

Jesus' Teaching on Prayer

Teaching given by Peter Warren at FGPC, April - July 2015

1. Jesus' First Words

Matthew 6. 5-13

Jesus' First Word.

Jesus' first word to his disciples on this subject of prayer, as recorded in this passage is '**when you pray**'. He makes this statement three times in verses 5-7; note Jesus said '*when*' not '*if*'. Jesus expected his disciples to pray, and He expects us to pray too.

He says the same in Mark 11.24

“Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask **when you pray**, believe that you receive *them*, and you will have *them*.”

The apostles also spoke and wrote of the importance, urgency and the command to pray – and this was common practice in the church.

“but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” Acts 6.4

“rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer” Romans 12.12

“praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit...” Ephesians 6.18

“Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving” Colossians 4.2

“pray without ceasing” 1 Thessalonians 5.17

“I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting” 1 Timothy 2.8

“...therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers” 1 Peter 4.7

“These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.” Acts 1.14

“Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church” Acts 12.5

“And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made...” Acts 16.13

Motive of Prayer vs5

We are not to be like the hypocrites – these made a public show of their praying. Their motive was to be seen and heard by men, and to receive the praise of men.

Prayer is not to be seen, heard or for show.

In this study we are talking about personal prayer - there is a place for corporate prayer which is meant to be vocal.

- There is the possibility that when we are together in a church gathering that we might have a wrong motive in praying.
- We must check our heart – are we hoping that others will think we are spiritual or good prayer warriors?

Place of Prayer vs6

Our private personal prayer should be in the secret place.

‘Shut the door’, shut out ALL distractions – people, phone, TV

Purposeful prayer – set time aside, be determined to pray, no distractions, have set petitions.

Language of Prayer vs7-8

We are not to be like the heathen – Here is another admonition from Jesus about our prayers. We are not to be like the hypocrites who wanted to be seen and heard by men. Neither are we to be like the heathen whose prayers were lengthy and repetitive.

Prayer should be simple, not lengthy, non-repetitious, non-rote, and specific.

Jesus condemned the heathen who prayed thinking that they would be heard because of their many words.

Vain repetition.. this is just

- repeating the same prayer
- saying the same phrases
- saying the same words over and over

Jesus hears prayers prayed in faith not because of the many words or the length of prayers.

Being constant in prayer, or praying always does not mean a lengthy prayer.

Jesus told us that we do not need to be like them because the Father knows the things we need, before we even ask Him.

Jesus followed up these statements about the motives of the hypocrites and heathen by giving us a pattern prayer.

Because of Jesus' teaching that we have just seen, I don't believe that this prayer was intended to be a public prayer or to be prayed repetitiously word for word, but rather that it was given to us as a pattern or as guidelines to help us pray.

Jesus says, as He introduces this prayer, that we should pray '*in this manner*'. The Greek word *houtos*, used here means 'in this way'. This is a way to pray not a prayer to pray. What Jesus went on to teach were guidelines or principles to direct us as we pray.

Structure of Prayer vs9-13

Our prayer should include the following:

- Worship and Thanksgiving (vs9)
- Submission to the Lordship of Jesus (vs10) - "thy Reign begin" (Moffatt)
- Revelation of the Will of God (vs10) – through His Word
- Daily Provision of Needs / Petitions (vs11)
- Forgiveness of our sins - Repentance (vs12)
- Forgiving (vs12) – Love, Compassion
- Protection from the enemy (vs13)
- Praise (vs13) – releases faith

In the next part we will look more closely at the teaching of this pattern prayer and draw any practical guidelines from it to help us pray.

2. The Prayer Model - Worship

Matthew 6. 5-13

Because of Jesus' teaching that we studied last time, I don't believe that this prayer was intended to be used as a public prayer or to be prayed repetitiously word for word, but rather that it was given to us as a pattern or as guidelines to help us pray.

Jesus says, as He introduces this prayer, that we should pray '*in this manner*'. The Greek word *houtos*, used here means 'in this way'. This is a way to pray not a prayer to pray, what Jesus went on to teach are guidelines or principles to direct us as we pray. So let us look at these principles:

It is broken down into three main areas

- Worship
- Petition
- Praise

A. Worship and Honour vs9-10

(a) Our Father in Heaven

These first words tell us much more than to whom we should address our prayer and petition. Knowing that God is our Father fills us with total confidence as we pray.

1. When we are born again we are adopted into God's family and God becomes our spiritual Father. Paul wrote in Galatians 4.6 **“And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!”**” The word Abba is in the Scripture but is not normally given any English translation – at the time of Jesus this was what toddlers called their fathers. The nearest word in English we have is Daddy. One of the first things Jesus taught was that we can call God, Abba, our Father, because we have an intimate relationship with Him.

2. Out of that relationship comes confidence and assurance that God will respond to the requests and petitions we bring.

i. we know that our Father is **love**. God is love, He loves us with an unconditional love. Most people have a very distorted image of love – they only love as long as it is reciprocated, or what they call love isn't actually love but lust. Those who are perpetrators, or even victims, of this distorted image can have a low opinion of God as Father, because they don't know love. All of God's dealings with His children are motivated by love

ii. Later in this chapter of Matthew, Jesus teaches that God is a **caring** Father. He cares for the birds of the air and he cares for us much more (Matthew 6.26). When we approach God in prayer, as Peter writes, we can **“cast all our care on Him for He cares for us”** (1 Peter 5.7).

3. *in Heaven*. These two simple words tells us more about God which we would do well to remember as we approach Him in prayer. These two words are used together over 100 times in the Bible and express:

i. His majesty and dominion –

He rules over the nations and over His creation. [2 Chronicles 20.6a](#);

ii. His omnipotence –

His power and might, He is the all powerful God, doing great and mighty things. [2 Chronicles 20.6b](#); [Psalm 115.3](#); [Isaiah 12.6](#)

iii. His omniscience –

All knowing. God's throne is in heaven and He knows all things including the the things we need before we even ask Him. [Psalm 11.4](#); [Psalm 33.13-5](#); [Matthew 6.8](#)

iv. His omnipresence –

The heaven of heavens cannot contain Him. His home is in our hearts. [1 Kings 8.27](#); [John 14.23](#)

v. His purity and holiness –

His habitation is described as a holy habitation. He is holy and inhabits the praises of His people. [Deuteronomy 26.15](#); [Isaiah 57.15](#); [Psalm 22.3](#)

(b) Hallowed be Your Name

When we pray, we bring our prayers and petitions to the Father in the name of Jesus. Jesus Himself said

“And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do *it*.” John 14.13-14

In Bible times a person's name indicated their nature, who they were, and their integrity. God has highly exalted the name of Jesus, He has given Jesus the name which is above every name, His own name (Philippians 2.9-10) – at His name every thing that is named must bow. There is great power in His name – Jesus said that whatever we ask in His name, it will be done.

God exalted (raise up to the highest position) the name of Jesus, and we should too. This is the meaning of the word **hallowed**, literally it means **to make holy or to honour**. “Our Father in heaven, help us to honour your name.” Matthew 6.9 (CEV)

How can we honour or hallow the name of Jesus? By acknowledging who God/Jesus is...

“Give to the LORD the glory *due* His name; Bring an offering, and come before Him. Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness!” 1 Chronicles 16.29

The Bible uses many names to express the nature and character of God. Part of our prayer and worship to God is give the Lord the glory that is due His name.. to worship the holiness of His name.

- **Shalom** - peace, rest, contentment
- **Tsidkenu** – righteousness, perfection
- **Makaddesh** – sanctifier and purifier
- **Rophe** - healer
- **Jireh** – who sees and provides
- **Nissi** – banner, security, captain
- **Roi** – shepherd, companion and friend

and there are many many more....

(c) Your Kingdom Come

“Thy Reign begin” (J. Moffatt)

A kingdom is the domain of a king, the area of his rule and reign. When we pray we submit ourselves to His rule and reign for our lives, to the Lordship of Jesus.

He is Lord – He has the pre-eminence in our lives.

“and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father” Philippians 2.11

1. The Kingdom of God is within Believers

“Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, “The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.” Luke 17.20-21

- i. It is the way that God works. Jesus likened the kingdom of God to a seed – Mark 4.26, 30.

- ii. He works through us so that He gets the glory. [1 Corinthians 1.27-29](#)
- iii. We cannot confess the Lordship of Jesus except by the Holy Spirit. [1 Corinthians 12.3](#)

2. The Kingdom of God has priority over everything else

“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” Matthew 6.33

This is an important point to note, especially as most of our prayers are asking for the things we need. Jesus said that these will be given to us but our first priority is to seek after His kingdom, His rule, and His will for our our lives.

When we submit ourselves to the Lordship of Christ, everything falls into it's rightful place – our families, the things we need, jobs etc

(d) Your Will Be Done On Earth As it is In Heaven

1. God expects us to find out what His will is. How can we do this? - by studying the Scriptures – they are His will. God's will is revealed through His word.
 - “finding out what is acceptable to the Lord... Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” Ephesians 5.10,17
 - “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,” 2 Timothy 3.16
2. God's will must take priority over our own will. It is too easy to pray for the will of God to be done somewhere else. We should submit to His will above our own will.
 - i. Isaiah sought God's will and submitted to it – send me!
 - “Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me."” Isaiah 6.8
 - ii. Jesus submitted to His Father's will.
 - “nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.... Your will be done.” Matthew 26.39-42
 - iii. When we submit ourselves to the Lordship of Jesus, submitting to His will follows easily and naturally.
3. We submit to His will by believing the Word of God and allowing it to renew our thinking.
 - “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” Romans 12.2
4. Jesus' one desire was to please His Father and do His will. He is our example.
 - “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.” John 4.34
5. God's will is always done in Heaven. It would be foolish and blasphemous to say that the will of God isn't accomplished there. God's will abides forever – God's word is His will.
 - “And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.” 1 John 2.7

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away”

Matthew 24.35; Mark 13.31; Luke 21.33

“Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.” James 1.18

- i.* We should pray in line with the word of God, to see God's will done on earth.
- ii.* It goes back to our first point – it's about relationship with our Father.
- iii.* Like Jesus we should desire to do the will of God here on earth.

3. The Prayer Model - Petition

Matthew 6. 5-13

Jesus says, as He introduces this teaching on prayer, that we should pray '*in this manner*'. The Greek word *houtos*, used here means 'in this way'. This is a way to pray not a prayer to pray, what Jesus went on to teach are guidelines or principles to direct us as we pray.

This is held up in the previous verses, which are all part of the same thought, that we are not to be like the Pharisees or heathen who:

- wanted to be seen and recognised by men. This is not the motive of prayer. Jesus said that they had already received their reward – the praise of men.
- Made long prayers, with many words, repetitiously saying words and phrases. Again their motive was wrong, prayer is not heard because we use many words, or continually repeat learnt phrases, or in a begging manner - prayers are heard that flow out of the heart in faith.

This pattern is divided into three main areas:

- i. Worship
- ii. Petition
- iii. Praise & Thanksgiving

B. Petition vs11-13

Before we begin to look at these next few verses of the pattern, let us remind ourselves what Jesus said about the the things we petition God for – our needs and desires.

(v8) “Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him”

Look what Jesus says here – your Father knows what you need before you ask Him. There are two important things to note here:

- the Father knows the things you need.
 - (a) God already knows what you need – He knows better than you. You may think you know what you need but that may not necessarily be the right thing.

- **Acts 3.1-8** this lame man asked for the things that he thought he needed – money to provide for his family's essential needs.
 - God knew that this wasn't his real need. He needed something greater than the money – he needed healing in his body, he needed self worth, he needed the ability to work and provide for his family. He needed the cycle of poverty broken in his life
 - Giving the man what he thought he needed, a few coins, would just perpetuate his need. What he really needed was that poverty spirit broken and the cycle of dependency eradicated.
- (b) He knows the best way to meet those needs.
- Look at the examples in the Gospels, Jesus didn't always meet the needs of people in the same way. e.g. the blind men, some He just spoke the word to them, others He touched their eyes, one He smeared a type of clay on his eyes and told him to wash in the pool.
- before you ask Him
 - (a) Not only does He know what we need and the best way to meet those needs, He knows before we even ask Him.
 - (b) He puts the desires into our hearts so that we ask Him
 - (c) We will not shock God by the things we ask. When we repent of our sins we will not surprise God by the things we confess – He already knows. When we confess our sin is when we get rid of them.
 - (d) So this leaves some asking the question: 'Since God knows the things we need before we ask Him, why ask Him?'

1. Why Ask Him?

If He already knows what we need, why pray?

i) It's a matter of obedience.

There are many Scriptures that tell us to pray. Actually, three times in this chapter (Matthew 6.5-7), Jesus said 'when you pray'. Jesus expected His disciples to pray, this wasn't to be treated as an optional extra.

We also have Scriptures like

“pray without ceasing” 1 Thessalonians 5.17

“be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication let your requests be made known to God” Philippians 4.6

“I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting” 1 Timothy 2.8

“Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray....” James 5.13

“Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them” Mark 11.24

“Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation....” Matthew 26.41

“The harvest truly *is* great, but the labourers *are* few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest” Luke 10.2

We are given instruction to pray, we must keep that command.

ii) It shows that we trust Him

Even though God already knows what we need and doesn't actually need us to tell Him what it is, when we pray and ask Him to meet that need it shows Him that we trust Him as Provider, as El Shaddai – the God who is more than enough to meet those needs.

iii) **God does not respond to need but faith** - believing prayer

There are billions of people right across the world in need today and have you noticed, for most of them, God isn't doing anything about their need. He could wipe out all the need with just one blink of his eyelids. God honours the faith of His people.

“When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” 2 Chronicles 7.13-14

When there was a need, God expected His people to pray and seek His face. The result of that praying would be removal of the need – forgiveness of sin, healing for the land

“And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus”
Philippians 4.19

Many might quote this verse saying that the Bible says “God will supply the need”, and yes He will, but this statement was made by Paul to a church that prayed, gave and acted in faith (vs 14-18). He said that in response to their faith that God would supply all their need.

How do we know that this was an act of faith? The final words of verse 18 says that their act of giving was “well pleasing to God”. We cannot please God without faith:

“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” Hebrews 11.6

We also see in this verse that God rewards those who diligently seek Him – in prayer
When we come to God we must believe that He is (God, Jehovah Jireh, Jehovah Rapha, El Shaddai etc - what you need Him to be) and not only that but you must also believe that He will reward that faith, meet that need when you pray.

“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” Hebrews 4.16

We can come to God boldly and in faith to petition Him to meet any need.

iv) **Give God something to work with**

Do you believe God can do anything?

You hear many people say that God can do anything – to a degree that is true. There are some things that He cannot do – e.g. He cannot tell lies, He cannot break His word, He cannot fail

God is limited! God can do anything within His limitations.

What limitations does God have?

- He will not do anything outside of His Word
- He cannot legally do anything in the earth unless someone gives Him the 'authority'.

John Wesley's statement – *“It seems God is limited by our prayer life – that He can do nothing for humanity unless someone asks Him”*

Let us look at why:

“Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them” Genesis 1.26-27

“What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him? For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honour. You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all *things* under his feet.” Psalm 8.4-6

- Man was God's best creation – created in His image and likeness
- God gave man dominion over all the works of His hands, all things were put under his feet.

But when Adam sinned and fell, he sold out and surrendered authority to the devil who became 'god of this age/world' (2 Corinthians 4.4; John 12.31) and Adam became a slave to sin (John 8.34; Romans 6.16).

Luke 4.5-8

“...All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for *this* has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish...”

Jesus didn't argue with the devil about the 'ownership' of these kingdoms. If the devil didn't truly own them, he couldn't have used them to tempt Jesus

One of the reasons Jesus came was to defeat the devil and restore the authority, but He had to do it legally. God could not just step into earth and defeat the devil – He had to become man in order to do it. A man needed to get that authority back.

Jesus couldn't just be born, God needed His people, the prophets, priests, kings to speak forth the prophetic word, authorising Him. Everything God does is through words – creation, birth of Jesus, our salvation (Romans 10.9)

When Jesus died he descended into the lower parts of the earth, triumphed over the devil, took the keys of death and Hades and was raised to life having won the victory (and authority). (Ephesians 4.8-10; Colossians 2.15; Revelation 1.18)

God did not say that He was going to dominate through man.

Matthew 28.18

“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore....”

When Jesus rose from the dead, having defeated the devil, He gave the authority back to man, His church

Matthew 28.18-20; Mark 16.15-18; Luke 24.45-49; John 20.21-23; Acts 1.4-8;

So we, the church, have been given that dominion and authority – that means that God can't just step in and take over. He needs man to authorise Him – we do that through prayer. We have to give Him something to work with.

“...Yet you do not have because you do not ask” James 4.2

2. For What Are We To Petition God?

“be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication let your requests be made known to God” Philippians 4.6

(a) **Daily Provision of Needs / Petitions** (vs11)

1. This a prayer of dependency. When we pray for God to provide and meet the needs that we have, we are expressing our dependence on Him and not on other external sources. God is our provider, not our jobs, paid work or other people; yes God may use these external sources to meet a need but He is the source.
2. A Prayer for our daily needs. “Give us this day our daily bread”
 - i. In the Scripture that we have just quoted from Philippians, Paul instructed the church not to be anxious about anything. This is a trap we can easily fall into especially when we face needs that can be urgent and pressing. Rather than taking an anxious thought about the need, we bring it God with prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, remembering that He is our provider. This is the stress of this pattern prayer.
 - ii. “Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive *them*, and you will have *them*” Mark 11.24
Jesus taught that when we pray, we should believe that we have received. When we receive something like a gift or similar item, we thank the person that gave it. An act of believing that you have already received is to thank the giver, Jesus – thank Him, as though you already have the answer to the need, even when you still can't see it.
 - iii. Don't worry about tomorrow. At the end of Matthew 6.25-34, Jesus taught a lot about the foolishness of worrying about the things we have need of for daily living – food, drink, clothing. He turns our attention to the birds and flowers and shows us that God provides for them and we are of so much more value to Him than they are.
In the last verse we are told not to worry about tomorrow. Our needs today are sufficient for us to pray and supplicate about.

Consider how God looked after the people of old:

- for forty years God fed His people in the wilderness with bread, meat, and water. They never once went without. He kept their clothing from wearing out (Psalm 105.40-41; Deuteronomy 29.5)
- The prophet Elijah was sustained through the years of drought – God charged the ravens with the task of bringing bread and meat to

him twice a day (1 Kings 17.6)

3. Blessed to be a blessing. We find it easier to pray for our own needs than the needs of others, this is because there is added responsibility placed upon us when we pray. God has blessed us so that we can be a blessing to others. Part of the pattern prayer is to pray 'what can I do to be a blessing?'. James puts it like this "If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,' but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?" James 2.15-16

There is a promise from Jesus in Luke 6.38, "Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you" - this is a divine law, when we give we receive, what we sow we shall reap. A really good way to receive the answer to your need is to be the answer to someone else's need (see also James 5.16 – *middle voice*, i.e. *you yourself*).

(b) **Forgiveness of our sins - Repentance** (vs12)

This part of the pattern, Jesus went on to explain afterwards. It is only through forgiving that we can be forgiven. If we do not forgive then we will not be forgiven (vs14-15)

1. Forgive Us.

- i. Thank God that when we repent of our sins, He forgives us. Notice this is repenting, which is completely different from being sorry. The word repent literally means 'to turn around and go in the opposite direction'.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" 1 John 1.9

- ii. Sin in our heart will hinder our prayers from being heard and answered. "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save; nor is ear heavy that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear" Isaiah 59.1-2

"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear" Psalm 66.18

Sin separates us from God, it causes a barrier in our fellowship with Him – it causes Him to hide His face from us. If we have sinned then we can be assured that God is greater and can forgive us. We need to be forgiven of sin so that we can have confidence in Him when we ask Him about the petitions we want to receive from Him.

"For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn, we have confidence toward God. And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." 1 John 3.20-22

2. Forgiving Others (vs12, 14-15)

"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive

you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” Matthew 6.14-15

Hand in glove with receiving forgiveness of our sin is that we also forgive those who have sinned against us. God has forgiven us loads, how can we then not forgive someone who has sinned against us.

- i. Being able to forgive others is a demonstration of the love and compassion of Christ working through us.

“And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you” Ephesians 4.32

- ii. Unforgiveness is sin. For some people, forgiving others seems to be an impossible mountain to climb. But the Bible teaches us that to be unforgiving or to hold grudges against another is sin itself. We cannot be forgiven if we refuse to forgive others their wrongs against us. This is the key part of this verse in the pattern prayer

We forgive as Christ forgave us – He forgives us as we forgive others.

Remember, it's with the same measure that we use that God gives to us (Luke 6.38)

- iii. How often should we forgive?

A question that is raised often is that of someone who continually wrongs you. How often should you forgive them? Peter asked this question of Jesus: “...Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” Matthew 18.21

Not just seven times, but seventy times seven! This does not mean that if a brother sins 491 times then he cannot be forgiven. This was to show the love and compassion that we are to show - indefinitely. How many times have we sinned against God? Has He ever refused to forgive us because it was just too many times?

Look what Jesus called the unforgiving man – *wicked* (vs32)

(c) **Protection from the enemy** (vs13)

The last petition that we are instructed to bring in our prayer is to do with protection from the enemy.

1. Lead us not into temptation.

Let us get one thing straight first – God does not tempt us. It is not a sin to be tempted – Jesus Himself was tempted. It becomes sin the moment we yield and give in to it.

So what can we learn from this statement in the pattern prayer.

“No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it” 1 Corinthians 10.13

- i. Everyone is tempted. No one escapes temptation, it is common to man. The enemy only ever uses three temptations – these are the same three that he used against Jesus in the wilderness (Matthew 4.1-11; Luke 4.1-13)

“For all that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and

[the pride of life – is not of the Father but is of the world](#)” 1 John 2.16

- ii. God does not desert us. When we are tempted God does not desert us, turn His back on us or let us down. He is faithful – He is at our side
 - iii. God knows our limitations. He promises that we will never be tempted beyond the power that He gives us. He does not allow us to be tempted beyond what we can bear.
 - iv. We need to pray before, during and after. When we are tempted we should pray. He helps us and gives us the way out of temptation so we must go to Him for that help.
2. Deliver us from the evil one

Let us remind ourselves that God does not tempt us.

- The devil tempts us in order to knock us down.
- God tests us in order to build us up

[“Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone”](#) James 1.13

- i. Christians face a spiritual battle every day. The devil wants to defeat us through temptation. So we pray for deliverance and protection so that we can overcome the temptation.
- ii. How can we overcome temptation?
 1. With the Bible. When Jesus faced temptation, He used the Scriptures against the devil. It is important to read, study and memorise the Word. [“Your word I have hidden in my heart that I might not sin against You”](#) Psalm 119.11
 2. Being humble before God. It is when we think that we are fine and doing well and cannot fall that we are at the most risk. [“Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall”](#) I Corinthians 10.12
 3. Watch and Pray. At one of the most crucial moments in the life of Jesus and the disciples, He told them to be alert and pray. [“...He said to them, 'Pray that you may not enter into temptation'.”](#) Luke 22.40

4. The Prayer Model – Thanksgiving & Praise

Matthew 6. 5-13

Having looked at the first two sections of the model prayer: this pattern, these guidelines to direct us we pray. We now turn our focus to the last section.

We have seen that part of our praying is to focus on God. We worship Him because He is our Father, we have an intimate relationship with Him. We worship Him because His name is holy. This gives us confidence so we can come boldly to Him, in Jesus' name, and bring our petitions to Him and receive the answer to our prayers.

As a follow on from what we have already studied we can now look at the final section of this pattern. We have already touched on it:

C. Thanksgiving and Praise vs13b

“For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen” Matthew 6.13b

The usual response at the close of prayers, according to *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible* was “**Blessed be the name of the glory of his kingdom, for ever and ever.**” This ascribes praise and thanksgiving to God for His power and glory manifested through the kingdom of God.

It is right and proper that we give thanks when we pray – it is Scriptural. The Psalms are great examples of this. Many of them begin with the psalmists in deep trouble, wondering whether God would bring them out. Then they turn to God and bring their petitions to Him, trusting Him. These psalms then end with a song of thanksgiving and praise (e.g. Psalms 3; 13; 28; 31; 52; 60)

The Scripture says:

“be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God...” Philippians 4.6

“Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving” Colossians 4.2

“pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” 1 Thessalonians 5.17-18

1. Thanksgiving Strengthens our Faith in God.

a) Jesus commended the Samaritan man who said 'thank-you'.

Luke 17.11-19

“Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. (12) Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. (13) And they lifted up *their* voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" (14) So when He saw *them*, He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. (15) And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, (16) and fell down on *his* face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. (17) So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where *are* the nine? (18) Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?" (19) And He said to him, "Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well.””

- Ten lepers were cleansed of leprosy

- As they went, they were healed. I believe this shows us that when we pray and bring our petitions to God, He expects us to act in faith. They were not cleansed as they stood in front of Jesus – it was their act of going (to the priest) in obedience to Jesus' words, that brought them their healing.
- Only one came back to Jesus to give God praise and thanksgiving. The other nine went on their way.
- Jesus connected the giving of thanks with faith in God.

When we give thanks and praise we are proclaiming that we trust and believe Him. Our praise and thanksgiving is an act of our faith.

(b) Thanksgiving Takes Possession.

When we receive a present from (or give one to) somebody it is customary and polite to say thank you to that person. Thank you means that you have taken possession of the gift, even if you do not yet have it in your hand.

Example: Let's say I wrote you a cheque for €1000 and telephoned you to say that I have this money in my hand for you and I will be sending it to you today. Even though you don't yet have the cheque in your hand you still say thank-you, believing that I am true to my word and will send it to you. You may even begin to spend the money because you trust my word. You take possession of the gift when you say thanks.

“So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive *them*, and you will have *them*.” Mark 11.22-24

When we pray, how can we believe that we have already received? By being thankful. This is the principle of this verse – thanksgiving takes possession.

2. Yours Is The Kingdom, Power and Glory

This is a fitting way to finish a prayer:

Our prayers are addressed to our Father, in Jesus name. He is the source of all that we have and need. He is the only God, our El-Shaddai, Jehovah Jireh.

Jude captures this in the closing benediction of his letter:

“To God our Saviour, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen” Jude 1.25

His is the glory, the power, the majesty and dominion. He is worthy to receive all the glory and power.

“You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honour and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.” Revelation 4.11

(a) The kingdom - His kingdom lasts forever. This was foretold through the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 9.7). When we approach God as Father, we also come to Him as King. We do not need a royal appointment, nor an invitation, for we are family. We have access to the throne of God through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” Hebrews 4.16

(b) The power - He is the King and He upholds all things by the word of His power (Hebrews 1.3).

His power keeps us and provides for all that we need,

“who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” 1 Peter 1.5

“as His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,” 2 Peter 1.3

“Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of *this* calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of *His* goodness and the work of faith with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.” 2 Thessalonians 1.11-12

(c) The glory - this is the Greek word *doxa* and is also used as 'praise, honour and worship'. He deserves the praise for all that He does for us, and will do for us. God blesses us so that He gets the glory.

Amen – This word means '*faithful, surely, truly*' and often ascribed as '*so be it*' and has the implication of consenting to the words of the prayer so as to make them our own. The word itself implies a confident resting of the heart in God, with the fullest assurance that all these petitions shall be fulfilled.

Some scholars suppose the word Amen is formed from the initial letters of **אדוני מלך נאמן** *adoni melech neetnan*, 'My Lord, the faithful King'.

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