdue.
Look ever to Jesus; He will carry you through.

2. To him that o'er-cometh God giveth a crown.
Thro' faith we shall conquer, tho' often cast down.
He who is our Savior, our strength will renew.
Look ever to Jesus; He will carry you through.

CHORUS

Ask the Savior to help you, comfort, strengthen, and keep you.
He is willing to aid you; He will carry you through.