

Paradise Lost and Restored: What is Prayer? (Part 6)

Ricardo Campos, Pastor Grace Chapel, Orange, CA April 12, 2015

I. Introduction

Does your voice change when you pray? Do you all of a sudden pick up a new vocabulary and speak with professor-like grammar? Sometimes we tend to see God as a sinless and perfect being whom you must approach with awe and reverence...and perfect speech. He is perfect and He is awesome, but He's also our Loving Father.

II. When You Pray, Does it Sound like You're Talking with Your Daddy or **God Almighty!**?

Prayer is having a conversation with God, Luke 22:39-53 (John 18:1-11), we all need to talk with God (even the irreligious). Why? Because we all experience inner unrest, we're all made in His image, and like Him we desire intimate contact, but not just with anything/anyone, with God. He knows us inside and out, what we were meant to be and therefore, what we'll need to succeed in life, Psalm 139:1-18.

Are there rules when talking with God? We shouldn't use our conversation with Him to impress others, Matthew 6:5-6. It should be an actual conversation with God not disengaged dialogue, Matthew 6:7. God wants to hear about our needs, Matthew 6:11, but more importantly He wants a relationship with us, **Our Father...**, Matthew 6:9-13. You can address your prayers to God the Father, but also God the Son, Acts 7:59. If you pray with doubt, your prayers won't work, James 1:5-8, because doubt keeps us from God's presence. But if you live your life with God, then you'll hear His voice and He will hear yours, John 15:7. God loves it when we talk with Him, 1 Thessalonians 5:17. Always be thankful when you talk with God even if you're upset, Philippians 4:6. You can actually yell at God when you pray, not in disrespect, but in agony and frustration, Psalm 22. God knows exactly what we're going through, so He's always ready to listen and help, Hebrews 4:15-16. God is merciful and will engage us even when there's unconfessed sin in our lives, Judges 16. God will answer our prayers as He answered the prayers of the giants of the faith like Elijah? Why? Because they're ordinary people like us, James 5:13-18. Don't ask God "Why?" but "What?" and "How?" and believe what you ask, Hebrews 11:6. Ask for things that are God's will not yours, 1 John 5:14-15. And if He makes you wait, realize that His timing is impeccable.

The Lord's Prayer, it's a template not a prayer to be repeated, Matthew 6:7-9. It is about our daily and intimate relationship with God as we live life in His Kingdom. First, God is our Father which means that the God of the universe is watching over us. Second, He wants our lives to reflect and honor His name, 1 Peter 1:16. Third, our Father is a King with a Kingdom and He wants His Kingdom and will to be done on earth as it is in heaven, i.e., to replace Satan's kingdom of darkness, Colossians 1:13. Fourth, as we live our lives in His Kingdom, our Father will take care of every need, John 16:23-24. Fifth, to succeed in our Father's Kingdom we're going to need His forgiveness, to receive it and give it to others. If we fail to live in our Father's forgiveness, Satan will use this to destroy our relationship with Him and each other, Matthew 6:14-15; 2 Corinthians 2:6-11. Sixth, as we take the Father's Kingdom to the rest of the world and disciple the nations, we ask God to guide and protected us from Satan's desire to steal, kill, and destroy, John 10:10.

Prayer is about relationship, your intimate contact with God and His people, when you talk with God, does your voice, your manner of speaking, or your grammar change? If it does, why? Do you see God the way the Israelites did in Exodus 19-20, as a terrifying, fire-breathing God, Hebrews 12:18-21? Or do you see Him the way Moses did, Exodus 20:18-21; Hebrews 12:22-24?

In John 17, when Jesus prayed, how did He see God, as a Loving Father or terrifying God and how did He see God's people, distant strangers or close relatives? In Ephesians 3:14-21, how did Paul see God and His people, how does he speak about Him and them? Praying is about entering into the relationship we have with God and thereby, His people.

How do you apply the 6 parts of the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6 to your prayers? In John 17, what parts of the Lord's Prayer—the Father's: Character [6:9], Kingdom [6:10], Provision [6:11], Forgiveness [6:12], Guidance [6:13a], and Protection [6:13b]—are present in Jesus' prayer? In Ephesians 3:14-21, what parts of the Lord's Prayer are found in Paul's prayer?

One way to apply the Lord's Prayer to your prayers is to keep the various parts in mind as you pray for a specific issue. Breen and Cockram give us an example of this when praying for someone who is ill. Notice how all six parts, the Father's Character, Kingdom, Provision, Forgiveness, Guidance, and Protection, are all present in the following prayer:

“Father, your reign in heaven extends down to our residence here on earth. Let your glory be seen in the life of my friend. In your kingdom there is no sickness, no pain. Let your kingdom come in my friend's life and body today. Providing our daily bread and our daily provisions includes having a healthy body so we can do all of your will, so please give my friend a healthy body today. Forgive my friend, as he forgives others, knowing that unforgiveness in our spirits can cause our bodies to react as well. Let him not be tempted to turn from you, his Healer, in this time of need. And protect him from the principalities and powers that want to cause him harm.”¹

III. Conclusion

May the LORD answer you in the day of trouble; may the name of the God of Jacob defend you; may He send you help from the sanctuary, and strengthen you out of Zion; may He remember all your offerings, and accept your burnt sacrifice. Selah. May He grant you according to your heart's desire, and fulfill all your purpose. We will rejoice in your salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners! May the LORD fulfill all your petitions. Now I know that the LORD saves His anointed; He will answer him from His holy heaven with the saving strength of His right hand.

¹ Mike Breen and Steve Cockram, *Building a Discipling Culture*, (Sheriar Press, 2009), 122.