

The Lord's Prayer

A Sweet Selah Day Guide

Introduction

I am so glad you have set aside time to rest in the Lord! Jesus invites us to come with our heavy burdens. Taking this time is one way to take Him up on His offer and find rest for our souls.

I have chosen *The Lord's Prayer* as the topic of this *Selah Day Guide*. This prayer is a model that can easily be carried into your everyday life. Regardless of how much time you have set aside today, the teaching in this prayer will help shape your heart to align with Christ's heart—to adore what He adores, to desire what He desires, and to form a habit of prayer. I pray that the confidence and hope demonstrated in this prayer will fill your heart and spill over into your daily life.

Initial Pause

Take a few deep breaths, recenter your scattered senses, and be fully present in this moment you have set aside. May God bless you as you seek to be present with Him as He is present with you.

Lord, we thank You for promising to draw near to us when we draw near to You.¹

Jesus taught the Lord's Prayer as an alternative to the wordy prayers the Gentiles were praying as an elaborate performance. With Sweet Selah time, no performance is necessary—no audience to impress. Come as you are. Put down your guard and anything that might hinder honest conversation between you and the Lord. You are here to rest in Him.

¹ James 4:8

Scripture Reading and Reflection

“And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him. Pray then like this:

***“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.”***

—Matthew 6:7-13 ESV

This prayer is simple, and yet it covers much. The first half contains three requests that focus on God’s purposes in the world (I’ve placed the last two together in this study). The second half includes three more requests that address our concerns for everyday life.

Perhaps it’s too much to cover all at once. So today, you are invited to “choose your adventure” and interact with the text in a personal way. After all, this is your time with the Lord. What do you feel drawn to focus on today? Below is each line of the prayer in bold, followed by personal reflection questions. Feel free to jump to what you feel compelled to focus on today.

Which part of this prayer tugs at your heart or stands out in your mind?

First Half (God’s purposes in the world)

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.”

An alternative translation to this line is, “May your name be recognized as holy.” I like this translation because God *is* holy, and this wording begs the question: how do we recognize His holiness?

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

In a kingdom, there is a monarch, and there are subjects who do the will of the monarch. How is God’s kingdom different from a kingdom run by humans? How can we, as humans, be willing participants in God’s kingdom here on earth in our daily lives?

Second Half (Personal requests for everyday life)

“Give us this day our daily bread.”

How has God provided “daily bread”—whatever is needed to sustain your existence? Take a moment to list these gifts and thank Him for His provision. Whether you are experiencing insecurity in this area or not, how could praying for this provision affect your heart’s posture toward what you own and what you need?

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

We are the recipients of lavish forgiveness from a loving God. To offer forgiveness to others is a radical act of trust in God and is one way we acknowledge all that we have received from Him. The “Bible Project” describes it in this way: “Jesus invites us to see that forgiveness is like breathing. In order to truly receive and take in God’s forgiveness, you need the habit of giving it out. The two work together as one.”² Where can you ask for God’s help in fully receiving this forgiveness for yourself? Where can you ask for His help in fully offering it to others?

“Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.”

In the first half, we pray for God’s will to be done on earth, and here, at the end of the prayer, we are faced with one reality that gets in the way of this: temptation. God walks with us through it all, and we can ask Him to guide our steps and deliver us from evil. What temptation are you faced with today? What is one step you can make towards deliverance from this?

² <https://bibleproject.com/guides/the-lords-prayer>

Further Thoughts

Jesus says that our Father already knows exactly what we need before we even ask Him³, and yet still encourages us to pray. Therefore, we can see prayer not as *informative* but as *formative*. When we pray, we are not merely sharing information with God; we are cultivating a relationship with Him, and that is forming us to be more like Him.

It's reasonable to think that if this is how Jesus taught us to pray, this is how He prayed regularly. We can hear echoes of this prayer in the prayer He prayed at the lowest point of His life when He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night of His crucifixion: "Not my will, but yours, be done"⁴. When done regularly, this way of praying serves as a formative practice in our life too. Perhaps what can be prayed with little effort today is helping form us into Christlikeness even to the point of maturity where we can pray, "Not my will, but Yours, be done" when we are faced with trials.

How could this prayer attune your heart to God's heart?

If you prayed this prayer frequently, how might it begin to inform the decisions you make in your daily life? Could you see yourself changing by praying this way?

I'll share a personal example. The line in this prayer, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive those who are indebted to us," always trips me up a bit. Because, to be honest, I don't want to be forgiven as I have forgiven others. I want to be forgiven *even better* than I forgive. But if I am not offering forgiveness, do I really understand the forgiveness I have received from the Lord? Praying this prayer serves as a reminder of what Jesus teaches about forgiveness and challenges me to be generous, not stingy, in my forgiveness. Write your thoughts.

³ Matthew 6:8

⁴ Luke 22:42

Closing

As you close your time, I encourage you to take a moment to think about how you could incorporate this prayer into your daily routine. It is full of certainty and hope, something we all could use more of in our lives! May God bless you as you walk closely with Him and continue to pray ...

***“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
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A Closing Blessing

May God bless you as you adore Him. May He make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you. May you seek ways to bring a little heaven down to earth as you pursue His will. May you never lose sight of this beautiful possibility. May your daily needs be met. May you lavishly forgive others as you live in the joyful reality of being fully forgiven by God. May your paths be kept straight and your foothold secure as you let the Good Shepherd guide you. May you always know that you are loved. Amen.

Ways to Continue Selah Time

- Listen to worshipful music
- Journal a personal response to today’s reading
- Write the Lord’s Prayer on a sticky note or index card that you can display as a daily reminder to pray as Christ has taught us to pray.
- Did you feel compelled to take action today? Go ahead and write down in your calendar when you will take this action or make a plan to execute it.
- Go for a walk and practice a loving awareness of His presence. He is “in heaven,” and He is also *with us*. Praise the Lord. What a gift!