

Quick Backdrop

Bring to mind two or three of your closest friends. Do you remember how you met? Can you remember the first things you talked about? How do those “first things” compare to what you talk about today? It takes time and effort to develop close friendships. But when we do, the conversations are much deeper and more fulfilling than those conversations in the early days of the friendship.

The same is true in our relationship with God: the longer we know Him the deeper our conversations can be. But does this really happen? Probably not the way we’d like it to. And if we’re all quite honest, it might be because we don’t know how to have those deeper conversations with God. We don’t know how to pray.

But, we’re in good company. Jesus’ disciples didn’t either. Thankfully, they asked some key questions about prayer. Jesus’ answers to their questions can change our prayer life forever.

1 Digging In (God, Show Me!)

Before digging in, listen to Jesus’ disciples display their level of understanding about prayer in the Luke passage below.



Luke 11:1 (NIV)

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.”

This next passage is the learning lab Jesus gave as He taught His followers to pray. This model prayer is a great place to start. Over time you will find yourself adapting this model to best fit your personal style. To best interact with these verses you may want to print them or paste them into an e-doc. As you read, underline or highlight each phrase in Jesus’ model prayer. (You may have noticed that the “Lord’s Prayer” shows up twice in the gospels, once in Luke, once in Matthew. We’re using the Matthew version as our model since it gives a little more detail.)



Matthew 6:9-13 (NIV)

⁹“This, then, is how you should pray: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, ¹⁰your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹Give us today our daily bread. ¹²And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’

2 Taking It Inward (God, Teach Me!)

Now let’s go a little deeper, one step at a time, and let God teach us what this model means for our prayer lives.

Look at each phrase you’ve highlighted. Starting with the first one lets work our way through the prayer, noting how we might do this today. Each phrase below has an explanation. Using that explanation, write out how you would pray each phrase in your own words. We did the first one as an example. By the end, you will have a rich, deep personal prayer.

Our Father in heaven,

Starting with the title “Our Father” puts us in our right standing with God. He is the divine Father and we are His children.

Your turn: (Example: *God, you are the authority of my life. I am your child.*)

Hallowed be your name,

“Hallowed” is another word for “praise” as in, “I praise your name.” What words might you use to praise and honor God?

Your turn:

Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

May your kingdom (heaven) grow in my life today. This is a request to become more like Him through our words, actions and thoughts. This is our opportunity to align ourselves with His will.

Your Turn:

Give us today our daily bread.

Bread refers to the nourishment necessary to sustain your life today. What are your basic needs? What does your family need? How do you need Him to provide for you?

Your Turn:

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

We aren’t perfect (that’s why we need Jesus) and because of our imperfection we need His grace. He is faithful to forgive us each time we ask.

Your Turn:

Fold or Cut

Teach Me How to Pray

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Not only does He forgive us, but He also provides us with the strength necessary to avoid the same bad choice again. Where do you need His strength?

Your Turn:

Now, take a minute to write out your entire prayer in an e-doc or on a piece of paper.

3 Seal the Deal (God, Change Me!)

God promises us that when we pray, not only does He hear, but he also works. Read about the power of prayer in these verses.

Matthew 7:7

Matthew 21:22

Mark 11:24

The final step is to keep practicing and not give up. You will be wobbly at first, but eventually you will get the hang of it. The best way to move forward is to be intentional. This means making time for prayer in your daily life. Answer the following questions to figure out how you can best create space to talk with God.

Are you more of a night person or a morning person?

What is your quietest part of your day?

Where would be a good place for you to be alone and without distractions?

Some people write their prayers, some say them out loud, some pray while they are walking or being active. Which way stands out to you?

After answering these questions, what appears to be your best formula for richer prayer? (where, when, how)

Where to go from here:

Start today. Use the prayer you created from Matthew 6 to talk to God each day this week. Change the wording to fit what you are feeling and how you are struggling. Push through the temptation to rush through it and allow the prayer to go deep. Imagine yourself actually sitting face to face talking with God while you pray.

Way to go! You are on your way to deeper, richer conversations with God than when you first met Him.