

Effective Prayer – Part 2

Kid Time

Do you know what this is? Nesting Doll

- On the outside it looks like a simple doll, but it opens up to have many different levels
 - Each level shows us more about the doll
 - There are some things in the Bible that way also – A couple weeks ago we looked at the Lord’s Prayer
 - It’s sort of like the nesting doll – When we look at closely, it has at least 7 different parts that show us how to pray.
 - We find that praying is just like a conversation, but with the most important and powerful being.
 - How do you talk to your friends?
 - o Do you ask them questions?
 - o Ask for things?
 - o Talk about things you both like?
 - o Tell them thank you?
 - That’s how our prayer works also. God wants us to talk to Him. So, tonight we’ll see how.
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The intent of prayer isn’t just to ask for things, but to change us.

- Change our thoughts, desires and perspectives and put them in line with God

Matthew 6:9-13

We mentioned last time that the Lord’s prayer can be broken into 7 elements.

- Last time we went through the first 3 elements.
- **1. The Relationship to God** – “Our Father which art in heaven”
 - o Our position with our Father and the direction of our prayer
- **2. The Reverence for God** – “Hallowed be thy name”
 - o How we speak to God and how we bring honor to Him.
- **3. The Rule of God** – “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

- An alignment of our heart that we want God's will done on earth and that we will do it as He instructs. Change of heart.

Tonight, let's look at the last 4 elements – See God is aligning our thoughts to His

4. The Resources of God

In Matthew 6:11 Jesus declared, "Give us this day our daily bread."

In this small section of the prayer the first request for material needs was given.

This is interesting since a great portion of the prayers of the Old Testament were for physical needs.

- John Phillips notes, "We do not have to dwell on our needs because God knows all about them. Analysis of our own prayers will often reveal preoccupation with the material side of life...material requests are to be kept in their right place and proportion."

Let's look from 3 vantage points – favor, faith and food.

FAVOR

Jesus started this petition with the phrase "give".

- "Give" is not taken as a demand, but rather as a request or appeal to God for favor.
- John Butler states, "appeal to His mercy and grace not to our merit and goodness."
- This comes from the realization that we have no right to demand anything from God.
- We didn't earn salvation as Ephesians 2:8-9 clearly indicates, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."
- We can't earn the ability to demand blessings from God based on the good works we perform.

FAITH

"faith" is linked to "This day...daily".

- Living a life of faith is a continual process instead of a one-time experience.

- Salvation is a one-time experience, but a life of faith is something that must be surrendered to on a daily basis.
- Paul stated this to the Roman believers in **Romans 12:1** when he said, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”
- Faith has always required a daily surrender to God’s will.
- When God led the Israelites out of Egypt and into the wilderness He made them rely on Him for their daily provision of manna in Exodus 16.
 - The manna for many years was their only food and could only be collected once per day. The manna perished after one day and required the Israelites to seek God’s provision each morning.
 - God was building a habit in their lives and Jesus is setting up the same habit in our lives with this phrase.
 - This partly answers the question of why God would have a Christian ask for something that He already knows we need.
 - Once again, it is a means to create a proper heart toward God.

FOOD

Lastly, the “bread” points to food.

- “This indicates our needs as opposed to our wants. Bread is common, not a luxury. It is ordinary, not special.”
- Jesus made it very clear following His statements on prayer that God is aware of our needs and will provide for us.
- In **Matthew 6:25-30** Jesus states,

“Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? “

Jesus clearly indicated that our needs are known and provided by God, so there’s no need to worry or spend the time listing them.

- This was not a reprimand, but rather an encouragement that the storehouses of God are at the disposal of Christians and that God will care for His children as David stated in **Psalm 37:25**, “I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.”

We can rest assured that God will supply our needs – **Phil 4:9** – “My God shall supply all your needs.”

5. The Repentance to God

This section of the prayer from Matthew 6:12 states “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”

- The same prayer in Luke 11:4 exchanges the word “debts” with “sins”.
- Forgiveness of sin is our greatest need
 - o For salvation, for fellowship and for supplication
- This verse does not refer to the forgiveness of sin for salvation.
- When Christ died on the cross He died for who man is, the sin nature of man.
 - o Every sin committed or to be committed was paid for by Christ. Therefore when we placed our trust in Christ we turned or repented and placed our trust in the finished work of Jesus Christ.
 - o Our salvation is sure, but when we commit sin, Jesus at that point is not Lord of our life (the One guiding us) – Loss of fellowship
 - o Therefore, to regain the lost fellowship we must ask forgiveness.
- The Psalmist tells us in **Psalm 66:18** that “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the LORD will not hear me”
 - o The matter of sin must be dealt with in our life or our prayers (supplication) will not be heard.

Next note this key point –

- To ask forgiveness of sin requires more than just the recognition of disobedience, it requires humility of spirit.
- Humility before God is a character trait that we need to develop if we are to grow in our relationship.
- The term “Lord” is not just a title for God, but a position that we must purposefully place God in our life.

Further, note the clause at the end of this phrase, “if we forgive our debtors.” Jesus placed the condition that forgiveness will only come if we respond in kind to other men.

- J.C. Ryle put it this way:

We must not expect our prayers for forgiveness to be heard, if we pray with malice and spite in our hearts toward others. To pray in such a frame of mind is mere formality and hypocrisy. It is even worse than hypocrisy. It is as much as saying, ‘Do not forgive me at all.’ Our prayer is nothing without charity. We must not expect to be forgiven, if we cannot forgive.

We cannot have a humble heart without having a forgiving heart.

- Without a forgiving heart, it is a fake humility and makes asking forgiveness a religious act and as Ryle stated, formality.

6. The Righteousness from God

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil” as recorded in Matthew 6:13a illustrates Jesus’ next point in His model prayer.

- The first parts of the prayer dealt with getting our mind in the proper view toward God.
- The last two portions mentioned and now this portion deal with petitions to God for our needs, be it physical needs, spiritual needs or security.

This portion of the prayer can be looked at by its two phrases.

- First, Jesus instructed us to ask God to “lead us not into temptation.”
- This does not imply that God places temptations in the way of sinners.
- “rather it is a negative way of saying we want to be led aright.”
- If a child comes to his parent requesting how to do something properly, that parent will gladly help.
- This is a prayer that God will gladly grant for His child.
- When speaking about requests in prayer in **Luke 11:9-13**, Jesus stated, *And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good*

gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

This reference does not strictly refer to help from temptation, but it is in agreement with the thought.

The second phrase, “deliver us from evil” brings up the difference between a trial and a temptation.

- No one wants to have a trial in their life that causes pain and anguish, such as a sickness or family problem, yet God often allows it in our life.
- It is through the trials that we grow our faith and learn to lean on God in a way we would have never learned without the storm or trial in our life.
- However, Jesus was not speaking here about a trial, but a temptation and evil.
- Temptations are placed in our path by the evil one to entice us to sin.
- We learn nothing good from sin, so Jesus guides us to pray for a way of escape.
 - o **1 Corinthians 10:13** promises, “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”
- Once again a prayer for deliverance from sin will not be rejected by the Heavenly Father.
- This portion of the prayer needs to be a genuine request.
- We can learn why God wants us to pray for deliverance from evil, but we must then back it up with how we live our life or it just becomes hollow words.
- For instance, to ask for deliverance from a temptation and then to purposefully subject ourselves to the temptation is insincere at best.

7. The Respect for God

This final portion of Jesus’ model prayer, called a doxology, is similar to the second portion that dealt with reverence for the position of God.

In Matthew 6:13b Jesus ends with, “for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.”

- The prayer began with the worship of God and it ends with worship.
- The final statement can be broken into three phrases where the sections of the full prayer are reiterated and reinforced in the mind of the person praying.

- First, “thine is the kingdom” restates the acknowledgement of God’s rule in the third portion of the prayer.
 - It also indicates the believers’ surrender and willingness to follow His leadership in that kingdom.
- Second, the phrase “and the power” recognizes the capacity of God to fulfill all of that which has been mentioned in the prayer and all that God has prophesied will come to pass.
- The final phrase, “and the glory” speaks of the complete intent of the prayer and of God’s creation.
 - As Romans 11:36 states, “For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen.”

We can see that a primary goal of each of the elements of the model prayer is to properly align our heart and mind toward God’s goals.

- The first instruction is to pray to the Heavenly Father, and then to make certain it is done with reverence.
- The prayer is to be done with God’s will foremost in mind.
- Only then, after the mind is properly focused, are the needs and concerns of the believer to be voiced.
- This is followed by repentance and forgiveness with the clauses necessary in view for the petitions to be proper.
- Finally, a request for the proper path is made and ending acknowledgement of who God is.

This look at the model prayer teaches us that prayer is not a list of wants, but rather a means in which God changes man and gives glory to Him.

- Don’t allow your prayer life to be on automatic
- Commune with God – focus and allow God to change your heart & life