

Prayer - Part One
Our Father in Heaven

Matthew 6:9–13 (NKJV)

⁹In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

¹⁰Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹Give us this day our daily bread.

¹²And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors.

¹³And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

- *Jesus gave us a pattern in Matthew, Chapter 6, of what prayer looks like and how it functions.*
- *What many call “The Lord’s Prayer” is not simply something one repeats, even though one could repeat it, but it provides us with the seven essential qualities of prayer.*
- *We are going to study the first quality of prayer - “Our Father in Heaven.”*
- *This principle of prayer is the most foundational and it illustrates that prayer above all else is based on relationship.*
- *If one removes the element of relationship from prayer it becomes a meaningless ritual with no power, purpose, or joy.*
- *When Christians find prayer difficult, dry, or tedious, it is because they have not cultivated the reality that prayer above all else is a relationship with God.*
- *“Our Father in Heaven” – gives us a pattern for cultivating a prayer life that is based on our relationship with God.*
- *There are three basic elements that summarize our relationship with God as our Father:*
 - *1. His Provision*
 - *2. His Protection*
 - *3. His Presence*
- *When we understand and embrace these three elements we will experience the security that the Father provides for His children.*

- *1. We need to see our Father as our Provider:*

Matthew 6:25–26 (NKJV)

²⁵“Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?”

²⁶Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?”

- *“Therefore I say to you” – Jesus is about to make a powerful point to bring freedom to our lives and it is in the context of being free from covetousness. It addresses the last thought in the preceding verse, “You cannot serve God and mammon” – with mammon referring to wealth or profit.*
- *Wealth or profit is the way a person tries in his or her own strength to feel secure in terms of provision.*
- *“do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on” – Do not have anxious thoughts about the future, if we will have enough, or if we will suffer lack.*
- *“Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?” – The word translated as life is ψυχή psychē and it literally means soul, and by inference it can mean life.*
- *Materialism is seeing life only in terms of the material world without regard to spiritual and eternal realities.*
- *Being motivated by materialism will result in covetousness, the worship of things, while a believer who sees the spiritual and eternal reality of life will evaluate everything from God’s point of view.*
- *“Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?” – For us to be free from fear and covetousness we need to see the provision and tender care that our Heavenly Father has for us, as He uses creation to give us insights that help us understand His love and care for us.*

Luke 12:28–32 (NLT)

²⁸And if God cares so wonderfully for flowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith?

²⁹“And don’t be concerned about what to eat and what to drink. Don’t worry about such things.

³⁰These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers all over the world, but your Father already knows your needs.

³¹Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and he will give you everything you need.

³²“So don’t be afraid, little flock. For it gives your Father great happiness to give you the Kingdom.

- **“These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers all over the world, but your Father already knows your needs” –*Unbeliever’s thoughts are dominated by fear and uncertainty of the future, but our Father already knows our needs and has made provision for us.***
- **“Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and he will give you everything you need” –*Jesus was always about His Father’s business and preaching the gospel. He could do that because He was always fully confident in His Father’s provision.***
- **“So don’t be afraid, little flock.” –*This is a beautiful picture of our Father’s tender mercy and care for us even in the midst of our human frailties and weaknesses.***
- **“For it gives your Father great happiness to give you the Kingdom.” –*God’s provision reflects His generosity. With great joy He pours out his blessings on us, so we will be able to receive all He has prepared for us.***

1 Peter 2:24 (NKJV)

²⁴who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.

- ***The Father’s provision is not only for material needs. It also includes physical and emotional healing.***
- **“might live for righteousness” –*wholeness in our souls to live lives that bring glory to God.***
- **“by whose stripes you were healed” –*wholeness for our bodies.***

- *2. We need to see our Father as our Protector:*

Isaiah 52:12 (NKJV)

¹²For you shall not go out with haste, Nor go by flight; For the LORD will go before you, And the God of Israel will be your rear guard.

- *The Lord is our protector. He goes before us to prepare the way and He follows behind us to guard against the enemy.*

Luke 21:12–19 (NKJV)

¹²But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name’s sake.

¹³But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony.

¹⁴Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer;

¹⁵for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist.

¹⁶You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death.

¹⁷And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake.

¹⁸But not a hair of your head shall be lost.

¹⁹By your patience possess your souls.

- *“But not a hair of your head shall be lost.” – Despite all the dangers, betrayal, and persecution in this life, God will bring us safely home to be with Him in Heaven.*
- *“By your patience possess your souls.” – In the midst of difficult circumstances, if we wait patiently on the Lord, we will experience victory and freedom in our souls.*
- *If we endure hardships patiently, as we trust our Father’s protection, it will result in deeper levels of freedom and joy.*
- *Protection does not necessarily mean deliverance from every difficult or painful situation, but deliverance and freedom as we pass through those experiences. This will result in knowing God in deeper ways than we could ever imagine.*

- *3. We need to recognize the Father's presence through abiding in Christ.*
- *It is this aspect of knowing and experiencing the Father's presence that makes prayer so sweet, comforting, and precious.*
- *Our confidence and faith in God grows and matures most, not when we experience His protection or His provision, but when we experience His presence.*

John 16:32 (NKJV)

³²Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.

- *Even in the midst of Jesus' most difficult times in His earthly ministry when His disciples fled from Him in fear, His Father was with Him and that gave Him the strength to face Calvary. God, His Father, even sent an angel to strengthen Him. (Luke 22:43)*

John 14:16–17 (NKJV)

¹⁶And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—

¹⁷the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

- *“And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper” - The Holy Spirit is a gift from the Father. (Luke 11:13)*
- *“that He may abide with you forever” - The Father has given us the Holy Spirit so we are never alone. Through the Holy Spirit we can experience the presence of the Father.*

Hebrews 13:5 (NKJV)

⁵Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

- *The Father's presence is with every believer, but we must learn to cultivate our relationship with Him, so His presence becomes real to us.*

- “be content” – *Contentment is not achieved or experienced through possessions or achievements, but through cultivating the abiding presence of God in prayer.*
- *A believer can witness or even experience God’s miraculous provision or deliverance multiple times without it transforming their lives. It is through experiencing God’s presence in prayer that those aspects of the Father, His provision, and protection, become real and life changing.*

Psalm 131:1–3 (NKJV)

¹LORD, my heart is not haughty, Nor my eyes lofty. Neither do I concern myself with great matters, Nor with things too profound for me.

²Surely I have calmed and quieted my soul, Like a weaned child with his mother; Like a weaned child is my soul within me.

³O Israel, hope in the LORD From this time forth and forever.

- “LORD, my heart is not haughty, Nor my eyes lofty. Neither do I concern myself with great matters, Nor with things too profound for me” – *Sometimes we can become over burdened by the problems of this life, or become contentious and argumentative about things we don’t understand, thinking that we are smarter than we are or think that the problems are more important than they really are.*
- “Surely I have calmed and quieted my soul” – *How do we quiet and calm our souls? By spending time in the presence of the Lord.*
- *We will either wrestle with the problems of life, which results in turmoil, or we can come to the Father and place our needs, burdens, and questions before Him and enjoy His presence.*

Psalm 34:8 (NKJV)

⁸Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!

- *How do we taste and see that the Lord is good? We do that first and foremost through prayer, because God is not a something but a Someone.*
- *The presence of God is experienced and cultivated in prayer.*
- *Prayer is to be a delight, because we are communing with God.*

Matthew 6:6 (NKJV)

6 But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

- *Here we see some components of prayer:*
- *“Go into your room” – The Greek word for room means an inner chamber, a treasury, a secret room.*
- *Our place of prayer is our inner chamber when we can find solitude as we commune with God daily.*
- *Our place of prayer is our storeroom or treasury where we share with God the things that are closest and dearest to our hearts. There we share our love and thanksgiving for Him and all that He does for us.*
- *Our place of prayer is our secret room where we can spend exclusive time not only sharing our needs but hearing His gentle voice of comfort or direction.*
- *“Shut the door” - We need to shut and lock the entrance to our souls from the distractions and busyness of life, so we can pray with our attention solely focused on our Father.*
- *“Pray” – The next thing we do when we go into our prayer closet is to actually pray.*
- *The very word “pray” implies verbal communication—speech.*
- *When we are in that secret place and the door is shut we are to pray to our Father.*
- *Verbalizing prayer helps to focus and concentrate our attention.*
- *“Pray to your Father who is in that secret place” – It is in the secret place of prayer that we encounter God and grow in our relationship with our heavenly Father.*
- *“Your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” – True faith-filled prayer always produce fruitfulness.*
- *This does not mean just an answer to a specific prayer, but something much greater and bigger—the will of God being manifested.*

- *The greatest consequence of consistency in prayer will seldom be seen in a sudden and abrupt change, but in the effect prayer has in the total transformation of our lives and those around us over the course of our lifetime.*

Matthew 6:7 (NKJV)

7 And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.

- *This verse is a caution regarding having a correct attitude.*
- *It reinforces that prayer is a relationship with God and not a ritual or religious practice. It is an act of us sharing our hearts with God.*
- *What is the difference between vain repetition and persistency in prayer?*
- *Our focus and attitude.*
- *“For they think that they will be heard for their many words.” – Religious people see prayer as trying to earn God’s favour in a superstitious way, when in fact prayer is solidly based on relationship.*
- *God hears and answers us, not because of how well or long we pray, but because He loves us.*

Matthew 16:16–17 (NKJV)

¹⁶Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

¹⁷Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

- *One of the greatest delights of prayer is communing and deepening our relationship with the living God.*