



DAILY DEVOTIONALS

OUR
FATHER

WEEK OF PRAYER AND FASTING 2023

*"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name."*

Matthew 6:9

It's always been fascinating to me that when Jesus was asked by His disciples, "Lord, teach us to pray", Jesus' response was to pray. This communicates to me that prayer isn't a formula to learn but a conversation to have. And so, Jesus invites them to listen to the conversation He is having with God. However, not all conversations are the same.

The kind of conversation people have depends on the type of relationship between the two people talking. The manner of conversation we have with the grocery clerk is going to be different than the sort of conversation we would have with our best friend.

The truth is, the type of conversation we have with God will be determined by the nature of the relationship we think we have with God. By calling God "Father", Jesus reveals that His relationship with God is one of deep dependence and intimacy and that is His starting place for prayer.

Jesus is inviting us to have the same relationship with God that He has. He is inviting us to know God as our Father and the good news is that we don't have to earn it, it's a gift given to those who have put their faith in Jesus.

THE STARTING POINT

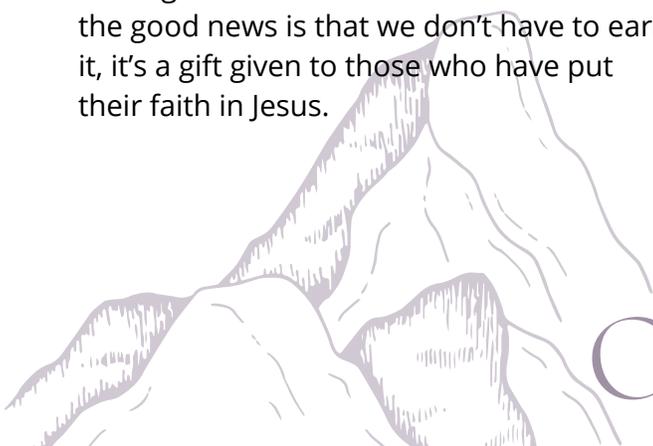
Jesus not only starts by calling God "Father" but by calling God "Our Father" – signifying that the relationship He has with the Father is also ours to enjoy through Him. Because of Jesus, our starting place with God can only be a place of deep dependence and intimacy.

Today, Jesus is inviting us into a life of prayer that begins with relationship. It's not that we earn relationship with God the more we pray. It's that we have relationship with God, and so we pray.

Call to Action

Pray today to your Father in heaven. Tell Him what's on your mind and even take a moment to pause and listen. Speak to Him as someone who has already been given the gift of deep dependence and intimacy.

*You have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when He adopted you as His own children. Now we call Him, "Abba, Father."
(Romans 8:15 NLT)*



AGENDAS MATTER



We often don't want people in our life with agendas, or so we say we don't. However, this isn't completely true. If someone were to ask to meet with us with no agenda, that meeting would be a waste of time.

Agendas get a bad reputation mostly because they are used to describe hidden, ulterior motives to what has been communicated. But the truth is, agendas matter and the right agendas matter even more.

When Jesus prays, "Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven", He has just revealed that God has an agenda. We usually refer to it as His plan, His way, and His will.

In fact, the Bible repeatedly shows us that God has an agenda. God had an agenda when He created Adam and Eve. He had an agenda when He called Abraham. God had an agenda when He spoke to Moses from the burning bush. What we always see in the Bible is that when God communicates His agenda, He always includes an invitation. An invitation to join Him and partner with Him.

Adam and Eve were invited into the cultivation of Earth (Genesis 2:15). Abraham was invited into creating a nation and a people God would call His own (Genesis 12:1-3).

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

Matthew 6:10

Moses was invited to lead the great escape of God's people (Exodus 3:9-10). When God communicated His agenda (His plan, ways, and will), He does so with an invitation to join Him in what He wants to do.

So, by teaching us to pray, "Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven", Jesus is not only revealing that God has an agenda – He is showing us that we are intricately involved in God's agenda to do His will and bring His Kingdom on the Earth.

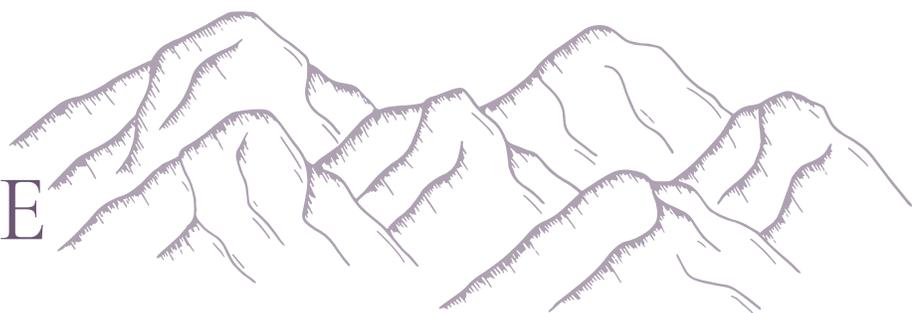
God wants to use us to accomplish His agenda. This requires putting our agenda aside and realizing that His agenda comes first. It also requires loving His agenda more than our own.

Call to Action

Take time to pray for God's agenda (His plan, His ways, and His will) to be accomplished in your life and to reveal ways in which you can partner with Him to bring His will and Kingdom on Earth as it is in Heaven.

He will always give you all you need from day to day if you will make the Kingdom of God your primary concern. (Luke 12:31 TLB).

DEEP DEPENDENCE



When we don't trust a person, we usually don't ask for their help. Asking for their help can be dangerous and irresponsible. It's not a common practice, but, by the same token, asking God for help should be a common practice in our life. That's because unlike a stranger we don't trust, God is completely trustworthy, and He actually has the power to help us. If asking a stranger, we don't trust, for help is dangerous and irresponsible, then not asking a trustworthy and powerful God for help is also dangerous and irresponsible.

When Jesus prays and teaches the disciples to pray the words, "Give us this day our daily bread", He is reminding us that asking God for help is the responsible thing to do because we are dependent on Him. We can depend on God for our daily needs, requirements, and worries. The most wonderful part about it is that God cares for those things because He cares for us (1Peter 5:7).

How much we depend on God reveals how much we trust Him and how much we trust Him reveals how much we believe He cares for us. He cares for us a great deal!

The God who made Heaven and Earth is more than capable of handling any situation we find ourselves dealing with.

Call to Action

Bring your cares and needs before Him, depend on Him and prove Him to be the trustworthy and caring Father He has promised to be. He is eager to help you, sustain you and give you peace. Take some time to thank God for the needs He has met and thank Him, in advance, for meeting the needs you now present before Him.

I look up to the mountains—does my help come from there? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth! (Psalm 121:1-2 NLT)

"Give us this day our daily bread"

Matthew 6:11



WHERE FORGIVENESS WANTS TO TAKE YOU



Prayer acknowledges our relationship with God our Father and demonstrates our dependence on Him as His children. Having established this in Matthew 6: 9-11, Jesus moves on to deal with the important area of forgiveness where He states, “Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors”. (Matthew 6:12)

Forgiving a debt means releasing a debtor from an obligation or, in this context, an offense. This includes our sins against God [first section of v. 12] and sins (offenses) against us by others [second section of v.12].

The request to “forgive us our debts” highlights two ideas: (1) it acknowledges the fact that we are prone to sin (Romans 3:23; 1John 1:8-10) and (2) it recognizes our dependency on the mercy of God — the Righteous Judge who forgives sinners (Romans 6:23; Luke 7:47-48), based on the finished work of His Son Jesus. All sins are ultimately against God. David expressed this in Psalm 51:4.

The truth is, we could never sufficiently repay God for our sins (debts) because this is only possible by faith in the atoning work of Jesus (Ephesus 2:8). While we were enemies of God, Christ died for us. This reality should compel us to forgive those who have wronged us.

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

Matthew 6:12

Our Lord teaches here that, when we come to God seeking forgiveness, we should have already forgiven our debtors. Those who value their relationship with the Father more than anything else, do not see this as an obstacle but rather as living proof that God’s forgiveness has changed their heart.

As we approach our Heavenly Father in prayer, let us pause and examine our own hearts. Let us ask Holy Spirit to allow us to see the wrongs done to us through the lens of God’s mercy in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Call to Action

You may be wrestling with the principle of forgiveness today. Allow your will to submit to the will of the Father. Cease from struggling and allow Holy Spirit to keep the lines of communication open between you and God. The ushering in of His Kingdom and the manifestation of His will require that we forgive others, even as God in Christ has forgiven us. This is one of the distinguishing marks of a true disciple of Jesus Christ.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9 ESV)

*"And lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil."*

Matthew 6:13

Many times when we sin or find ourselves in a position of failure we will say, "I could not help myself" or "I could not stop myself". In fact, we are correct on both counts. We live in a world where everyone is a self-made man or woman, totally dependent on ourselves which produces and generates societies where stress, anxiety and suicides are at an all time high. We need help!

In the Kingdom of God, the intention is that we would always live a life totally dependent on Jesus, His will and His ways. The Bible tells us in Philippians 2:13 that God actually works *IN* us to do His will. We will not fall into temptation and sinful tendencies when we allow God to lead us inwardly by His Holy Spirt. In this way, God can expose the plan of the enemy. We fight against unseen spiritual forces that seek to destroy and defeat us. So how do we resist temptation?

James 4:7 says, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you". We have to actively engage with God by reading His word, learning to hear when He speaks and obeying His voice. Trying to resist on our own is futile. We will fail every time because we have no power in ourselves. It is the word of God and the power of His Spirit that leads us in the right and righteous ways, delivers us from evil and makes the way of escape for us when we are surrounded by the enemy.

Call to Action

Today, purpose to live your life with total dependency on your God. He will NEVER lead you into temptation or evil but will always lead you away from sin and evil. Actively seek God and allow His voice to be your guide. He will expose the enemy and lead you out of darkness and cause you to live an abundant life, free from fear.

ENEMIES DON'T LIKE
TO BE EXPOSED



A bouquet of dried lavender flowers in shades of light blue and purple, positioned in the top right corner of the page.

OUR
FATHER

Prayer Week 2023

The green stems of the lavender flowers, extending from the bottom left corner of the page.