

# Prayer 101: Requesting & Releasing

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, take your Bibles this morning, if you would, and open them to Luke chapter 11.

! We're finally going to get back to Luke 11. And I can say to you that I have two more sermons out of this very famous prayer. This morning and next Sunday, if God gives us next Sunday, we may be with the Lord.

Then we don't need any prayer after that. And then we'll move on from there. As a matter of fact, we'll be not leaving the subject of prayer as we go past the, quote, Lord's Prayer.

Because then we get into some really, really deep kind of praying, intercessory prayer. And we'll see what the Lord has to say about that. In a few weeks.

But I want to finish up on this, this Sunday and next Sunday. So listen as I read this very familiar passage. Not a prayer per se, as we have discussed a number of times.

[ 1 : 14 ] But it is Jesus' instructions on how to pray. So let me read it. Now it came to pass, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, that one of his disciples said to him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

So he said to them, when you pray, say, our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Let me stop there just a minute because I failed to mention last time we were in this passage.

Some of you, well, how many of you have the New American Standard out there? Just raise your hand. A few. Some of you have the ESV. Maybe a few. Maybe some other versions.

Well, in some versions of the Bible, you don't have that there, do you? So you were probably wondering, last time I was preaching out of this particular portion of the passage, you think, well, my Bible doesn't say that.

[ 2 : 18 ] Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Not to worry. It's supposed to be there. It was there when Jesus first gave the instructions. And all we have to do is go back to Matthew chapter 6.

And we see it right there. And there's no debate about it appearing there in Matthew's account. And by the way, Matthew was there when Jesus gave these instructions. Luke was not. And I'm not saying that Luke is somehow fallible.

God, the Holy Spirit, inspired Luke to write it just the way he did. He got it from other witnesses. And so this portion of the prayer he leaves out, Matthew includes it. Just don't worry.

We bring both of those together and it's supposed to be there. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us day by day. Verse 3. Give us day by day our daily bread.

And forgive us our sins. For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us or has sinned against us. Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

[ 3 : 24 ] All right. So there it is. What an amazing prayer guide. Let's call it that, okay? An amazing prayer guide. Each phrase of this very well known instructions on prayer.

Each phrase represents deep and vital truth about prayer. About how to do it. About what it should consist of and so forth.

What prayer should be. And we have learned from this model prayer four lessons thus far. Let me review. Well, not really review.

Just name them. First of all, prayer is about resting. Resting in God our Father. Our Father in heaven. And then we learn prayers about reverencing, reverencing, reverencing God.

Hallowed be your name. Prayer is about reigning. Reigning. Not R-A-I-N like we're getting here today. Praise the Lord. But R-E-I-G-N-I-N-G.

[ 4 : 31 ] Reigning. Reigning in the kingdom of God. Your kingdom come. That's how Jesus instructed us to pray. Then a few weeks ago we learned prayer is about resigning.

Resigning. Resigning, that is, to the will of God. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Vance Havner once said, Nothing is ever settled till it is settled right.

And nothing is ever settled right until it is settled with God. That's a pretty good quote, isn't it?

Prayer is about resigning. Resigning to the will of God. And now we're ready to move forward.

And we're going to be looking this morning at lesson number five and six. And then there's one more after that. And we'll take that up next week. And so this morning, the fifth lesson on prayer.

Prayer is about requesting. Prayer is about requesting. Requesting, that is, what we need from God. Now this is the part of prayer that we like to think about and do.

[ 5 : 29 ] In fact, I would be safe to say that most of us in our prayer life spend a great deal of that time requesting, asking God for things that we need. And so this is what he said.

When you pray, say this. Give us day by day our daily bread. Now, have you noticed the first half of this model prayer?

That half we've already discussed. The first half of this model prayer is exclusively about God. Have you noticed that? We embrace him and trust him as father.

We reverence and worship his name. We pray for his kingdom to come. We pray for his will to be done.

It's all about God. All about God. And that in itself is a part of the lesson, isn't it? Because Jesus is saying, when you pray, start with God. That's a pretty good lesson, isn't it?

[ 6 : 30 ] Usually when we start praying, we start with me. With us. But Jesus is, I think, instructing us that when you pray, start with God. His person, his works, his glory, and glorious kingdom, his will.

And so when you pray, start with God and then move in your prayers to man. To man. And so, in verse 11, the focus changes, doesn't it?

Jesus now teaches us to pray for ourselves and to pray for one another. So we have these phrases. Give us. Forgive us. Lead us. Deliver us. Now, the first of these is, give us day by day our daily bread.

And so prayer is about requesting. Pretty simple, isn't it? Requesting what we need from God. Now, I want us to learn three truths about this particular aspect of prayer, this fifth aspect of prayer.

[ 7 : 35 ] Three truths. The devotion of it. The dependence of it. And the depth of it.

So, the devotion of it. The dependence of it. The depth of it. Prayer is about requesting. Now, first of all then, the devotion of this prayer. The devotion of it.

Now, even though the focus here, as I've said, is now personal. We've gone from heavenly, lofty, directed toward God, about God, and the things of God, to now more personal, more about man, about us.

And even though it is more personal, this aspect of praying is still intensely spiritual. All right? It's not selfish prayer. It's a very spiritual kind of prayer.

And I would also add that it is now profoundly worshipful. Because I would suggest to you that no higher form of worship exists than for a child of God to enter into the presence of his or her heavenly Father and unashamedly declare, Lord, I cannot make it without you.

[ 8 : 45 ] This is very worshipful. All right, so you see, when you daily pray for your daily needs, you are praying devotionally.

You're devoted. You are devoted to the belief, first of all, in the power of God, aren't you? Devoted to the belief in the power of God. Ephesians chapter 3, verse 20.

This very, very familiar passage and one of my favorites. Now, to him who is able to do. Able to do. Exceedingly, abundantly, above all that we ask or think according to his power.

His power. The power. His power that works in us. And so, you see, we believe. We're devoted to the belief. In this aspect of prayer, we are devoted to the belief in the power of God.

Also, when you daily pray for daily needs, that's what this part of the prayer is about, you are also devoted to the belief in the promises of God.

[ 9 : 50 ] The promises of God. That is, you are, by the very act of praying in this way, you are confessing something. You're confessing your faith in the promises that God has made in your behalf, in my behalf, as beloved children.

Do you remember something that David wrote in Psalm 37, verse 25? He said, I have been young and now I am old. Yet, I have never seen the righteous forsaken nor his descendants begging bread.

That's quite a statement, isn't it? And that's a devotion to the belief, not only in the power of God, but the promises of God. You see, this prayer, give day by day our daily bread, is a prayer of devotion.

Devoted to the belief in the power of God and the promises of God. And you're also saying something else here about what you're devoted to. You're devoted to the belief in the person of God.

The person of God. Did you know all this was wrapped up in this prayer? Give us day by day our daily bread. Did you know that's what you're devoted to? All of these things. You're devoted to the person of God. See, when you pray this way, you are humbly acknowledging God's willingness to give.

[11:09] Now think about that. That's very important. This is good instruction. We're devoted to the belief in this truth that God is willing. And so when you ask God for daily needs of life, you don't have to choose your words carefully.

Have you ever done that in prayer? You want to make sure you use just the right words because you're trying to persuade God to give you what you want or give you what you need. You want to just frame every prayer very smartly and frame your requests very, I guess we could say, persuasively.

Now you're all looking pretty holy. Have you ever tried to do that in prayer? And you think that if you can just word it just right, God's going to give you what you're asking for. And really, what a distorted view that we have of God sometimes.

Because our Heavenly Father, listen, our Heavenly Father delights to give us those things that we need and to give us above what we need. And so we ought to just ask Him.

Ask Him. So the devotion of this prayer. Second, as we're thinking about prayer being an act of requesting those things we need from God, there is also the dependence of this prayer.

[12:22] The dependence, or it's at the very least revealing, showing your dependence, your absolute dependence upon God our Father. See, this kind of praying reveals that.

It reveals an utter dependence upon God for our daily needs. This is hard for us as Americans because we're so blessed and we have so much.

And we don't often feel dependent upon God for our daily needs. But we are. We are. And this aspect of praying reveals that.

Our dependence in prayer. And so that means that this kind of praying consists of a prayer of confession. Confessing what? Well, we're confessing to the Lord that we need Him.

We're not self-sufficient. And again, I would say that's hard for us. Because in the fiber of our flesh, there is something woven in that.

[13:28] Whether it's because we're Americans and we've just always known abundance, always known blessing. Or whether it just simply is a part of our flesh. And I suspect that it is both. It is woven in the fiber of our flesh to be self-sufficient.

To be self-reliant. And so this is what we need to do in prayer. We must confess daily, Lord, I depend upon you for every single thing.

Now that doesn't mean we don't work. I mean, that doesn't mean we don't get out there and do the things that God has gifted us to do and wants us to do. It doesn't mean that this is excusing somehow laziness.

Not at all. Jesus is not talking here about some philosophy of let go and let God in this. The church is not a welfare state.

Right? It's not. We're to work hard. But this prayer confesses that all of our needs are met by a gracious God.

[14:34] Everything we need, everything we receive comes by the hand of our gracious God. Whether given to us by way of an employer that we work for and we earn our wage.

Or whether it is rewarded to us by way of our own God-given wisdom, ingenuity, hard work. Or whether on occasion, praise God, whether it comes by way of a work of grace that is completely outside of ourselves.

Something that we could never deserve and don't even ask for. No matter what. Listen, this prayer confesses some of the most basic truths of life for the Christian.

That is, if you have anything, if you are anything, if you are able to do anything, it is because of the gracious work of God in our lives.

That would be a good place to say amen. That's what we need to understand. And that's what we're confessing here. And so prayer, praying, give us day by day our daily bread, is a prayer of dependence.

[ 15 : 38 ] Dependence. Because it is a prayer of confession. A daily confession to self and to God, especially to God, that I am utterly dependent upon Him.

Let me tell you something else. This prayer is a prayer of confidence. It's a prayer of confidence. By praying this way, what am I doing?

If I'm praying honestly this way, I am revealing a confidence that day by day by day by day, God is going to meet the needs of my life.

It's a prayer of confidence. It's a prayer of confidence. And by the way, you did notice that Jesus said, give us day by day our daily bread. King James says, give us our daily bread.

This is a daily prayer. This is a daily prayer for each day. God requires that we renew our dependence upon Him every single day.

[ 16 : 52 ] And so we're talking about the dependence of this prayer. This is a prayer of dependence because it is a prayer of confession. And it is a prayer of confidence. And because it is a prayer of contentment.

You need to add that in here too. It's a prayer of contentment. Analyze your prayer life. And your heart of prayer. That is your thinking in prayer.

Is your prayer, give me what I need Lord. Is it a prayer of contentment? It comes out of contentment. You know, you may not always like the bread God sends to you.

Or the amount of it. Or what you perceive to be the lack of it. You may not be, you know, just be really keen on that every single time. But a large part of our spiritual growth is to learn to be content. That's a lesson most of us have not learned. To be content. Paul said in Philippians 4.11, I have learned. This is what we need to learn. I have learned in whatever state I am.

[ 18 : 08 ] That is whatever condition I'm in. To be content. That's what Paul has learned. That's what we need to learn.

And so that's part of what it means to pray. Give us day by day our daily bread. It is a prayer of contentment.

Alright, now then. That's what we're learning about prayer today. Jesus is teaching us. That prayer is about requesting. It's about requesting. Requesting what we need from God.

Give us day by day our daily bread. The devotion of it. The dependence of it. And one more. The depth of it. The depth of this prayer.

This aspect of prayer. This is not a surface type of prayer. I mean, when we get to this part, we think, Well, here's finally a phrase I understand.

[ 19 : 04 ] So this is just very basic. This is something very deep. And it is deep, especially when you consider who.

Who it includes. Who this prayer concludes. Did you notice? He said, Give us.

That's plural. Last time I checked. Give us. Our. Daily bread. Our daily bread.

See, this is not a prayer that we can pray selfishly. Although we normally do. This is not just about getting my personal needs met.

Now, it is about that. But it's not just about that. This is about praying for the needs of the family of God. And we are to pray for one another. And so there's great depth in this aspect of praying.

[ 20 : 06 ] This prayer of requesting. There's great depth in who it includes. Also, there's great depth in what it includes. So to get the idea that all we're doing here is praying for food.

Praying for more food in our pantries. And on our plates. And in our mouths. And in our bellies.

That's not all that this is about. Just ask yourself this question.

Is Jesus simply. Just simply. Just merely instructing us. To pray for food. When most of us could live a week probably. Maybe more. On the food that's right now in our pantries.

We really could. Is that all this is about? Well, no. There's much more. In what this prayer includes.

This prayer includes. And I'm not going to list it all. All I have to do is say everything. This prayer includes everything. We could possibly ever need each day.

[ 21 : 05 ] And don't leave anything out. Don't leave anything out. If it's important to you. Then it is important to God. Jesus said then. Here is how you should pray.

Give us day by day. Our daily bread. Prayer is about requesting. The great Billy Graham once noted.

Every religion teaches that men ought to pray. But only the biblical faith promises that God will answer. That's really true. Now let's take the next part of this model prayer. Verse 4. And forgive us our debts. Our sins. For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. Has sinned against us. And some versions have sins. Some have debt. It's talking about the same thing. So here is lesson number six.

[ 22 : 06 ] Prayer is about releasing. About releasing. The releasing of a debt owed.

That's what this prayer. This part of the prayer is about. It's about God releasing us. From our debt. We owe him. And it is about us.

Releasing others. From their debt. They owe us. Their sin debt. They owe us. Now. The Lord's prayer.

Remember. I mentioned this early on. is a family prayer. It's a family prayer. All of the things we are praying to the Lord about. Have to do with our relationship.

And our standing as members of the family of God. That would be vertically. In relation to the Father. And it includes horizontally.

[ 23 : 06 ] In relation to one another. That's what this prayer is about. And what is it. That constantly. Violates. That communion.

That unity. We have with God. And unity. We have with one another. What is it. That constantly. Violates. Seeks to violate that. Sin. Of course.

It's sin. And again. That's what this portion of the prayer is all about. It's dealing with sin. Vertically. And horizontally. This is such an important part.

Of our prayer life. All right. So let's consider. What this is about. First of all. There is. Implied here. The priority.

Of this prayer. And the priority. Of this prayer. Is. Confessional. The priority. Of this aspect of prayer. First.

[ 24 : 06 ] And foremost. Is confessional. Forgive us. Our debts. Our sins. Matthew used the word debts. Luke used the word sins. In this version. But it's talking about the same thing.

So what is it. That we owe God. That apparently. We are unable to pay. And so. For which. We need his forgiveness. What is it? Sin. Sin. And. Also.

What is it. Others owe us. From time to time. That is similar. In kind. To what we owe God. That apparently. We are called upon.

To forgive. It's sin. What is it. What is this debt. We owe to God. Oh. Sometimes. Others owe to us. And we owe to other people. What is it? It is. Sin. It is a sin debt. Because we have sinned. Against God. And therefore. Owe him restitution.

[ 25 : 04 ] We. Others have sinned. Against us. And this is the focus. Of this particular portion. Of the prayer. Not that we don't sin. Against others. But others have sinned. Against us. And therefore. Owe us.

Restitution. And so. The debt. For which we need. Forgiveness. Is sin. And the debt. For which we need. To forgive. Is sin. They're.

They're. They're clear. Very plain from the past. When the Lord saved you. Listen. When the Lord. Saved you.

Did you know that he. Bought you out. So to speak. Everything. About you. Bought you out completely. First Corinthians 6.

20. You are not your own. Why? Because Jesus bought you out. You're not your own. For you. Are bought. With a price. And we know what that price was.

[ 26 : 01 ] And so. If you are a born again. Christian. And let's just assume. We all are. In this place. This morning. Then. The Lord owns you.

He owns you. That's not a bad thing. That's a good thing. Good thing to be owned. If it's the Lord who owns you. He owns you. And so.

Quite simply. When you use your body. To commit sin. And your mind as well. By the way. When you use your body. Your mind. To commit sin. You are indebted to the Lord.

Because you've used his property. For that which is unrighteous. Sin. And we owe a debt. And so in prayer.

We are. What? Confessing that. We confess. Our sins. And we are confessing. A debt we owe to God. A debt that is more than we can pay.

[ 27 : 01 ] And here's the good news. God is not demanding payment. Is he? If he were. You couldn't pay it. He's not demanding payment.

What is he demanding? Confession. He's demanding confession. A humble and honest agreement with God. That's what he's demanding. Not only that. But he's demanding repentance.

Repentance. Repentance. That is a turning. A deliberate. Turning. A definite turning.

An abandonment of sin. That you've committed against him. That's what he's demanding. And with that. He graciously grants a release from the debt. Praise the Lord.

And so. The priority of this prayer. Is confessional. It's confessional. There's a second truth. We need to see about this aspect of prayer.

[ 27 : 57 ] That really we must see. Otherwise the first thing that I mentioned. Is going to. You're going to have some questions about. The second thing.

The second thing. Not only is the priority of prayer confessional. But the purpose of this particular aspect of prayer. Is communal. That is for communion.

It's communal. Now it's communal. Not salvational. That's what we need to understand here. Or we're going to get confused. And what I mean is. That the purpose of praying.

Forgive us our sins. Or our sin debt. If the purpose of that kind of prayer. Is not to restore. Or renew. Our salvation.

That's not what the purpose is. As if that. Somehow could ever be lost. And it cannot. You see. In terms of relationship. Let's just talk about relationship.

[ 28 : 54 ] In terms of relationship. Our relationship with God the Father. In terms of relationship. The born again believer. Is a child of God. We're children of God. And nothing we did.

Merited that relationship with God. It was the grace of God. That worked in us. Through faith. In Jesus Christ. That's how our relationship came about.

And it's not within our power. To maintain that relationship with God. May I say that again? It's not within our power. Any more than it was within our power. To be saved. To enter into that relationship.

It's not within our power. To maintain that relationship with God. And nothing we could do. Would do. Will do. Or fail to do. Has any effect whatsoever. Upon the relationship we have.

With God our Father. And yet. I assure you. That there is not a day that goes by. That you. That I.

[ 29 : 52 ] Do not sin against him. Not a day. Barely could we. Go a moment without sinning. We disobey him. Every day.

We do. We dishonor him. Daily. We displease him. Daily.

As our Father. Our Heavenly Father. But. Our relationship with him. Never changes. Never changes.

This is the wonder of grace. Our relationship. Never changes. Indeed it cannot change. It cannot. We remain. His favored children.

No matter what. And yet. Our sins. Do have an effect. Don't they? They certainly do. Our sins. Against. God. Can.

[ 30 : 49 ] And do. Come. Between us. Every day. That's why. This prayer is so important. This daily prayer. I mean.

Life sometimes is not happy. Between us. Life sometimes is not close. Between us. Life sometimes is not peaceful. Between us. Not when there is sin.

Between us. Unconfessed. Unrepentant. Undealt with. Now. Of course. The relationship is still there.

Again. Let me. Pound that in. The relationship is still there. It can never end. It can never be violated. Never destroyed. It was all by grace. To begin with.

And continues to be. But our fellowship. What about that? Our communion.

[ 31 : 45 ] What about that? First John. One. Seven. But if we walk in the light. As he is in the light. We have fellowship. With one another. And the blood of Jesus Christ.

His son. Cleanses us. From all sin. That's a wonderful promise. For the believer. And so. When we sin. We. Must not deny it.

We must not. Tuck it away somewhere. We must not hide it. Must not try to explain it away. Or excuse ourselves. We should drag it out. Into the glorious. Light of God's holy word.

So that it can be viewed. Exactly for what it is. And we should confess it. And we. For what it is. And we should repent of it. For what it is. And we should deal with it. In our prayers.

And so. We'll make this very personal. My heavenly father. Forgive me. Because I've sinned against you. Release me from this debt. So that. My communion.

[ 32 : 42 ] My fellowship. My sweet fellowship. With you. Could continue. Be restored. So the priority of this prayer. Is confessional.

Confessing. That I have sinned. Against you. The purpose of this prayer. Is communal. And then. Finally. This morning.

The promise. Of this prayer. Prayer. You're not going to necessarily like this one. The promise of this prayer. Is conditional. It is conditional.

Look at it closely. For. We. Also. Forgive. Everyone. Who is indebted to us. Is that what you do? Always. Immediately. For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us.

[ 33 : 41 ] Matthew gives us. It in a little different wording. He says. And forgive us our debts. That's our sin debt. As we forgive our debtors.

As we forgive those. Who have wronged us. Who have sinned against us. Now. When you really get down to it. This is the most difficult part of the prayer. Because it requires a great deal. To take place. To happen. Even before we pray it. Before we come to the Lord in prayer. And we pray. Father. Forgive. My debt.

We must make sure. That we have forgiven. All those who are indebted to us. That's why I say. That this is conditional. It's given in that sense. It's conditional.

That's what Jesus is saying here. He's saying. God. Will measure out. His forgiveness. To us. The same.

[ 34 : 41 ] As we measure out. Our forgiveness. To others. That's what he's saying. That is. That is. Forgiveness. His forgiveness. Of us.

Is conditional. It's conditional. If you expect the Lord. To forgive you. Of your sin debt. When you cry out to him. Then you must be sure.

That you have forgiven those. Who have wronged you. If not. God will not forgive you. You say. What? That's right. Ephesians 4.32.

And be kind. One to another. Tenderhearted. Forgiving. One another. Even as God. Our. For Christ's sake.

Has forgiven you. Now. You may not like this. But the truth. Could not be clearer. Not only here. In. These instructions. On prayer. But.

[ 35 : 38 ] Also. Other places. In scripture. If you refuse. To forgive. Your brother. Or sister. In Christ. For their sins. Their wrongs. Against you. Then you should not.

Expect the Lord. To forgive you. Of your sins. Your debts. Against him. Now. In case. You're questioning.

Whether or not. This is true. I want you to consider. What Jesus taught. In Matthew 6. We're not going to turn to it. But in Matthew 6. You have. Matthew's account.

Of the. The same instructions. On prayer. Though Matthew. Includes some other instructions. And Luke includes. Some other instructions. You put them together. And you have. Quite a lot of instruction.

On prayer. But in Matthew chapter 6. Jesus gives the Lord's prayer. Just as we're studying here. In Luke 11. And then. After that. In verse 14.

[ 36 : 31 ] He says this. For if you forgive men. Their trespasses. Their sins against you. Your heavenly father. Will also forgive you. But. There's.

Not one of the. Butts. We like to. Hear about in scripture. But if you do not. Forgive men. Of their trespasses. Their sins against you. Neither.

Will your father. Forgive your trespasses. There's. There's no other way. To explain that. It's very clear. Now. Again. Please understand.

That we've already covered this ground. It is not a question of relationship. Your saving relationship with God. By grace. Through your faith.

It's not a question of relationship. It is a question of fellowship. Of communion. Sweet communion with the Lord. It's a question of sure guidance from the Lord. You're looking for guidance from the Lord.

[ 37 : 28 ] Then you better be in communion with him. And you want to be in communion with him. Then you must deal with your sin. Always. Constantly. Be fessed up with him. Short accounts with him.

And. If you expect his forgiveness. Of sin. That is. Between you and him. In communion. Then you must. Have forgiven those who have sinned against you.

There's just no other way. It's a matter of communion. That is. The important thing. All of this. Communion with him.

Guidance from him. Provision from him. As your child. Sweet fellowship with him. All of it. Is predicated upon. Our. Release.

From the sin debt. We owe our heavenly father. And it is conditioned. Upon. Our release. Our forgiveness. Of those who have wronged us. Have sinned against us.

[ 38 : 24 ] Forgive us. Our debt. Our sin debt. For we also forgive. Everyone. Who owes. A sin debt. To us. Can you pray that.

And mean that. You say. Well pastor. I'm a forgiving person. But there's this one person. I'll never forgive him.

Then dear brother. I hope you never sin. Dear sister. I hope you never sin. I hope you never sin. because neither will your Father forgive you.

Prayer is about releasing.