

THE KING OF KINGS: A STUDY OF MATTHEW

The King's Arrival: A Study of Matthew 1–7

STUDY EIGHTEEN

Prayer and Fasting Minus All the Pizzazz

Matthew 6:9–18

The best place to pray is in a private room. We do our best work of prayer on our knees when nobody is around.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

IN Matthew 6:2–8, Jesus was specific. He said we should give simply, sincerely, and secretly, trusting that our good Father sees us and will reward His loving children. When we pray, Jesus specified *where* we are to pray: “go away by yourself, shut the door behind you” (Matthew 6:6); *to whom* we are to pray: “to your Father” (6:6); and *how* we are to pray: “don’t babble on and on as the Gentiles do” (6:7).

In this study, Jesus teaches us *what* to pray: the Lord’s Prayer. Undoubtedly, this prayer, which Matthew preserved for us in 6:9–13, is the most well-known prayer ever uttered. Rarely does our Lord design a one-size-fits-all pattern of worship for His disciples, but here is an exception. What follows is a paradigm for prayer, a divine model for all God’s children to follow.



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Make the Lord’s Prayer your prayer as you open His Word. You may have memorized the prayer in another Bible version, which you may wish to quote. Here is the prayer from the New Living Translation.



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Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

Prayer and Fasting Minus All the Pizzazz

Matthew 6:9–18

“Our Father in heaven,
 may your name be kept holy.
May your Kingdom come soon.
May your will be done on earth,
 as it is in heaven.
Give us today the food we need,
and forgive us our sins,
 as we have forgiven those who sin against us.
And don't let us yield to temptation,
 but rescue us from the evil one.” (Matthew 6:9–13)



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Read the full passage on giving, prayer, and fasting, [Matthew 6:1–18](#), and notice the emphasis on *private* and *personal* devotion to the Lord.

- “When you give . . . don't do as the hypocrites do” (Matthew 6:2); *instead*, “Give your gifts in private” (6:4).
- “When you pray, don't . . . pray publicly” (6:5); *instead*, “pray to your Father in private” (6:6).
- “When you pray, don't babble on and on” (6:7); *instead*, “Pray like this” (6:9).
- “When you fast, don't make it obvious” (6:16); *instead*, “comb your hair and wash your face” (6:17).

Shining like a glittering jewel in a setting of gold, the Lord's Prayer is the centerpiece of this passage. We could title it the “Disciple's Prayer” because Jesus designed it as a teaching tool to help us experience the kind of daily and dependent relationship He had with His Father. Look closer at this prayer, observing two main themes: adoration (6:9–10) and petition (6:11–13). And then, we'll conclude with Jesus' teaching on fasting.



Observation: The Lord's Prayer and Fasting

A loupe is a magnifying glass that jewelers use to see the tiniest details of a gemstone. Using your *Searching the Scriptures* observation skills, examine the Lord's Prayer like a jeweler looking through a loupe.¹



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Adoration of the Lord—Matthew 6:9–10

Look first at the Lord's *name*. How do we address God, and what does this title say about our relationship with God and His character (*Matthew 6:9*)?

Second, notice the Lord's *realm*. What realm does the Lord inhabit, and what do we pray for as we come before Him (*6:9*)?

Realm implies “rulership,” so the third facet is the Lord's *rule*. Over what does the Lord rule, and what do we pray for regarding his rule (*6:10*)?



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Finally, we put ourselves under the Lord's rule by submitting to His *will*. Where do we pray for the Lord's will to be accomplished and in what manner (6:10)?

Pause and imagine just these verses of the Lord's Prayer fulfilled—all people adoring the Lord and surrendering to His will in complete submission. What would our world be like?

When the will of God is done in our lives, we become the living personification of the kingdom of Christ. When we give up our wills and embrace His will, we enthrone the Lord and model "kingdom life." God's kingdom is at work in us and through us.

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Petitions to the Lord—Matthew 6:11–13

What did Jesus say we are to ask the Lord to give us (*Matthew 6:11*)? What do you notice about this brief request?



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While the first petition is physical in nature, the second is spiritual: *forgive us*. As nourishing as bread is to our bodies, forgiveness is to our souls. What did Jesus say about our need for God's forgiveness and our need to forgive others (*Matthew 6:12*)? What explanatory point did Jesus add in *6:14–15*?

Third, having been forgiven for past sins, we look forward and petition the Lord to *lead us*. The statement, “do not lead us into temptation” (6:13 NASB), is a permissive imperative in Greek, which can be stated, “don't let us yield to temptation” (6:13). We can't avoid the tests and temptations that lurk around every bend. So we ask the Lord to lead us in such a way that they not overwhelm us. Try stating this petition in your own words.

In addition, we ask the Lord to *deliver us*. From what and whom do we ask deliverance, and why do you think Jesus taught His followers to make this request (6:13)?



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Matthew 6:9–18

Our adversary hates everything we love. He hates the will of God. He hates the Word of God. The devil hates our joy in Christ. Cast out of God's presence, the devil looks with envy on us who have a favored position near God because of the death and resurrection of Christ.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

When We Fast—Matthew 6:16–18

Jesus included fasting in His theme of personal and private devotion. What did He warn against and what did He encourage (*Matthew 6:16–18*)? How is His teaching about fasting similar to giving and prayer?

Why do we fast? Fasting helps us concentrate on issues. It's good for our health. It enables us to rearrange and fix our priorities. It encourages us to examine our lives and motives. It assists in finding the Lord's will. It strengthens our self-control. It helps us deal with our grief. It brings us back to the basics and simplifies our lives. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: The Meaning of Key Concepts

In the interpretation phase of *Searching the Scriptures*, let's seek to understand the meaning of three key concepts: *hallowed*, *kingdom*, and *forgiveness*. Pastor Chuck explains these concepts on pages 113–114 of his commentary, *Insights on Matthew 1–15*. Consult those pages as you answer the following questions. A helpful online resource is [Constable's Notes](http://netbible.org) at netbible.org.



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“Hallowed Be Your Name”—Matthew 6:9 NASB

The word, *hallowed*, is a passive imperative. We pray that the Father’s name be hallowed. Consult *Insights on Matthew 1–15* and read the ways the *New Century Version* and *New English Translation* Bible versions translate the word. What does *hallowed* mean?

In your own words, elaborate upon this prayer in a few sentences to help you get a firmer grasp of its full meaning.

We pray for God who is holy to be revered as holy, and, in a similar way, we pray for God who already reigns to spread His reign in people’s hearts as more people come to faith in Him. Let’s look closer at this part of the Lord’s Prayer.

“May Your Kingdom Come”—Matthew 6:10

What does this request mean? With eyes to the future, we pray for God’s kingdom to come—when Christ returns to rule in the millennial age—and we join our voices with the apostle John’s, “Come, Lord Jesus!” (Revelation 22:20). At the same time, we plant our feet in the present and pray for God to spread His reign in us and to people everywhere *now* as we enthrone Christ in our hearts and live out His kingdom principles.



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Express the dual meaning of this part of the Lord's Prayer in your own words.

“Forgive Us Our Sins”—Matthew 6:12

How does Pastor Chuck explain the correlation between God forgiving us and us forgiving others (*Matthew 6:12, 14–15*)?

Forgiving others doesn't earn God's forgiveness, for we are saved by grace through faith in Christ (Ephesians 2:8–9). Forgiving others, however, does allow us to enjoy the blessings of God's forgiveness and the intimacy of fellowship with Him. Let's take a deeper look into this principle.



Correlation: The Consequences of Unforgiveness

In *Matthew 18:23–35*, Jesus told a story about a king who forgave his servant a great debt. However, when the ungrateful servant refused to forgive the small debt of another servant, the king summoned him and said, “Shouldn't you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?” (*Matthew 18:33*). Then the king “sent the man to prison to be tortured until he had paid his entire debt” (*18:34*).

This negative story of the consequences of unforgiveness illustrates a positive point: *God's mercy is a powerful force*. When truly received, it *will* transform our hearts and empower us to forgive others as our Father forgave us.



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Write down your understanding of Jesus' teaching on forgiveness as it relates to God forgiving us.

If you're holding a grudge, today is a great day to give it to the Lord. Say to Him, "I don't deserve Your forgiveness. How could I hold an offense against another person?" Release the debt and forgive. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: The Lord's Prayer in Action

Bring to life the Lord's Prayer by taking the following steps. First, *make the heavenly Father, not people, your main focus*. Hallow His name. Build His kingdom. Do His will. How can you take this step today?

Second, *make the secret place, not the public place, your primary platform*. Only in the private space of our prayer closet can our devotion to God be formed. What can you do to follow through with this principle?



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As you close, pray the Lord's Prayer again slowly and meditatively. Reflect on the many sparkling facets of this magnificent prayer. Own this prayer by inserting your name: _____'s Prayer. Make this prayer reveal the heart of *your* relationship with God and then carry it with you into the wide expanse of all your relationships.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, may people everywhere acknowledge the wonder of who You are and all that You do as they join the heavenly host in submitting to Your rule. Nourish my body and refresh my soul today. Forgive me as I forgive others. Lead me on Your righteous path. And deliver me from the snares of the evil one. I trust You as my provider and protector this day and every day. I pray in Jesus' name, amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the Web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."

