



NEW TESTAMENT • LESSON 15

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

*We live for the praise of God, not man.*



### MONDAY

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#### **THE STORY: MATTHEW 6:1-4**

Give in secret. This passage seems to contradict the one that came a chapter before. In Matthew 5:16 Jesus taught we should not keep our light hidden. Now we are instructed to keep our acts of righteousness hidden in secret. What is the difference? Clearly Jesus is speaking against the way the hypocrites lived, parading their good works for all to see. They wanted to look good in front of others. Outwardly they displayed their good works, but inwardly they were full of sin.

#### **TALK ABOUT IT:**

Why might we be tempted to do our acts of righteousness before men? (If people see the good we do, they will think well of us.)

Is doing good acts for others to see wrong? (No, doing good acts that others can see is not wrong. It is the motive of the heart that is being questioned. If we give up our place in line as a true demonstration of kindness, we have not sinned. But if we call attention to giving up our place in line and draw our pleasure from the recognition that comes from our act of kindness, we are guilty of self-glory. God alone deserves the glory.)

In what ways might you be tempted toward self-glory? (Parents, help your children to see ways in which they might do good works for recognition or brag about good works for self-praise.)

**PRAY:**

Ask God to help us live in such a way that He receives the glory for our good works done in public or private.



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**TUESDAY**

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**THE STORY: MATTHEW 6:5-13**

Pray in secret. Jesus continues to warn against hypocrisy using the illustration of prayer. He is not prohibiting public prayer. Rather He is speaking against those who, when praying, draw attention to themselves. Their focus, rather than being on God, is on themselves. Their concern, rather than being communion with God, is the praise of their fellow man.

Jesus goes on to teach His disciples how to pray. The first half of the Lord's Prayer is all about giving God the glory due His name. This stands in stark contrast to the self-glorifying prayer of the hypocrite. Jesus then introduces his hearers to the amazing truth that God is our Father in heaven. God is personal. He is our Father. He has a name, a kingdom, and a will. After celebrating the glory of God and His person, the prayer moves on to requesting help from God for daily living. What an amazing truth! Jesus encourages us to ask God for help.

**TALK ABOUT IT:**

What are we asking for when we ask God for daily bread? (This portion of the prayer is not meant to suggest we should ask God for bread to eat every day. Daily bread represents our basic needs. We need food, clothing, water, shelter, and many other things every day. By praying to God each day for our daily bread we admit that we need God's help and cannot provide for ourselves.)

Jesus invites us to ask God to meet our daily needs. How should that encourage us in praying for the things we need? (If Jesus tells us to ask, we can expect He is prepared to act on our request. In fact, Jesus later presents God as a Father who loves to give good gifts to His children. See Matthew 7:11.)

**PRAY:**

Take time to pray through the Lord's Prayer, feeling the freedom to personalize "daily bread" to include what you need today. For instance, if you are sick, pray that God would heal you.



**WEDNESDAY**  
**WHERE IS THE GOSPEL?**

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**THE STORY: MATTHEW 6:12-14**

When Jesus prayed that God's kingdom would come and His will be done, He was praying for His own death to be accomplished. Prior to His crucifixion, Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane for the cup of suffering to pass, but only according to the will of His Father. Jesus came as a servant, lived a sinless life, and then gave up His life so that we could be delivered from temptation and evil. Apart from the work of Christ, the Lord's Prayer would be meaningless.

Forgiveness would not be possible if it were not for Jesus' death on the cross. God can forgive us only because the penalty for our sin has been taken by Jesus. Hebrews 9:22 tells us that without the shedding of blood, there can be no forgiveness. The Lord's Prayer would be meaningless if Jesus were not to die on the cross to make forgiveness possible.

Forgiveness marks our lives as Christians – the Lord's Prayer assumes those who seek God's forgiveness have already forgiven those who have sinned against them. Jesus concludes the Lord's Prayer by explaining that forgiving others is a

requirement to receiving forgiveness. This does not mean that we can earn God's forgiveness by forgiving others. Rather, this is one of many indicators of true conversion. If we understand our sinfulness and the tremendous suffering Jesus endured to make a way for our forgiveness, we will gladly forgive others.

Our sin against God is worse than any crime that might be committed against us. If, however, we do not understand the priceless gift of God's forgiveness, we won't have a basis to forgive the debt of others against us. There is always a cost to forgiveness. Jesus endured the Father's wrath for our sin. He bore the cost of our sin in a justifying, redeeming way. Of course, we cannot do that. For us, the cost of forgiveness has to do with not seeking, demanding, or subtly exacting some kind of payment for the sin against us. The cost of forgiveness for us is in releasing the debt owed. Genuine forgiveness costs us the "right" to seek repayment for sin, or to try to somehow "get even." Such forgiving is only possible as we understand how great a debt of sin we have been forgiven in the gospel. It is simply unthinkable for ones who have been forgiven so great a debt of sin against a holy God to exact payment from others for their sins.

### **TALK ABOUT IT:**

Why can it be hard to forgive someone who has sinned against us? (People who sin against us bring hurt upon us, and we can be unwilling to pay the cost of giving up our desire for retribution. Forgiveness releases the offender from the debt. We bear that cost ourselves. Our forgiveness is a reflection of God's forgiveness in the gospel.)

Is there anyone you don't want to forgive or find it difficult to forgive? (Parents, first be honest yourself, then draw out your children. What if a brother or sister or friend broke a favorite toy in a fit of anger? It would likely be difficult to forgive them. Sin in us might cause a desire to arise to break one of their toys. Revenge is a wicked temptation that is the opposite of forgiveness.)

### **PRAY:**

Pray that God would give you the grace to quickly forgive others as God has forgiven you.



## THURSDAY

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### **THE STORY: MATTHEW 6:16-18**

Fast in secret. Jesus continues His warning against hypocrisy by using a third illustration of fasting. In each case, with good works, prayer, and fasting, Jesus mentions a reward. Even though all we do is by God's grace, God promises to reward us for the good works He enables us to do! But if we do our good works to receive praise from men, that praise will be our only reward.

### **TALK ABOUT IT:**

What is fasting? (Fasting is giving up eating for a short season as an act of self-denial and worship of God.)

Why would we want to fast? (It is easy to find our pleasure in the things of this world. Perhaps the food we eat gives us the most pleasure. In contrast, we can easily forget just how much we need God's Word, which is our spiritual food. Think for a minute. How long would it take for you to notice if you were not given any food? One or two meals later you would be aware of your hunger. In contrast, it is easy for us to go days, weeks, even months without taking in the Word of God. Taking away our food and putting in its place the reading of God's Word and prayer helps us keep our priorities straight. Fasting is an act of worship and devotion to God.)

### **PRAY:**

Ask God to help you remember to keep God's Word and prayer as priorities in your life.



## FRIDAY ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

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### **THE STORY: ISAIAH 53:8**

Jesus was stricken for our transgressions. The wrath of God was poured out on Him instead of us. In 1 Corinthians 15:3 Paul says that Christ died for us in accordance with the Scriptures. Paul also says that this is of first importance and the heart of the Gospel.

### **TALK ABOUT IT:**

Why is Jesus standing as our substitute so important? (We are all sinners and deserve to be punished for our sin. If Jesus did not take our place, no one would be able to go to heaven. Instead we would all be judged forever in the fires of hell.)

What does it mean that Jesus was stricken for our transgressions? (Jesus was stricken in two ways: by man and by God. Jesus - the perfect, sinless man - was persecuted and beaten by men. Secondly, Jesus was cursed by God upon the cross, and the wrath for our sin was poured out on Jesus.)

### **PRAY:**

Thank Jesus for His sacrifice upon the cross, where He received the just penalty for our sin.