



## HELPS Devotional Articles

An excerpt from *The Discovery Bible* by HELPS Ministries Inc.

### Praying through the Lord's Prayer (The "Our Father")

The "Our Father" (Mt 6:9-13) is the *only* prayer we are *commanded to pray* in the *whole Bible* – which obviously makes *praying* ("meditating") *through it* very important! One approach is saying "yes" to each of its *ten parts* – i.e. saying "yes" to affirm *God's fatherhood* (#1, "Our Father"), "yes" to "*who is in heaven*" (#2), to "*hallowed be Your name*" (#3), etc.

Oswald Hoffman, "The Lord's Prayer is a *pattern*, not a formula. It is not a string of magic words. He (Christ) did not pray that way Himself, and He didn't want anybody else to pray that way" (*The Lord's Prayer*, Harper & Row, 1982).

The "Our Father" (Mt 6:9-13) then is a *model (guide) for meditation*, as Jesus clarifies in the introduction, "*Regularly pray (Gk present imperative) in this manner . . .*" (Mt 6:9). The "Our Father" is of great importance to grow in the "school of prayer" since it is the *only* prayer in the Bible we are commanded to "pray (through)." This obviously means more than *merely reciting it verbatim (rotely repeating it)*.

[Note the emphasis of the original Greek text, "Give us this *daily* bread . . .".]

"The Model Prayer" ("Our Father") consists of *ten key truths* to be *affirmed regularly* (even daily). Such *directed* praying prevents "mind drift" or "getting stuck" in the "same spiritual grooves" (and neglecting *other* essential spiritual principles).

The *ten affirmations* below correspond to the ten "parts" of the Lord's Prayer – "the *ten yeses*" (affirmations) the *Lord Himself seeks regularly* from *each of us*.

["Pray *in this manner*" (Mt 6:9, 3779/*houtōs*) indicates a model (pattern, paradigm for prayer). This is further reinforced by the Greek *present* imperative (pray!) which commands this is to be *regularly* done. Mt 6:13: "And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil" (*NASB*) ends the Lord's prayer "proper" (the OT benediction follows, "For Thine is the kingdom . . .," but is not found in the earliest manuscripts.)

### "God's ten yeses"

The following is a brief paraphrase ("sample meditation") for each of the ten parts of the Lord's Prayer. Each gives us the opportunity *to agree with God* by saying "yes!"

### 1. **Our Father . . .**

- Yes, I want Your *transforming touch* in every scene of my life! Nurture me Father so I become *more and more like You*. As *Your child* and *developing bride*, my supreme desire is to live in Your unbroken fellowship.
- Yes, I believe You are committed to sharing Your holy, transforming touch to conform me more and more to Your image. Nurture me Father, so I can become more like You. Transform me in the journey from 'child to Bride' by knowing Your loving protection and fellowship.
- Lord, I want to resemble You; transform me by Your holy touch.

[Every believer has the same objective: to be fully conformed to the image of the Father, our maker (Ro 8:29). Our greatest goal is to progress in *resembling Him as Father*. We should look like who we belong to! Indeed, all who bear His name ("Christian") are to *resemble Him more and more as "Father" – looking like Him* because *they belong to Him* (His family) *as His beloved children*. The Lord adopts us and cares for all our needs as His children. Hence our *supreme ambition* is knowing His *transforming, Fatherly touch*.]

### 2. **Who is in heaven . . . the One is in the heavens (plural)**

- Yes, You are the Holy One Who is above (beyond) every sin, defect, and limitation. You are the one perfectly revealed in the Scriptures. I desire to know more and more of You – in all the "levels" You offer to fellowship with me (note the Gk plural, "heavens", suggesting *the infinite "levels" God desires to give Himself away*).
- I desire more of Your perfect *attributes*, so I can go higher and higher in *knowing You*. I empty myself of all unworthy thoughts about You to rise up on the "ladder of faith" – to lay hold of *more of You*.
- I affirm Your perfection and empty myself of any unworthy thoughts about You. I believe You truly are *the God of the Scriptures*.

### 3. **Hallowed be Your name . . . Your name (Yahweh) must *entirely* be made different** (i.e. in all its fullness – with absolutely nothing excluded)

- Yes, I extol everything about You and treasure (sanctify) every exact piece of knowledge I have of You . . . because *You* mean everything to me! Every part of You is ultimately special and filled with wonder.

[God's only name in Scripture is *Yahweh* which means, "The one who always *was, is, and will be*." See also Eccl 3:15.]

- Yes, all glory and praise belong to *You* and *You* alone. As your *Bride* I *hallow* *You* above *all* things as my heavenly Bridegroom.
- You are everything to me and I hold every part of knowing *You* as special and wonderful. You are my everything. I treasure (sanctify) every exact piece of knowledge I have about *You*.

[This affirmation also acknowledges a reverent, healthy *fear of God*, recognizing His absolute holiness ("*otherness*"). The Greek text uses a passive imperative meaning, "Your name *must* be hallowed," i.e. by all of His creation.

We hallow the Lord (Heb *Yahweh*, Gk *kyrios*) *who is to be prized* (cherished) *above all things*, in every way and in all we do. *Yahweh* (God's only name) literally means the One who always *was, is, and will be*. See Eccl 3:15, Rev 1:8, 4:8.]

**4. Your kingdom come . . .** Your kingdom must *entirely arrive* (i.e. in all its fullness – nothing less suffices)

- Yes, I desire Your *full Lordship* in my life so I can be *ready to meet You*. I *submit completely* to Your *authority as my King*, surrendering all self-agenda and self-government to draw closer to *You* and be ready for Your return. I do not want to leave *any* of Your will for my life here on earth *undone*.
- Yes, I desire Your absolute Lordship, now and forever.
- I submit totally to Your authority as my King and surrender all self-agenda (self-government).

[A *kingdom* is always ruled *by a king*! Jesus, *the King*, is worthy to rule over every scene of our lives. The yielded believer acknowledges His *rule* in every domain of their being: *heart* (decisions, emotions); *soul* (personal identity); *mind* (intellect, logic); *strength* (use of resources); and, all our *relationships*. See the two greatest commands (Mk 12:29-31).]

**5. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven . . .** Your preferred-will (2307/*thelēma*) on the physical earth must *entirely* emerge (from eternity – in all its fullness with nothing excluded) as it is in heaven (singular).

- Yes, I will obey all of Your preferred-will (2307/*thelēma*) as You birth it in me through faith. I want to live out Your preferences, with *You*, as it is in *heaven* on the *physical earth* and so be a doer of Your word. As *You* make this plain to me, I promise to obey it conscientiously "*through my body*" (2 Cor 5:10). I commit to doing Your will in *every* physical scene of life – in times of difficulty, "routine," and temporal blessing.

- Yes, I will obey all Your preferred-will as You birth it in me through faith. I know *every* physical scene of life is *equally important to You*.
- I want to be a *doer* of Your will, obeying the faith You birth in me.

["When we pray, 'Thy Kingdom come,' we also ask that God's will be done here and now, today. . . . This is part of the Gospel of *the Kingdom of God*" (G. Ladd, *The Gospel of the Kingdom*, 23).]

**6. Give us this day our daily bread . . .** Please (*urgently*) give to us more of You and nothing more and nothing less than what comes from Your hand today.

- Yes, I am content with Your manna (bread) that you give. I desire *all* of and *only* it, and reject living by my "own" ingenuity or resources for the coming day. I want to live only by what comes from Your hand.
- Yes, I will be content each day, living in all (only) the provisions *You* give.
- I want to live by *all* Your provision and *only* Your provision – nothing in my "*own* ingenuity" (resources).

["Bread" in Scripture stands for all the provisions God gives to meet all our *needs*. "Give us this day, our daily bread" suggests living *strictly* by what comes *from the Lord's hand* – and *all* that goes with that. Also, "this day, our daily bread," suggests Jesus intends us *to make this meditation a daily exercise* – perhaps in the evening about the *coming* day (cf. the order, "*evening* and morning," in Gen 1:5,8, etc.).]

**7. And forgive us our debts . . .** Please (*completely*) forgive us our debts.

- Yes, I receive Your cleansing through the blood of Jesus and repent of my sins (independent thinking and decision-making). I do not want the *slightest separation* between my soul and my Savior.
- Please remove the slightest separation between my soul and You. I humbly confess my sins and receive Your cleansing forgiveness.
- Yes, I *will* forsake all other loves to love You. I will rather break anybody else's heart than Yours, my Lord and my God.

[Every time we fail to live in faith it leaves a debt of sin (cf. Ro 14:23) – so we "owe God" each time we live in our own plan (even when it is "respectable!"). Confessing sin however brings Christ's complete forgiveness (1 Jn 1:9), even for sins of omission (i.e. things we fail to do).]

**8. As we also have forgiven our debtors . . .**

- Yes, I *have released* all desire for *vengeance* (to be *punitive*). I *refuse* to hate any human being or be bitter against anyone who has wronged me in the past, now, or in the future . . . for *Jesus' sake!*
- Yes, I have made up my mind to forgive on *Your* holy terms rather than mine.

[Refusal to forgive others diminishes God's enjoyment of *us* – so we forgive *all* our debtors . . . for *Jesus' sake!*

Unforgiveness is very serious. Refusing to "release" ("let go") causes us to be *guilty of idolatry* on *two* counts. *First*, unforgiveness puts *someone else* on *God's throne* (i.e. instead of Him). *Second*, it puts *ourselves on the Lord's throne*, because only He has the right to take *vengeance* (Ro 12:19).

Unforgiveness puts *the person we're bitter against* on God's throne, and *they* then become the object of our attention. So too *we "climb on the Lord's throne"* when we make *ourselves* "His instrument of vengeance." This dethrones God and robs Him of *first place* in our lives.

Unforgiveness always brings an unfulfilled, bitter life and seriously cuts us off from the grace of God (Mt 6:14,15)! Therefore we must *release all bitterness* (malice) and refuse to *hate any human being* (Eph 4:31).]

**9. And do not lead us into negative-tests . . .** Please do not bring us (*even once*) into chastising tests.

- Yes, I have a *holy fear* of You and therefore reject a *compromised life* – i.e. where You have to *chastise (negatively discipline)* me. I forsake all efforts to "redefine (reroute)" You and seek for the exact *balances* in life You require.
- Yes, I affirm a *wholesome, holy fear of You* which avoids all unnecessary chastisements that must follow from a *compromised life*.
- Lord I want to live an uncompromised life so You will not have to chasten (unnecessarily discipline) me.

["Lead us *not*" calls us to *avoid negative tests* from God, i.e. *divine discipline* because we have *strayed* from the Lord.

There is only *one* Greek word (3986/*peirosmos*) for the *two* English words "tempt" and "test." God tempts no one (Js 1:13) so this phrase is best translated, "Lead us not into [unnecessary chastising] tests." See also Heb 12:4-11.]

**10. But deliver us from evil . . .** Please (*entirely*) deliver us from the operating principle of evil (fruitless *pain*).

- Yes, I desire Your *maximum* (fullness of life) so please deliver me from *all* bondages of sin – its intoxicating (evil) influences and its psychological (emotional) *pain* ("evil"). Bring me *to Yourself* and *for Yourself* – out of *my* "stuff" and *into* full intimacy with You as Your bride and wife . . . as *Your prized possession*.
- Yes, I desire to live in Your Spirit-fullness, totally delivered from *every* bondage and enslavement of sin (physical, psychological, intellectual, emotional). Also deliver me from the pains that go with these as You bring me into Your health and wholeness. Deliver me *to Yourself* and *for Yourself* . . . out of "my thing" and into Your glorious liberty as your faithful bride and wife.
- I desire to go higher and higher in knowing You – delivered from every pain of evil. *All of me is for You and unto You*. Draw me *to Yourself* and *for Yourself*.

[The closing doxology, "For Thine is the kingdom . . .," was not apparently part of the "Our Father" *per se*, though it is scriptural (cf. 1 Chron 29:11; Neh 9:5).]

### ***In brief***

*Meditate through* (say "yes" to) *each of the ten parts of the Lord's Prayer* ("Our Father") *regularly*, such as at the *end* of the day (in the *evening*).

[This "cue" comes from Gen 1 by the repeated statement: "*Evening* and morning were the first day (the second day, . . . the third day, etc.)."]

How we close the day profoundly *begins the next* – so it is very important to *offer up* our day the *night before*. For more discussion on "praying through the Lord's prayer" see notes at Sidebar A, at 3962/*patēr* ("Father") in *The Discovery Bible*.

### *One more suggestion for prayer in the mornings*

Consecrate the *five domains* of life Jesus identifies in the *two greatest commands* (Mk 12:29-31). This is a wonderful "quiet time" for the *morning* because it expresses full, *undivided* love for the Lord your God out of (and to) Him; your *whole*:

- *heart* (decisions/moral preferences);
- *soul* (personal *identity*);
- *mind* (use of logic);
- *strength* (taking the right *action*); and . . .

- our relationships.

For more on this see 3650 (*holos*) in The Discovery Bible.

["Love your neighbor as yourself" is defined by the *first* (greatest) command. It teaches love is *never self-defined* or *neighbor-defined*. Rather, love is *always* (only) God-defined. See 1 Jn 4:8,16,17.]

The Lord's Prayer in Mt 6:9-13 (the "Our Father") and the two greatest commands in Mk 12:29-31 provide amazing *daily paradigms for prayer (entire consecration)*. They "cover all the bases" (essentials) for *completely surrendering* to God . . . and *what could be better than that?*

### **Grammatical notes on the Lord's Prayer**

The "Our Father" uses seven Greek *imperatives* following "Our Father; the one in the heavens (plural)";

- Must be made different, Your name (i.e. Yahweh);
- *Must arrive* (fully), Your kingdom;
- *Must emerge* (from eternity) Your will (2307/*thelēma*), on the physical earth as it is in heaven (singular)."

[The aorist ("global") imperatives in the *first* half of the Lord's Prayer mean:

Must *entirely* be made different . . .

Must *entirely* arrive (= nothing less suffices) . . .

Must *entirely* emerge . . . ]

The second half of the Lord's Prayer focuses on the "horizontal" aspect of prayer, which likewise uses *aorist imperatives* to convey the action as *holistic* ("entire") and *urgent* ("right now"):

- "*Urgently (completely) give* us our daily bread;
- "*Urgently (completely) forgive* us our debts, as we have also forgiven our debtors;
- "Do not bring us into temptation (testing) *at all*; and
- "*Entirely* deliver us from the (principle of) evil (fruitless *pain*)."