

# Truth and Spirit Ministries

## Lord, Teach Us To Pray.

By Denise Bostic

This request came from one of Jesus' disciples after they had observed Him praying to God. (*Luke 11:1*) Before Jesus ever taught one thing about prayer to His disciples, He was first exemplifying a personal prayer life for them. It has been said that actions speak louder than words. Jesus came to set the example for us not only in word but also in deed. He came into the world in order to redeem and reconcile lost mankind back to God (*John 3:16, II Corinthians 5:19*) and give those that accept His atoning sacrifice the prestigious status as sons of God. **"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."** (*John 1:12-13*)

Jesus came to model **sonship** to those who have now become heirs of salvation and His Kingdom. (*Hebrews 1:14, James 2:5*) His title of being the Firstborn among many brethren tells us that He is the First in a long line of succession of others that follow after Him. (*Romans 8:29*) In what is commonly referred to as the Lord's Prayer, Jesus reveals the power of effective communication between Father and Son. With that being said, we can now gain more understanding of the purpose of prayer and why is it so important to God and to us as believers. First, because of the blood sacrifice of Christ and His reconciling us to God, we now have personal access into the very presence of God (the Holy of Holies) and can connect with our Father through the devotion of prayer. **"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God."** (*Hebrews 10:19-21*)

We pray to God and He answers us in a variety of ways. Unfortunately for many, prayer is all too often a one-way conversation with God, but Jesus came to reveal to us that prayer is not a one-way street, but that God desires to speak with His people in two-way conversation. God is love and God loves us. **"And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him."** (*I John 4:16*) First and foremost God desires to reveal His love, kindness and generosity to us. He wants to help us in our everyday lives, to protect and bless us. He wants to share His divine will, plans and purposes for mankind and for each one of us personally. Many times Jesus would withdraw into a private place to pray. At times He would pray all night in fellowship with the Father, receiving His love, strength and divine instructions in order to carry out God's will in the earth. Victories are won through the power of prayer. Jesus obtained the victory and was empowered to go to the cross as He sought the perfect will of the Father in the Garden of Gethsemane. There is great power in prayer because it brings change into our natural world by supernatural means.

For those who have sought the Almighty, He has answered by giving direction personally to individuals, groups, tribes and whole nations. God has always communicated with man and man likewise with God down through the ages as revealed in the pages of the Bible. It is written that God spoke to the first man and woman in the Garden of Eden. God created man so that He would have children with whom He can have relationships with and He has continued to reach out to men and women down through the ages. He has spoken to patriarchs, kings, priests, prophets, and apostles and continues to speak even today to every New Testament believer that will believe that God is the same yesterday, today and forever.

In light of God's pattern of speaking to man, why would we find it strange or unusual that God would desire to speak to us also? Jesus said, **"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."** (*John 10:27*) The Lord speaks to His people personally. When we come to God in prayer, we must have faith. God desires that we believe what He says and walk in His ways. The scripture says, **"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."** (*Hebrews 11:6*) How do we seek Him? It is through prayer that we seek God and draw near to Him. Prayer makes us sensitive and responsive to God's Spirit. After all, the more time you spend with someone, the more you get to know him or her. The importance of the power of prayer is revealed to us by Jesus, not only for every sinner who cries out to God and every believer in Christ, but also for the purposes of an Eternal Kingdom that is greater than all the

kingdoms of the world- the Kingdom of God. As we study the Lord's Prayer, we can gain insight and understanding of how this applies to our lives as children of God, beginning with...

### **Our Father In Heaven**

One of the first things Jesus revealed about prayer is that it denotes **relationship**. He said, "When you pray, say, **Our Father which art in heaven...**" (**Matthew 6:9**) Our first act as a Christian is prayer. We repent before God and ask Jesus to be our Savior and Lord. When we do this, we are born into the Kingdom and God then becomes our Father. As was stated earlier, Jesus came to earth to be an atoning sacrifice for our sins so that we could be forgiven and restored back into right relationship with God as Father, giving us the status of sons. When we believe in and accept Jesus as Savior, we are born again of the Spirit, born from above. In order to enter the Kingdom of God one must become born again.

A Pharisee named Nicodemus came to Jesus at night seeking answers from Him. Jesus said to him, "**I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again... no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.**" (**John 3:1-8**) Once we are born into God's Kingdom, we learn as we continue in our walk with the Lord that the devotion of prayer is essential in nurturing our personal relationship with Him. Prayer is personal fellowship or communion with God. God is light and we must enter into His light if we are to have fellowship with Him. Once we are walking in the light of God's Kingdom, we can then have fellowship with Him in prayer. "**But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.**" (**1 John 1:7**)

As we grow in Him, we find that prayer also becomes our connecting lifeline to Him. Once we are saved, we are to remain in Christ. Jesus said, "**Remain in me and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.**" (**John 15:1-5 NIV**) As we pray to God, we draw our source of life, strength and ability from fellowshiping with Him in this place of prayer. Just as our earthly father gives us physical life, so also our Heavenly Father gives us spiritual life. Even as a branch cannot survive apart from the vine, so we cannot survive without the Lord.

We also learn about God- His nature, character and ways as we spend time with Him in quietness. He reveals Himself not only in the pages of the Bible, but also personally communicates from His Spirit to ours as we fellowship with Him. God reveals mysteries and knowledge about Himself and His ways to us by His Spirit. (**1 Corinthians 2:9-13**) Again, the more time you spend with someone, the more you get to know him or her. It's the same way with our relationship with God. We can learn to know Him, be sensitive to His voice and be responsive to Him. The Father-son relationship also is one of intimacy. Intimacy in Latin means **innermost**. Our Father wants to have a very personal relationship with us where He speaks and moves in our innermost being. It is here that we learn to reverence and worship Him and let Him know...

### **Hallowed Be Your Name**

The next thing that Jesus taught was, "**Hallowed be thy name...**" God is Holy. When we come before God in prayer, we are to come with the awareness of His Holiness. In this part of the prayer, Jesus is teaching us to reverence our Father because of His position as God. The greatest commandment is, "**Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.**" (**Mark 12:30**) God should always come first in our lives. We should be seeking Him personally, not just what He can do for us. Jesus taught us that if we seek God's righteousness and Kingdom first, then God would take care of all of our needs. (**Matthew 6:33**) At the same time, we are presenting ourselves to Him in an attitude of humility and thankfulness. Humility because is Creator and we are dependent upon Him as His creation and thankfulness for all that He is to us and all that He does for us. We are to even make our requests known with thanksgiving! (**Philippians 4:6**) We dedicate this time as sacred, as time set apart to worship Him because He is worthy of our love and devotion.

In teaching us that we are to hallow God's name, Jesus is showing us the first and highest priority of prayer is **worship**. We are to first take the time to honor and express our love to our Father. We have a reciprocal relationship of love with God. We love God because He first loved us! We can only have the capacity to love with God's kind of love because He dwells in us. As the scriptures declare, "**We love because he first loved us.**" (**1 John 4:19**) In prayer we can take this special moment to express our love to Him because that's what people do who love one another. Since love is the greatest gift, our love is the most treasured thing that we can give our God! Prayer is the time where we express all that is in our hearts with passion

and warm feelings of affection for the Lord. When we take the time to worship God, this draws us closer to Him. When we worship God, He surrounds us in His presence and we not only minister to Him, but He ministers to us as well. We are always changed from glory to glory in the presence of the Lord. There is joy in His presence and we praise God because He inhabits us! Once we come into His presence, this helps us to open up a dialogue with God. Prayer is not a one sided conversation, but fellowship between persons. Fellowship is sharing between friends; it is a sharing of similar interests, ideals and experiences. We share what is on our hearts with God and He shares with us what is on His...

### **Your Kingdom Come, Your Will Be Done On Earth, As It Is In Heaven**

After making God our first priority, the next priority is God's Kingdom. There is something that needs to be emphasized at this point in the Lord's Prayer. Some denominations recite this prayer word for word, not realizing that this was not Jesus' intent. He taught that we must not have vain repetition in prayer. (Matthew 6:7) This being the case, we can understand that it was not the Lord's will that we recite this prayer in a repetitious, empty and useless way as some do today. What Jesus has given us is a pattern or an outline for the way and the things we ought to pray for. This pattern is consistent with the two greatest commandments as spoken by Jesus, **"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."** (Matthew 22:36-40 NIV) The first part of the Lord's Prayer is directed toward loving, honoring and putting God first.

Immediately after setting the example of putting God first, Jesus teaches us that the next highest priority is God's Kingdom. **"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."** (Matthew 6:10) This lines up perfectly with what He said in the Sermon on the Mount, **"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."** (Matthew 6:33 NIV) This is no accident that the Lord taught prayer in this order. God has made a promise to us in the Word that if we put Him and His Kingdom first, our needs will be met. Prior to this scripture, the Lord is telling us that we do not have to worry that our needs will not be met.

Seeking God's Kingdom and His righteousness first in the Greek means **to seek its blessings and benefits whether present or future.** [Joseph Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament] Also, the Apostle Paul taught that we are to have our minds on heavenly things or the things of the Kingdom of Heaven. **"Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God."** (Colossians 3:1-3 NIV) We are citizens of that heavenly Kingdom. **"But you are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels. To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven..."** (Hebrews 12:22,23) If we are seeking God's Kingdom first and His righteousness, we can rest assured our needs will be met. There is no lack for the citizens of heaven! Since Jesus placed such a high priority on the Kingdom of God, shouldn't we also? God wants us to keep our focus where it belongs, on Him and His Kingdom. It is so easy to get distracted with the cares of the world that we can forget what is most important.

There is more to this sentence **"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven,"** than we could ever realize. Our understanding and knowledge of God and His Kingdom is not yet made perfect or complete. The Apostle Paul captured this thought so wonderfully when he wrote, **"For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."** (1 Corinthians 13:12 KJV) Right now our knowledge is imperfect. If we were to look through a dark glass, we would not be able to see clearly to what is on the other side. The darkness obstructs our vision and there are things that we do not yet see or comprehend. During the times that we spend seeking the face of God in prayer, He does give us understanding in part, but it is only when we are totally perfected by God that we will have knowledge clearly, fully and perfectly. We know that only God Almighty has all knowledge. He reveals these things that He wants us to understand by His Spirit a little at a time and when we are ready to receive it.

We are admonished in the Word of God to **"grow in grace, and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."** (1 Peter 3:18) God in all of His wisdom will impart knowledge and understanding to us when He knows that we need it and also when we ask Him. God promises us, **"Ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened..."** (Matthew 7:7-11) Therefore it is with understanding that we pray this part of the prayer realizing that we are praying in a position of dependence on God for knowledge of Him, His will and His Kingdom.

**“Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”** When we are praying for this we are praying for a progressive revelation of how the will, plans and purposes of God and His Kingdom are to be known and put into effect in the earth on a daily basis. We realize that we do not know all of God’s will concerning His Kingdom, so we need to pray daily for the knowledge of His will. In effect, we are learning daily knowledge about God and His Kingdom. We learn this not only in times of prayer when God speaks to our hearts, but also as we study His Word.

Understanding about God, His will and Kingdom comes into the life of the believer *progressively through revelation knowledge by the Holy Spirit*. **“However, as it is written: “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him- but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man’s spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.”(I Corinthians 2:9-13 NIV)** We should all seek God’s will on a daily basis. As we grow in the Lord and spend time with Him, we come to know more of His will, plans, purposes and ways. **“Thy kingdom come”** in the Greek literally means **to come from one place to another**. [Joseph Thayer’s *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament 2064*] This is so powerful! We can have and walk in the things of the Heavenly Kingdom as they come from heaven to earth!

We are citizens of that Heavenly Kingdom of God. As God’s people, we are ambassadors or representatives of God’s Kingdom in the earth. Because God dwells in us, when we pray, move and operate in the things of the Kingdom, we are helping to release God’s power so that He may manifest His glory and Kingdom power in the earth. When we do this, we are following in the example and footsteps of Jesus in fulfilling the Father’s work. Many in the Church pray this part of the prayer with the thought of Jesus returning to earth at the Second Advent. If we receive a greater understanding of this scripture though, we realize that we can be a part of bringing God’s Kingdom to earth on a daily basis right now. We can do our part by being willing and obedient vessels of the Lord as we follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.

The Lord moves through His Church to reach people with the good news of the Kingdom of God. People in the earth need the things of the Kingdom of Heaven now while they are here, not after they die. Salvation is to be received now. Healing is needed now. Deliverance is needed now. Now is the acceptable time to receive what God has for us. **(Luke 4:17-21, II Corinthians 6:1-2)** God wants to manifest His glory in the earth. Jesus wants to draw all mankind to Himself. He does that through His Church and we are to prepare the way for the Coming of the Lord! We are His vessels to bring glory and honor to His name! When we walk with the Lord, we can be sure that He will...

### **Give Us Today Our Daily Bread**

Just because the Lord told us not to worry about our needs does not mean that God does not want us to ask Him for them. There are many scriptures where Jesus admonishes believers to ask God for things in prayer and believe to receive them. **(Matthew 7:7, 11, 14:7, 21:22, Mark 6:22,23, Luke 11:9, John 14:13,14, 15:7,16)** Even though God knows what we need even before we ask, He still wants us to ask Him. **(Matthew 6:8)** God wants us to exercise our faith in Him. **“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” (Hebrews 11:6)** God wants us to show Him that we believe what He says. It is during this time of prayer that we can ask God to **“Give us this day our daily bread.”** After we have put God and His Kingdom first, then we can rightfully petition God for daily needs. When we do this we are recognizing God as our Provider and learn to trust Him for everything in our lives. Not only can we ask God for our needs but also the Bible tells us that if we delight ourselves in the Lord, He will give us the desires of our heart. **(Psalm 37:4)** As we delight in God, He also delights in giving good gifts to His children! In **James 1:17** it says, **“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”**

As we bring our petitions before God, it is important for us to come to God with a thankful heart for those things He has blessed us with already. **Philippians 4:6** says, **“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”** We should be grateful for what we do have and not complaining about what we don’t have.

When we come into God's presence, we pray not only for ourselves, but also for God to take care of the needs of others also. Jesus said, "Give **us** this day our daily bread." Praying "us" instead of "me" is keeping the second greatest commandment, "**You shall love your neighbor as yourself.**" We want those around us to be blessed by God as well with the things of the Kingdom of God. If we would "do unto others as we would have them do unto us" then we surely would want others to pray to God on our behalf.

There is power in prayer! Jesus said, "**You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.**" (**John 14:14**) There is power in a believer's prayer for "**the prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.**" (**James 5:16**) Jesus also promised, "**I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.**" (**Matthew 18:18-20**) With such powerful promises from God, we are then able to "**approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.**" (**Hebrews 4:16**) What marvelous promises from God!

"**Give us this day our daily bread.**" We can pray and ask not only for our physical needs but our spiritual needs as well. We can trust God not only for our basic necessities of food, clothing and shelter, but also for those things that are necessary for our spiritual life as well. God freely gives to us without cost. "**Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you...**" (**Isaiah 55:1-3**) We have an everlasting Covenant with God that is eternal and sure. God made a promise to us, "**Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.**" (**Matthew 5:6**) Whether we are physically or spiritually hungry and thirsty, God is able to provide all our needs. Just as we need physical bread (food) and water on a daily basis, we also need the bread that has come down from heaven, the Living Word of God, on a daily basis. Jesus said, "**Man does not live on (physical) bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.**" (**Matthew 4:4**)

We also need the Water of Life, the Holy Spirit, to sustain us to live spiritually. Jesus also said that the Holy Spirit gives life. "**The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.**" (**John 6:63**) Without the Lord we would wither and die spiritually, just as surely as we would die physically without food and water. (**John 15:4-6**) Without Him we have no life in us. **Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink of his blood, you have no life in you."** (**John 6:53,54**) In other words, without receiving the atoning work of Jesus Christ, we do not have eternal life.

God has not only created us and provided salvation for us but is our Sustainer as well. He did not put us on this planet to fend for ourselves, but He wants to take care of us in every way. Jesus invited us to come to Him as the Author of life for all of our needs. (**John 7:37-39, 14:13-14**) He is the Bread come down from heaven. (**John 6:32-35**) We receive eternal life by eating of His flesh, drinking of His blood and remaining in His sacrificial atonement. (**John 6:48-58**) In other words, we can partake of Jesus' life as the Lamb by receiving the spiritual things of God just as Israel partook of the physical lamb during Passover. Jesus became the Passover Lamb when He died for us on the cross and became our sacrificial Lamb (Savior) when we accepted Him. We do this on a daily basis when we walk with Him and receive His sanctifying work in our lives.

We also do this when we observe the Lord's Supper or Communion as we always remember what His crucifixion on the cross means to us. We remember His death or sacrificial atonement He has made on our behalf until He returns. The bread is symbolic of His body that was broken for us and the fruit of the vine is symbolic of His blood that He shed for us to have forgiveness of sins. It is not only good to thank God for providing for our material needs, but to also thank God for this "Bread from Heaven" and "Living Water" that is eternal and enables us to be filled spiritually. Praise God for His wonderful works! Continuing in the Lord's Prayer, we will also learn that He teaches us that we are to give to others what God has so graciously given to us...

## Forgive Us Our Debts, As We Also Have Forgiven Our Debtors

All human beings on the planet have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (**Romans 3:23**) No one can say that they have never sinned (transgressed God's commands) and be telling the truth. It is written in the word, **"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."** (**1 John 1:8, 10**) The scriptures declare that it is impossible for God to lie. (**Titus 1:2, Hebrews 6:18**) God has already declared all mankind sinners and that not one is righteous. (**Psalms 14:1, Romans 3:10, 23**) Without the Lord Jesus Christ in our lives, we have no righteousness or right standing with God. By His sacrificial atonement on the cross, He has brought those that receive His sacrifice into a right relationship with God as Father. He has done this by imparting His righteousness to us and this has now given us **right standing** with God. It is only when we acknowledge these truths that we can come to God and ask for forgiveness for our sins that we have committed, not only against Him, but also others.

No one is perfect. All of us are fallible, even those who are saved by the blood sacrifice of Christ. We have not yet been made perfect, so there are times that we fall short of God's glory and holiness. It is important that we seek forgiveness in order to be cleansed by the blood of Jesus. If we ask God for forgiveness of our sins, He does not impute (or count) those sins against us and removes them from us so that we may continue in right relationship with our Holy God. (**Romans 4:6-8**) The Apostle John taught, **"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."** (**1 John 1:9**) Those of us in Christ need to know that God will forgive us of our faults, weaknesses and sins. God assures us in many scriptures that He extends His forgiveness to us when we ask Him.

We all need to receive God's forgiveness so that we will not come under **condemnation**. God does not condemn us for sin but saves us from it by the sacrifice of His Son, empowers us to overcome sin by the power of His Holy Spirit and live a godly life in Christ Jesus. It is only when we do not believe, receive and obey the Gospel that we are damned or condemned. (**Mark 16: 15-16, II Thessalonians 1:8-9**) What God desires is our repentance and turning away from our sins. (**John 3: 16-18, Romans 8:1, Acts 2:38**) We are saved by God's grace and have remission of sins by the blood of Jesus. Even though we are not deserving of and by ourselves, we are cleansed by the blood of Jesus because of His atoning work of the cross.

We all need forgiveness and cleansing of sin so that we may have and continue in fellowship with God. God desires that we have a clean conscience, pure heart and body before Him. **"Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."** (**Hebrews 10:22**) When we are seeking to draw near to God in prayer, He does not want sin to interfere with our fellowship with Him. **"If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin."** (**1 John 1:6-7**) God wants us to have a right relationship with Him and one another and we can do this by asking for forgiveness of our sins and we can rest assured that He is faithful to forgive us of them!

Because we are so grateful that God forgives us of our sins, so we should also forgive those who sin against us. Let's face it- we have all sinned against others in our lifetime. Which one of us can say that we have not transgressed against at least one person? Since God extends His grace and mercy to us, we, in turn should extend grace and mercy to others as well. **"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you"** is the golden rule. If we want to be forgiven, we will forgive others. Holding unforgiveness towards others for long periods of time can cause bitterness to spring up in us and defiles us. We are told in God's Word, **"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man will see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, thereby many be defiled."** (**Hebrews 12:14-15**) God does not want this in our lives because of the harm that it does to others and even to ourselves. Our sinful flesh will not want to forgive others because it is not subject to God. We should rely instead on the Holy Spirit to empower and lead us into what is right and good.

At times we may have a difficult time forgiving others. When this happens, we can ask God to help us have the grace to forgive those that have hurt us deeply by sin. Sin hurts people. This is why Jesus paid the high price to set us free from it. God has always known the devastating effects of sin and the hurt, pain and suffering that it causes people. In these situations, we can always trust God to bring us healing from such hurts and help restore our relationships with those who have sinned against us. At times, God may want you to go and speak to someone that has sinned against you. Jesus taught us, **"If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over."** (**Matthew 18:15**) He also teaches us what to do if he or she does not listen. (**Matthew**

**18:16-17)** There are times when it may not be wisdom to go to a particular person but we can seek direction from the Holy Spirit as to what God's will is in the matter. Father knows best and we can seek His wisdom in these situations. (**James 1:5**)

In the Lord's Prayer, we are praying, "**Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.**" In this part of the prayer, Jesus is teaching us that forgiveness is a two-way street. We should be quick to forgive others. This may be easier to do as we mature in the things of the Lord. But whether we are mature or immature, God will enable us to forgive others if we ask for His help and grace when we need it. (**Hebrews 4:16**) The consequence of not forgiving can be terrible if we choose not to. If we harbor unforgiveness it can cause bitterness, which hardens our heart. (**Hebrews 12:15, Hebrews 3:13**) Unforgiveness and bitterness is not a fruit of the Holy Spirit, but the fruit of the devil.

Regarding the subject of forgiveness: Jesus told a story of one who would not forgive and was turned over to the tormentors. (**Matthew 18:22-35**) We open the door to Satan and his demons when we choose not to forgive others. We should obey God and forgive others when we find that it is in our hearts or when the Holy Spirit convicts us of this. God gives us time to repent of this sin and turn from it. And lastly, Jesus Himself speaks the worst possible consequence of not forgiving others. While He was teaching about the subject of forgiveness He said, "**For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.**" (**Matthew 6:14-15**) Of course, we would not want this to happen to us. It is not a question whether we are to forgive or not, but it is a command from the Lord. If we do not forgive others, we are in sin and are not walking in the love of God. (**1 John 2:9-11**) The Lord wants us to bear godly fruit and walk in His footsteps. He set the highest example of forgiveness for us when He forgave those who crucified Him when He said, "**Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.**" (**Luke 23:34**) If Jesus could forgive and also ask the Father to forgive such terrible enemies, can't we also forgive those who sin against us? Let it be so Lord Jesus!

God reminds us that we are all susceptible to sin. In **Galatians 6:2**, Paul teaches the Church, "**Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.**" We are all human and susceptible to temptation; this is why we must pray daily...

### **And Lead Us Not Into Temptation**

It is made clear in the Word that God does not tempt us to sin. "**When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then after desire has been conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.**" (**James 1:13-15**) We must take full responsibility for our own mistakes and sins. We cannot blame anyone else but ourselves. With this fully established, we can go on to understand that what Jesus is teaching us here is to ask God to help us to not to enter into temptation, which can lead to sin. We can ask God to help us to avoid situations, which may be tempting and ask Him to steer us away from that which is enticing. Sometimes it is just not wisdom to put ourselves in certain situations that may be dangerous to our spiritual life. We should ask God for wisdom in situations that we are not sure about and stay clear from the ones that are obviously bad for us.

Temptation and sin are very deceptive. We need to rely on God to expose that which is deceiving and those things that will lead us into sin. "**And lead us not into temptation...**" again we find that we are not only praying for ourselves but obeying the second greatest commandment and praying for others not to be brought into temptation either. We can pray for spiritual strength for others who may be struggling with certain sins or who may be enticed to sin and ask God to give them victory over this. We must especially pray for our leaders, whether in the civic or spiritual arena. We are admonished to pray for our rulers. (**1 Timothy 2:1-4**) We can pray for God to help them overcome temptation in the areas such as lust, greed and power so that they might lead with strength and integrity.

As fallible human beings we are all subject to the temptations of the flesh. If surrendered to this can lead down the road to moral and spiritual failure. Our asking for divine help makes all the difference in our victory or lack thereof. God promises to help us in our time of need but warns us to be careful during times of temptation; "**So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can**

**stand up under it.” (I Corinthians 10:13)** All of God’s people will have enticement to sin at times, but how we deal with temptation is very important. God always makes a way for us to escape the temptations to sin; we just need to rely on His power to help us to overcome.

What is temptation any way and why is it so dangerous to a Christian? According to *Joseph Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, temptation is **of a condition of things, or a mental state, by which we are enticed to sin, or to lapse from faith and holiness**. As the scriptures teach us temptation is an evil desire that is first conceived in the mind. When we have sinful desires, we are lapsing from faith and holiness during that particular time. Lapse means: **To fall from a previous standard (like faith and holiness), as of quality, a minor or temporary failure; slip**. This thought in turn gives birth to sin. That Jesus told us to pray this way is no accident. God is all wise and all knowing and teaches us to ask Him for divine help to resist the enticement of sin. This must first begin in our thought life.

We are told in **Ephesians 6:10-18** to put on the whole armor of God so that we might be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power and overcome the schemes of the devil. One of the pieces of spiritual armor is the helmet of salvation. A helmet is worn over the head or mind. This is spiritual protection for our thought life. We do not want to depart from the way of salvation but strive to abide in the Lord at all times. One way we can stay in the way of faith and holiness is by prayer, studying and applying God’s Word to our lives. If we fill ourselves with the things of God- we will have less room for ungodly desires and will be able to resist temptation by God’s strength. By praying for God’s help we are asking for spiritual empowerment when we find ourselves in a situation where we may be enticed to sin. In other words, God can empower us to overcome the temptation to sin by the power of His Holy Spirit.

If we do not rely on God’s power in our lives to overcome temptation and sin, we find that we are vulnerable and weak in our own efforts to overcome sin by ourselves. Without Jesus we can’t do anything. **(John 15:5)** Our flesh is weak and sinful. It is not subject to the law of God and cannot be. Our flesh always goes contrary to the Spirit and wars against Him. **(Galatians 5: 17)** With God all things are possible, including the ability to overcome sin by His power! When we pray this daily, we are relying on God’s power to help us overcome instead of relying on our own flesh to do so. When we rely on God’s power, He always causes us to triumph. **(II Corinthians 2:14)** The Lord revealed to the Apostle Paul the solution to the sin problem in **Romans chapters 6-8**. The Lord has set us free from sin; we are no longer to yield our members to it. We conquer sin in our lives by the power of the Holy Spirit. Our victory is always in Christ Jesus.

Even as we are to rely on the Holy Spirit for empowerment and victory over sin, we must also rely on God’s Word and use it as a sword to cut down sin in our lives. We must take up the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. **(Ephesians 6:17)** The Word of God is living and active. There is power in it to pull down the strongholds of the mind (our evil thoughts and desires). **(II Corinthians 10:3-5)** We are trained in what is good and evil as we exercise (or put into action) the word of God. **(Hebrews 5:13-14)** Not only are we to depend on the Holy Spirit, but also God expects us to use the spiritual weaponry that He has given us. We are to renew our minds with the Word of God. **(Romans 12:2)** When we are renewing our minds with the Word, we are replacing that which is ungodly with that which is godly. We receive a greater revelation of godly thoughts and gain the mind of Christ. **(I Corinthians 2:16)** In studying the Lord’s Prayer, we will also receive a greater understanding about how crucial it is for us to pray for God to help us not to be brought into temptation and to stay on our guard against the daily barrage of not only sin, but Satan and evil as well...

### **But Deliver Us From The Evil One**

We look at the world around us today and see much darkness and evil present. Included in the Lord’s Prayer is a request for God to deliver us from this evil. The root of all evil is the evil one himself-the devil. The opposite of evil is good. God is holiness, righteousness, and light and is the personification of goodness. As God’s people, we are to walk in the light as He is in the light. Satan’s army is of the darkness (or evil) and directly opposes God and everyone in His Kingdom. We are not to be ignorant of his devices. We must understand that even though Satan and his demons are under authority, they are not to be underestimated. We are to be on our guard, lest he should take advantage of us. We are to take heed lest we fall. If the devil were not some sort of a threat, Jesus would not have included this in His prayer that we should ask the Father to rescue or deliver us from the evil one.

In studying this scripture, we find the meaning of what the Lord is teaching us to ask our Father for. The word, deliver means **to draw to one self, to rescue, to deliver**. The meaning of the word evil one in the Greek **is used pre-eminently of the devil, the evil one**. [*Joseph Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the*

**New Testament deliver-4506, evil-4190]** According to these definitions, in this request we are not only asking God to rescue or deliver us from Satan and all evil that is associated with his kingdom, but also to draw us close to Him and bring us under His protection. Satan is at the root of all evil. Even though evil is present around us, God does not remove us from the world but instead promises to protect us from Satan and evil in the world. Jesus prayed to the Father, **“My prayer is not that you would take them out of the world but that you would protect them from the evil one”.** (*John 17:15*) Satan would love to destroy us but God's protection prevents him from doing that. According to the Apostle John, God is able to keep His children safe from the devil and the harm he wants to inflict on us. **“We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him.”** (*1 John 5:18*)

Although God delivers us from evil, it does not mean that we will never be allowed to go through anything. We must place all of our trust in God even in the most trying times. Even though God will deliver us from evil and the evil one, we must do our part and not aid the devil's cause. Instead, we are to aid the cause of Christ and His Kingdom. The word of God teaches us what to do. **“Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.”** (*1 Peter 5: 8-9*) All of those in Christ must contend with the wiles of the devil. The devil is always looking for a place to work and we are admonished in the Bible to, **“Neither give place to the devil.”** (*Ephesians 4:27 KJV*) It is with this knowledge that we can arm ourselves in protection from our enemy and have the victory as we resist him and stay firm in our faith in God.

Although we may have this wonderful knowledge to empower us, there are others who have not yet come to the knowledge of this truth. Satan seeks those that he can do his evil work through. It is important to pray for those that the devil and his demons work through. They are in bondage to powers of darkness and need to be set free. Love and prayer are powerful weapons against the enemy and intercession is needed for those who need to be loosed from evil bondage by the power of God. This is very important to remember when people are being used as instruments of Satan to persecute those of us who are in Christ. Sometimes it can be difficult to walk in the fruit of the Spirit when others are persecuting you, but all things are possible with God's help. We must remember that we, too, at one time were servants of sin and needing God to set us free. We should have compassion on others who need to be delivered from evil also.

All people need to come to the knowledge of the truth. The devil seeks those whom he may devour or destroy. (*1 Peter 5:8*) He is simply looking for unsuspecting and willing agents that he can operate his works through. The good news though is that Jesus came to destroy the devil's work! The Apostle John taught, **“The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.”** (*1 John 3:8*) We know that it is God's will that people be translated from Satan's kingdom of darkness into God's Kingdom of light, we know that it is God's will that He heals all those who are oppressed and made sick by the devil; it is His will for these prisoners to go free. (*Acts 26:17-18, Acts 10:38, Isaiah 61:1*) We must also understand that all believers have been given power from Jesus to cast out demons in His name and we must exercise this authority when we need to. Satan and his demons are under authority and we have been given power over them. Jesus said, **“Behold I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.”** (*Luke 10:19*) & (*Mark 16: 17-18*) Thank God for His redeeming and delivering power! Concluding the Lord's Prayer, Jesus brings us full circle to remind us that we must never forget where all of our help comes from and to give glory to God...

**For Yours Is The Kingdom, And The Power, And The Glory, Forever. Amen**

God has a Kingdom that has always existed and He is Sovereign Ruler over it. King David understood this and declared, **“Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations.”** (*Psalms 145:13*) As believers, when we come to God in prayer, we are acknowledging His Kingdom is above all and recognize that we have not only been born into God's Kingdom but that it is within us for Jesus said, **“The kingdom of God does not come with your observation, nor will people say, ‘Here it is,’ or ‘There it is,’ because the kingdom of God is within you.”** (*Luke 17:20-21*) We have been appointed a Kingdom, given to us by Christ Himself. **“And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me...”** (*Luke 22:29*) We are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ in His Kingdom. **“Now if we are children, then we are heirs-heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.”** (*Romans 8:17*) And we have been given an Eternal Kingdom that cannot fall or be shaken. **“Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe.”** (*Hebrews 12:28*) All the kingdoms of this world will fall, but God's Kingdom is forever and stands throughout all ages! God's Kingdom is of power for it is written, **“For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but**

**of power.” (1 Corinthians 4:20)** God takes action and backs up His word by His power. He is all-powerful and full of glory. God’s glory is eternal and never fades away.

When we see God’s power and glory manifested in the earth, we are receiving a glimpse of Him and His Kingdom on earth. His power and glory surpasses any power or glory that any man could possess on this earth. We also acknowledge that God has the preeminence over all kingdoms and He is our ultimate authority and King. The word glory in this passage means: **that which belongs to God; and the kingly majesty, which belongs to him as supreme ruler.** [1391, Joseph Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament] We do not yet see all the kingdoms of this world coming under the Lordship of Christ, but one day we shall for the scriptures declare, **“The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever.” (Revelation 11:15)** We who are in Christ and sons of God recognize and give allegiance to God’s Kingdom now and forever. We understand that this present world we live in is temporary, that we will eventually have a new heaven and earth and look forward to the time when the entire world will be under the rulership of Christ and His Kingdom.

When Jesus came from heaven to earth as God in the flesh, He brought the Kingdom of God for all those who would receive it in the here and now. Jesus taught that when one receives Him as Savior, the Kingdom of God then comes to abide in that person. (Luke 17:20-21) In other words, Jesus becomes our King and we live by the rule of God’s Kingdom because He first begins rulership in the hearts of men. Now we do not yet see the whole earth under God’s dominion, we will only see that when Jesus returns bodily to this earth once again to rule and reign from Jerusalem. Until His return then, we are to preach the Gospel to the whole world so that as many as possible will come into His Kingdom and under His Lordship before He returns. (Matthew 24:14) We in the Church are, in effect, announcing to the world the return of the King! Those who do not enter into God’s Kingdom through the door (Jesus) will be cast outside the Kingdom. (Matthew 25:41-46, John 10:7, Revelation 22:12-15) As we pray for God’s Kingdom to come, we are not only praying for it to come into the hearts of men, but also to this earth. It is only then that we will be free from man’s corruptible government and come under God’s perfect government. It is only when the Prince of Peace returns that we will truly have peace on earth. Come quickly Lord Jesus! Amen.