

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

PRAYER

A. Definitions of prayer

1. Clement of Alexandria, *Prayer is conversation with God.*
2. John Calvin, *The chief exercise of faith, by which we daily receive God's benefits.*
3. Madame Guyon, *Prayer is the overflowing of the heart in the presence of God.*
4. John Hannah, *Prayer is essentially an act of worship wherein homage is given to God alone through praise, adoration, confession, or request.*
5. J. I. Packer, *Prayer is finding our way through duty to delight.*

B. Descriptions of prayer

1. Lifting up the soul. Psalm 25:1, *To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.*
2. Lifting up the heart. Lamentations 3:41, *Let us lift up our hearts and hands to God in heaven.*
3. Pouring out the heart. Psalm 62:8, *Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us.*
4. Pouring out the soul. 1 Samuel 1:15.
5. Calling on the name of the Lord, Psalm 116:4, *Then I called on the name of the LORD: "O LORD, I pray, save my life!"*
6. Crying to God. Psalm 27:7, *...I have been pouring out my soul before the LORD.*
7. Crying to heaven. 2 Chronicles 32:20, *Then Hezekiah the king and Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, prayed because of this and cried to heaven.*
8. Seeking God. Job 8:5, *If you will seek God and plead with the Almighty for mercy.*

C. Types of prayer

1. Confession

- a. Psalm 51:1-4, *Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.*
- b. Daniel 9:3-19, *Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. 4 I prayed to the LORD my God and made confession, saying, "O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, 5 we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and rules...*

2. Adoration

- a. Matthew 6:9, *Pray then like this: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.*
- b. Revelation 5:13-14, *And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!" And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" and the elders fell down and worshiped.*

3. Thanksgiving

- a. Psalm 100:4, *Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!*
- b. Colossians 4:2, *Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.*

4. Petition

- a. Daniel 9:16-19, *O Lord, according to all your righteous acts, let your anger and your wrath turn away from your city Jerusalem, your holy hill, because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and your people have become a byword among all who are around us. 17 Now therefore, O our God, listen to the prayer of your servant and to his pleas for mercy, and for your own sake, O Lord, make your face to shine upon your sanctuary, which is desolate. 18 O my God, incline your ear and hear. Open your eyes and see our desolations, and the city that is called by your name. For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy. 19 O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive. O Lord, pay attention and act. Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name.*
- b. Acts 4:29, *And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness.*

5. Intercession
 - a. Matthew 5:44, *But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.*
 - b. Luke 23:34, *And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."*
6. Complaint
 - a. Exodus 5:22-23, *Then Moses turned to the LORD and said, "O Lord, why have you done evil to this people? Why did you ever send me? 23 For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has done evil to this people, and you have not delivered your people at all.*
 - b. Matthew 27:46, *And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"*

D. Characteristics of prayer

1. It is commanded
 - a. Matthew 7:7, *...do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*
 - b. Colossians 4:2, *Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.*
 - c. 1 Thessalonians 5:17, *pray without ceasing.*
2. It is expected
 - a. Matthew 6:5, *And when you pray...*
 - b. Matthew 6:6, *But when you pray...*
 - c. Matthew 6:7, *And when you pray...*
 - d. Matthew 6:9, *This, then, is how you should pray...*
3. It is a primary way to get to know God better
 - a. D. A. Carson, *One of the foundational steps in knowing God, and one of the basic demonstrations that we do know God, is prayer—spiritual, persistent, biblically minded prayer.*
 - b. Timothy Keller, *Prayer is continuing a conversation that God has started through his Word and his grace, which eventually becomes a full encounter with him.*
 - c. R. C. Sproul, *...knowledge and truth remain abstract unless we commune with God in prayer. The Holy Spirit teaches, inspires, and illumines God's Word to us. He mediates the Word of God and assists us in responding to the Father in prayer.*
 - d. D. A. Carson, *In the biblical view of things, a deeper knowledge of God brings with it massive improvement in the other areas mentioned: purity, integrity, evangelistic effectiveness, better study of Scripture, improved private and corporate worship, and much more. But if we seek these things without passionately desiring a deeper knowledge of God, we are selfishly running after God's blessings without running after Him.*
4. It promotes obedience
 - a. R. C. Sproul, *Prayer prompts and nurtures obedience, putting the heart into the proper "frame of mind" to desire obedience.*
 - b. John Owen (17th C.), *He who prays as he ought will endeavor to live as he prays.*
5. It is a tool of the Holy Spirit for spiritual growth, Donald Whitney, *Just as a plane is guided more easily when it's airborne than when it's on the ground with its engines off, so the Holy Spirit guides us in prayer better when we are airborne in prayer than when we are not.*
6. It is what humans do
 - a. Timothy Keller, *Prayer is one of the most common phenomena of human life...Efforts to find cultures, even very remote and isolated ones, without some form of religion and prayer have failed.*
 - b. Martin Luther, *As it is the business of tailors to make clothes and of cobblers to mend shoes, so it is the business of Christians to pray.*
7. It is a measure of spirituality
 - a. J. I. Packer, *I believe that prayer is the measure of the man, spiritually, in a way that nothing else is.*
 - b. Robert Murray M'Cheyne, *What a man is alone on his knees before God, that he is, and no more.*
 - c. Martin Luther said that he prayed regularly for an hour every day except when he experienced a particularly busy day. Then he prayed for two hours.

8. It is beneficial
 - a. R. C. Sproul, *We pray to glorify God, but we also pray in order to receive the benefits of prayer from His hand. Prayer is for our benefit, even in light of the fact that God knows the end from the beginning. It is our privilege to bring the whole of our finite existence into the glory of His infinite presence.*
 - b. Elton Trueblood, *At the profoundest depths in life, men talk not about God but with him.*

E. Some reasons why Christians don't pray

1. A lack of discipline/too busy
2. Doubt that it will make any difference
3. A lack of the sense of the nearness of God
4. Little awareness of need
5. The spiritual life is not a priority
6. A lack of learning about prayer
7. Disobedience
8. Bitterness

F. Problems Related to the Doctrine of Prayer

1. Since God knows all that is good for men, can't we rely on Him to do what is best without any request on our part?
 - a. Petitions are the divinely appointed means which God has ordained for men to receive blessings from Him.
 - b. Verses to consider:
 - 1) Matthew 7:7-8, *Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.*
 - 2) Matthew 7:11, *If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!*
 - 3) John 16:24, *Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.*
2. Since God is unchangeable in His purposes, how can prayer alter His determination?
 - a. It is a misunderstanding of immutability (unchangeableness of God) which actually refers to His person and ultimate purposes not to specific actions.
 - b. Verses to consider:
 - 1) Psalm 102:25-27, *Of old you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you will remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will change them like a robe, and they will pass away, but you are the same, and your years have no end.*
 - 2) Malachi 3:6, *For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.*
 - 3) James 1:17, *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.*
3. Since God is omniscient (all knowing), it is foolish to inform Him of our desires and needs.
 - a. God knows our wants before we can name them and loving enough to satisfy them without being asked to do so, yet requires us to put wants before Him in prayer.
 - b. Verses to consider:
 - 1) Matthew 5:44-45, *But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.*
 - 2) 1 Timothy 2:1-4, *First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. 3 This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*
 - 3) James 4:2, *You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask.*

G. For prayerful consideration: Andrew Murray, *Reading a book about prayer, listening to lectures and talking about it is very good, but it won't teach you to pray. You get nothing without exercise, without practice. I might listen for a year to a professor of music playing the most beautiful music, but that won't teach me to play an instrument.*

LINKS BETWEEN BIBLE STUDY AND PRAYER

A. Meditation

1. Definition of Meditation

- a. Thomas Watson, *The Hebrew word for meditate means to be intense in the mind...to stir the affections, to be warmed by the fire of meditation.*
- b. Donald Whitney, *...deep thinking on the truths and spiritual realities revealed in Scripture for the purposes of understanding, application, and prayer.*

2. Importance of Meditation

- a. Donald Whitney, *We learn to pray by meditating on Scripture, for meditation is the missing link between Bible intake and prayer.*
- b. William Bates, *The great reason why our prayers are ineffectual, is because we do not meditate before them.*
- c. Thomas Manton, *Meditation is a middle sort of duty between the word and prayer...The word feeds meditation, and meditation feeds prayer. These duties must always go hand in hand; meditation must follow hearing and precede prayer.*
- d. Peter Toon, *The three duties of reading Scripture, meditation, and prayer belonged together, and though each could be done occasionally on its own, as formal duties to God they are best done together.*
- e. Matthew Henry, *...meditation is the best preparation for prayer, so prayer is the best issue of meditation. Meditation and prayer go together.*

3. Biblical commands and promises to meditate

- a. Joshua 1:8, *This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.*
- b. Psalm 19:14, *Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.*
- c. Psalm 1:1-3, *Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.*
- d. Psalm 119:97-104, *Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day. Your commandment makes me wiser than my enemies, for it is ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers, for your testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the aged, for I keep your precepts. I hold back my feet from every evil way, in order to keep your word. I do not turn aside from your rules, for you have taught me. How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way.*

4. Differences between Christian meditation and other forms of meditation

- a. It is filling your mind with God and truth, not emptying your mind.
- b. It requires constructive mental activity, not an attempt to achieve complete mental passivity.
- c. It is a focus on things that are true, not an attempt to visualize your own reality. *Philippians 4:8, ...whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.*
- d. It is effecting change through a deepening understanding of God's Word, empowered by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, not by imagining something better through visualization.

5. How to Meditate

- a. Select a passage
 - 1) It may relate to personal concerns and needs.
 - 2) It may be a passage that has been difficult to understand.
 - 3) It may be the verse/passage of the day in a Bible reading program.

- b. Rewrite it in your own words
 - 1) Do I understand what it says well enough to write it in a way that expresses the meaning?
 - 2) Richard Baxter, *...our speaking to ourselves in meditation, should go before our speaking to God in prayer.*
 - 3) Philippians 4:9
 - a) *What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.*
 - b) The Apostle Paul encourages me to understand and do what he teaches in his letters. Such behavior will draw me closer to God Who gives me peace.
 - c. Search for applications in the text
 - 1) How am I to respond to this text?
 - 2) What would God have me do in response to my understanding of the text?
 - 3) George Muller, *...what is food for the inner man? Not prayer, but the Word of God; and here again, not the simple reading of the Word of God, so that it only passes through our minds, just as water passes through a pipe, but considering what we read, pondering over it and applying it to our hearts.*
 - d. Pray through the text
 - 1) Ask the Holy Spirit to give understanding.
 - 2) Ask for wisdom to see more than you ever have before.
 - 3) Donald Whitney, *After the input of a passage of Scripture, meditation allows us to take what God has said to us and think deeply on it, digest it, and then speak to God about it in meaningful prayer. As a result, we pray about what we've encountered in the Bible, now personalized through meditation. And not only do we have something substantial to say in prayer, and the confidence that we are praying God's thoughts to Him, but we transition smoothly into prayer with a passion for what we're praying about.*
 - e. Don't rush through the text
 - 1) Read and reread it.
 - 2) Meditate on smaller sections of Scripture in order to meditate more.
 - 3) Jonathan Edwards, who penned these lines in his journal soon after his conversion: *I seemed often to see so much light exhibited by every sentence, and such a refreshing food communicated, that I could not get along in reading; often dwelling long on one sentence to see the wonders contained in it, and yet almost every sentence seemed to be full of wonders.*
 - 4) Thomas Watson, *The reason we come away so cold from reading the word is because we do not warm ourselves at the fire of meditation.*
6. Results of meditation
- a. Donald Whitney, *The process works like this: After the input of a passage of Scripture, meditation allows us to take what God has said to us and think deeply on it, digest it, and then speak to God about it in meaningful prayer. As a result, we pray about what we've encountered in the Bible, now personalized through meditation. And not only do we have something substantial to say in prayer, and the confidence that we are praying God's thoughts to Him, but we transition smoothly into prayer with a passion for what we're praying about.*
 - b. Thomas Manton, *What we take in by the word we digest by meditation and let out by prayer.*
 - c. R. A. Torrey, *The prayer that is born of meditation upon the Word of God is the prayer that soars upward most easily to God's listening ear.*

B. Bible memorization

1. Importance of Bible memorization

- a. It supplies spiritual power
 - 1) Donald Whitney, *When Scripture is stored in the mind, it is available for the Holy Spirit to take and bring to your attention when you need it most. That's why the author of Psalm 119 wrote, "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you (verse 11)."*
 - 2) Donald Whitney, *A pertinent scriptural truth, brought to your awareness by the Holy Spirit at just the right moment, can be the weapon that makes the difference in a spiritual battle...memorize Scripture so that it's available for the Holy Spirit to take and ignite within us when it's needed.*
 - 3) Jesus' confrontation with Satan in the wilderness, Matthew 4:1-11.

- b. It strengthens faith
 - 1) Donald Whitney, *Memorizing Scripture strengthens your faith because it repeatedly reinforces the truth, often just when you need to hear it again.*
 - 2) Proverbs 22:17-19, *Incline your ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply your heart to my knowledge, for it will be pleasant if you keep them within you, if all of them are ready on your lips. That your trust may be in the LORD, I have made them known to you today, even to you.*
 - c. It aids in witnessing and counseling
 - 1) Scripture memory prepares us for ministry opportunities.
 - 2) Donald Whitney, *Recently, while I was presenting the message about Christ to a man, he said something that brought to mind a verse I had memorized. I quoted that verse and it was the turning point in a conversation that resulted in him professing faith in Christ. The same kind of thing happens frequently in counseling conversations. But until the verses are hidden in the heart, they aren't available to use with the mouth.*
 - d. It is a means of God's guidance
 - 1) Psalm 119:24, *Your testimonies are my delight; they are my counselors.*
 - 2) Donald Whitney, *Just as the Holy Spirit retrieves scriptural truth from our memory banks for use in counseling others, so also will He bring it to our own minds in providing timely guidance for ourselves.*
 - 3) Ephesians 4:29, *Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.*
 - e. It stimulates meditation
 - 1) Memorized passages can aid in the understanding of a new passages.
 - 2) When you have memorized Scripture, you can always recall one for the purpose of meditation.
 - 3) Donald Whitney, *The Word of God is the "sword of the Spirit," but the Holy Spirit cannot give you a weapon you have not stored in the armory of your mind.*
2. How to memorize Scripture
- a. It is possible
 - 1) Donald Whitney, *Most of the time memorizing is mainly a problem of motivation...The question becomes whether you are willing to discipline yourself to do it.*
 - 2) Dawson Trotman, founder of The Navigators, began memorizing one verse a day when he came to faith in Christ. He was a truck driver for a lumber yard and worked on one verse daily as he drove around town. He memorized his first thousand verses in his first three years as a Christian.
 - b. Devise a plan
 - 1) Determine whether it will be a verse or passage, one a day, one a week, one a month.
 - 2) Select a section of Scripture or verses on a particular topic or area of personal weakness.
 - 3) One man told Dawson Trotman that he was afraid that learning so much Scripture would make him prideful. Trotman replied, *Then make your first ten verses on humility!*
 - c. Write out the verses
 - 1) Make a list of your verses on a sheet of paper.
 - 2) Practice writing them from memory.
 - d. Draw picture reminders
 - 1) Psalm 119:11, make a heart with a Bible inside to remind you to treasure God's Word in your heart.
 - 2) Ephesians 6:17, draw a picture of a sword.
 - e. Memorize the verse perfectly
 - 1) Learn it word for word so you don't end up not memorizing at all.
 - 2) Knowing it perfectly increases confidence in using it in conversation and witnessing.
 - 3) It is easier to review verses you know perfectly.
 - f. Select a method of accountability
 - 1) Review with someone else.
 - 2) It can be a witnessing opportunity if an unbeliever agrees to be your accountability partner.

- g. Review and meditate every day
 - 1) Donald Whitney, *Without adequate review you will eventually lose most of what you memorize.*
 - 3) The better you learn a verse, the less time it will take for review.
 - 4) A good time to review is before going to sleep. If you fall asleep, that's fine since you were going to sleep anyway.
- 3. The goal of Bible memorization
 - a. Donald Whitney, *The goal is to memorize the Word of God so that it can transform our minds and our lives.*
 - b. Dallas Willard, *As a pastor, teacher, and counselor I have repeatedly seen the transformation of inner and outer life that comes simply from memorization and meditation upon Scripture.*

INTRODUCTION TO THE LORD'S PRAYER

A. Context

- 1. Matthew 6:9-13, The Sermon on the Mount, R. C. Sproul, *...the sermon was more than simply an ethical presentation of principles for good living. Jesus was talking about the character traits of people who live a redeemed lifestyle within the kingdom of God.*
- 2. Luke 11:1-4, Jesus' response to the disciples' question, *Lord, teach us to pray.*

B. Thoughts on the Lord's Prayer

- 1. Tertullian, *[The Lord's Prayer] is truly the summary of the whole Gospel.*
- 2. R. C. Sproul, *I have always been amazed that the disciples didn't ask Jesus how to walk on water, how to still the tempest, or how to do any of His other miracles. They did, however, ask Jesus to teach them about prayer. Note that they did not ask Jesus to teach them how to pray; instead they begged, "Teach us to pray." I'm certain that the disciples clearly saw the inseparable relationship between the power Jesus manifested and the hours He spent in solitude, conversing with His Father.*
- 3. R. C. Sproul, *...Jesus was not so much giving us a prayer to recite as a pattern to show us the way in which to pray. Jesus was providing us with an outline of priorities or those things that ought to be priorities in our prayer lives.*

C. Jesus has given us a pattern for prayer

- 1. Tom Constable, *Here is a way to pray that is neither too long, ostentatious, nor unnecessarily repetitious.*
- 2. *Our Father* indicates that Jesus expected His disciples to pray in a group context but use for private prayer is certainly appropriate.
- 3. Jesus' pattern for prayer involves five areas:
 - a. Person of God (Matthew 6:9 and Luke 11:2a)
 - b. Program of God (Matthew 6:10 and Luke 11:2b)
 - c. Provisions from God (Matthew 6:11 and Luke 11:3)
 - d. Purity from God (Matthew 6:12 and Luke 11:4a)
 - e. Protection from God (Matthew 6:13 and Luke 11:4b)

JESUS' PATTERN FOR PRAYER

A. Person of God (Matthew 6:9 and Luke 11:2a)

- 1. He is our Father God.
 - a. The word *Father* is not the word used for God in the Old Testament. Such intimacy was almost never found in Old Testament prayers.
 - b. Because of the work of Jesus on our behalf, we are adopted into the family of God.
 - 1) John 1:12-13, *But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.*
 - 2) Romans 8:14-16, *For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.*
 - c. Also, we have access to our heavenly Father because of the work of Jesus.
 - 1) Hebrews 11:6, *And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.*
 - 2) Elmer Townes, *Your reward for praying the Lord's Prayer daily is more than money. God rewards you with Himself... His assurance...and His guidance.*

2. He is in heaven.
 - a. *Our Father* speaks of the nearness of God (immanence) but *in heaven* points to His being set apart (transcendence).
 - b. R. C. Sproul, *We can come to God and call Him Father, but this filial relationship does not allow us to have the type of familiarity that breeds contempt. We are to come with boldness, yes, but never with arrogance or presumption...When we pray, we must remember who we are and whom we are addressing.*
3. He is to be revered.
 - a. R. C. Sproul, *No matter how close God invites us to come, there is still an infinite gulf between our sinfulness and His majesty. He is the heavenly one; we are of the earth. He is perfect; we are imperfect. He is infinite; we are finite. He is holy; we are unholy.*
 - b. Martin Luther remarked that those around him spoke to God *as if He were a shoe clerk's apprentice.*
 - c. Leviticus 10:1-3, *Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it and laid incense on it and offered unauthorized fire before the LORD, which he had not commanded them. And fire came out from before the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD. Then Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD has said: 'Among those who are near me I will be sanctified, and before all the people I will be glorified.'" And Aaron held his peace.*

B. Program of God (Matthew 6:10 and Luke 11:2b)

1. The kingdom of God is real
 - a. Jesus focused on the kingdom in the Sermon on the Mount.
 - b. He sits exalted at the right hand of God and reigns as King, Acts 2:32-33, *This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God.*
 - c. God's rule is established in heaven.
 - 1) Psalm 103:20, *Bless the LORD, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his word, obeying the voice of his word!*
 - 2) Psalm 115:3, *Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases.*
2. The kingdom of God is spiritual
 - a. The kingdom of God may be seen in the lives of Christians who live out kingdom truths.
 - b. Luke 10:8-9, *Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you. Heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'*
3. The kingdom of God will be earthly
 - a. We are to pray that the invisible will become visible.
 - b. R. C. Sproul, *Christ sits exalted at the right hand of God and reigns as King. But Jesus is not merely the spiritual King of the church, where His only responsibility is to exercise authority over our piety, as if there were a separation between church and state. Jesus is King of the universe.*
 - c. Jesus Christ will reign on earth, Revelation 5:9-10, *And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."*
4. A proper transition in prayer from a focus on God to a focus on oneself, R. C. Sproul, *We should not come rushing into God's presence arrogantly, assaulting Him with our petty requests, forgetting whom we are addressing. We are to make certain we have properly exalted the God of creation. Only after God has been rightly honored, adored, and exalted do the subsequent petitions of God's people assume their proper place.*

C. Provisions from God (Matthew 6:11 and Luke 11:3)

1. He meets physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs
2. We are needy people.
 - a. God gives good gifts, Matthew 7:11, *If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!*
 - b. God provides all we need, Matthew 6:33, *But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*
 - c. God provides our needs one day at a time, Matthew 6:34, *...do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.*

- d. Prayer is a matter of trusting God not making Him aware of our needs, Matthew 6:30-32, *But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.*

D. Purity from God (Matthew 6:12 and Luke 11:4a)

1. Ask forgiveness for sins (debts - moral shortcomings)
 - a. God's children sin and are convicted of sin by the indwelling Holy Spirit.
 - b. God forgives when His children confess and repent, 1 John 1:9, *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*
 - c. Louis Barbieri, *Personal fellowship with God is in view in these verses, not salvation from sin.*
2. Forgive others as you have been forgiven.
 - a. Reasons for forgiving others
 - 1) The example of Jesus, Luke 23:34, *And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."*
 - 2) You are commanded to forgive, Colossians 3:12-13, *Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.*
 - 3) To prosper spiritually, Matthew 18:33-35, *And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."*
 - 4) To receive forgiveness, Matthew 6:14-15, *For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*
 - b. Thoughts on forgiving others
 - 1) R. C. Sproul, *The supreme warning from Jesus is that God will judge us according to how we have judged other people. Since man is saved by grace, what better evidence could there be of a man's salvation than that he offers to others the grace he himself has received?*
 - 2) Jonathan Edwards, *It is an insult to God for us to withhold forgiveness and grace from those who ask us, while claiming to be forgiven and saved by grace ourselves.*
 - 3) Tom Constable, *The person who does not forgive a brother's offenses does not appreciate how much he himself needs forgiveness.*
 - 4) Louis Barbieri, *One cannot walk in fellowship with God if he refuses to forgive others.*

E. Protection by God (Matthew 6:13 and Luke 11:4b)

1. Ask for protection from temptations that lead to sin.
 - a. Temptations are neutral but become sin when one yields to temptation.
 - b. God does not test or tempt anyone, James 1:13-14, *Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.*
 - c. Tom Constable, *Why then do we need to pray that He will not lead us into testing? Even though God is not the instrumental cause of our testing He does permit us to experience temptation from the world, the flesh, and the devil. Therefore this petition is a request that He minimize the occasions of our testing that may result in our sinning.*
2. Ask for deliverance from demonic attacks.
 - a. This is another way of saying what was said in the first sentence. It is parallelism, the Hebrew way of giving emphasis.
 - b. This verse identifies the source of temptations, the evil one, Satan. Luke 22:31-32, *Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail.*
 - c. Martin Luther called temptations *unbridled assaults of Satan.*

CONCLUSION

- A. The Lord's Prayer is a terrific pattern for prayer which reminds us of the majesty of our God, of our dependence on God for our physical needs, and for God's protection from temptation to sin.
- B. But, it is not a prayer for everyone as noted by Elmer Townes,

If you don't know Christ ... you can't pray, "Our Father."

If you glorify yourself ... you can't pray, "Hallowed be Thy name."

If you reject His rules ... you can't pray, "Thy kingdom come."

If you won't submit ... you can't pray, "Thy will be done."

If your life is only for here and now ... you can't pray, "On earth as it is in heaven"

If you are self-sufficient ... you can't pray, "Give us our daily bread."

If you won't forgive ... you can't pray, "Forgive us our debts."

If you seek sin ... you can't pray, "Lead us not into temptation."

If you are a friend of evil ... you can't pray, "Deliver us from evil."

If you build your own kingdom ... you can't pray, "Thine is the kingdom."

If you want power ... you can't pray, "Thine is the power."

If you always take credit, ... you can't pray, "Thine is the glory."