



*Teach Us
To Pray*

Enjoying Extended Time Alone With God

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The Heart of Prayer

Where is the first prayer in the Bible?

In a class taught at Regent College entitled Jesus and Prayer, Eugene Peterson asked that question then had his class turn to Genesis 3:9-21. Prayer is interacting with God. This is the first verbal exchange recorded.

He then goes on to ask two more questions.

Who Speaks First?

This reveals a key truth: Prayer always begins with God. Anytime we pray it is a response to the Lord. How do we know this? Because we are told in Romans 3:11 "There is no one who seeks after God." Instead, God is always seeking after us. In Revelations 3:20 God lets us see him at the door knocking waiting patiently for us to hear his voice and open the door so we can enjoy relationship with Him.

Throughout the Bible we see God communicating in a variety of ways: a hand writing on the wall, through his prophets, through a saturated fleece, in a burning bush, even through a donkey. God is an incredible communicator. I expect when we get to heaven we are going to be amazed at all the efforts God made throughout our lives to communicate with us.

Recently I was flying with a friend. As we started to descend I asked her a question but she didn't respond. When I tapped her on the shoulder she looked at me in surprise and exclaimed, "I can't hear you, my ears are full." Does that ever illustrate our problem. How many times do we not hear God because our ears are full?

What a difference it could make if we ask for his help, starting our day by requesting, "Would you please help me hear you today? Would you please help me be alert when you are communicating with me?"

I remember Jean Fleming once sharing, "I can find Jesus in any book." Why? Because she's listening. When my husband and I watch movies I often ask, "Jesus would you let me hear whatever you want to say to me through this?" And I am blown away at how He loves to answer that request.

Prayer always begins with God and one of the best ways we see this is through the gift of His Word. One of my favorite ways to pray is with my Bible open, responding to what I'm reading. Long-time Navigator Staff Barbara Jabbour shared with me once how for the past few decades she has met with a friend weekly to pray through the Bible. When we spoke they had already prayed through the entire Bible once and were on their second time through. Reading a verse together and then using that to launch into talking with God, responding to what He is communicating through His Word. My weekly prayer partner and I do this too. It is such a beautiful way to interact with the Lord!

Eugene Peterson reminded his class, prayer is not about HOW we pray, but about WHO we are praying to. What a gift this is.

Picture showing up to a date with a list of things to talk about and focusing on the list more than the person you are interacting with. How would that feel both for the list talker as well as the listener?

If we focus on the how it's so easy to slip into using God or seeking to manipulate Him rather than enjoying relating with Him.

Don't forget God is the one who has made himself available to us 24/7. He is the one who invites us to interact with him. Not just once but all throughout scripture! (A few examples: Jeremiah 33:3, Matthew 7:7, John 15:7, John 16:24. Matthew 11:28-30, Romans 8:26, Hebrews 4:16, 1 John 5:14-15, Revelation 3:20)

When we wander, He is the one who comes looking for us, taking the initiative to relate. In Romans 8:26 we're even told the Holy Spirit helps us when we don't know what to pray!

Look back at Genesis 3. How do Adam and Eve respond to God?

The blame game is happening in full force. They get it all wrong. But here's the beautiful thing, God still provides what they need. This passage ends with the Lord clothing them, covering their shame and then protecting them from living forever without him.

Prayer is not a formula but interacting with the lover of your soul.

As Eugene Peterson shares, "Get the "who" right, and the how takes care of itself." Does this ever tie in with our memory verse for this week: John 15:7

What thoughts come to mind as after reading this? Share them in the box below with Jesus as you commit your time to Him this week.

What Prayer Is & Isn't

(read the following underlining anything that stands out to you)

1. *Prayer is not informing God, but interacting with Him*

In Psalm 139 we're told, "Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O Lord." Since God knows everything, even what we're going to say before we say it, then why should we pray?

Quite simply, because prayer is not about informing God, but about interacting with Him.

Communication is vital for relationship. When I ask my husband about his day, I'm not simply asking him to recount a list of facts regarding what he did, I'm desiring to share his life. Even if I already know the facts from someone else, I love to hear his take on it.

Prayer is how we share life with God. It is all about communicating with Him to interact with Him. It's not like an intelligence officer reporting to a general to inform him so he knows what to do. Instead, it is an opportunity to grow closer to the Almighty, all-knowing God of the universe, and in the process become more like Him.

2. *Prayer is not about trying to change God's mind, but about aligning my heart with His*

As we communicate with each other there is also tremendous opportunity for growth. This is why we become like the people we spend the most time with. Prayer is how we spend time with God - and in the process do we ever have an opportunity to be transformed.

I've heard it estimated that the Bible records 288 questions Jesus asks. How many of those do you think He knew the answer to?

And in the book of Job when God responds, the majority of what He says are questions - and you better believe He alone knows the answers to them. So why does God ask questions?

When we communicate so much more is going on than transmission of information. As we dialogue, our thinking is impacted - especially when we dialogue with people who are good listeners and questioners. In the process, we learn to think and have the opportunity to gain a greater and broader perspective.

Consider Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane. He was about to be plunged into a nightmare of injustice and abuse where He would endure the cup of God's wrath on our behalf. And He, God Himself, chose to spend the time before praying. Do you remember what He prayed? "Lord if you are willing take this cup from me." Do you remember what He concluded? "Yet not my will but yours be done."

Prayer helps us see our circumstances from God's perspective (which according to Isaiah 55:8-9 is not the perspective we normally have!) - especially when we pray with thanks as instructed in Philippians 4:6-7 and it prepares us to surrender to His good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:2)

3. Prayer is not about me doing all the talking, but involves listening too!

God gives us a wonderful invitation in Jeremiah 33:3, "Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and hidden things you do not know." And again in Isaiah 55:2, "Listen, listen to me and eat what is good and your soul will delight in the richest of fare."

Prayer is about communicating - and that's a two-way street. Don't forget to take time to listen. This is a vital part of prayer!

One of my favorite ways to pray occurs as I read through God's Word. I listen to what He says, then respond with whatever comes to mind after I read each paragraph. It is amazing how much what I'm reading relates to what's happening in my life and the lives of others around me!

I also find I listen best with pen in hand. I will ask God a question and then write out the thoughts that come to mind - time after time I am blown away at what I've written down, knowing that didn't come from me!

But remember when we read scripture we know with certainty it is the Word of God (check out 2 Peter 1:21). But there are many voices that speak to us - so we need to test and approve what we "hear" to be certain where it's coming from - it's vital we compare this with what is written in God's Word and can it ever help to get feedback from others!

4. Prayer is not trying to get God to do something He doesn't want to do, but joining in with His purposes

God is good. All He does is good. And we are told in Psalm 84:12 "No good thing does He withhold from those whose walk is blameless."

Did you catch that? If something is good, you can count on God to do it. You don't have to convince Him!

So why Pray?

Prayer helps us experience God more.

Every single day God is at work in my life in so many ways providing for me and protecting me. When we get to heaven I expect we're going to be blown away to see how much more active He was in caring for us and sustaining us than we ever imagined.

When we ask it helps us experience Him more. The more aware we are of our needs, the more alert we are to see Him in action providing for them - and the more thankful we become as we see Him respond!

Whenever I meet with a woman and we memorize God's promise of John 16:24, "Until now you've asked nothing in my name, ask and you will receive and your joy will be complete" I encourage her to draw two columns on a sheet of paper, then take time that week writing down in the left column everything she asks God for and then in the right column record how the Lord answers her prayers.

Without fail it never ceases to amaze both of us the joy that is added to our lives. We become even more aware of how much the Lord is at work as we do this.

Because God always responds!

Granted, it may not always be the way we want Him to. Take a closer look at John 16:24 "Until now you've not asked for anything in my name, ask and you will receive and your joy will be complete." Does it say, "Ask and you will receive what you ask for?" No. It says "Ask and you will receive" and what you receive will make your joy complete.

According to James 1:17, every good and perfect gift comes from above. God is a giver of good gifts. But have you ever wanted something you thought was good, only to learn later it wasn't? Do you want God to give you something if it isn't good?

Good news - He won't. But according to John 16:24 when you ask you will receive something. And because God is good and only does what's good, that something will be good. You can bank on it.

So when you ask, you never lose out! You never come away empty-handed. You may not get what you ask for, but you will get something good.

It's like if my son came to me at 5 pm and asked for a candy bar. Well, that's the last thing he needs right before dinner. But what's behind his request? He's hungry - a signal his body needs nourishment. If dinner isn't going to be ready for a bit, while I'm not going to give him a candy bar, I will give him a healthy snack - and he will be better off because of it.

That may seem a silly and trite example, but the principle is true. I remember one of my friends shared how in college she was in a relationship with this Christian guy who seemed great but God laid it on her heart to break up with him. It was hard, but she did. Years later she was watching the news and up pops his face in a mug shot. He'd been arrested for murdering his wife!

Things are not always what they seem. And remember God knows the future. That's why I love that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us when we don't know what to pray. I may not always pray for the right things - but God has made provision for this. I don't need to be afraid of praying the wrong thing.

So pray, pray, pray! God will respond when you do. But only with what is good.

Prayer is one key way God invites us to join in with what He's doing.

One of the most important things I ever do for anyone is to pray for them. I believe this with all my heart. Does God need me to do work in someone's life? No. But He chooses to involve me so I can have a front-row seat seeing Him in action and as I experience Him more, do I ever grow closer to Him and to those I'm praying for.

Prayer is not an optional suggestion, but a vital command

God never gives us commands to make us jump through hoops. Instead, His commands are designed as boundaries to keep us where abundant life is. That doesn't mean life will be easy - Jesus said, "In this world you will have trouble." But there will be peace, joy, love... all that makes for experiencing this life to the full.

Prayer is not a duty, but a precious gift

Can you waltz in and see the President of the United States today? No Way. You need to make arrangements weeks in advance and even if you do manage to get an appointment it's going to be a short one. But the Almighty God of the universe has made Himself available to us day and night 24/7. How incredible is that?

I love the Old Testament! Does it ever help me appreciate all Jesus has made available to us. Especially as I study the way people worshipped back then. Do you know only the High Priest was allowed to enter God's presence in the Holy of Holies? And he was only allowed to do that once a year. And when he did they tied a rope around his leg so they could pull him out in case he was struck dead because of impurity.

Yet because of Jesus, we can approach God's throne of grace at any time, anywhere with full confidence. This is an unbelievable privilege. One God encourages us to avail ourselves of "without ceasing." Do you hear that?

God wants to interact with you all day, every day. That's how much He loves you. That's how much He desires relationship with you. He doesn't only want you to show up and tell him about your day, He wants you to actively walk through it with Him, interacting with Him and enjoying His presence every moment of it.

You are desired! You are invited! You are delighted in! How incredible is that? This is why I love praying!

But truth be told, every once in a while I hit a dry spell. I may still be showing up but not sure what to say. Well, do you know how they have those packs of questions you can use with your friends? The ones that get you asking things you'd never think to ask on your own?

That's the way I view books that contain other people's prayers. I find it can be so helpful to get the conversation going by reading what they pray. On some days this provides the jump start I need to get me going. One of my favorites is Ruth Myers' 31 Days of Praise - can praying through that book ever change your life. Because as you pray with Ruth through her book, it really can change your perspective in a beautiful way. It sure did mine!

Other favorites are The Valley of Vision, Every Moment Holy, and David's Crown by Malcolm Guite. However, my favorite prayer prompts are the Scriptures themselves!

Did you know an entire book of the Bible (and the longest book at that!) is really a compilation of prayers? Pray your way through the book of Psalms and I guarantee you will be blown away at what you learn about prayer.

Truly the best way to grow in prayer is by diving in and doing it! May the Lord richly bless the time you spend enjoying Him as you share your life with Him.

The Prayer Hand

There are many different ways to pray. In this booklet we will explore some of them. But one tool I've found helpful is The Navigator Prayer Hand.

There are many different ways to do each "finger" but this is a great way to remember the five main categories of prayer.

Sometimes it can be easy to get stuck just using one finger instead of the full repertoire the Lord's blessed us with.

When Jesus' disciples asked Him how to pray, he responded:

Pray then like this:
"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day 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 evil.
Matthew 6:9-13

He gave them a model for praying which is often referred to as the Lord's prayer.

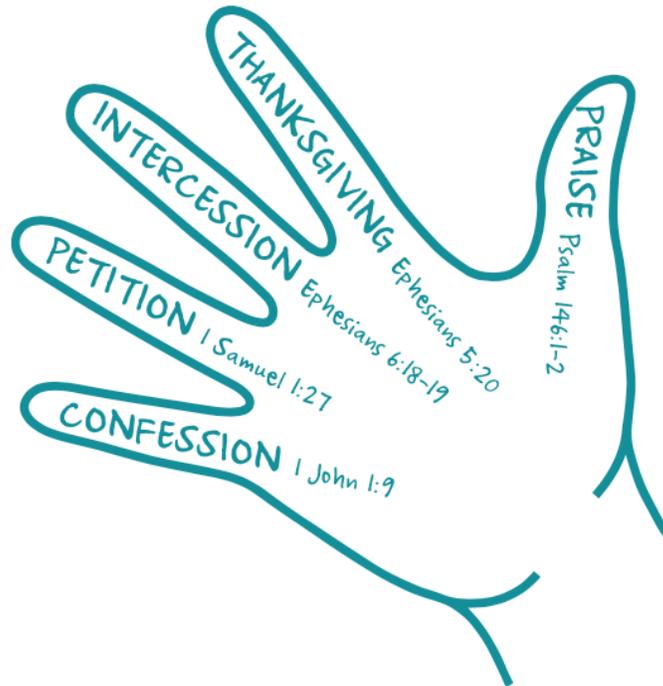
This booklet provides an opportunity to explore this model in depth while





Navigators Discipleship Tool

Many believers find extended time in prayer is a difficult spiritual discipline. Here's an easy way to remember five essential aspects of prayer. Pray through each of these five aspects, remembering that prayer is really about aligning our hearts with God's, and as the fifth aspect explains below, praises to God should permeate every part.



THE PRAYER HAND

① CONFESSION

I agree with God about my sin.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."
1 John 1:9

② PETITION

I ask God to provide for my needs.

"I prayed for this child, and the Lord has granted me what I asked of him."
1 Samuel 1:27

③ INTERCESSION

I ask God to provide for the needs of others.

"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel..."
Ephesians 6:18-19

④ THANKSGIVING

I thank God for what He has done in, through, and for me. I thank Him for His answers to prayers in the lives of those around me and for His ongoing work across the nation and the world.

"...always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."
Ephesians 5:20

⑤ PRAISE

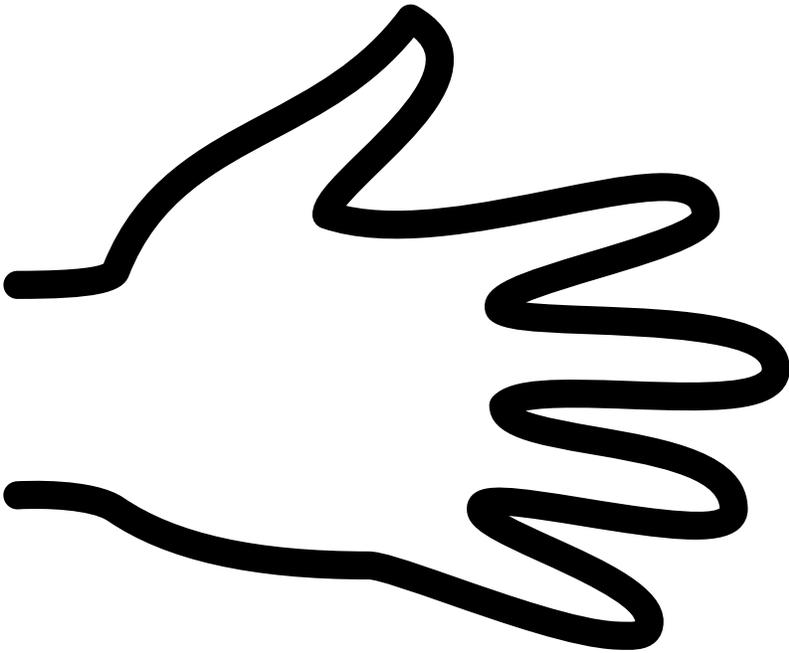
I let my enjoyment and adoration of God overflow into words. As the thumb is able to touch all four other fingers, so praise should permeate every part of my prayer life.

"Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord, my soul. I will praise the Lord all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live."
Psalm 146:1-2

Making Connections

Take a moment to identify each part of the Prayer Hand below and consider, how does the prayer hand relate to the model prayer Jesus gave?

Connect each phrase from Jesus' model prayer to the related "finger."



Pray then like this:
"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day 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 evil.
Matthew 6:9-13

What do you observe as you do this?

Is anything "missing?"

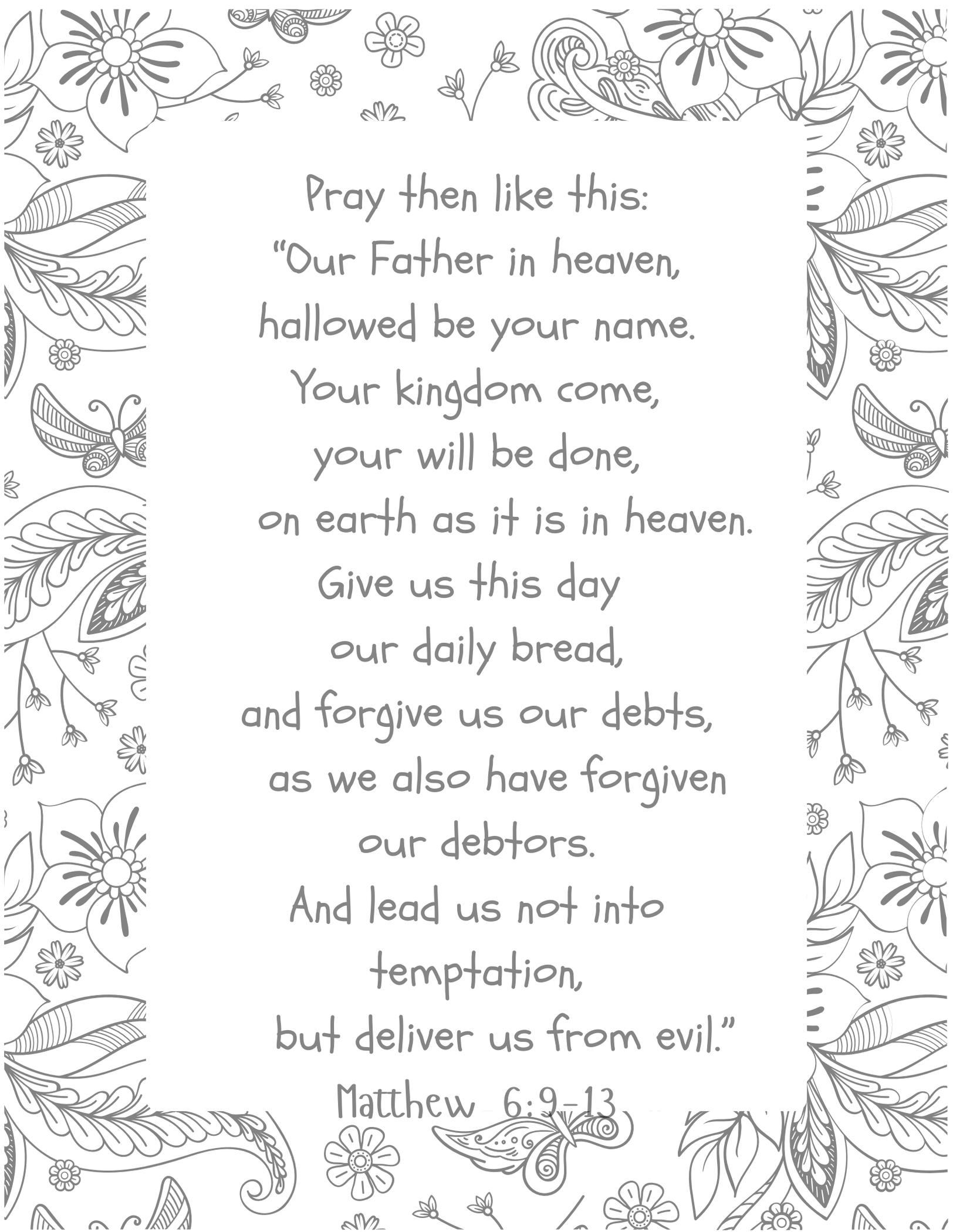
How might it not be missing? (consider 1 Thessalonians 5:18a)

What difference can it make in your life to pray as Jesus taught?

Creatively Process

Look back over the portions from the preceding pages you highlighted. What do you sense the Lord is saying to you through this? In the space below have fun either through doing Word Art or sketching a summary picture to capture that treasure so you can remember it and not forget.

Then share your thoughts with Jesus as you creatively meditate, outlining the flowers and/or coloring them, on the model prayer He gave on the next page.



Pray then like this:
"Our Father in heaven,
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Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day
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and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven
our debtors.
And lead us not into
temptation,
but deliver us from evil."

Matthew 6:9-13

1: Our Father. In Heaven..

(Remember Who God Is)

After my son was born there were a series of murders in Gainesville. For three days we awoke to another dead body brutally murdered. The entire town was gripped in fear. We lived in a house on the outskirts of Gainesville surrounded by woods. My husband was a sales rep who had to travel overnight for his job.

My first night alone with my new son I awoke in the middle of the night hearing noises and immediately started praying, "Oh Jesus, I just heard a noise! Is that someone breaking in? Oh Jesus, I have no idea what I should do! Please protect us! Please help! Oh Jesus, there's another noise and it's sounding closer..." As I was praying I was getting more and more panicky, more and more stressed. "Where is that peace you promise, God? I am not feeling that at all!"

Then the Lord reminded me in Philippians 4:6-7 it says, "With thanksgiving let your requests be made known". And I realized praying about the problem only made me more anxious, but as soon as I started thanking the Lord - not for the problem but for who he is, that was when peace came.

When I find I am struggling either with a scary situation or not knowing what to do it can be so easy to obsess on the problem as I pray. So one of my favorite ways to pray is to use a one page sheet created by former Navigator staff Drake Mariani called 100 Descriptions of God. When I pray with thanks for who God is, peace comes because I am remembering what He has revealed about Himself. Drake lists these characteristics in alphabetical order and I learned from him when I am tempted to focus on the problem instead to pray my way through the alphabet, praising and thanking God for who He is.

“Thank you God you are available to hear my cry for help. Thank you God you are big, bigger than anything else, even bigger than my fear. Thank you God you care about me and are here to comfort me....”

Then comes peace.

When Jesus’ disciples came to him and asked him to teach them how to pray, do you remember how He started? Focusing on who he was talking to, “Our father in heaven...”

Take time today to focus on who God is, praising Him through the alphabet. See if you can come up with something for each of the 27 letters in our alphabet.

Fun fact: The idea of praying through the alphabet isn’t a new one. In the longest psalm in the Bible, Psalm 119, this is exactly what the psalmist did - praised God starting with each letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

In case you get stuck I’ve included a copy of Drake Mariani’s handout. I love to print this out, fold it in quarters and take it with me as I walk and pray. I will also often print out a second copy to give to people I am meeting with one on one so we can walk and pray through this together.

It really is powerful what happens to our prayer life when we focus on the WHO and not the HOW!

Praising & Thanking God Through The Alphabet

Available, Accepting, Author, Afflictor,
Almighty, Ancient of Days, Alpha &
Omega, Awesome!

Beautiful, Blessed, Beginning, Builder

Caring, Caller, Chooser, Close,
Comforter, Creator, Compassionate,
Counselor, Celebrator

Delighter, Defender, Deliverer, Diligent,
Director, Discipler, Drawer

Emmanuel, Eternal, Exalted, Encourager,
End, Everlasting, Example

Father, Finisher, Faithful, Forgiving,
Fisherman

Generous. Gentle, Giving, Glorious, God,
Good, Gracious, Great

Holy, Hope, Humble, Healer, Higher,

I am, Innocent, Intercessor,

Jealous, Jehovah, Judge, Justifier, Joy
Bringer

Keeper, Kind, King

Light, Love, Leader, Lord, Lamb, Loyal

Mediator, Miracle-worker, Messiah,
Merciful, Maker, Most High, Marvelous

Never leaves, Noticer, Nocturnal (never
sleeps), Name above all Names,

Omnipresent, Only True God, Owner,
Omniscient, Omnipotent,

Persevering, Physician, Patient,
Powerful, Promiser, Purifier, Peace,
Planner, Priest, Purposeful, Potter

Quieter (He Quiets Us With His Love),
Quintessential

Rock, Refuge, Resurrection, Redeemer,
Rich, Rewarder, Reviver, Righteous,
Refreshing, Rest

Savior, Sanctifier, Servant, Shield,
Sovereign, Shepherd, Sympathetic,
Stronghold,

Truth, Transformer, Teacher, Triumphant,
Trustworthy, Timeless,

Understanding, Unfailing, Unmockable,
Unchangeable, Upright, Unequaled

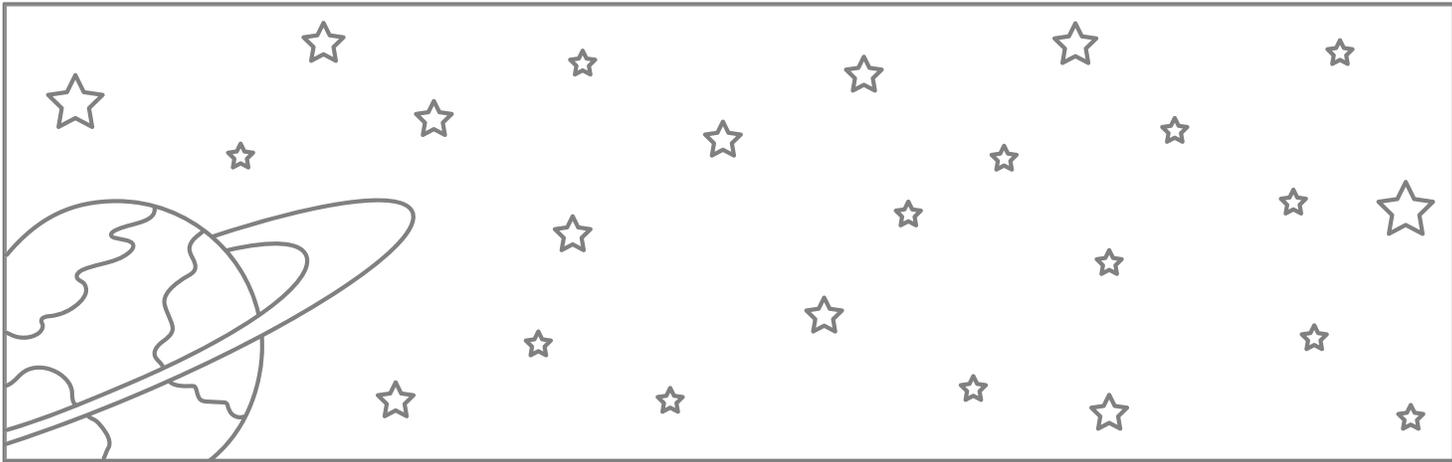
Victorious, Vine

Warrior, Waymaker, Wise, Way,
Wonderful, Word, Worthy

eXcellent, eXciting, eXalted,
eXtraordinary

Yearning

Zealous, Zenith



Pray then like this:

⁶⁶Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,

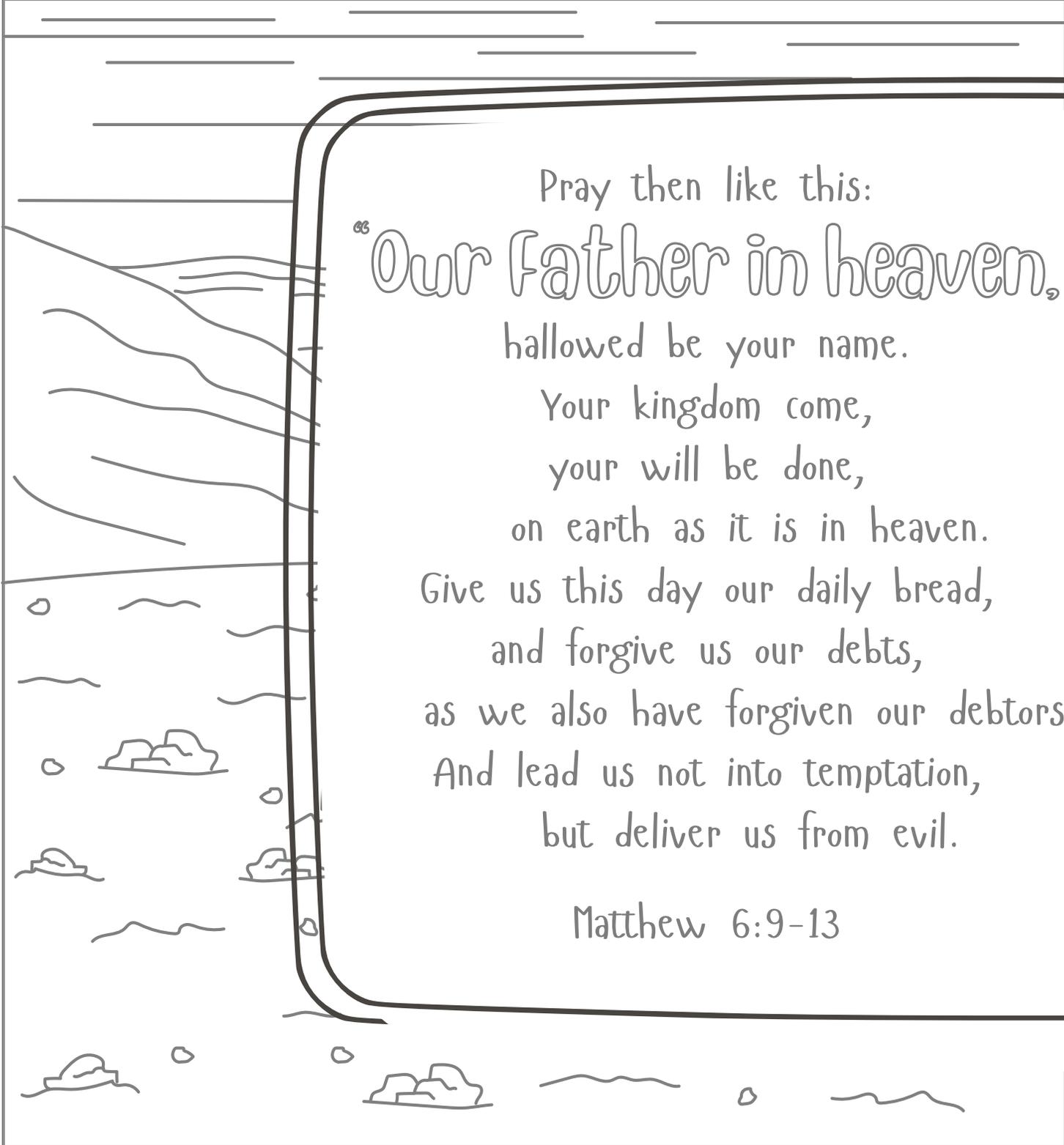
and forgive us our debts,

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

Matthew 6:9-13



2: Holy Is your Name

(Honor God As Holy)

After addressing the Father Jesus prays, “Holy is your name.”

What does this mean? To set apart, above all others.

It really helped me wrap my brain around this remembering in Genesis when the Tower of Babel was being built it began with people declaring, “Let us make a name for ourselves.” Sadly it can be so easy to fall into doing this, even with spiritual things.

In this prayer, Jesus is declaring the opposite, like the psalmist In Psalm 115:1, “Not to us oh Lord, but to your name be glory.”

Now Jesus isn’t just giving the disciples a prayer to pray but he prefaces his prayer with, “In this manner you should pray.” So what can it look like to pray in this manner?

This past year as I was preparing to teach on A Heart That Worships I discovered the Hebrew word for worship literally means to have one’s forehead on the ground and I thought, I haven’t really done that before.

Now we can pray at any time in any position but what a difference posture can make! As I knelt down with my forehead on the ground I began to pray, “I am... you are...” taking time to consider how God is different from me. What a powerful exercise this in.

I am of the earth	You are God Most High
I don’t rise very far from the ground	You are the Great King over all the earth
I can do some things	You can do all things
Apart from you I can do nothing	Nothing is too difficult for you!
I know in part	You know everything
I can be in one place	You are everywhere all the time
I see the outside of people	You see their hearts
I am like grass, here for only a brief time	You are eternal, from everlasting to everlasting you are God
I am finite	You are infinite!

Every time I do this I think of new things to add. It helps me remember how the Lord is different and set apart from me. Can this ever be humbling to consider and help me not be tempted to touch His glory. I now often do this before I get up to speak. But it also helps me remember my limits which motivates me to depend more on God and stop trying to be God. While I can join in with what God is doing, I am not the Savior!

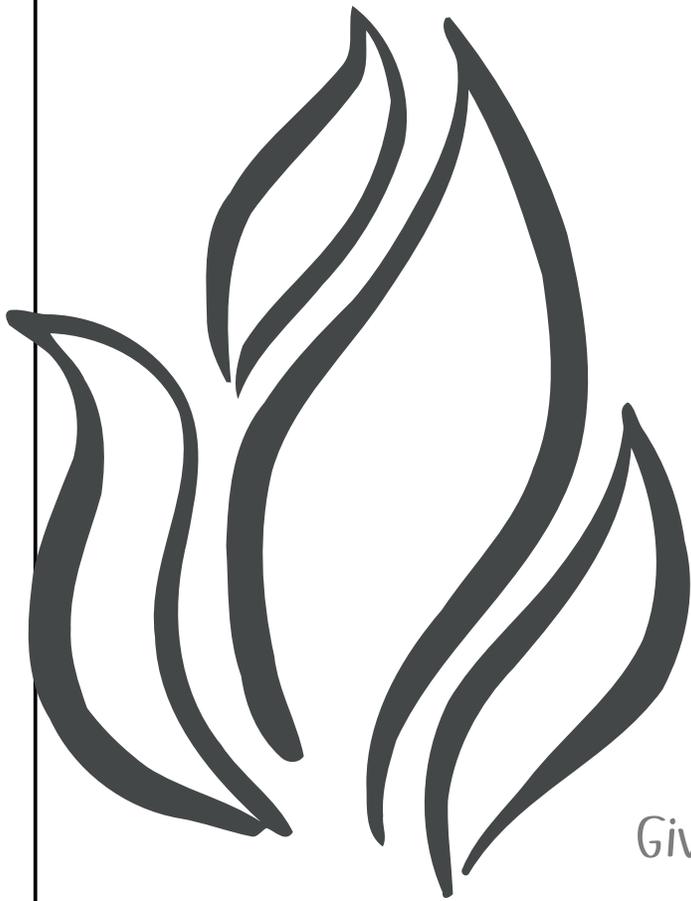
Today I encourage you to give this a try. What difference can your physical posture before God make? How is God set apart from you?

What else helps you to honor God as holy?

I am...	You are...
I am limited in what I can see	You are able to see everything. Nothing is hidden from you.
I am able to do some things	You are able to do all things
I am present in one place	You are present everywhere
I don't rise far from the ground	You are the High King of Heaven
I am able to know in part	You are omniscient, you know everything
Apart from you I can do nothing	Nothing is impossible for you.
I have a limited perspective	Your thoughts are as high as the heavens above the earth.
I am finite, I have limits	You are infinite

What else would you add to this?

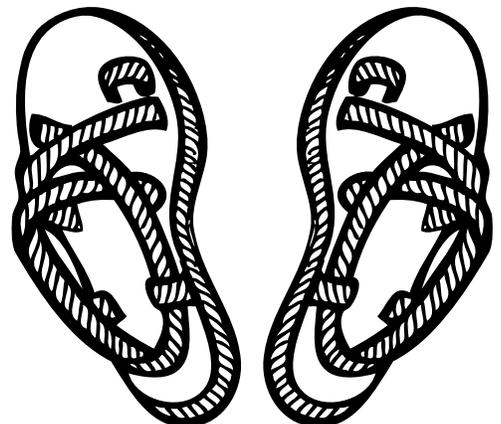




Pray then like this:
“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be
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Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

Matthew 6:9-13



3. Your Kingdom Come

“Prayer is not so much something we do as something we are.

In fact, prayer is not leaving oneself, but coming to oneself.”

- Pete Scazzero

Do you remember how the first man was created? Yes, he was formed from the dust of the earth but he didn't come alive until God breathed into His nostrils the breath of life.

God breathed in and then Adam breathed out.

God could've filled him up like a balloon but God didn't. Instead, God's first breath got the process going and to live is to breathe in and out.

What is the meaning of breath? It serves as a visible reminder I need something outside myself to live.

That's not only true for oxygen!

How many breaths do you take each day?

In truth it varies from person to person as well as from day to day. But unless asked to count them we have no idea. God has created us so that our breaths usually occur automatically. We don't have to think to breathe because our breathing is controlled by our autonomic nervous system.

Just as we were created to breathe for life, so we were created to interact with God for life. For Adam and Eve this came naturally. But when the Fall happened it's like that autonomic nervous system was destroyed. Ever since prayer, relating to God has been fraught with difficulty because now we have to think to do it. Even worse, as soon as our sin nature kicked in, we started thinking for ourselves, depending on ourselves rather than God.

In short, we kicked God off the throne of our lives and plopped down there ourselves. We like to be in the driver seat. We are used to calling the shots.

Entering into a relationship with Jesus has restored our connection to God, but we are so use to living without him that there needs to be a conscious choice, even more a conscious surrender to do so. And I need to change, I need to be transformed for this to take place. I'm not only praying for his Kingdom to come through me but in me.

When we pray Your Kingdom come we are acknowledging God's reign and inviting Him to reign in our lives.

Basically I am praying God whatever it takes I want to live my life with you on the throne and not myself. That requires major heart surgery. When I pray this I am surrendering the story of my life to the Lord to let Him write it however He wants. Inviting Him to fill in the blanks of what He does and doesn't want me doing no matter what.

I will never forget the first time I heard the following song by Brenton Brown:

Over all the earth you reign on high
Every mountain stream, every sunset sky
But my one request, Lord my only aim
Is that you'd reign in me again

Lord, reign in me, reign in Your power
Over all my dreams, in my darkest hour
You are the Lord of all I am
So won't you reign in me again

Over every thought, over every word
May my life' reflect the beauty of my Lord
Cause you mean more to me
Than any earthly thing
So won't you reign in me again

This song was played by a fellow campus minister during church. After the service I raced up to him and asked to get a copy of the lyrics.

Soon after, this person's house burned to the ground. He got mad at God, left the ministry, left the church. It can be so hard when God as King writes the story of our lives in ways we don't want it to go. In the middle of our stories it can be hard to fathom how He can love us and let so much hardship and heartbreak occur.

That next summer my husband and I were asked to serve at a Summer training program and were told it would be family friendly so we eagerly packed our bags and headed to Colorado with our 12 year old son anticipating a fun summer.

When we arrived we learned the program was understaffed and we were both needed to serve as team leaders plus each work an additional ten hours a week doing other jobs and there were no other kids our son's age. We had to tag team all summer so one of us was able to be with him and on our one day off we got mountain bikes to adventure with him. It was a summer of no rest and by the time it ended we were a wreck.

On one of the last days of the program as I spent time alone with the Lord, I sensed him say, "You are here because I love you."

Seriously?

It sure didn't feel like love!

But God was at work. As a result of being so depleted my husband was finally diagnosed with Clinical Depression - something he'd struggled with for years but we never knew what it was and then he experienced deep healing. Eventually this proved one of the best things for our marriage as we both grew a ton through our recovery.

God makes it clear in Isaiah 55:11-12, His ways are not our ways. In fact as high as the heavens are above the earth that's how different his ways are than ours.

It can be so easy for our prayers to become all about asking God to make life easy. But when we pray "Your Kingdom come" we are asking God, "Do radical surgery in me so I will die to myself and let you reign. We were never meant to sit on the throne of our lives.

This is not a prayer to take lightly. When you pray it, be ready. God loves to take you up on this request... and bless you with abundance of life in return (though it may not initially feel like it!).

What does praying Your Kingdom come look like for you?
Share your heart below with God.

Pray Through A Song

Of course, this is also a prayer for God's kingdom to come on the earth as Bob Kauflin's song Let Your Kingdom Come so wonderfully expresses. Take a few moments to listen, sing and pray through this song:

Record below any thoughts that came to mind
as you were singing this song as a prayer to Jesus:

Pray then like this:
"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come,

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

Give us this day 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 evil.

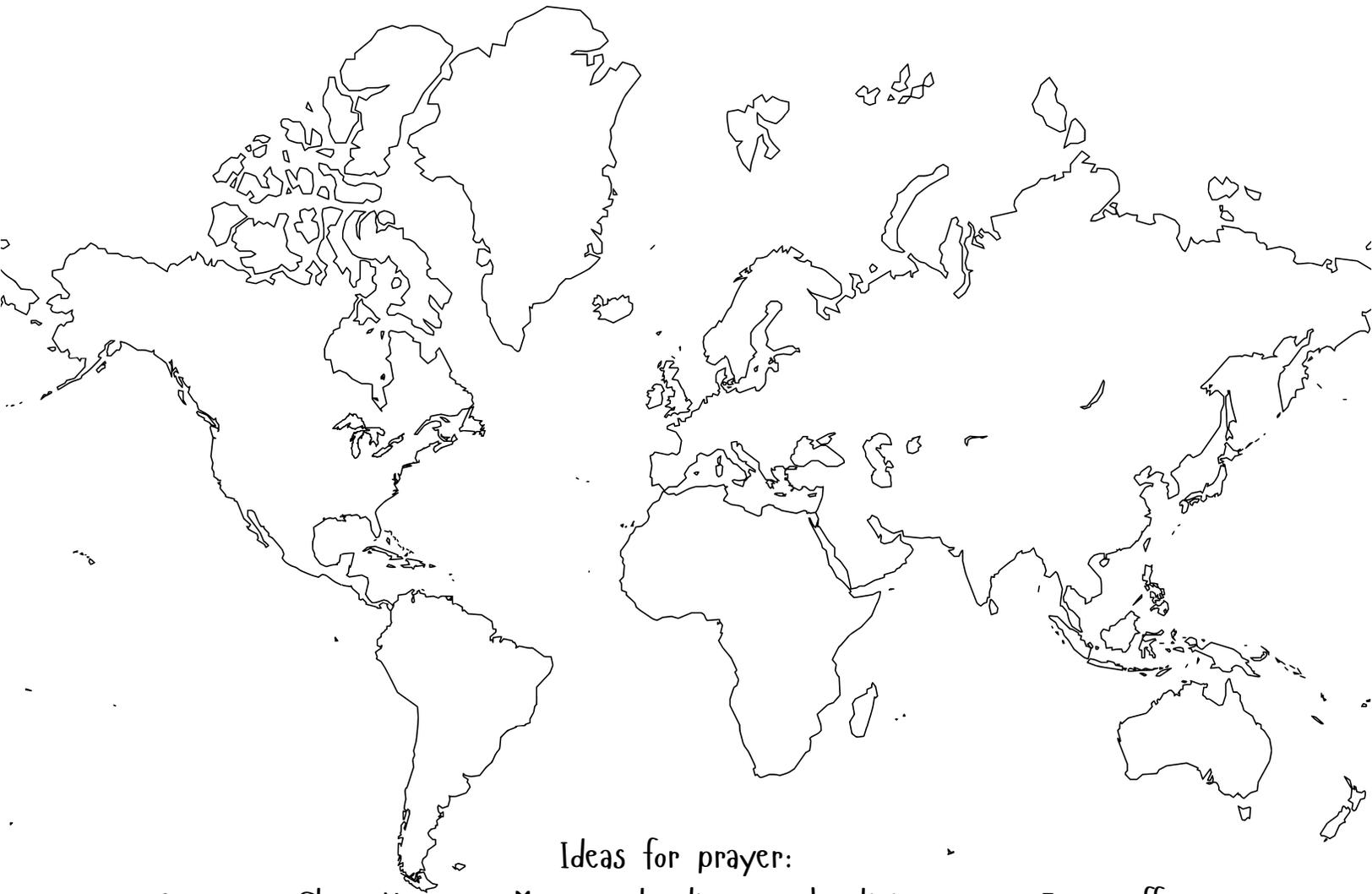
Matthew 6:9-13



Intercession

This past summer I was asked to share about prayer at a Vacation Bible School. I asked the Lord for wisdom to know how to make prayer come to life for these children and He gave an idea that radically changed my prayer life!

Since God is everywhere and sees everything and is all powerful I can literally put my finger on a map and start praying for the people who live there and make a difference on the other side of the world! How incredible is that? It's not an original idea. Dawson Trotman used to get up at 5 in the morning and do this with the men he met with and that was the start of The Navigator Worldwide ministry! You can also color as you pray!



Ideas for prayer:

Access to Clean Water - May people discover the living water Jesus offers

Food to Eat - that people will also be well nourished by God's Word

Wars to cease - people to discover true peace in Jesus

Safety from violence - Protection for believers who live in closed countries

Fair Wages paid - God's mercy so people don't get what they deserve

4. Your Will Be Done

In his class Jesus and Prayer Eugene Peterson shared, "All too often prayer is better summed up "Not your will, but mine be done."

It's so easy for prayer to become about getting my will done, telling God what I think He should do.

Instead Jesus taught his followers to pray, "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." This is a prayer of surrender as well as invitation. God write my story however you see fit. I surrender my hopes, my preferences, my dreams, my very life, indeed all that is most dear to me, to you knowing that Jesus has said, "In this world you will have trouble." But also that it is through that very trouble we have the greatest opportunities to experience Him and grow, becoming more like Him.

When I wake each morning, I love to start the day stating, "I wonder how I will experience your love today?" Of course I'm thinking what wonderful delights may come my way. But I'm discovering Jesus' love doesn't just come in happy feel good moments. Many times it's in the midst of the most heart shattering pain as I realize He is there, comforting me and bringing a peace that passes all understanding.

We never know what a day may hold.
But there is purpose in all God allows.

Tom Paterson was one of the most gifted process engineers. He holds the patent for ATM machines, Camcorders (the first hand held video recorders), and even designed Space Mountain for Disney World! When China decided to embrace capitalism they contacted Ronald Reagan asking for help making the transition and President Reagan contacted Tom Paterson.

But when he was at the top of his field his 12 year old daughter got brain cancer then died, another son stopped on a rainy day to help change the tire for a woman stuck on the side of the road, was hit by a car and died, then a third son's bi-plane flipped and he died, then his first wife got breast cancer and she died. His story unfolded like a modern day Job.

At first he responded by drinking and became an alcoholic, but after he hit rock bottom the Lord got a hold of his life. After he surrendered to Jesus he asked the Lord, "All these years I've been using the gifts you've given me for myself, is there something you want me to do for you?"

He sensed the Lord reply, "So many of my children have no idea why I created them. I want you to come up with a process that can help them identify the unique purpose I have for their lives and help them learn how to be intentional to live it out for the rest of their days." And He did. Thousands of lives (including mine!) have been forever impacted because he did.

What are the best plans you can come up with for your life?
Record them below:

That's nothing compared to what Jesus can do with your life, if you will surrender it all to Him. Do you believe this? Why or why not?

The Call To Surrender



When God asks you to give something up. Do you see Him as a taker or as a giver? Why?

How does Psalm 84:11-12 relate to this?

For the Lord God is a sun and shield. The Lord bestows favor and honor. No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly. Oh Lord Almighty, blessed is the one who trusts in you.

Ponder With Jesus

39 And he came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. 40 And when he came to the place, he said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." 41 And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, 42 saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." 43 And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. 44 And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.[g] 45 And when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow, 46 and he said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation."

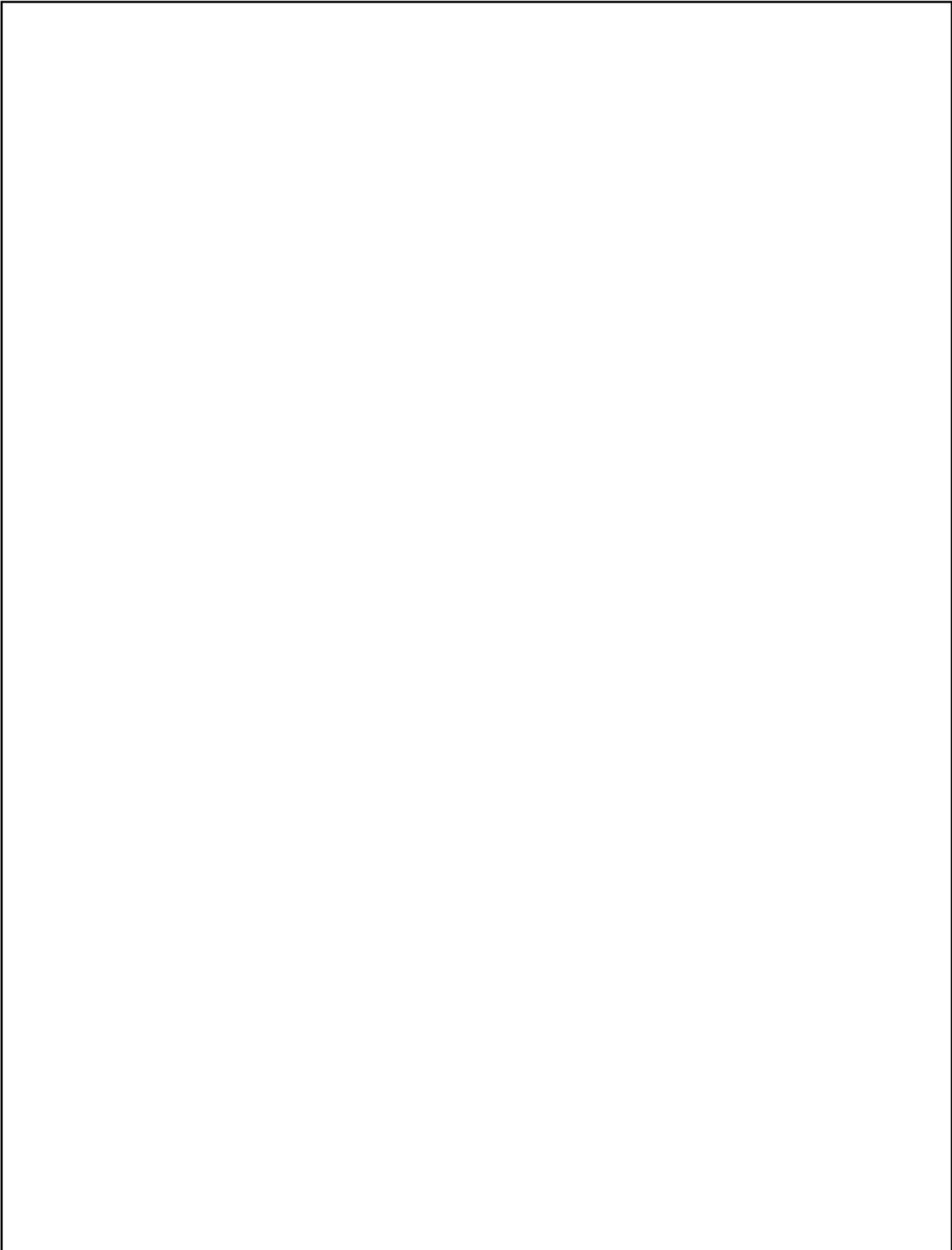
47 While he was still speaking, there came a crowd, and the man called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He drew near to Jesus to kiss him, 48 but Jesus said to him, "Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" 49 And when those who were around him saw what would follow, they said, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" 50 And one of them struck the servant[h] of the high priest and cut off his right ear. 51 But Jesus said, "No more of this!" And he touched his ear and healed him. 52 Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders, who had come out against him, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs? 53 When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness."

LOOK

LISTEN:

LIVE IT OUT:

LET IT LAST:



Pray then like this:
“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come,

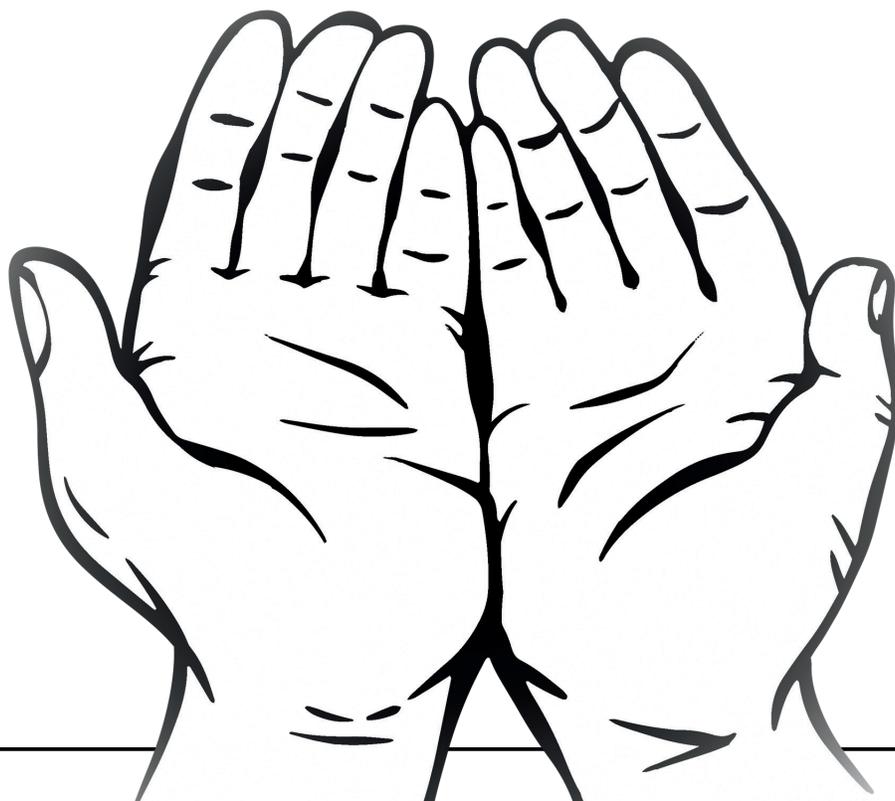
your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day 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 evil.

Matthew 6:9-13



5. Give Us Our Daily Bread

Here is where reading in context can help. Take a moment to read Luke 11:1-13 and underline anything that stands out to you.

Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him,

“Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.”

2 And he said to them, “When you pray, say:

“Father, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.

Give us each day our daily bread,

and forgive us our sins,

for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us.

And lead us not into temptation.”

5 And he said to them, “Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves, 6 for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; 7 and he will answer from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything’? 8 I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs. 9 And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. 11 What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; 12 or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? 13 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

How do verses 5 through 13 relate to "Give us this day our daily bread?"

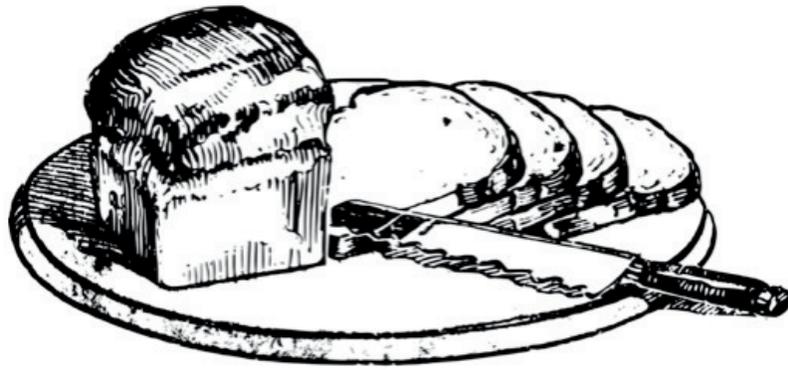
What do you learn about God from this passage?

Take a moment to share with Him your thoughts on this.

Why do you think Jesus includes this as part of his teaching?

What does it look like for you to ask God for your daily bread?

What needs are you currently facing? Share them with the Lord.

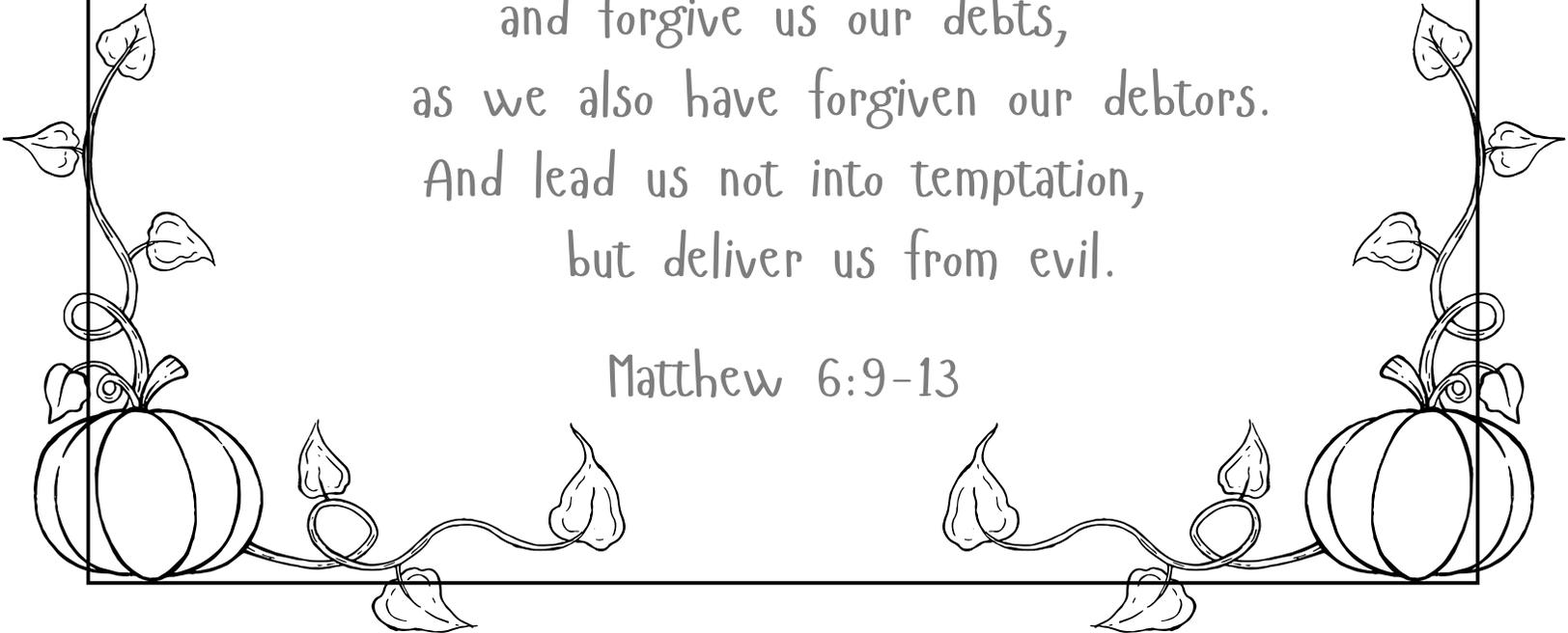


Pray then like this:
“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day
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 evil.

Matthew 6:9-13



6. And Forgive Us Our Debts As We Forgive Our Debtors

Why do you think Jesus considered this an important part of prayer?

In Matthew's account of Jesus teaching this prayer to his disciples, he follows the Lord's prayer with this:

For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your father forgive your trespasses. Matthew 6:14-15

Then twelve chapters later Matthew records Jesus sharing the following parable:

21 Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?"

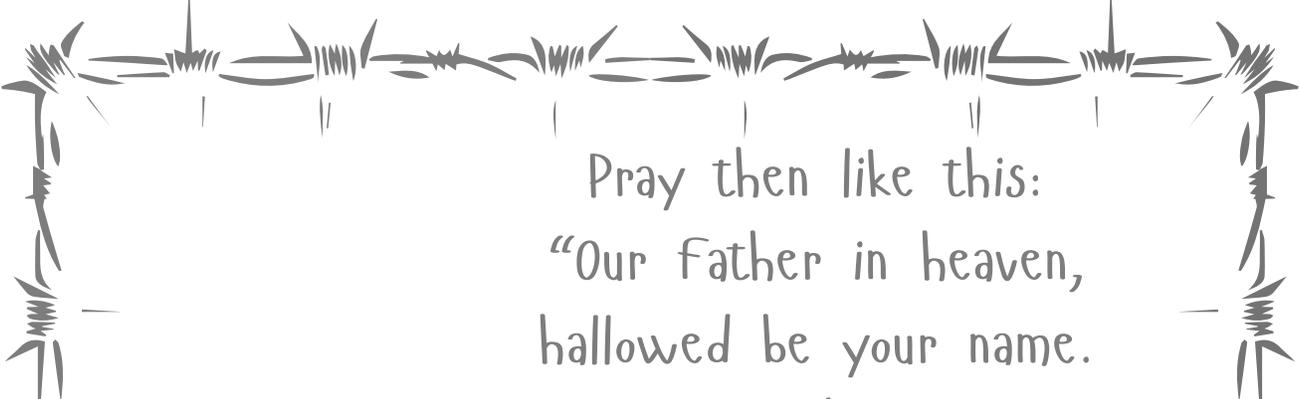
22 Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times. 23 "Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. 24 When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. 25 And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. 26 So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.'



27 And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. 28 But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, 'Pay what you owe.' 29 So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' 30 He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. 31 When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. 32 Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. 33 And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' 34 And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. 35 So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart." Matthew 18: 21-35

How might praying to ask God to forgive us as we forgive others help to keep Christ at the center of your life?

How might having Christ at the center of your life help you forgive others?



Pray then like this:
“Our father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.

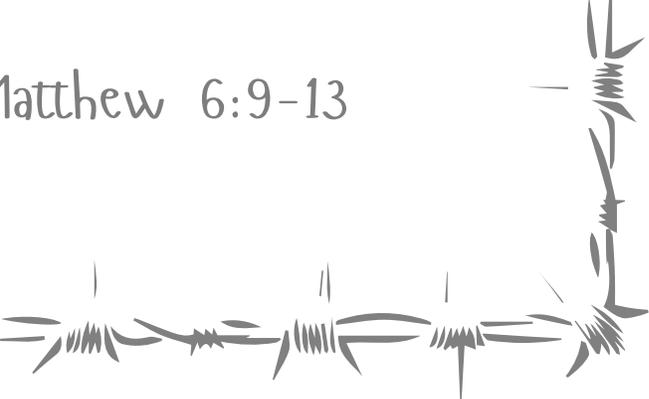
Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day
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 evil.

Matthew 6:9-13



Is There Someone You Need To Forgive?

As the great, great, great, great granddaughter of a pirate, I come from a rough background. Johnny Depp aside, being a pirate was a rough life ~ and my ancestor passed down an inheritance not of buried treasure but alcoholism, abuse and adultery. To this day, when you play the Ungame with my dad, every childhood memory is a terrible one. After years of alcoholism and verbal abuse his father was unfaithful and his parents divorced when my dad was sixteen.

My mother's dad was also an alcoholic, repeatedly unfaithful to her mom and after she divorced him, he committed suicide. That happened when my mom was thirteen.

When my parents met they both agreed they'd experienced too much pain from divorce and they agreed never to do that. So they entered into marriage and committed to staying married. But by the time I was eight, they were realizing why so many people divorce. Their marriage was on the rocks.

But God intervened. My dad was invited to a weekend conference where he heard the gospel, accepted Jesus as his Savior, and began to follow Him. A month later my mom followed my dad into the kingdom.

Did that ever help their marriage! And they continued on, even though there was still a lot of baggage they were carrying and did it ever impact the way they related.

But then eighteen years ago they met a counselor named John Regier. He'd been a pastor and for twenty years got down on his knees and prayed James 1:5. "Oh Lord, just preaching at your people doesn't seem to help much. Would you please give me wisdom to know how to really help your children?"

After meeting with him there was such a radical change in the way my parents related - I wanted to hear more!

Now John Regier has a video series entitled, "Rekindling Marital Intimacy." As I was looking through the videos I noticed one on bitterness and I passed right over it thinking, "I'm a happy person. I don't need that one."

I was just going to listen to the first message but somehow the tape just happened to be at the start of the bitterness message - I didn't discover this until I was a way into it so I continued to listen.

On that tape, John said, "You know bitterness has taken root in your heart whenever you recall something and feel the pain as if it just happened."

Wait! There were instances in my past where that was certainly true. For example, it always was painful for me to attend weddings, especially to watch the new bride and groom dance that first dance (my husband grumbled in my ear during our entire first dance at our wedding) - did John Regier ever have my attention!

I learned in our culture we don't understand forgiveness. And yet, living in a broken world, with a sin nature inside that's still very much alive and kicking - it is vital we know how to forgive. And what a difference it makes when we do!

So one morning, after getting up at 4 am to see a friend to the airport, I decided to dive in and began working through John Regier's bitterness worksheets.

First, he has you describe the painful memory.
Then there is a list of emotional pain words.

Abandoned / Accused / Alone / Angry / Anxious / Apathetic / Ashamed /
Attacked / Bad / Belittled / Bitter / Blamed / Cheap / Controlled / Deceived /
Defeated / Defenseless / Defrauded / Degraded / Destroyed / Devalued / Dirty /
Disgusted / Disrespected / Don't Belong / Dominated / Embarrassed / Empty /
Exposed / Failure / Fearful / Foolish / Frustrated / Hated Hurt / Inadequate /
Indecent / Inferior / Insecure / Insensitive to my needs / Insignificant / Lied to
Lonely / Manipulated / Mindless / Misunderstood / Neglected / Not cherished /
Overwhelmed / Pressure to perform / Rejected / Repulsed / Revenge / Ruined /
Sad / Scared / Secluded / Stressed / Suffocated / Suicidal / Taken advantage of /
Torn apart / Trapped / Trash / Ugly / Unaccepted / Unclean / Unfit / Unfairly
treated / Unlovable / Unloved / Unprotected / Unsafe / Unsympathetic / Unwanted
/ Wasted / Wicked / Worthless / Wounded / Wrongly judged / Violated /
Vulnerable

This list is pure gold! Many of us have limited vocabularies for describing our emotions. Does it ever help to have a list before you! Then he has you circle 3-5 which describe how a certain situation made you feel.

Then you pray through a simple prayer to forgive the person not only for what he did but also for how it made you feel. This is so key!

“Lord, I choose to forgive _____ for
_____ causing me to feel _____ and I am willing to pay for
the emotional
pain and consequences that has caused me. I ask You Lord Jesus, to take back the
ground I gave to the enemy through my bitterness and I yield that ground
to Your control.”

Ever said “I forgive you” and then struggled afterwards wondering if you’d really done it? This is because forgiveness isn’t just a matter of words. And it certainly doesn’t come naturally to us to do it.

We need Jesus’ help! And we need to realize in every single incident there are two things that must be addressed - what happened and how it made you feel. That’s why it’s so important for you to take time to identify how something made you feel - so you can forgive the person specifically for this.

I spent the entire day writing down painful memories (it’s amazing how many you can accrue in nearly two decades of marriage!), then identifying how they made me feel and then praying to forgive Jim for what he did and how it made me feel. And by six o’clock that night - while I could still remember the memories of what happened - THERE WAS NO MORE PAIN!!!

Things that had brought me pain every single time I’d think of them for sixteen years I could now recall and the pain was completely gone! It was amazing! I felt like a 50 lb weight had been taken off my back!

And you know, I didn’t even realize until after it was gone, how much that “weight” had been influencing my relationship with Jim!

In truth, it hasn’t just helped my marriage, it’s even helped with my son, too. And even in relationships with people I work with. I cannot recommend doing this highly enough.

If you have someone you need to forgive you can find a booklet describing in detail how to do this in the Heart of Discipling Women Library under the tools in Collection 2.

Fun fact: My parents have now been married 62 years! What a mighty God we serve!

Forgiveness Worksheet

Painful Memory:

How It Made Me feel:

Pray to forgive:

7. And Lead Us Not Into Temptation, But Deliver Us From Evil

As we come to the end of this week, we come to the final portion of the prayer Jesus taught his disciples as a model. Why do you think Jesus ends with “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil?”

How does James 1:12-15 relate to this?

12 Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. 13 Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. 14 But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. 15 Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

Now read Matthew 4:1. What stands out to you as you consider this?

NOTE: ESV Study Notes: Matt. 6:13 lead us not into temptation. In this sixth and final petition, “temptation” can also indicate testing (see notes on 4:1; James 1:13). The sense here most likely is, “Allow us to be spared circumstances that would tempt us to sin” (compare Matt. 26:41). deliver us from evil. The Greek word translated “evil” can mean either “evil” or “the evil one,” namely, Satan.

Read Matthew 4:1-11, Then read Hebrews 2:18.
Why do you think Jesus might have included this in the prayer model he taught the disciples?

Here are some comments on this from John Piper:

God does not do the tempting—he does not put evil desires in our hearts (for he can have no evil desires in his heart)—but he does bring us into the presence of many tests and temptations. “A man’s steps are from the Lord” (Proverbs 20:24).

In fact, every step we take is a step into the presence of temptation. There is no moment of your life that is not a moment of temptation—a moment when unbelief and disobedience is not a possibility.

The Lord’s prayer does not teach us to pray against that kind of sovereign guidance.

What it teaches us to pray is that the temptation does not take us in. Don’t lead me into temptation. Deliver me from this evil that is set before me.

Today I will stand before innumerable temptations. That’s what life is: endless choices between belief and unbelief, obedience and disobedience. But, O mighty God, forbid that I would yield. Hold me back from stepping inside the temptation.

SOURCE: <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/does-god-lead-us-into-temptation>

What thoughts come to mind as you consider this?

So what are you asking the Lord to do when you pray "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil?"

How can that help to keep Christ at the Center of your life?

What temptations do you struggle with? Share your struggles with the Lord and ask for His protection from them and from the enemy who seeks to rob, kill and destroy.

Pray then like this:
“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

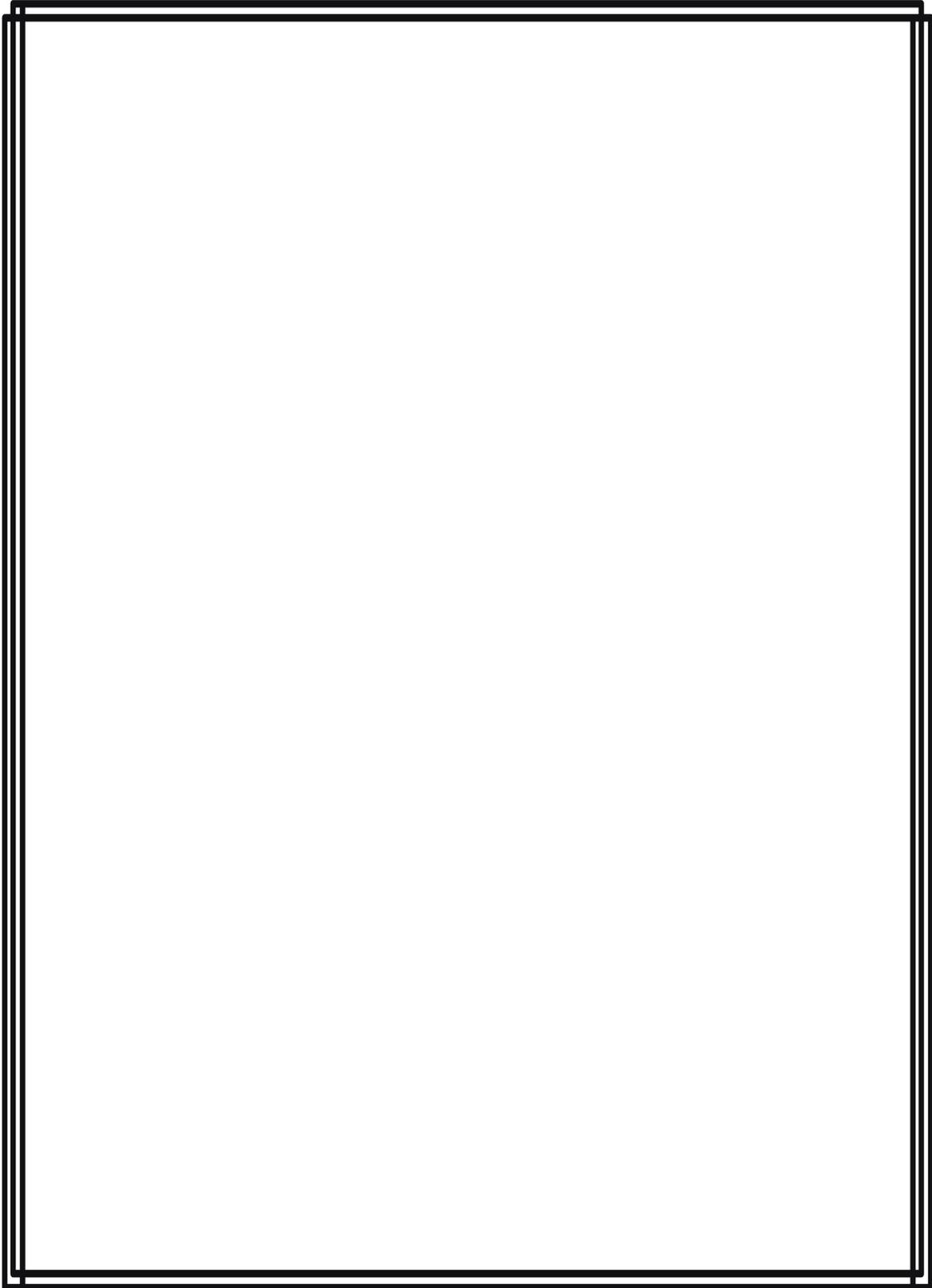
Give us this day
our daily bread,
and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
*And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.*

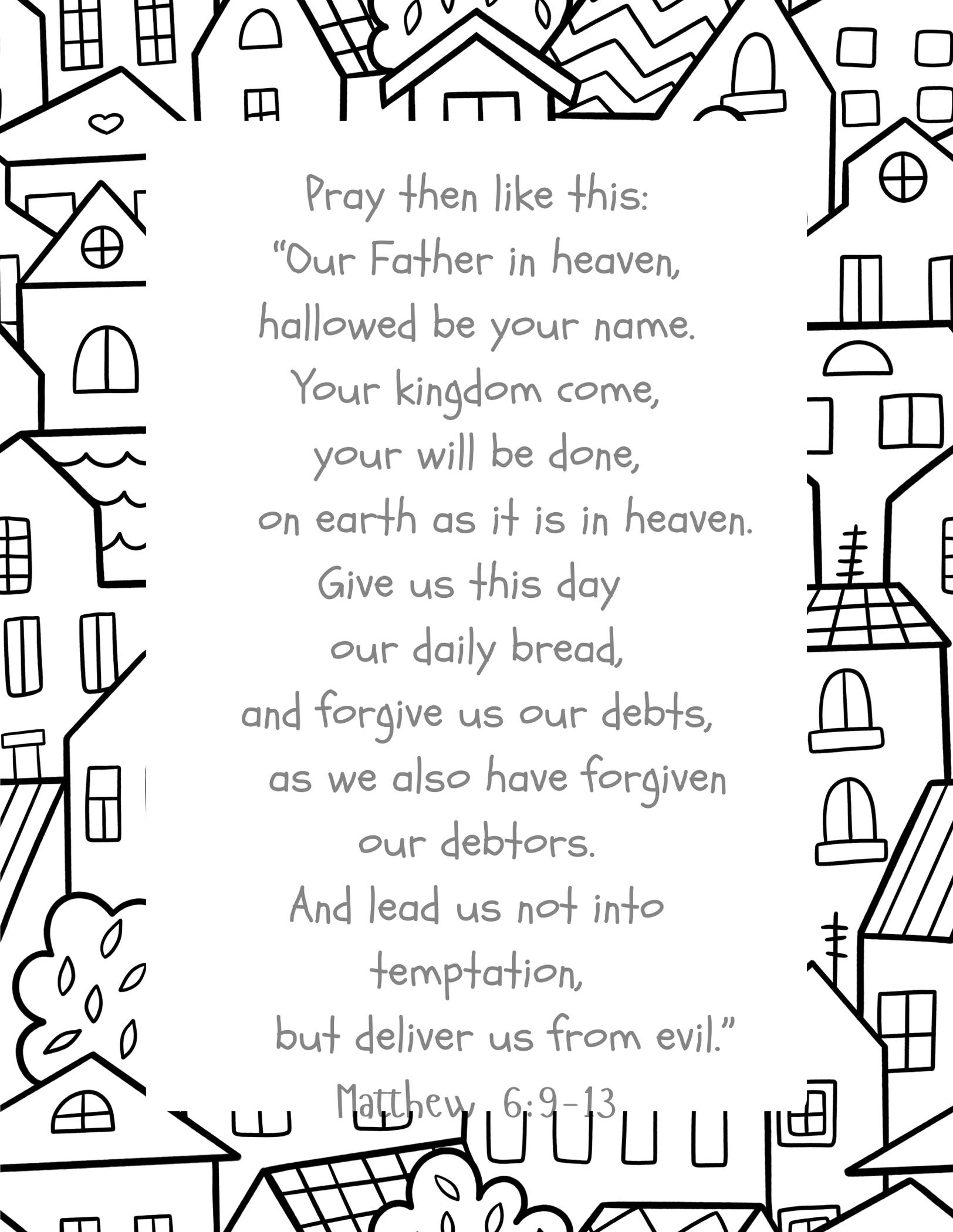
Matthew 6:9-13



Summary Picture

In the space below draw a summary picture illustrating the Lord's Prayer.
Pray through this with Jesus as you draw.





Pray then like this:
"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day
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 evil."

Matthew 6:9-13

Consolidate your foundation



When Jesus shared the parable of the wise and foolish builders, he wasn't giving instructions for building a house, but how to lay a firm foundation for your life that will withstand storms. The main difference wasn't that one built his house on the rock while the other built his house on the sand, but what that represented. Both people heard the word. The difference was what they did in response.

In James we are warned to not be hearers only and deceive ourselves. How can you be deceived if you only hear? By thinking you've got a firm foundation for your life because you're spending so much time in the word. But both Jesus and James emphasize it's what you do in response that determines the foundation on which your life is built.

Again, it is vital to keep Christ the center as you do this. It's not, do whatever you want to do, but are you actively responding to what the Lord is leading you to do?

With this in mind, what do you sense the Lord inviting you to do in response? What specifically could that look like? On the next page you will find a process that can help you be an effectual doer of the Word.

S.M.A.R.T.

Making Applications Doable

I find meditation is a key part of processing through a passage with Jesus that prepares me to live it out in my life. But once I sense an invitation from the Lord regarding how He wants me to respond, there is still a gap between identifying this and doing it.

That's where the acronym S.M.A.R.T. can help!

This process walks you through how to make something doable. It doesn't have to take a lot of time, but thinking through the following five questions can be a huge help towards actually doing God's Word. As you read through the following dialogue with Jesus and take time to apply it to your application for this week.

S = Specific = What specifically do I sense the Lord leading me to do?

M = Measurable = How will I know whether I've done it or not?

A = Accountable = what are your plans for having someone hold you accountable? (Does this ever help!)

R = Realistic = have you attempted too much or kept it doable? If it's not realistic for you to do at this time the "R" becomes "Revise."

T = Timely = don't say "In five years I will..." life change best happens when you're doing something soon In response!



Treasure

*What treasure did the Lord bless you with that
you don't want to forget?*