

# Matthew 6:9-10

## God In The Disciples' Prayer

### INTRODUCTION

As we've seen already in Matthew 6, Jesus wants us to pray. He wants us to pray in secret to our Father, in the confidence that He knows what we need before we ask.

At the same time, Jesus warns us to avoid hypocritical or pagan prayer.

**HYPOCRITICAL PRAYER** doesn't take God seriously; it treats prayer as a means of gaining praise from other people, or of giving ourselves a certain kind of reputation.

**PAGAN PRAYER** doesn't understand God's nature and character, and doesn't care. The pagan mind believes that prayer works because of the petitioner's sincerity or intensity; the deity being prayer to doesn't matter.

Clearly, hypocritical and pagan prayer are offensive to God and worthy of His judgment. Hypocritical prayer ignores God; pagan prayer substitutes another god in His place.

But we don't need to fear prayer, because Jesus gives us such clear instructions, beginning with a basic catechism. The Lord's Prayer – the Disciples' Prayer is more accurate – is not just appeal to our Father to meet our needs, but a confession of the truths we know and believe.

God is the Father of all who are in Christ. God is holy. God has a Kingdom, of which Christians are citizens, and which will one day obliterate every earthly kingdom. And God has a Will, which cannot be hindered or prevented.

Let's take a moment before we move on to our text.

Do you know for certain that God is YOUR Father in Jesus Christ? Not just your God, but your FATHER, the One you lean on and call upon.

Do you understand that your Father is HOLY, not just morally pure, but utterly separated from His Creation? Do you understand that He is not just a big version of us, but the Self-Existent Being who created and sustains all things for His own eternal glory?

Do you know that your Father-God has an eternal Kingdom, and that His eternal Kingdom is His primary work? Do you understand that as a Christian you are already a citizen of His Kingdom, and that your loyalty to Jesus as King takes priority over every other allegiance in your life?

Do you know that your Father-God has a specific Will, and that He is carrying out His Will in exact detail? Do you understand that He will not for any reason work against His own Will or bless anyone who opposes Him?

These are not just salvation questions, although the person who denies the Fatherhood, Holiness, Kingdom, and Will of God is not saved. They are also the basis for the remainder of the Lord's Prayer. Someone can't simply jump into the middle of the Lord's Prayer and

expect an answer. It's not that saying the words is magical in some way, but that what we believe about God and His Kingdom is inseparable from the promises He makes to us.

**TRANSITION:** Jesus gives us three petitions to pray to our Father: Provision, Pardon, and Protection. These cover every possible need in our lives.

**Provision** – “give us this day our daily bread” – covers everything to do with life in this mortal world, from actual food to a job, the right college for our kids, a peaceful retirement and so on.

**Pardon** – “forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors” – covers the need for peace with God for ourselves and for others, including evangelistic prayers for the lost.

**Protection** – “do not lead us into temptation but deliver us from evil” – covers the spiritual battles we and others face, whether arising from the inward nature of sin, through the acts of wicked people in the world, or by Satan himself.

Let's look at them more closely.

## PROVISION

**Matthew 6:11 (ESV) – 11 Give us this day our daily bread,**

Bread – some filling, starchy food – is basic to almost every culture out there. And, the word “bread” in Scripture often refers to food in general. But Jesus isn't just talking about physical bread, or even all

food; He's talking about the necessities of life, what it takes to keep physical life going day to day.

You might be interested to know that the word translated "daily bread" was invented by Jesus; it only appears here and in Luke 11:3, where Jesus gives a more abbreviated version of the Lord's prayer. It doesn't appear in the rest of the New Testament, or in Greek literature of the time. It describes what is necessary for life: food for today; clothes for this season; breath for this moment.

God knows what we need for life; He created us, after all. "Give us this day our daily bread" is the same as "give us what You know we need for life." Your Father knows what you need before you ask Him. He created us to need those very things. What you receive day by day or week by week is not by luck or chance, but by the Father's loving provision.

So, why have us ask for what God knows we need, and what He willingly provides for us? It's so that we don't think that we survive every day by sheer dumb luck, but rather are cared for by our Father in heaven. "Give us this day our daily bread" is a reminder of our Father's care.

## **PARDON**

**Matthew 6:12 (ESV) — 12 and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.**

The word debt speaks of sin, of the impossible obligation that presses down on our heads because of our sinful acts and nature. It covers the

entire spectrum of sin: deliberate sins, sins of ignorance, sins of commission, sins of omission, sins that we never even comprehended were sins, and even our own sin nature, which condemns us before we are old enough to know right from wrong.

Now, by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ, we have forgiveness, free for the asking, without cost, without punishment, without restitution.

- Do we have to promise never to commit that sin again? No.
- Do we have to do some sort of penance? No.
- Do we have to pay restitution first? No.
- Do we have to be really, really, really sorry about your sin? No.

We simply need to confess our sins:

**1 John 1:9 (ESV) – 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

In fact, because Jesus died once to save, all of your sins are already forgiven, including those you haven't committed yet, and even those you might be committing right now. If you are in Christ, you are forgiven, period.

Then, why are we to ask for forgiveness on a regular basis? We need to understand that forgiveness has two components: justifying and experiential.

In Christ all your sins are removed and you are justified. Jesus died as a substitute for you, satisfied your debt and God's wrath against you, and you are eternally free of all your sins, even the ones you haven't

committed yet. This is the very nature of justification: the cleansing of our account from every record of wrong, and being declared righteous, once and for all time.

And in Christ there is also **experiential** forgiveness, which is the peace of knowing that you are clean and right before God. Experiential forgiveness doesn't come just because time passes and we forget our shame; it is a gift of God, obtained by Jesus on the cross. We receive that gift through confession of sin. Our legal guilt has already been removed by Jesus' blood. Our shame is removed by the Holy Spirit when we ask for forgiveness.

But we can short-circuit this process by refusing to forgive others. Look at Matthew 6:14-15 for a moment.

**Matthew 6:14-15 (ESV) – 14** For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, **15** but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Jesus is not teaching that justification requires us to do a good work, but that the experience of forgiveness, and the peace that results, will not be ours if we refuse to forgive others. If we continue to hold someone's guilt against them, the Father will continue to remind us of our own guilt. The parable of the unforgiving servant in Matthew 18 describes a man who owed a massive debt to a king – \$12 billion today – and was forgiven the entire debt, and refused to forgive the \$800 debt another man owed to him. The king ordered him arrested and handed over to the torturers until the \$12 billion was paid in full. When we who have been forgiven refuse to forgive others, we ourselves will

continue to suffer our own guilt and shame. Don't argue with it; don't defend yourself; just forgive and be at peace with the Father!

## PROTECTION

**Matthew 6:13 (ESV) – 13** And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Once upon a time Linda and I used to play a game with our kids. Now, I don't mean that she and I and the kids played a game; I mean that she and I played a game, and the kids were the game pieces. It went like this.

“Mom, can I do this?”

“Go ask your dad.”

“Dad, can I do this?”

“Go ask your mom.”

“Mom, can I do this?”

It went on like this until the kids caught on, and that parent lost that round.

Some people think that's how God is. He's more or less good, but He has a tendency to tease us for no good reason.

But that's not our Father God. He doesn't play games or tease us out of boredom. So, why does He permit people, whether unbelievers or His own children, to encounter temptation?

We need to understand that God restrains sin in every human being to a great degree. Whenever someone says, “Well, sinners are not as bad as they could be,” that’s true, not because the sinners themselves hold back, but because they are held back by the mercy of God. The same sin nature that led Aubrey Trail and Bailey Boswell to murder Sydney Loofe is present in you and me. The reason we have never committed those crimes is not because WE are better people, but because God has restrained us. He had mercy on us, even in our wickedness, and kept us from going as far as sin would take us.

### **Temptation and evil are part of God’s judgment on the wicked.**

But God lifts His restraining hand in order to punish the wicked. We think of God’s judgment as being some future event. The day of judgment, in our minds, is often a day when God finally weighs everyone’s good and bad actions, and sees where they land. But the Bible is very clear that God has already passed judgment on the wicked, and that His judgment on them has already begun. The Day of Judgment is not when He decides whether they are guilty, but when He declares and carries out their full punishment for sin. In the meantime, the Lord often punishes the wicked by giving them over to even more sin, and therefore more guilt.

### **Temptation and evil are part of God’s means of sanctifying His children.**

God uses them surgically in order to sanctify us and bring about our maturity in Christ. His own Son, Jesus Christ, was tempted in the wilderness by Satan, as we see in Matthew 4. Jesus was hungry, so Satan tempted Him to turn stones into bread. Jesus faced tremendous suffering, and so Satan tempted Him seek angelic protection. Jesus



came to establish the Kingdom of God, and so Satan tempted Him with possession of every kingdom of the world. Jesus resisted each time with the Word of God. He was proven holy by His resistance to these temptations, and others as well.

Satan desired to sift **Peter** like wheat, but Jesus prayed that Peter's strength would not fail, and it didn't (Luke 22:31). **Paul** writes, "So to keep me from being conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given to me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited." (Second Corinthians 12:7).

Satan desires nothing more than our destruction; he is like a roaring lion, frantically seeking someone to devour (First Peter 5:8). But that lion is on a leash, and if he manages to strike us with a claw, it is because the Father has permitted him to do so for our good.

This prayer asks the Father to restrain our sinful flesh, so that we don't fall into sin. Test me, Lord, prove me, but don't allow me to face more than I can bear. Don't deliver me OVER TO evil, deliver me FROM evil.

## Bringing it Home

**Matthew 6:11-13 (ESV) – 11** Give us this day our daily bread, **12** and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. **13** And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

I think we just need a moment of review.

Because God has made us His children in Christ, He is truly our Father. Because of what Jesus did for us, we have access to our Father at all times. As we come to Him we need to remind ourselves that He IS our Father God, that He is holy, that His Kingdom is His priority, and that His Will prevails over every situation and circumstance.

In light of that, we pray “give us this day our daily bread,” not because we will starve otherwise, but because our Father loves us and meets our needs. This prayer means that we not only look to the Father to meet our needs, but that we know that He DOES meet our needs, even when we are unaware.

And we don't pray “forgive us our debts” because we continue to bear our sin-guilt as Christians; we know that Jesus died for every sin, and that we have been justified by grace through faith. But we do long to experience genuine peace in our minds and hearts, the peace which Jesus obtained for us on the cross. And so we confess our sins, and forgive others, because we want His peace.

And finally, we don't pray “lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil” because God might forget where He is taking us, but because He is “our rock and our fortress and our deliverer, our God, our rock, in whom we take refuge, our shield, and the horn of our salvation, our stronghold.” (Psalm 18:2). We have no illusions about being able to protect ourselves from our own sinful flesh, much less human and demonic enemies. We trust our God to only permit what He knows is for our eternal good, and so we don't need to fear any accusations or attacks or schemes of the devil.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your Kingdom come!  
Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. And because You are God,  
and holy, and Your Kingdom is Your great work, and Your Will is  
absolute, give us this day our daily bread, forgive us our debts as we  
forgive our debtors, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us  
from evil - Amen!