

heavenly father is the provider of all we will ever need. He not only supplies our temporal needs, but also our spiritual ones. As Paul wrote in Philippians 4:19, - *"My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus"*. God loves us and provides for us.

5. Our Father is a Forgiving God - *"And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors"* (Matthew 6:12). An earthly father understands that his children make mistakes, and because he loves his children, he will go out of his way to help them get out of trouble. He is more forgiving to his children than he is to anyone else. There is a similar thought here. God our heavenly father is saying, *"Out of the depths of my love, I have forgiven you, now you are to forgive others"* (cp. Ephesians 4:32). The forgiveness in this verse is the Father's forgiveness of his child, and not the once for all act of forgiveness, which one receives when he becomes a child of God.

6. Our Father Protects His Own from Evil - *"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one"* (Matthew 6:13a). Here we must stop and ask whether God ever leads any one into temptation? The word "lead" us not into temptation has in it the connotation of seducing or enticing to sin. James states: *"When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone"* (James. 1:13). Since God cannot lead someone into sin, the solution to the problem lies in the proper understanding of the word translated "temptation." This word does not mean a solicitation to commit sin. The word means to undergo a trial or test of any kind.

It is a prayer to God *"to keep them from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth"* (Revelation 3:10). Since the primary interpretation of this prayer belongs to the

future disciples who will go through the Tribulation, we can see the special significance of praying to the Father to be delivered from the evil one.

7. Our Father is to Receive All the Praise and Glory - *"For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen"* (Matthew 6:13b). It is the ultimate goal of every kid to be like his father. If his father was a good man, the son refers to him as his hero. His father is remembered and honoured for all he has done. In like manner, our Heavenly Father works all things for our good; therefore we need to see him as the ultimate almighty powerful one who has eternal purposes and plans and give him all the praise and glory.

In great appreciation and thanksgiving we are to ascribe all power and glory to him. He is our Hero. He has done great things for us and all praise, honour and glory belongs to him. (cp. Psalm 148 and Revelation 19:4-10).

So when you say the Lord's Prayer, think of the greatness of our Heavenly Father who works all things after the counsel of his own will.

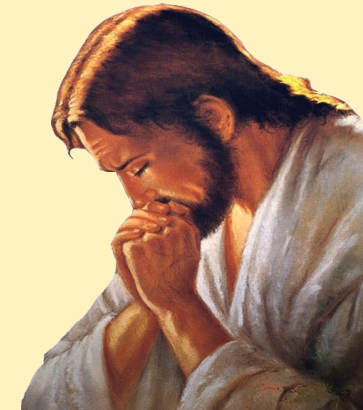
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So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.
- John 8:36

A Fresh Look at

PRAYER

Matthew 6: 9-13



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Matthew 6: 9-13

I would like to share some thoughts on the nature of God as our heavenly father and take note of any parallels between an earthly father and our wonderful Heavenly Father. To do this, I'm going to use the Lord's Prayer as it is recorded in the New King James Bible.

The Lord's Prayer, which might better be called the Disciple's Prayer, was taught by Jesus on two different occasions. The first in Matthew 6:9-13 and later in Luke 11:1-4, on an entirely different occasion. But the prayer is basically the same. Luke stresses persistence in prayer.

The prayer was doubtless intended to be a sample or model for prayer: not a prayer to be memorised and repeated word for word, over and over again. Jesus warned against using repetitions in prayer. *"When you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words"* (Matthew 6:7). When God has answered our requests we do not continue to ask for that thing again. If he has not only supplied all we need for today, but for a week or month in advance, we should thank him for the supply; not continue to petition him.

1. God is our Heavenly Father - "Our Father in heaven" (Matthew 6:9). Just as we have an earthly father, so as Christians we have a heavenly father. *"As human beings we were born of a human seed, that eventually dies, but spiritually we have been born again not of decaying seed but incorruptible seed, through the word of God which lives and abides forever"* (1Peter 1:23). Many Jews could not have 'prayed' this prayer, for Jesus said, *"You are of your father the Devil,"* (John 8:44). It is most important to recognise the fact that the disciples were children of God, as only true

believers can call God their Father. God is the creator of everything and mankind is one of his creatures, but he is only the father of all those who become his spiritual children by faith in Jesus Christ.

The words **"Our Father"**, are a personal and loving expression that flows out of our heart to our God, whom we know and love (Romans 8:15-17). All prayer should begin with praise and worship of God. He is the one who created us and after mankind sinned, he planned a way for us to be saved through Jesus Christ his son. The apostle Paul wrote about this in the letter to the Colossians. *"For he (our Heavenly Father) has rescued us from the one who rules in the kingdom of darkness, and he has brought us into the Kingdom of his dear Son. God has purchased our freedom with his blood and has forgiven all our sins"* (Colossians 1:9-14).

Note that the words *"Our Father in heaven"* clearly states that God our Heavenly Father lives in Heaven. Heaven is the abode of God. It is a literal and real location. Though God cannot be limited to time and space; He does have a place of abode, which the Bible calls heaven. It is the place where his children will one day live. *"Christ has gone to heaven. He is seated in the place of honour next to God, and all the angels and authorities and powers are bowing before him"* (1Peter 3:22).

2. Our Father is a Holy God - "Hallowed be your name" (Matthew 6:9). Just as an earthly father is to set the standards and values for his family and children, so our Heavenly father is our model. We are to respect our earthly father, but more so we are to respect and reverence our heavenly father. The word *"hallow"* means to be holy, to sanctify, to make a person or thing the opposite of being common. God's name stands for God Himself. That is why God commanded that we should not take his name in vain, or lower His name to the base and commonplace things of this world.

This is a petition, which means that the one praying

is asking for God's name to be hallowed and honoured in his own personal life. The Bible tells us that we who are God's children must endeavour to become like him. *"For he himself has said, "You must be holy because I am holy"* (1Peter 1:14-16).

3. Our Father has planned a future 1000 year Kingdom on Earth. "Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). These two requests are very closely tied together, for when the Kingdom comes God's will shall be done in earth as it is done in heaven. This request is evidence that the Kingdom in the Gospel writings is the yet future Messianic Kingdom which shall be established here upon the earth. Jesus taught that the Kingdom was 'to come' at a future time.

The coming of this Kingdom depended upon Israel's acceptance of Jesus as their Messiah and King. Even though Israel rejected him and had him crucified, he prayed for their forgiveness and a new opportunity was given them in the early chapters of Acts to repent. Again they rejected him and the Kingdom was not established, but was postponed until God's salvation of the Gentiles into the Church is completed (Romans 11).

Verse 10 teaches us that in the same way that an earthly father has plans for his children, so God has plans under the reign of Jesus Christ, to give his children the rich blessings of a renewed earth for at least a 1000 years, after which they will inherit eternity.

4. Our Father is the Great Provider - "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11). [NKJV] or *"Give us today our daily bread"* [NIV]. A good father loves his kids and naturally cares for his family. He works hard to put food on the table, clothes on his kids and a house in which to live, etc. In like manner our