

Connecting With God

Insights into the Lord's Prayer

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Foreword

Welcome to this life-enriching seminar for men and women who already know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, and others who may be seeking Him.

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Part 1: Focus on God and His Will

Lesson 1

The Lord's Prayer is perhaps the best known passage of the Bible. It is recited millions of times each week around the world. Concise, profound, simple, serene--the 66 words of what has become known as the Lord's Prayer reveal the deepest truths about our relationship with God and fulfillment in life.

Jesus gave His disciples this exemplary prayer when one of them asked, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1). The disciples were all Jews and familiar with prayer, but perhaps they saw Jesus' communication with His Father to be different and the secret of His amazing ministry. They must have observed that His frequent times of prayer actually linked Him with the unseen world. One author states:

It became clear that Jesus had a link with eternity. Though He moved through time, there was something transtemporal about Him, something in Him that brought people into confrontation with the deep issues of life. I'm sure He was fun to be with--natural and joyful, a good companion--but somehow His manner and His words tended to pitch people's attention onto important things, matters of depth and permanence. He was a man with one foot planted in time--for God truly intersected history with His incarnation--but with the other foot in eternity.¹

So perhaps the real desire of the disciple who asked, "Lord, teach us to pray," was to discover the secret of Christ's powerful life. Jesus responded with a brief prayer meant to be a guideline for all prayer.

The Lord's Prayer is made up of two parts. The first focuses on God and His redemptive work in the world (Matthew 6:9-10). The second emphasizes personal needs and help in daily struggles (Matthew 6:11-13). This order shows that prayer should begin with turning from self to focus on God's majesty and will (His kingdom or lordship) in our lives. This prepares us to desire His will above our own as we pray about concerns and needs.

Perhaps most important to remember is that Jesus gave the Lord's Prayer in the context of teachings that strictly censored hypocrisy. The prayer was never meant to be a liturgy, but rather to exemplify sincere communication with a loving heavenly Father about everyday needs. Only as we pray the Lord's Prayer from the heart do we bring joy to God and find fulfillment ourselves.

Yet how easy it is to recite the Lord's Prayer without even thinking about its meaning. The purpose of our study of this great prayer is that we might more fully understand its meanings and be able to pray it with absolute sincerity. Another purpose is to learn principles from this exemplary prayer that direct our overall prayer life to be like that of Jesus, that we also might know the power and joy that comes from having one foot planted in time and the other in eternity.

Having a Perfect Heavenly Father

“Our Father...”

What a privilege to address God as "Our Father." It was Jesus who taught this familiar way of conceptualizing God. Throughout His ministry, Jesus modeled and encouraged such an intimate, personal,

family-like relationship with God. The gospels record Jesus referring to God as Father over seventy times.

The Scriptures up to the time of Jesus rarely mentioned God as a Father. However, other human terms were used to reveal the character of the transcendent Almighty God of heaven and earth. For example, Old Testament passages speak of His face looking at us with grace, His ears hearing our prayers, His eyes seeing all things, His voice communicating His word to us, His fingers creating us, His hands saving, guiding, providing, protecting and disciplining His children. The Psalms especially are filled with the love, goodness and faithfulness of God depicted in human terms.

In spite of these descriptions, the world at the time of Christ, as today, wondered whether the One behind the universe was a hostile, indifferent or friendly being. The incarnate Son of God answered these questions as He introduced the omnipotent One who called all things into being as a loving Father--perfect in compassion, wisdom and justice--who desires an intimate relationship with each of His children.

The Scriptures reveal that God, unlike imperfect earthly fathers, is dependable, loyal, available, understanding, strong, and uncondemning. He looks with compassion and deep concern on our struggles and is moved by our least effort to resist evil and do good. By His Spirit, He extends His grace to help and lift us above sin's pull. His thoughts and inner attitudes toward each of His children are good, gentle, kind, perceptive and affectionate. In His love, He is always strongly opposed to things destructive to our lives, but in any situation welcomes us into His presence with a sympathetic ear. He is not temperamental or moody, but consistent and even-natured.

The whole concept of God as our Father is filled with incredible love, meeting our deepest need to be fully known, with all our faults, and

fully loved. Through teachings such as the parable of the prodigal son, Jesus demonstrated that even when we have broken God's heart by our actions, He will receive His repentant child with forgiveness and an open-handed, greathearted welcome.

To relate to God as an affectionate, loving child is a great privilege and brings the deepest sense of security and fulfillment in life. We will begin our study of The Lord's Prayer observing biblical truths related to knowing God as a perfect heavenly Father.

1. How does Jesus begin His example of effective prayer?

Matthew 6:9

2. How do the following Old Testament Scriptures describe the fatherhood of God?

Psalm 68:5

Isaiah 64:8

3. What negative attributes of human fathers can we unconsciously transfer to God?

4. To know God as a loving heavenly Father requires working through these misconceptions and grasping the Bible's revelation of His character, primarily His love. The Bible declares that God is love (1 John 4:8b). How does the following passage describe God's love?
1 Corinthians 13:4-8a

5. The greatest evidence of God's love is in His willingness to pay the penalty for our misdeeds. What do the following verses declare?
John 3:16-17

Reference: Note 2, "*Why did Christ have to die in my place?*" p. 15.

6. a. What must we do to have a personal relationship with God as a Father?
John 1:12-13 (*Him* refers to Jesus Christ; cf. Galatians 3:26)

Note: *Receiving* Christ refers to inviting Him to come into our lives; *believing* in His name involves trusting Him to control our lives.

b. What is also involved in receiving Christ and coming to the Father through Him?
Acts 3:19

Note: Repentance involves sorrow for sin and turning to God from self.

7. When we place our faith in His Son, Jesus Christ, what does the Father give us in addition to eternal life?

Romans 8:15-16

John 14:23

John 16:23b

8. Jesus told a parable to show the consistent unconditional love of the Father toward His children. Read Luke 15:11-24.

a. How did the father respond to his son's request for his inheritance and independence?

b. What did the father probably experience because of his son's actions?

c. What did the son realize?

9. a. How did the father receive his son (15:20)?

b. What was the son's attitude (15:21)?

c. In spite of the heartache he had experienced, how did the father respond (15:22-24)?

10. What comforting aspects of our heavenly Father's character did Jesus reveal in this parable? Of what does this story assure us when we have come to the Father with a broken, repentant heart?

Reference: Note 3, *The older brother*, p. 16.

11. In addition to grasping God's love, it is important to know that He sees everything in our lives and understands us completely--better than we understand ourselves. He knows our makeup and why we are as we are. What do the following passages tell us about God's understanding?
Psalm 147:5b

Psalm 139:1-4

12. a. Since our heavenly Father understands us and all things completely, what can we confidently do?
Hebrews 4:16

b. Even though God sees even the worst about us, of what are we assured?
Romans 8:31b-32

Romans 8:38-39

13. As we begin the Lord's Prayer with the words, "Our Father," for what can we praise God, according to 1 John 3:1?

S U M M A R Y

14. What tone does addressing God as a heavenly Father set in our prayer life?

15. What stands out to you about the character of the Father from this lesson?

16. Why is the Father's greatest demonstration of love found in Jesus Christ?

17. How can knowing God as a Father meet deep needs in your life?

Note: Do you struggle with the concept of God as a Father? Perhaps you would like to take a moment to ask God to reveal His character, especially His love, understanding and forgiveness, to you.

Reference: “*God is Easy to Live With*”, p. 14.

Books that can help you discover God as a perfect heavenly Father:
What is the Father Like? by W. Phillip Keller.

31 Days of Praise by Ruth Myers.

A Final Note

As we saw in Question #6 above, the Lord waits to be invited to share His life with us on a heart level. The New Testament explains that a personal relationship with God as a loving heavenly Father begins with faith in His Son, Jesus Christ (John 1:12; Galatians 3:26). In Revelation 3:20, Jesus states His desire to come into our lives: "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me." If your desire is to place your faith in Jesus by inviting Him into your life, the following prayer can help you express this desire to Him:

Lord Jesus, I open the door of my life to you. Please forgive the sin that makes me feel awkward in your presence. Thank you that this is possible because you took the penalty for my sin on the cross. Come into my life and make me the person you created me to be. Thank you for giving me eternal life as I place my faith in you. Amen.

References: Romans 3:23-26; 6:23; Colossians 2:13-14.

If you prayed this prayer, what does He promise to you in Revelation 3:20 (above), Hebrews 13:5b and 1 John 5:11-13?

Excerpt from "God is Easy to Live With"
by A. W. Tozer

It is most important to our spiritual welfare that we hold in our minds always a right conception of God. If we think of Him as cold and exacting we shall find it impossible to love Him, and our lives will be ridden with servile fear. If, again, we hold Him to be kind and understanding our whole inner life will mirror that idea.

The truth is that God is the most winsome of all beings and His service one of unspeakable pleasure. He is all love, and those who trust Him need never know anything but that love. He is just, indeed, and He will not condone sin; but through the blood of the everlasting covenant He is able to act toward us exactly as if we had never sinned. Toward the trusting sons of men His mercy will always triumph over justice.

The fellowship of God is delightful beyond all telling. He communes with His redeemed ones in an easy, uninhibited fellowship that is restful and healing to the soul. He is not sensitive nor selfish nor temperamental. What He is today we shall find Him tomorrow and the next day and the next year. He is not hard to please, though He may be hard to satisfy. He expects of us only what He has Himself first supplied. He is quick to overlook imperfections when He knows we meant to do His will. He loves us for ourselves and values our love more than galaxies of new created worlds.

How good it would be if we could learn that God is easy to live with. He remembers our frame and knows that we are dust. Some of us are religiously jumpy and self-conscious because we know that God sees our every thought and is acquainted with all our ways. We need not be. God is the sum of all patience and the essence of kindly good will. We please Him most, not by frantically trying to make ourselves

good, but by throwing ourselves into His arms with all our imperfections, and believing that He understands everything and loves us still.

LESSON 1 NOTES

1 Everett L. Fullam, *Living the Lord's Prayer*, p. 6.

2 **“Why did Christ have to die in my place?”** This is one of the most important yet least understood questions of the Christian faith. The following explanations of various biblical terms answer this question:

a. Propitiation is a biblical word meaning "satisfaction" and refers to the righteous demands of God being satisfied. God will not compromise His attributes of righteousness and justice which are legitimately outraged by man's deliberate violation of His will. But God's attribute of love motivated Him to provide a way to bring man back into fellowship with Himself *without compromising* His attributes of absolute righteousness and justice. God's holy character demanded that man's sin be paid for. Therefore, God came into the world in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ. Because Christ was born without sin and never committed an act of sin, He qualified to bear the holy wrath of God due the human race as He willingly died on the cross for our sin (cf. Genesis 2:16-17; 3:6, 23-24; Romans 5:6, 15, 17). In so doing He "satisfied" the just demands of God's holy character against man's sin. This act set God's love free to pour out grace on those who receive His gift of salvation. In this way, God is "just and the one who justifies the man who has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:26).

b. Justification refers to God declaring us "not guilty" and righteous in his sight, even though we are guilty of sin. God is able to do this

because of the life and death of Jesus Christ acting as man's substitute (Romans 3:23; 6:23). When God declares a person righteous in His sight, He does so on the basis of the life and death of the One who was acting on his behalf. "Jesus our Lord...was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification" (Romans 4:24-25). When we put faith in Jesus Christ to save us from sin, God declares us justified, or not guilty, and righteous. We are justified by the death of Christ which paid the penalty for our sin, and we are justified by the life of Christ whose life of righteousness is also credited to us. This justification, which is all by God's grace and received by faith, brings us into fellowship with God as a child in His family. See also Note 1, *Redemption, Reconciliation*, p. 63-64.

3 The *older brother* (Luke 15:25-32) shows how pride, self-righteousness and a legalistic attitude can prevent us from knowing our heavenly Father. The person who sees God as harsh, hard and very demanding cannot sense His fatherly love, compassion, generosity and forgiveness. He keeps God at arms length as did the older son. It is important to know God's character as revealed in His Word and in the person of His Son who perfectly reflected his Father (Hebrews 1:1-3).

Lesson 2

What Heaven is Like

“Our Father in heaven . . .”

Heaven is mentioned over 400 times throughout the 66 books of the Bible. Sometimes it refers to the earth's atmosphere. "As the rain and the snow come down from heaven..." (Isaiah 55:10). Sometimes heaven is used to speak of outer space. "The heavens declare the glory of God..." (Psalm 19:1). Certainly God is in these places because He is spirit and omnipresent. "Do I not fill heaven and the earth?" is the declaration of the Lord recorded in Jeremiah 23:24.

But the heaven Jesus refers to in the Lord's Prayer when He prays, "Our Father in heaven," is the third use of the word heaven in the Scriptures. It is the place where God dwells and from which He reigns eternally. In the New Testament, it is sometimes described as a heavenly country, a New Jerusalem, a home prepared especially for God's children. Being a realm we cannot see, it is hard to imagine, and many questions surround the concept. In his book, *Living the Lord's Prayer*, Everett Fullam states:

Imagine you have a blackboard in front of you, and we have drawn a line across it halfway between the bottom and the top. Everything below the line represents the world within our experience--the absolute limit of our human reasoning, even of imagination. Then we place the Lord God above that line, beyond the reach of human knowledge, wisdom, and understanding. Our finite minds will not penetrate that area, no matter how hard we try.

Now this would be a true picture were it not for the astounding fact, the most central and sobering teaching of the Christian faith, that

*God at a real point in history came down below that line and entered the world of our experience. In this boundless universe of galaxies, quasars and formations surpassing our wildest imaginations, this tiny little globe on which we live became, in the words of J. B. Phillips, "the visited planet." God Himself, in the person of His Son, came among us.*¹

Jesus, the incarnate Word of God (John 1:1f), came to reveal truths of the unseen world to us, but even He found it difficult to explain to mankind in terms we could understand. In the context of our experience with human fathers, the word *father* to describe God falls short, but the phrase *in heaven* places Him in the realm of the infinite and eternal... absolutely unlimited and unfettered by the conditions in this world that restrict us humans. He is heavenly, not earthly. Jesus wants us to see that the Father is transcendent, omnipotent (all-powerful), omniscient (all-knowing) and omnipresent (everywhere present), even though our humanness makes us incapable of fully comprehending those descriptions.

In the words, "Our Father in heaven," Jesus reveals that this transcendent One, enthroned in heaven, wants to relate to us as dearly loved children. His infinite love can heal our emotional wounds from earthly fathers and others, and His wisdom can be trusted. He reigns over all things from a place called heaven that the Scriptures say will one day be the believer's eternal home. The descriptions of this place, envisioned by men like Isaiah and the Apostle John, sound like something we would see on a modern movie screen... almost unimaginable. They had difficulty using human language to depict what they saw.

But in common terms, Jesus promised that those who believe in Him will be there and that He has gone to prepare a place in heaven for each one. Because His resurrection is a fact of history, we can know Jesus

was God's Son, and His promises regarding heaven and our eternal future there will be fulfilled.

Hebrews 11:1 says, "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." In teaching us to pray, "Our Father in heaven," Jesus encourages us to begin prayer with faith that the Father is on His throne, and we will one day see Him face to face. In this lesson, we will look at some of the facts the Bible gives us about heaven.

1. a. How does Jesus describe God in Matthew 6:9?

b. How does Jesus' description of God as a *heavenly* Father set Him apart from human fathers? (See also commentary notes.)

2. a. What are some common preconceived ideas about heaven and our Father in heaven?

b. What does 1 Corinthians 13:12 say about our understanding of the unseen world?

3. a. What do these Old Testament passages reveal about heaven?
Psalm 103:19

Psalm 93:2

b. What will always cause those around the throne of God to worship Him?
Psalm 89:14

4. What does Hebrews 1:2-3 state about Jesus Christ?

Reference: Note 2, *Jesus at the right hand of God*, p. 24.

5. a. What does Jesus promise the believer?
John 11:25-26

John 14:1-3

b. What does Philippians 3:20-21 add to this promise?

6. The Bible tells us that God will make a new heaven and earth (2 Peter 3:10,13; Revelation 21:1), and the whole created world will be redeemed and set free from decay and struggle. How do the following verses describe this redemption?

Romans 8:19-21

Isaiah 11:6-9

7. Jesus' resurrection body gives us a picture of what our eternal bodies might be like, bodies not subject to decay or sickness but made to live eternally. What do you observe about His resurrection body in the following passages?

Luke 24:15-16, 30-31, 36-43, 51

Acts 1:9-11

8. What do you observe from the following verses about the new heaven and earth where believers will live forever?

Revelation 21:1, 3-5

Revelation 21:10-21

Revelation 21:22-27

Revelation 22:1-5

Note: *Lamb* is a term used for Jesus (Ex. 12: 1 Cor. 5:7; John 1:29; Is. 53:7).

Reference: Note 3, *Reflections on heaven*, p. 25.

9. As we pray, "Our Father in heaven," for what can we praise God?
1 Peter 1:3-4

Note: *Hope* biblically is certainty, not just wishful optimism.

SUMMARY

10. How would you describe heaven to someone that asked? What characteristics of heaven stand out to you from this lesson?

11. Are you certain that you will go to heaven? According to John 3:16 and John 1:12, what must one do?

Note: If you would like to be certain that you will go to heaven, the prayer on p. 11, and the verses of assurance which follow, may be helpful.

12. Of what are you reminded as you pray, “Our Father in heaven...”?

LESSON 2 NOTES

1 Everett L. Fullam, *Living the Lord's Prayer*, p. 25.

2 Jesus at the right hand of God. Both Old and New Testaments reveal that Jesus Christ will reign forever, one with the Father. Isaiah's Messianic prophecy states: "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the *government will be on his shoulders*. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6; emphasis mine). "In love a *throne* will be established; in faithfulness a man will sit on it--one from the house of David--one who in judging seeks justice and speeds the cause of righteousness" (2 Samuel 7:13-16, emphasis mine).

In the New Testament, the angel Gabriel announced to Mary, "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the *throne* of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end" (Luke 1:32-33, emphasis mine).

Jesus also claimed to have come from the Father and to be one with the Father. "I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father" (John 16:28). "I and the Father are one...Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father...it is the Father, living in me, who is doing His work." (John 10:30; 14:9-10).

The writer of Hebrews states, "...but in these last days He has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by His powerful word. After He had provided purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. But about the Son He says, 'Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom.'" (Hebrews 1:2-3,8).

Revelation 11:15 states: "...and there were loud voices in heaven, which said, 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign for ever and ever.'" (Cf. Revelation 5:13.)

3 Reflections on heaven. In his book, A Layman Looks at the Lord's Prayer, pp. 33-42, Phillip Keller lists the following freedoms and benefits in heaven.

Fourteen things we will be freed of in heaven.

1. Freedom from assaults of Satan--subtle insinuations and dark deceptions, temptations and deceitful tactics. No more doubt or temptation.
2. Freedom from the strain of separation from loved ones. We will have quiet contentment, no more restless spirits; at home with God.
3. Free from tears of anguish, despair, frustration, no more painful anguishing moments.
4. No more death because of what Christ accomplished on the cross--His death was the doorway to His home. Free from foreboding thoughts about when and how we will die.
5. Freedom from regrets and remorse over errors, wrong attitudes, unkind words, selfish motives, wrong actions. Fully forgiven, free from folly, sorrow, regret over misdeeds. Instead, deep delight.
6. No more search for truth, having come home to find our Father there waiting to welcome us.
7. Deliverance from pain--physically and emotionally and spiritually. No more watching others endure agony.

8. When God's new heaven, new earth and New Jerusalem are unveiled, there will be no church buildings or doctrinal divisions, only warmth and love and understanding produced among God's people by God's presence.

9. No sun or moon--time will be no more. We will not be limited by the time/space conditions of life on earth. No more meeting deadlines, schedules, organizing our lives around the clock and calendar. No more sense that time is running out on our lives. No urgency--instead peace, quiet, unhurried life free from the fret and strain of earth's on-rushing pace.

10. No night there. Our new spiritual bodies will not need sleep and restoration as our physical bodies have.

11. No more misunderstanding between ourselves and others or God. Total and complete enlightenment--we will know as we are known--no more fears, doubts, misjudgments, animosities, despair from misunderstanding.

12. Nothing there to contaminate our thoughts or moral life. Nothing there will draw us away from devotion to God. No more dominated by struggle to earn a living--deliverance from the strain and stresses of our unpredictable earthly sojourn. The world can't pull us down.

13. No more tension of looking good for others; no more masks or false fronts to cover flaws. No more deceit, lying, dishonesty, duplicity. We will just be ourselves before God and others.

14. Free from sin and the pull of evil, freely walking in paths of righteousness. No longer burdened with sin--exult with lighthearted abandon.

Seven Benefits of heaven God's Presence will make possible.

1. Satisfaction and tranquility, contentment and repose, complete satisfaction continually.
2. Abundant quality of life--absolute love, honesty, good will and righteousness.
3. Absolute justice and fairness.
4. Service to God. All our work will have significance and deep meaning for it will be divine--a series of delightful enterprises in which men and God are active co-workers.
5. Exquisite fellowship--see our heavenly Father face to face. Tremendous joy in knowing Him will bind everyone together in a loving family.
6. Complete revelation of God and every aspect of life--all bright and right. No fear or foreboding.
7. Victory, rest at last as we reign forever and ever with Christ.

Lesson 3

Knowing God

“Hallowed be your name.”

How easy it is for us to rush into God's presence with an urgent concern or list of concerns which we inform Him about (as though He doesn't know) and then instruct Him how to deal with.

But Jesus teaches us to begin prayer with, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name." Herein lies an important principle of a powerful and fulfilling prayer life. We should begin prayer by turning our focus on our heavenly Father, opening ourselves to His presence, putting ourselves under His sovereignty and remembering who He is. When we start there, our concerns may well diminish in size in light of the goodness and greatness of the Lord who bids us come to Him in prayer.

What does the phrase, "hallowed be your name," mean? We must go back in biblical history to understand. The name of God was so holy to the Jews of old that they refused to pronounce it. When they read the Scriptures aloud, they did not say the word, which consisted of four consonants, transliterated JHWH, which later became Jehovah or Yahweh. When they came upon the name, they substituted the word *Adonai*, which means Lord. The word LORD in the English Bible is usually the translation of JHWH.

But when we see "thy name" (KJV) or "your name" in the Bible, it does not just stand for Yahweh. The "name" of God biblically stands for the whole being of God. In other words, to know His name is to know His character, His personality, His temperament, His love, His mercy, His power. For example, when the Psalmist declares, "...those

who know Your name put their trust in You" (Psalm 9:10), he is saying, "Those who truly know who and what You are put their trust in You."

In the same way, the psalmist who wrote, "Some boast of chariots, and some of horses; but we boast of the name of the Lord our God" (Psalm 20:7), was saying that Israel took pride and found her identity and strength in knowing God.

God has revealed Himself through the inspired Scriptures and through the experiences of people who walked with Him--individuals like Abraham, Moses, David, the prophets and the Apostles of the New Testament. Most powerfully, God has allowed us to know Him through the incarnation of His Son, Jesus Christ, who is "the exact representation of His being" (Hebrews 1:3).¹ As we study the character of God revealed in these ways, and as we walk through life with Him, we grow in the knowledge of God that is the basis for truly hallowing His name.

To *hallow* the name of God, then, is to magnify, honor and revere who He is. We do this when we worship and praise Him, reminding ourselves of His glory and His lovingkindness seen throughout the Bible and experienced in our lives. In this lesson, we will make some observations about this very important first step in prayer.

1. a. What can easily be our focus when we come to God in prayer?

b. What does God want us to do with our concerns?
Philippians 4:6

2. a. What does it mean to "hallow" God's name before we make requests in prayer?

b. Why do you think this is important?

3. The commentary stated that the *name* of God in the Bible stands for the whole being of God. To know His name is to know His character, His personality, His temperament, His love, His mercy, His power. To better understand this concept, think of someone you know and love and describe that person.

To "hallow" this person's "name" is to respect and expound on all these qualities.

4. At this point in your spiritual journey, what do you understand to be true about God? How would you describe Him?

Reference: Note 1, *God has revealed Himself*, p. 35.

5. Psalm 145 is one of many passages of Scripture that hallows the name of God. What phrases describe the character and majesty of the One who bids us come to Him as a loving heavenly Father?
Psalm 145:1-7

Psalm 145:8-13a

Psalm 145:13b-16

Psalm 145:17-21

Reference: *Optional Study on the Attributes of God*, p. 34.

6. How do the following verses describe the essence of God revealed in Christ?
Colossians 1:15-17, 19

Reference: Note 2, *firstborn over all creation*, p. 36.

Philippians 2:5-11

Reference: Note 2, *Why Did Christ Have to Die in my place?* p. 15.

Isaiah 9:6

7. a. It is powerful to pray in the “name,” or authority, of Jesus. When He is Lord of our lives, what does Jesus promise?

John 15:7

Note: As with the Father, the *name* of Jesus sums up the Person. To pray in Jesus’ name is to pray in accordance with His character and is aimed at carrying forth God’s work as God wills.

b. What is the evidence of God’s character in us if we are abiding in Christ? John 15:12

8. How does Psalm 100 reflect Jesus’ teaching to begin prayer honoring God’s name and will?

S U M M A R Y

9. a. What does the "name" of the Lord mean in the Scriptures?

b. What does it mean to "hallow" His name?

10. How can the following build your ability to truly "hallow" the name of the Lord?

❖ Bible study.

❖ Praying about everything (Philippians 4:6).

❖ Allowing Jesus Christ to be Lord of your life (John 15:4-7).

11. What have you observed in this lesson about the phrase "hallowed be your name" in the Lord's Prayer?

Optional study on the attributes of God.

His Majesty: 1 Chronicles 29:12
Faithfulness: Psalm 36:5
Goodness: Nahum 1:7
Grace: Romans 3:23-24 (Titus 3:7)
God's Graciousness and Patience: Psalm 103:8
Greatness: Psalm 145:3
Holiness: (purity; separate from sin) Psalm 99:5 (Isaiah 5:16)
His Immutability (He does not change): Psalm 102:27 (Heb. 13:8)
Impartiality: Job 34:19 (Acts 10:34-35)
Justice: Psalm 33:5
Love: John 3:16
Mercy: Psalm 103:10-12 (Lamentations 3:22-23)
Omnipotence (all-powerful): Luke 1:37 (Job 42:2)
Omnipresence (everywhere present): Psalm 139:7-10
Omniscience (all-knowing): Hebrews 4:13 (Job 31:4)
Providence (care):
 Providing: Philippians 4:19
 Protecting: Psalm 91:4
 Guiding: Proverbs 2:8
Righteousness: Deuteronomy 32:4
Sovereignty: Daniel 2:20-22
His Ways and Laws: Psalm 18:30; Psalm 19:7-8,11
Understanding: Psalm 147:5 (1 Chronicles 28:9b)
Wisdom: Isaiah 28:29 (James 1:5)

For further study: The Knowledge of the Holy by A. W. Tozer;
Knowing God by J. I. Packer; Your God Is Too Small by J. B. Phillips

LESSON 3 NOTES

1 *God has revealed Himself* in the Scriptures through the experiences of people who walked with Him. At 99 years of age, Abraham discovered Him to be *God Almighty* (El Shaddai) as He enabled Sarah (90) to give birth to Isaac, the long promised heir (Genesis 17:1). Later, in the dramatic story of Abraham being willing to give up his son in obedience to God, the patriarch discovered *the Lord our provider* (Genesis 22:14) as the Lord Himself made provision for the sacrifice. Four hundred years later, God revealed himself to Moses from the burning bush as the one and only God, the eternal God, the “I AM,” the God of the unspeakable name JHWH. Then in the Exodus story as the people of Israel wandered in the wilderness, God revealed himself as *the Lord your healer* (Exodus 15:25-26) and as *the Lord our banner or victory* (Exodus 17:14-15).

Later in time, Gideon discovered the Lord as *our peace* (Judges 6:22-24). Isaiah foresaw a much different revelation of God to come as he prophesied: “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given . . . and His name will be called *‘Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace’*” (Isaiah 9:6). Seven hundred years later, the angel came to Joseph in his distress and told him, “. . . do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit . . . and you are to give Him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:20-21). Jesus means *Yahweh saves* or *Yahweh is salvation*. After the resurrection, Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, declared to thousands, “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is *no other name* under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Paul declared that God “exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the *name that is above every name*, that at the *name of Jesus* every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth . . .” (Philippians 2:9-10).

Through these and other revelations of Scripture, we read of who God is. As we walk with the Lord, we grow personally in the knowledge of

Him as Almighty, Everlasting, Healer, Victory and Peace-giver, Provider, Savior. And above all is the name of Jesus.
Everett Fullam on *Living the Lord's Prayer*, pp. 34-40.

2 *firstborn over all creation* (Colossians 1:15). “Just as the firstborn son had certain privileges and rights in the Biblical world, so also Christ has certain rights in relation to all creation—priority, preeminence and sovereignty (vv. 16-18).” *The NIV Study Bible*, p. 1814.

Lesson 4

God's Good and Perfect Will

“Your kingdom come, Your will be done.”

All of Scripture points to God's overall purpose to establish His righteous kingdom on earth. The Bible tells us that this kingdom where God's will is perfectly carried out will one day replace the kingdoms and nations of this world (Daniel 7:27). It also explains that God has gone to great lengths to bring people into this kingdom--people who are willing to relinquish dominion over their own lives and wholeheartedly subject themselves to God's appointed King, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus' preaching focused on the kingdom of God. Matthew 9:35 states, “Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.” Phrases such as “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near,” “The kingdom of God is like...” and “seek first His kingdom and His righteousness” were common in His teachings.

After His resurrection, Jesus continued this focus. Acts 1:3 records, “After His suffering, He showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that He was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.”

When Jesus told us to pray, “Your kingdom come, your will be done,” He was directing us to begin prayer focused on God's overall purpose to establish His righteous kingdom, not only on earth one day, but in our hearts today.

God's intent to build His kingdom begins unfolding in Genesis as He created man in His image with the capacity to have a personal relationship with Him. But Genesis tells us of man's decision to dethrone the Lord from His rightful place as God. Falling for the serpent's temptation, Adam and Eve usurped God's prerogative to determine right and wrong. Everett Fullam writes:

God said it was wrong to eat from a certain tree. Adam and Eve said, "No, it is not wrong; it is right." (See Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-7.) They with all of us following their example, became the standard by which good and evil, right and wrong, are judged. We exercise our freedom against the will and purpose of God. We establish rival kingdoms in which we are the sovereigns, trying to bend others to our wills and purposes. Thus throughout the earth we have millions of kingdoms rival to the kingdom of God, people who will not live willingly under His sovereignty. And we have chaos. So Jesus said we should pray, "Thy kingdom come . . ." ¹

After the fall recorded in Genesis, the rest of Scripture reveals God's steps to rescue man and to restore the original kingdom man was created to live in forever. He did this by calling one man, Abraham, to be the father of a nation through whom a Savior would come. Romans 5:12-21 explains that as through one man, Adam, all fell from God's kingdom, so through one man, Jesus, we can again enter His kingdom. Romans tells us that when we choose to trust in Jesus' substitutionary death for our sin, we are given the gift of Jesus' righteousness before God. Not only this, but God places His Spirit within us to motivate us to do His will and make it possible for the supreme power of God to again rule in our hearts.

All who so choose make up the restored kingdom of God and will one day be a part of God's reestablished kingdom on earth. John, the author of Revelation, caught a glimpse of the future when Jesus Christ will

return to set up His kingdom as he wrote, “Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him . . .” (Revelation 1:5-7).

So to sincerely pray, “your kingdom come, your will be done” is to first acknowledge God is king of a realm we don’t yet see, but into which we enter when we choose to let Christ reign in our hearts. It is to determine to follow the good and perfect will of a loving heavenly Father at whatever the personal cost.

Sadly, thousands pray this prayer daily without really meaning it. For each who utters this petition, the question should be: Does Jesus Christ reign in me, thus making me a part of His kingdom on earth today?

1. a. Review Fullam’s view of the fall of man in the commentary. What stands out to you in his statement regarding the problems in our world and individual lives?

b. In light of this, why is it important to begin our prayers with an attitude of submission to God’s sovereignty and will?

2. a. What do you imagine God’s kingdom on earth with Jesus Christ as Lord will be like?

b. What do these verses suggest?

Psalm 45:6

Daniel 7:27

3. Jesus spoke of the kingdom of God on earth in the future, but also said, “The kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:21), in the hearts and lives of people who choose God’s will in the present. What does the Holy Spirit produce in us when we choose to direct our thoughts, words and deeds toward building God’s kingdom?

Matthew 18:1-4

Matthew 22:37-39

Galatians 5:22-23, 25

4. a. Along with “your kingdom come,” Jesus taught us to pray “your will be done.” How does Romans 12:2b describe God’s will?

b. What enables us to discern God’s leading in small or great decisions?

Romans 12:1-2a

Proverbs 3:5-6 (Philippians 4:6)

References in parenthesis () are optional.

Psalm 119:105 (2 Timothy 3:16)

Reference: Note 2, *Discerning God’s will*, p. 45.

5. a. Whom did Jesus promise would direct us in doing God’s will?
John 14:16-17; 16:13

Reference: Note 3, *The Holy Spirit*, p. 46.

b. What does the Holy Spirit give us according to 1 Corinthians 2:16b (11-12)?

6. In the Bible, the will of God refers to two things: (1) the laws or guidelines God has given us to live by and (2) God's will in history and in our everyday lives. What is true of God's guidelines for our lives?

Psalm 19:7-11

7. What results when we live by these guidelines according to Psalm 1:3 (1-2)?

8. God's will in the Scriptures also refers to His sovereignty over history and circumstances. Of what can we be sure when the path of life is difficult, confusing, or overwhelming?

Psalm 18:30

Isaiah 55:8-9

Romans 8:28

Romans 8:31-32

Reference: Note 4, *Trusting God in hard times*, p. 47.

9. a. What does God's Word promise the one who sincerely prays, "your kingdom come, your will be done"?

Psalm 23:6

Psalm 32:8

S U M M A R Y

10. Many people think if they let Christ be Lord of their lives, He will make their lives miserable. What have you seen in this lesson about the rewards of subjecting ourselves to Him?

11. a. Are there areas of your life that are confusing or difficult at this time?

b. What is God's will for you in this area(s)?

c. What is His promise?

12. What does it mean to sincerely pray, "your kingdom come"?

"your will be done"?

13. Why is it important to begin prayer with this mindset?

LESSON 4 NOTES

1 Everett L. Fullam, *Living the Lord's Prayer*, p. 50.

2 *Discerning God's will.*

Everett Fullam writes: "In order to discern the Lord's will about something, I say, 'Lord, I don't want to do this unless you want me to. If you want me to do it, incline my heart; if you don't want me to do it, disincline my heart.' Then I talk with my wife, my friends, proven counselors. And, very importantly, I use the brains God gave me. I weigh alternatives. And little by little things begin to happen. I find a solid, reasonable desire that I can trust growing within me to go one or another direction." *Living the Lord's Prayer*, p. 65.

Phillip Keller gives seven guidelines for discerning God's will:

1. Is it definitely in agreement with God's will expressed and written in His Word? If so, fine. If not, don't do it.
2. Have you faced a similar situation before? If so, what did God show you as His will then? If you made a mistake, don't repeat it.
3. If the decision is difficult and far beyond you, seek the wise and prayerful counsel of mature and godly persons who know how to ascertain God's will.
4. Make the matter one of quiet but earnest prayer. Ask God, your Father, by His Spirit, to impress upon you distinctly by a deep inner conviction what the proper course of action is.

5. Our Father has endowed us with a fund of wholesome and practical knowledge which He expects us to use. We ignore it with risk.

6. Expect and wait to see events and circumstances surrounding this situation alter in such a manner as to influence your mind and will in determining God's will. Time takes care of many decisions. We are prone to be too impatient and hasty. God is seldom in a great rush about things.

7. Anticipate that as time goes on, the way will either open or the way will close for you to proceed along any given course. This should be accompanied by a sense of acceptance, gladness that you are being made aware of God's will, happiness in doing it, and peace about it.

A Layman Looks at the Lord's Prayer, pp. 83-84.

The late Dr. Bill Bright taught what he called the "sound mind principle." At the top of a divided sheet of paper, write 2 Timothy 1:7: "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love and a sound mind." Then, with an open mind and being as honest and objective as possible before God, ask Him to guide unmistakably as you list the pros and cons on the courses of action before you. Many times, the evidence is overwhelmingly in favor of or against a decision.

3 *The Holy Spirit.* God has made Himself known in the Bible as a Trinity; three divine persons (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), all with the same essence of deity. The Holy Spirit, known as the third person of the Trinity, indwells every person who personally receives Christ (John 1:12; 14:16-17; Romans 8:9). The Scriptures reveal the Holy Spirit not as an *it*, but rather as a *He*, a distinct personality. In John 3, Jesus tells Nicodemus that the Holy Spirit brings about regeneration or spiritual birth in the believer. While the Holy Spirit cannot be seen, we

can see the evidence of His work (3:8). When we ask God (Luke 11:13) to “fill” us with His Spirit (Ephesians 5:18b), He responds by supernaturally instructing and empowering us to live the Christian life (Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 3:16-20; Ezekiel 36:26-27). Sometimes the Bible refers to this as “Christ in you” (Colossians 1:27b). See also Note 4, *Works of the Holy Spirit*, p. 82.

4 *Trusting God in hard times.* C. H. Welch wrote: “The Lord may not definitely have planned that this should overtake me, but He has most certainly permitted it. Therefore though it were an attack of an enemy, by the time it reaches me, it has the Lord’s permission and therefore all is well. He will make it work together with all life’s experiences for good.” Ruth Myers, in her *31 Days of Praise*, states: “Praise can heighten your awareness that distressing circumstances are God’s blessings in disguise. Through praise you focus your attention on God...you begin to look at your problems from a new perspective—you compare them with your mighty, unlimited God. You see them as molehills rather than mountains, as opportunities rather than hindrances, as stepping stones instead of stumbling blocks...the prelude to new victories, the raw materials for God’s miracles.” *31 Days of Praise*, p. 126-127.

Part II: Focus on Our Needs and Struggles

Lesson 5

Ask, Seek, Knock

“Give us today our daily bread.”

Nothing is more wonderful for the Christian than God’s open invitation to come to Him with all that is on our hearts. Thus far, Jesus has taught us to begin prayer by seeing God in His superior place and coming to Him as our loving heavenly Father whose will and kingdom we seek above all. This puts us in the right frame of mind to openly discuss needs and concerns and lay our requests before Him. Jesus teaches us that God welcomes this and is always available to listen, provide, lead and protect. It is this aspect of our relationship with God that Jesus addresses in the second part of the Lord’s Prayer.

Jesus begins this section with the petition, “Give us today our daily bread.” The term “bread” certainly refers to physical sustenance, but also to all our basic needs—physical, emotional and spiritual. God desires that we look to Him as our sole source of supply for all we need to sustain the “full” life Jesus came to give us (John 10:10b). While He may use a friend to help us, a doctor to heal us, or a job to provide for us, “every good and perfect gift” ultimately comes from God (James 1:17). When we come to Him with childlike faith, He promises to carry us through each challenge of life, orchestrating to give us the “bread” we need one day at a time.

More importantly, this dependence on God and open communication about our needs meets our deep spiritual need for fellowship with our Creator. The fifth century theologian, Augustine, wrote, “Thou has made us for thyself, O God, and our hearts are restless until they find

their rest in Thee.” As we learn to talk to God about everything, by God’s design, we will find rest in our relationship with Him.

Jesus said, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty” (John 6:35). Through His death on the cross, Jesus made the way for us to be reconciled to God and be close to Him as a loving heavenly Father. As we meet with the Lord daily for prayer and meditation on His Word, our souls are fed, our spiritual thirst quenched and our spiritual life sustained. Not only this, but His Spirit within us uses our time with Christ to transform us into His likeness and strengthen us to reach out to others with God’s love and grace.

Paul wrote, “And my God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19). Jesus said, “Ask, and it will be given to you, seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you” (Matthew 7:7). To pray, “Give us today our daily bread,” is to ask God to meet all our needs—physical, emotional and spiritual—knowing He is there to do this today and every day to come.

1. a. What do people tend to do with their needs if they do not take them to the Lord?

b. What does Matthew 6:25-32 tell us *not* to do with our needs and why?

c. What are we instructed to do instead?
Matthew 6:33

Philippians 4:6-7

2. a. How do these verses describe the extent of God's care for us?
Psalm 121:3, 7-8

Luke 12:7a

b. What does He want us to do with our needs and concerns?
Psalm 62:8

Luke 18:1 (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

Verses in parenthesis () are optional.

Hebrews 4:16

3. a. Of what do these passages remind us as we come to God with our needs?

Acts 17:28a

2 Corinthians 3:5

James 1:17 (John 3:27)

b. What warning did Moses give Israel that is important for us to heed?

Deuteronomy 8:10-14, 17-18a

4. For 40 years, God supernaturally provided food for millions of Israelites in the wilderness. Read Exodus 16:14-27, 31, 35.

a. How often did manna come?

b. When did they collect it?

c. How long did it last?

d. What did they learn from God's way of providing for them?

5. a. How did Jesus describe Himself in John 6:32-35?

b. What did Jesus also promise in John 6:47-51?

Reference: Note 2, *Why did Christ have to die?* p. 15.

6. a. Jesus not only gives us spiritual life when we put our faith in His redemption; He also wants to continually feed us spiritually as we spend daily time with Him in prayer and meditation on His Word. How is this "daily bread" like the manna the Israelites fed upon in the wilderness? (Review Question 4.a-d.) What parallels do you see?

b. What did Jesus say about our need to continually stay connected to Him?

John 15:5

c. How are we changed by being with the Lord?

2 Corinthians 3:18

7. How does Matthew 7:7-8 reflect God's desire for us to come to Him with every need, concern and question?

8. What is His promise?

Philippians 4:19

S U M M A R Y

9. a. What physical, emotional or spiritual needs are in your life today? What concerns for others?

b. What does Jesus tell you *not to do* in the face of these needs and concerns?

c. What are you encouraged to do?

10. a. How can we experience Jesus as “the Bread of life?”

b. Why is daily time with Him important in your life?

c. Do you have a place, a time and a plan to meet regularly with the Lord to pray and meditate on His Word? If not, perhaps you would like to establish this now. Discuss with Him the obstacles you’ve faced and your need for help to make this time a priority.

11. How would you summarize what it means to pray “give us today our daily bread”?

Whenever a man is ready to uncover his sins, God is always ready to cover them.

Lesson 6

The Freedom of Forgiveness

“Forgive us our debts . . .”

In this second section of the Lord’s Prayer, five phrases deal with our personal needs and struggles, two of which relate to forgiveness. The topic is of such importance that Jesus later took the time to reemphasize and develop it in depth. Perhaps this is because the emotions involved with guilt (to be addressed in this lesson) and unforgiveness (which we will consider in Lesson 7) can be devastating.

Sadly, a lot of people pray the phrase, “forgive us our debts,” who do not really experience God’s forgiveness. Some don’t feel any sense of indebtedness to God. As the Pharisees of Jesus’ day, they compare themselves with other “worse sinners” and feel pretty good about themselves. However, Jesus set the norm much higher than that. He said, “Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:48), making God and His Word the standard.

Still others live with guilt, trying to cover sin by denying that it is sin or trying to somehow earn God’s forgiveness. Many live with false guilt.²

But God wants to set us free from the draining emotions surrounding guilt and shame, and He has paid a great price to make it possible. Through the cross of Christ, where Jesus took the penalty for our sin, we can be set free from the guilt that drains our energy and separates us from a loving heavenly Father. Jesus was also teaching that we must be open with our heavenly Father regarding sin in our lives in order to walk with Him in a fulfilling personal relationship.

The phrase, “forgive us our debts,” then, reminds us to ask the Holy Spirit to bring to mind any wrong we need to confess and abandon. If He reminds us of something specific we have done, we can immediately agree with God about our sin, determine to change and thank Him that, on the basis of Christ’s death on the cross, we are forgiven.

If the Spirit does not point out anything, the words, “forgive us our debts,” can remind us to be thankful that we can come into the presence of a holy God because of the forgiveness we have received through the cross of Christ. In this sense, we will always feel indebted and grateful to God for His amazing grace. One writer described it thus:

*Because the sinless Savior died
My guilty soul is counted free,
For God, the Just, is satisfied
To look on Him, and pardon me.*

In this lesson, we will look at the freedom of forgiveness God wants us to experience as we pray, “forgive us our debts.”

1. What problems do people experience as a result of guilt?

2. a. In what ways do people try to deal with guilt and the separation they feel from God?

b. Why do these responses to guilt only produce more problems?

3. What do you think are the real needs of the guilty person?

4. a. What separates man from holy God, according to Isaiah 59:2?

b. What is the penalty for sin according to Romans 6:23a (cf. Genesis 2:16-17)?

Note: *Death* biblically denotes separation, in this case from God.

5. a. How did Isaiah describe God's gift of redemption 700 years before Jesus Christ's sinless life and sacrificial death?

Isaiah 53:5-6

Isaiah 53:10-12

b. How is this expressed by Peter after Jesus' resurrection?
1 Peter 2:24

6. a. How are we made right with God according to the following?
Romans 3:22

Romans 3:24-25a

Reference: Note 1, *Redemption, Reconciliation*, p. 63-64.

Ephesians 2:8-9

b. What is the result of receiving God's gift of forgiveness in Christ?
Romans 5:1

7. Receiving God's gift of salvation in Christ is a once-and-for-all decision that places us in the family of God eternally (1 John 5:1a, 11-12). But as a follower of Christ, we can continue to find cleansing from sin, forgiveness, and a new start.

a. To experience God's love and forgiveness, we must *confess* our sin, which is to agree with God that a specific action was wrong. What is God's promise when we confess our sin to Him?
1 John 1:9?

b. To experience God's love and forgiveness requires *repentance*, a total turning from wrong to live a godly life. How did David demonstrate a repentant heart in Psalm 51:10-12?

8. a. What do the following verses reveal about God's character that encourages us to approach Him with a repentant heart?
Psalm 103:8-14

Micah 7:18-19

b. What is God's promise to the one who comes to Him in genuine repentance?
Isaiah 43:25

Isaiah 55:7

9. On what basis are we cleansed from *any* sin, small or great?
Ephesians 1:7 (Colossians 1:20-22)

Verses in parenthesis () are optional.

Matthew 26:28 (Jesus speaking)

10. The prayer, “forgive us our debts,” is not meant to send us into introspection and shame. Some people struggle with false guilt. How is false guilt different from true guilt? (See Note 2, *False guilt*, p. 64.)

11. What does Psalm 130:3-4,7-8 declare about the Lord’s forgiveness and redemption later fulfilled in Christ’s sacrificial death?

Note: *Fear of the Lord* (Ps. 130:4) is reverent trust in Him.

SUMMARY

12. On what basis does God forgive us our debts and free us from guilt?

13. Why was the cross of Christ necessary for you to be forgiven by a holy God? What does the cross prove about God's love for you?*

14. When we have received Christ, what do we have to do to receive God's forgiveness for wrongs on a daily basis (Question 7)? What heart attitudes are important?***

15. What does the prayer, "forgive us our debts" remind you to do?

*If you have never made the decision to receive God's forgiveness in Jesus Christ and would like to now, the following is a suggested prayer.

Lord Jesus, I acknowledge that my sin has separated me from you. I believe that you paid the penalty for all my sins when you died on the

cross. I now receive the complete forgiveness that you offer. I invite you to come into my life and make me the person you created me to be. Amen.

If you prayed this prayer, what does Christ promise you in Hebrews 13:5b and Revelation 3:20?

***Are there areas of your life where you would like to experience God's forgiveness once and for all? It may be helpful to take a piece of paper, go before the Lord, and prayerfully list any unforgiven sin. Take time to "call it sin, call it forgiven on the basis of the cross, and call on God to change you." Then write 1 John 1:9 in large letters across the sheet and destroy it, symbolizing God's total forgiveness.*

Express forgiveness to yourself, then acknowledge forgiveness of specific individuals who have hurt you. Finally, you may feel led to ask forgiveness of individuals you have wronged. As difficult as these tasks may seem, great joy and freedom is the result.

LESSON 6 NOTES

1 a. *Redemption* is a biblical word meaning "to buy out" or "to set free by the payment of a price (ransom)" and refers to a slave being purchased out of slavery. Romans 3:24 says we are "justified freely by his grace through the *redemption* that came by Christ Jesus." As born sinners, we are in the slave market of sin, so to speak. But Christ, the only free man who ever lived (because He was sinless), paid the ransom price of His own blood to purchase sinners out of the slave market of sin and set them free to become sons of God. Only by the price of death can one be set free (Romans 6:23), and only one who is

free (sinless as Christ was; cf. Hebrews 4:15; 2 Corinthians 5:21) can buy a slave's freedom. By paying the ransom price of His shed blood, Jesus purchased the person who puts faith in Him out of the slave market of sin and sets him free to become a son of God (Galatians 3:13; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Galatians 4:4-5).

b. Reconciliation means "to change a person from enmity to friendship." The Bible says that man is born at enmity with God. Sin erects a barrier between man and God because of a sense of guilt in man. This guilt puts him at odds with God. Reconciliation is the aspect of Christ's death on the cross which removed the barrier of man's sin and its consequences and thus took away guilt which caused enmity against God. Christ's death on the cross removed every barrier between a holy God and sinful man. Reconciliation is available to all men, no matter how sinful. While reconciliation is available and sufficient for everyone, only those who accept the gift of this reconciliation personally by faith receive it. "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). "When we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to Him through the death of His Son" (Romans 5:10). See also Note 2, *Why did Christ have to die?* p. 15.

2 False guilt. In her book, *Falling Apart or Coming Together*, Lois Walfrid Johnson contrasts the following differences between true and false guilt.*

	TRUE GUILT	FALSE GUILT
GUILT PRODUCER	The Holy Spirit convicts - based on truth	Satan condemns - based on lies
OBJECTIVE	Improvement	Defeat
SPOTLIGHT	Specific, unforgiven sin	Past failures and forgiven sin; general in nature
YOUR REACTION	Repentance; asking for forgiveness	Remorse and helplessness; a no-win situation; not knowing how to make change; no peace
GUILT PRODUCER'S ACTION	Grace, forgiveness	Accusation
RESULT	Peace; cleansing; set free; loved	No peace; defeat; hopelessness; despair. Worthlessness; emotionally, spiritually and physically tired.

*Lois Walfrid Johnson, *Falling Apart or Coming Together* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984), p. 66.

Lesson 7

The Freedom of Forgiving

“Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.”

Conflict with others is unavoidable in life. As Everett Fullam so eloquently stated (quote on p. 29), the results of the fall of man is that each of us has the tendency to want the world to be our personal kingdom where we call the shots and others follow. Conflict results, and in these conflicts we all have the opportunity to choose revenge or forgiveness.

Jesus clearly taught us to choose to forgive. He viewed this as so important that He inserted the phrase “as we also have forgiven our debtors” in the middle of His model prayer. In the same breath that we ask for God’s forgiveness, we must pause to be sure that we have forgiven anyone who has wronged us.

This is not always easy. When we are living or working with someone, for example, who continually abuses, wrongs or irritates us, the temptation to harbor resentment and hurt them for hurting us is ongoing. We could all think of situations where we will never feel like extending grace in our conflicts with others.

But Jesus teaches in the Lord’s Prayer that we must choose to forgive others as an act of the will in order to experience God’s forgiveness. “For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins” (Matthew 6:12,14-15).

Like Jesus’ teachings on loving our enemies in Matthew 5, these principles can be so difficult to accept that many people choose to

disregard them altogether. This may be because we don't think it is reasonable or necessary to forgive in some situations. Or perhaps we don't feel God has much to forgive us for, or we have forgotten the extent to which He has gone to cancel our debt for sin.

But God not only wants us to experience His forgiveness, but also freedom from the consuming and imprisoning emotions of bitterness and unforgiveness in our lives. He wants us to trust Him to deal with the person who has wronged us. This is not to say that we do not create healthy boundaries in our lives or that we enable others in their addictions. It is to say that we keep fresh in our mind the way God has forgiven us and the mercy He has shown us. Then we choose to extend that same forgiveness to the one who has hurt us. The results can be amazing.

It is important to keep in mind that Jesus, as He taught these principles, continually faced unavoidable conflict during His ministry. The religious leaders of the day were threatened by His popularity and teachings which openly confronted their rigid rules and publicly exposed their hypocrisy. In His teachings on forgiveness and love even toward our enemies, Jesus used terms that actually described how he was treated by His opposition: hated, cursed, mistreated, physically abused, and, had it been possible, robbed of His authority as the Son of God. Yet he taught *and* modeled His teachings on forgiveness. On the cross He looked down in agony upon those who hurled insults at Him and said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34).

The Lord's desire is that we not only experience the freedom of God's forgiveness secured for us through the cross, but also the benefits and freedom of forgiving others in the conflicts of life.

1. a. What are our natural responses to abuse?

b. What results when we follow these natural responses? What have you observed in your life and the lives of others?

c. What are some problems that have been caused by revenge in our world?

2. a. In the last lesson, we looked at the great price God paid to justly forgive our sins. How is this summarized in 1 Peter 2:24?

b. Why do we all need the forgiveness of the cross? What is the benefit to us who believe? Romans 3:23; 6:23

3. What are we to do in light of God's gracious forgiveness toward us? Colossians 3:13

4. What did Jesus teach us about forgiveness in Matthew 6:12,14-15?
5. a. How did Jesus explain this further in Matthew 18:21-35?
- b. What is the principle in this parable?
6. What related principles did Jesus teach in these passages?
Luke 6:37-38
- Reference:** Note 1, *Judge not*, p. 73.
- Luke 6:41-42
7. a. What did Jesus also teach His disciples in Matthew 5:44?

b. How did He model these principles during His trial and crucifixion?
Luke 23:34a

1 Peter 2:23

8. a. What related principles about forgiveness are stated in the following?
Ephesians 4:26

1 Peter 3:9, 11

Proverbs 19:11

b. What does Romans 12:19,21 command?

c. Why is God alone able to judge perfectly?
Psalm 147:5b

Also, 1 Chronicles 28:9: "...for the Lord searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts."

9. a. One of the most moving stories in the Bible is that of Joseph (Genesis 37-50). After hostile and jealous brothers sold Joseph into slavery in Egypt, a famine reunited the family after 23 years of separation. Joseph, who had become Pharaoh's right hand man, freely forgave his brothers and provided for them and their families, saving them from famine. What attitude did Joseph choose rather than revenge? Genesis 50:19-21 (45:2-8)

b. What does God promise in all circumstances of our lives? Romans 8:28

10. David endured the unjust accusations and assaults of King Saul that forced him to be a fugitive for many years. On two occasions when David had the chance, he did not kill Saul, even though Saul was seeking to kill David. What was David's focus rather than revenge? (Summarize with a sentence or two.)

Psalm 37:1-8

1 Samuel 26:7-11a

11. At times it may seem impossible to forgive the hurts inflicted on us by others. What source of power to extend God's love and forgiveness do we find in Philippians 4:13?

S U M M A R Y

12. a. On what basis does God forgive us our debts and free us from guilt?

b. How can remembering the debt God has canceled for you help you forgive others?

13. a. What principles of forgiveness and dealing with anger stand out to you in this lesson?

b. What freedom and other benefits come from following these principles?

14. When we pray the Lord's Prayer, what does the phrase "as we also have forgiven others" remind us to check in our lives?

LESSON 7 NOTES

1 *Judge not* (6:37). "In the context of Luke 6:27-36, to judge is to pass judgment on someone, to declare what he justly deserves, and furthermore to wish heartily that he will get what is coming to him. Jesus warns against judging that someone is your enemy, that he deserves to be hated and punished for hating, cursing, mistreating, striking, or robbing you (6:27-29). Judgment and condemnation are the opposites of love, mercy, giving and forgiving." *Luke, Life Change Series*, NavPress, p. 95.

Lesson 8

Facing Temptation

“And lead us not into temptation...”

As surely as conflict is unavoidable in life, so is temptation. Because Jesus was faced with enormous temptation early in His ministry, He knew the anguish we experience when it comes to resisting pulls to rebel against God’s will. So He taught us to pray that God would “lead us not into temptation.”

Certainly as we seek to follow the Lord in our daily lives, He will lead us away from many temptations that easily entice those who do not follow Him. When we receive Christ into our lives, He gives us a heart like His. Not only are we no longer drawn to many unhealthy, unconstructive activities, we see the fallacy in the idea that we must have certain things to be happy, like money, sex and power. If we begin each day giving our lives to God and asking His Spirit to control us, He will give us great strength when we face temptation, and not allow us to be tempted beyond what we can handle.

But we will face temptation, because we have an old sinful nature that responds readily to the schemes of Satan, the master of temptation. The Bible tells us that he is real, seeking to undermine our faith by using various deceptive schemes to entice us to sin, and sowing seeds of doubt, unbelief and rebellion in us. As we study Satan’s two best-known temptations in the Bible—Adam and Eve in which he succeeded, and Jesus in the wilderness in which he failed completely—we see Satan’s often-used strategy of tampering with God’s word. He twists what God has said and leads us toward self-pleasure, self-reasoning and self-prominence. The Scriptures tell us to stand firm in the faith and watch out for the temptation schemes of the enemy.

In our watchfulness, it is important to realize Satan attacks the area where we are most vulnerable, the area of our personality that is not yet fully under God's control. In times of temptation, we will undergo a great struggle between our old sinful nature and our new Christlike nature which is indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:16-17). It is important not to feel we have sinned just because we experience this battle. Jesus was also tempted, but He never sinned. We only sin when we make the choice to disobey God.

If we choose to turn the area of weakness over to the Holy Spirit's control, regardless of how many times we have failed, He will use the battle to develop more of Christ's character in that area. If we do not turn the area over to the Spirit's control, it will become a spiritual stronghold from which Satan can launch more assaults on our relationship with God. Our character and maturity as God's children grows as we determine to keep choosing God's way through the temptations of life, calling on His Spirit for help and guidance in the battles.

J. B. Phillips' translation of James 1:2-4 describes the good that can result from temptation in our lives.

When all kinds of trials and temptations crowd into your lives, my brothers, don't resent them as intruders, but welcome them as friends! Realize that they come to test your faith and to produce in you the quality of endurance. But let the process go on until that endurance is fully developed, and you will find you have become men [women] of mature character with the right sort of independence.

The difficult ordeal of temptation is a continual challenge for every believer. As we pray, "lead us not into temptation," we declare our commitment to do God's will in the power of His Spirit. In this lesson, we will look at biblical principles that give hope as we face the constant temptations of life.

1. a. The biblical definition of temptation is being enticed to sin against God. What are some subtle temptations that people face everyday?

b. What are results of falling to these temptations?

2. a. What areas of temptation are listed in 1 John 2:16?

b. How are these areas reflected in Adam and Eve's temptation in the beginning of human history?

Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-6

c. How are these areas reflected in Jesus' temptation in the wilderness? What was common in all of Jesus' responses?

Matthew 4:1-11

Reference: Notes 1-2, *Jesus' temptation*, and Note 3, *Satan*, p. 81-82.

3. If we are committed to pleasing God in our lives, how does He promise to help us with temptation?

1 Corinthians 10:13

Hebrews 2:18

Hebrews 4:15-16

4. Satan twisted God's Word to tempt Adam and Eve. Jesus used God's Word to resist Satan's temptations. How can the Word of God help us to make healthy, constructive choices in the face of temptation?

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Psalms 119:130; 138

5. What does James 1:13-15 tell us about temptation?

6. a. How do the following passages describe the Christian's battle with temptation?

Romans 7:15-23

Galatians 5:17

b. What do these passages explain about overcoming temptation?

Galatians 5:16,25 (Romans 8:5-6)

Reference: Note 3 *The Holy Spirit*, p. 46, and Note 4, *Works of the Holy Spirit*, p. 82.

7. What are we commanded in Ephesians 5:18?

Note: To be filled with the Spirit is a continuous act of choosing to be controlled by the Holy Spirit of God. The analogy with wine in Ephesians 5:18 suggests that being filled with the Spirit controls one's life in a positive way as alcohol controls one negatively.

Reference: Note 5, *Be filled with the Spirit*, p. 83.

8. To be filled, or controlled and empowered, by the Holy Spirit, we must:

(1) Confess any sin in our lives (1 John 1:9);

(2) Present every area of our lives to God (Romans 12:1-2); and

(3) Ask God to fill us with His Spirit.

What does Jesus promise in Luke 11:13?

9. To be controlled by the Holy Spirit is to live in Christ and allow Him to live His life through us. What does He tell us that relates to temptation in John 15:5?

10. When we fall to temptation, how can we get back on track? (See also #7 above.)

1 John 1:9

11. What is God's attitude toward us as we struggle to overcome temptation in order to please Him?

Psalms 103:8-14

S U M M A R Y

12. What does the prayer “lead us not into temptation” mean to you?

13. a. What temptations are most prevalent in your life today?

b. How does God want to help you with this temptation?

14. Describe the battle in our lives between the Holy Spirit and our old sinful nature when we are tempted?

b. Why are you not sinning when you experience this battle?

15. Only the Spirit can give us the power to overcome temptation. What must you do to experience this power?

16. What is your prayer regarding the Holy Spirit and your life? If you have never asked Christ to fill--control and empower--you with His Spirit, perhaps you would like to ask Him for the first time now. The following is a suggested prayer that you can pray daily:

*Lord Jesus, I acknowledge that I cannot live the Christian life in my own strength. Thank you that you have forgiven my sins through your death on the cross for me. I now invite you to take control of my life. Fill me with the Holy Spirit as you have commanded me to be filled and as you promise to do if I ask. Live your life through me, Lord, in the power of your Spirit. I pray this in the name of Jesus.
Amen.*

LESSON 8 NOTES

1 *Jesus' temptation in the wilderness* (Matthew 4:1-11). "The devil, also called Satan, tempted Eve in the Garden of Eden, and here he tempted Jesus in the desert. Satan is a fallen angel. He is *real*, not symbolic, and is constantly fighting against those who follow and obey God. Satan's temptations are real, and he is always trying to get us to live his way or our way rather than God's way. Jesus will one day reign over all creation, but Satan tried to force his hand and get him to declare his kingship prematurely. If Jesus had given in, his mission on earth—to die for our sins and give us the opportunity to have eternal life—would have been lost. When temptations seem especially strong, or when you think you can rationalize giving in, consider whether Satan may be trying to block God's purposes for your life or for someone else's life." *The NIV LAB, p. 1648.*

2 “*Jesus wasn’t tempted inside the temple or at his baptism but in the desert where He was tired, alone, and hungry, and thus most vulnerable. The devil often tempts us when we are vulnerable—when we are under physical or emotional stress (for example, lonely, tired, weighing big decisions, or faced with uncertainty). But he also likes to tempt us through our strength, where we are most susceptible to pride. We must guard at all times against his attacks.*” *The NIV Life Application Bible, p. 1648.*

3 *Satan* means “the accuser.” He is also called *the devil*. While Satan and evil adversaries, or demons, are incredible to some, it is important to understand what the Bible has to say about them. In the Gospels, Jesus delivered people from demons in numerous incidents. The Bible refers to Satan as an angelic being who led a heavenly revolt against God. Consequently, God cast him out of heaven with his rebelling host of angels (2 Peter 2:4; Revelation 12:7-9). Under Satan’s leadership, these angelic beings became known as demons, and are organized in their schemes and attacks on human beings (Ephesians 6:12). Satan and his forces work to get people to worship Satan (Luke 4:7) and to prevent individuals from turning to God (Luke 4:8). Satan’s defeat is promised in Genesis 3:15 and was completed at the cross of Christ (Colossians 2:15). In the resurrection, Christ was victorious over Satan and his power. Therefore, Jesus Christ is the permanent ruler of the whole world. Satan is still a force to be reckoned with until Christ returns to judge the earth (Matthew 16:27). Satan is the temporary ruler of the part of the world that chooses to follow him. James 4:7 instructs believers to resist the devil (or demonic forces) by continually surrendering to God’s leadership in their lives.

4 *Works of the Holy Spirit*. Because the Holy Spirit is the source of power in the Christian’s life, it is important to know who He is. Throughout Scripture, the Holy Spirit is revealed along with the Father and the Son as a full and distinct person of the Godhead. As a divine

Person, the Holy Spirit is eternal, everywhere present, almighty, perfectly wise, perfectly just and perfectly good (Hebrews 9:14, Psalm 139:7-10, 1 Corinthians 2:10-11). The Holy Spirit's distinct role is the Sanctifier who frees us to lead new lives in Christ (2 Corinthians 3:17). It is the Holy Spirit who leads us to spiritual rebirth, brings Christ's presence to us, keeps us in touch with God, makes us realize God's love, gives us power to witness and to live the Christian life, and gives us spiritual gifts with which to serve the body of Christ (Titus 3:5, John 14:16-18, Romans 8:26, Romans 5:5, Acts 1:8, Romans 8:5-9, 1 Corinthians 2:4-12). He teaches, encourages, comforts, pleads for us and leads us into all truth (John 16:13, Acts 9:31, John 14:16, Romans 8:27). Romans 8 tells us that allowing our minds to be controlled by the Holy Spirit is the key to 'life and peace' (8:6) and experiencing victory over the sin that seeks to control us. See also Note 3, *Holy Spirit*, p. 46.

5 *Be filled with the Holy Spirit* (Ephesians 5:18) does not refer to a quantity of the Spirit (like a glass needing to be filled as opposed to half-filled with water). The phrase refers to the continual choice we can make to allow the Holy Spirit to completely control our lives. Neither does the analogy with alcohol ("do not get drunk with wine") mean we get drunk with the Spirit in a way that we don't see, hear, feel or reason realistically or with self-control. The Holy Spirit produces the life of Christ in us, giving us godly perception, power, love and self-discipline (2 Timothy 1:7), and the fruit listed in Gal 5:22-23.

Lesson 9

Protection Against Evil

“...but deliver us from the evil one.”

One need only read a newspaper or turn on a television to observe that evil is a reality that daily wreaks havoc on nations and individuals. For many, the response to evil is fear and despair. But the Christian can have hope. Throughout the Scriptures God reveals Himself as our refuge and salvation in the face of evil, and He is stronger than the destructive forces we face in this world. God has made death itself into a passageway to eternal life with Him in a new heaven and earth that is absent of evil. In acknowledgement of this hope and our dependence on God for protection, Jesus taught us to pray, “Father...deliver us from the evil one.”

To understand this request, we have to look at the Greek words used for *deliver* and *evil*. *Deliver* is translated from the words *apo rhuomai* meaning *to rescue away from, to preserve through, and so, to deliver*. The word *poneros*, denotes *what is evil in influence and effect, malignant, destructive, injurious in nature*. It is the opposite of what is kind, gracious, and of service.

The usage of the word as a noun indicates Jesus was speaking of Satan, the one the Bible ascribes to being the originator of all that is evil in our world.¹ Jesus had faced Satan and his demonic forces in His human experience and knew God alone could preserve us through the powerful and age-old destructive schemes of this enemy. Jesus is teaching us in the Lord’s Prayer that our heavenly Father is available and able to do this.

To ask the Father to deliver us from evil, then, is essentially asking Him to keep us from falling into the clutches of evil, to take us through it and deliver us from the destructive intentions of Satan.² However evil stalks us—through overwhelming temptations, difficult circumstances or the cruelty of others—we can know that God is “for us” and is more powerful than the one behind the evils we face. Satan is limited by God. Nothing can touch us unless permitted by God, and then it is allowed only for our benefit.³ As stated, death itself is only victory for the believer in Christ.

God’s deliverance from evil not only involves protection from an overwhelming foe. God uses our conflicts with evil to build and transform us into whole people who reflect His character. In his book, *A Layman Looks at the Lord’s Prayer*, W. Phillip Keller shows the Father’s love in this process using the analogy of a child learning to walk. Just as a loving parent is supportive and attentive and encouraging as his child progresses through the falls, bumps and bruises, God helps us learn to “walk” spiritually as we battle evils in ourselves and the world. His desire is not that we be in a state of despair over our weaknesses and failures, but rather that He be with us in the learning process, providing strength and guidance and encouragement through the struggles that build wholeness and a deeper relationship with Him in our lives.

In his book, Keller speaks of three keys to experiencing God’s deliverance from evil. First, when we face evil we must deliberately turn to God for help. In simple, sincere prayer, we can tell Him how the battle is beyond us to cope with and ask Him by His Spirit to get us through it without falling.

A second key to experiencing God’s deliverance from evil is to heed common sense. Paul told Timothy to “Flee these [evil] things...” (1 Timothy 6:11). In areas of our lives where we are most vulnerable to

fall, we need to heed the inner voice that says to stay away from the places, situations or people that pull us down. The Holy Spirit will also give us a sense of caution when we cannot see the danger.

The final key is to be ready to resist the devil (James 4:7). When we feel overwhelmed by fear, doubt, unbelief or the pull to rebel against God's way, we must remember that the "sword of the Spirit" that destroys the enemy is the Word of God (Ephesians 6:17). We resist the devil by first submitting ourselves to God and then quoting Scripture related to the situation. Jesus did this in His wilderness temptations (Matthew 4). The more we study and memorize Scripture, the easier this becomes.

All of these areas of biblical truth are bound up in Jesus' prayer, "Father...deliver us from the evil one." In this lesson, we will look at some of these principles from the Scriptures.

1. a. What is the definition of evil in the commentary (paragraph 2)?

b. What is the deliverance Jesus speaks of in the Lord's Prayer? (Review Lesson 9 commentary, paragraphs 2, 4.)

2. What does Ephesians 6:10-13 tell us about the battle against evil in our world?

Reference: *Satan*, p. 82.

3. a. List words or phrases that describe the armor of God in Ephesians 6:14-17. What protects us in the battle?

b. What practical choices allow us to put on God's armor?
Proverbs 4:14-15

1 Timothy 6:11

Romans 6:13

4. a. What is the most important key in the battle against evil?
Ephesians 6:18

b. The power of prayer and praising God in the battles of life is demonstrated dramatically in 2 Chronicles 20. Summarize this story. 2 Chronicles 20:1-6, 12-15, 21-24.

c. What were the keys to victory for the nation of Judah?

d. What does this story encourage us to do?

5. a. Who gives us the strength from within for the battles?
Romans 8:26

Ephesians 3:16,20

b. What spirit does the Holy Spirit give us in the warfare?
2 Timothy 1:7

1 John 4:4

6. How are we changed by struggles against evil?
Romans 5:3-5 (James 1:2-4)

1 Peter 5:10

7. As we make these choices of faith and commitment, of what can we
be confident?
Psalm 37:23-24

Isaiah 43:2-3a

1 John 5:18

8. What do these Scriptures instruct regarding the battles we face against evil?

1 Peter 5:8-9

Reference: Note 2, *Satan constrained*, p. 91.

9. What is the final result of God delivering us from evil?

2 Timothy 4:18

Jude 24-25

S U M M A R Y

10. What is the promise hidden in Jesus' prayer, "Father...deliver us from the evil one"?

11. What choices can you make in order to receive God's protection against evil?

12. What does God want to do in your life through your struggles with evil?

13. Is there an area of your life where you are battling evil right now? What encouragement have you found in this lesson?

LESSON 9 NOTES

1 Reference: Note 3, *Satan, devil*, p. 82.

2 *Satan constrained.* “To understand the power of Satan in the lives of Christians, imagine a stake driven into the ground. Tethered on a long chain attached to the stake is a roaring, ravenous lion. As a Christian passes by, the lion sees him, roars and makes a mighty lunge toward him, but he’s stopped by the chain and that’s as far as he can go. All he can do is roar. However, because of free will, the Christian can, if he wants to, walk within the radius of the chain. But he will be consumed, for in that case he is no match for the evil one. However, the lion can’t force the Christian to walk within his range. And neither will God lead him within that circle of genuine danger; He will merely let the Christian be tested. God has set limits on Satan’s power. Satan cannot lead us into rebellion and sin unless we agree to cooperate. The Scripture tells us that Christians have been taken out of the kingdom of darkness over which Satan rules and transferred into the kingdom of God’s beloved Son (Colossians 1:13). It’s as though we have emblazoned on our foreheads the words, 'Under New Management.'

Satan no longer has rights over us unless we give them to him.”
Everett Fullam, *Living the Lord’s Prayer*, pp. 100-101.

3 Reference: Note 4, C. H. Welch, p. 47.

Lesson 10

The Kingdom, the Power and the Glory

*“For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever.”
Amen.”*

The doxology at the end of the Lord’s Prayer appears in only about half of the 6,000 full or partial New Testament manuscripts existent from early times. Eminent textual authorities believe it was added by later hands, probably to make the prayer more suitable for public worship.

Certainly inspired by the Holy Spirit, if not from Jesus’ lips, the doxology of the Lord’s Prayer makes the prayer begin and end with worship. Its main ideas are clearly biblical and coincide with a prayer of David recorded in 1 Chronicles 29:11—“Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O Lord, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all.”

For these reasons, it seems appropriate to conclude our study of the Lord's Prayer with a look at the meaning behind its traditional doxology.

To say “Yours is the kingdom” is to reaffirm that the Lord is sovereign over our world. Kings and nations rise and fall and are limited by God in what they can do. While Satan has great power to influence, the Bible makes very clear that the Lord will finally triumph in the battle between good and evil. Though He created a world in which evil was possible, it exists by His permission and to accomplish His purposes. Biblical prophecy and events prove that God reigns supreme over the events and destiny of history. Its final book, Revelation, tells us that in

the end the Lord will replace our chaotic world with a new eternal heaven and earth absent of evil, filled with the righteousness of God, and ruled by Jesus Christ, whom God has declared King of Kings forever (Revelation 17:14; 19:16).

“Yours is the kingdom” thus reminds us that our heavenly Father is sovereign and bids us to lay down our rival kingdoms and let Him reign in our lives.

“Yours is the power” reminds us that all power resides in God’s hands. He sustains His creation, ordering galaxies as well as the life of the smallest organism. Each person’s existence as well as what he may take pride in—beauty, talents, intelligence, riches, or otherwise—comes from God. This leaves no room for self-exaltation. His power not only sustains our lives today, but will one day bring about the kingdom where believers will live eternally. “Yours is the power” calls us to bow before the One who holds our lives in His hands.

“Yours is the glory” reminds us of the glorious character of God. The more we see the character of our heavenly Father—His greatness, justice, love, generosity, graciousness--the more we are seeing His eternal glory. Everything exists for the glory of God--to reveal His majesty, holiness, goodness, and perfection.

The greatest revelation of God’s glory is in His Son, Jesus Christ. By His life, death, resurrection, and present reign in heaven, He is a reflection of God’s perfect character and passion to bring sons and daughters out of the human race to *share* His glory. As we yield our lives to God, the Holy Spirit delights to produce God’s character in us, enabling us to reflect His nature in our words and deeds and countenance. As the moon reflects the light of the sun, so we are made to reflect His glory forever.

Finally, the “amen” that concludes the Lord’s Prayer is not just a word used to end our prayer. It means “so let it be” or “let it be so.” To say “amen” is to say, “Yes, this is right; I agree. Let this happen; let this be the case.” As we praise our heavenly Father, seek first His kingdom, trust Him for our needs, receive His forgiveness, and draw on His strength to overcome temptation and evil, we can be sure He will accomplish His good and loving purpose for our lives. The “amen” of the Lord’s Prayer is a final declaration of faith in God and commitment to His will above our own.

The disciple wanted Jesus to teach him how to pray as He did to unlock the secret of His amazing ministry. And so Jesus gave it to him, and to us in the Lord's Prayer.

1. What does “Yours is the kingdom forever and ever” mean?

2. a. What does Psalm 93 declare about the Lord’s reign?
Psalm 93:1 (3,4b)

Psalm 93:2

Psalm 93:5

Psalm 89:14

b. How does Psalm 89:15-17a describe people who revere the Lord and allow Him to be King in their lives?

3. To what does “Yours is the power forever and ever” refer?

4. a. Man tends to take pride in his own reasoning and strength. What do the following verses state?

Deuteronomy 8:17-18a (1 Chronicles 29:12)

Acts 17:28a

Isaiah 40:6-8, 22a

Isaiah 40:23-24

b. How is God's power described in the following?
Isaiah 40:12, 15

Isaiah 40:22b, 26

Isaiah 40:13-14

5. What is God's promise to those who trust in His power and wisdom?
Isaiah 40:11

Isaiah 40:27-29

Isaiah 40:31

6. a. What power has God vested in the risen Lord Jesus Christ?
Hebrews 1:3a; Colossians 1:17

b. How do these passages describe the power produced in our lives through faith in Christ?
Ephesians 1:18-20

Ephesians 3:16, 20

7. What does “Yours is...the glory forever and ever” mean?

8. a. The glory of the Lord is the rightful honor He should receive because of who He is. (For review, see Attributes of God list, p. 28.)
What does David declare in 1 Chronicles 29:11?

b. How do the following verses describe God's glorious character?
Psalm 145:8-9

Psalm 145:13b-14

9. a. Jesus laid aside His glory when He came to serve us. What did Jesus pray in the garden of Gethsemane before His crucifixion?
John 17:5, 22-23

b. What do these verses say about reflecting the glory of God?
2 Corinthians 3:18 (Galatians 5:22-23)

Colossians 3:12-17

S U M M A R Y

10. a. What truths about God and your relationship to Him stand out to you from this lesson?

b. Why is it important to end prayer with a focus on God's kingdom, power and glory?

11. a. In what areas do you need special comfort, strength, and wisdom today?

b. What promises from this lesson encourage you? (Do a quick review of your lesson and list references here.)

c. What do these promises encourage you to do?

12. When you give the Lord all the praise and glory, His glory is reflected in your life. What manifestations of His glory do you most desire the Spirit to produce in you?

REVIEW

Connecting With God: Insights into the Lord's Prayer

13. a. Why is it important to begin and end prayer with a focus on God and His will?

b. What did Jesus teach about coming to God with personal needs and struggles? What should we ask Him for?

14. What comes to mind as you think of these phrases?
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.

Forgive us our debts.

Forgive us as we forgive our debtors.

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

For Yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever and ever.

Amen.

15. What have you learned about God and your relationship with God from this study?

16. What secret to His amazing ministry did Jesus give the disciple who asked, “Lord, teach us to pray”?

The Lord’s Prayer as a Guide to Prayer

Our Father in heaven

Dear heavenly Father, thank you that I can call you Father.

Hallowed be your name

May your name be honored, because you are gracious, loving, merciful, good, wise, concerned, understanding, just, pure, holy, all-powerful and all-knowing. I worship you.

Your kingdom come

Lord, I give you all I have and am, and ask you to reign in my life today by your Spirit.

Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven

Not my will but your will, Father, is all I want or need.

Give us today our daily bread

I look to you to meet all my needs today -- physical, emotional, spiritual -- as you have promised. (Pray about specific needs of yourself and others here.)

Forgive us our debts

Lord, thank you that you paid for all my sins on the cross. (Confess any specific sin that comes to mind, and thank Him for His forgiveness through the cross.)

as we have forgiven our debtors

Because you have forgiven me all of the sins of my life when you died on the cross, I don't want to harbor any unforgiveness toward others. (Declare your forgiveness of any specific people that come to mind.)

And lead us not into temptation

Lord, fill me with your Spirit that He may give me the power to do your will today and to resist the temptations I will face. (Confess any sin that comes to mind. Thank Him that Christ died on the cross for all your sins.)

but deliver us from the evil one

Lord, protect me from the enemy by your Spirit and by your mighty angels. Thank you that your Spirit within me is greater than the forces of evil in this world. (Pray for protection or deliverance of others that are on your heart.)

For yours is the kingdom

Father, I praise you that you reign over our world and over all the universe.

Yours is the power

You alone are all powerful, not kings or nations. All power is yours.

Yours is the glory forever

Forever your name is glorious -- you are holy, gracious, loving, faithful. I love and praise you, dear heavenly Father.

Amen

Amen.

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