

Prayer That Rises
Matthew 6:5-13

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5 “Whenever you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by people. I assure you: They’ve got their reward! **6** But when you pray, go into your private room, shut your door, and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. **7** When you pray, don’t babble like the idolaters, since they imagine they’ll be heard for their many words. **8** Don’t be like them, because your Father knows the things you need before you ask Him. **9** “Therefore, you should pray like this: Our Father in heaven, Your name be honored as holy. **10** Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. **11** Give us today our daily bread. **12** And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. **13** And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

A) IN THE LAST COUPLE YEARS IN BOSTON, BUILDING HIEGHT REGULATIONS HAVE BEEN REMOVED.

1. So near our office there is a tower being built—**tallest tower** in Boston.
 - a. The TAGLINE of the sign reads our city rises from here.
 - i. Last summer I would walk by each day and look at the building.
 - ii. Progress seemed slow. I was struck by the amount of work and time that went into building a strong foundation.
 - b. It has to be strong to withstand the storms of Boston.
2. The older I get, the more I realize the shayness of life.
 - a. I constantly am looking for some form of stability (job, health, finances, family, morality).
 - b. Maybe you to?
3. In these words, Jesus shows us that if we are to have lives that rise (community) we need a foundation that can hold us, one that can withstand the pressures of life.
 - a. For centuries the Lords’ prayer has been used as one of three texts to catechize (shape the faith) of disciples (**decatalogue**, **creed**, and **L. Prayer**)
 - b. If you want to see your prayer life rise, or just life rise beyond this world into something bigger you need this foundation.
 - c. In what is commonly known as the Lord’s prayer, we find
 - i. Where we find this foundation.

- ii. Why We Need It
- iii. Way It Forms Us
- iv. How It Can Cause Our Prayer to Rise

WHERE WE FIND THIS FOUNDATION

A) WHEN JESUS TEACHES ON PRAYER HE TEACHES THEM TO RELATE TO GOD IN AN ENTIRELY NEW WAY...

1. When you pray, say, our Father.

a. In Aramaic, the everyday language spoken by Jesus the word is “Abba”, (cf. [Mark 14:36](#); [Rom. 8:15](#); [Gal. 4:6](#)).

i. It was the word used by Jewish children for their earthly fathers.

1. **Reverence (authority)**: Similar to the south, where adult children sometimes refer to parents as mamma, or Daddy, In both Aramaic and Greek it was also used by adults to address their fathers, the claim that “Abba” meant “Daddy” is misleading and runs the risk of irreverence

2. **Relationship (warmth)**:

A) THAT’S WHY ‘OUR FATHER,’ GIVE SUCH STRONG FOUNDATION?

1. **Why? Because** to Call God “**our Father**” is to evoke the Christian doctrine of **adoption**.

a. Jesus says, If you want to fuel your prayers; if you want to make them soar, overcome your feeling of alienation,

i. You’ve got to sit under the weight and warmth of these two words, Our Father...

ii. There is a strong relational capital in word **Father**.

1. My daughter on my lap face to face (**shameless audacity**)

John 1:12-13

To all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— **13** children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

b. What does it mean to be a Xan= you are adopted, you receive the rights of the family name.

i. *"To call God "Father is to pray in Jesus' name"*

—John Calvin

ii. You are saying, 'every confidence of Christ belongs to me.'

1. Accepted, beloved, come with a shameless audacity.

iii. **It's not a change in nature or behavior, not at first, but the minute you adopt a child it's a status change. A legal change.**

"If you want to know how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he/she makes of the thought of being God's child, and having God his/her his father. If this is not the thought that prompts and controls their worship and prayers and whole outlook on life, it means he/she does not understand Christianity very well at all."—J.I. Packer, *Knowing God*

c. Packer actually says, all of Christ's teaching,

i. everything that makes the NT new, and better than the Old,

ii. everything that is distinctively Christian, is summed up in the knowledge of the Fatherhood of God.

iii. "Father" is the Christian name for God.—J.I. Packer, *Knowing God*

2. When you're adopted, you cross over from misfortune to a new fortune.

a. Christians are people that have moved from seeing Jesus as mere example to follow to a *representative* for us.

i. Here's how you pray, you must start your prayer with the doctrine of adoption.

1. When Jesus says you start with our Father, you've got to get that out every time. That's what turns the throne of the universe into the throne of grace (Heb 4).
2. This is a relationship so personal that it knows the things you need even when we don't know. Looking at a master class on prayer, Jesus teaching on prayer.

Objection: You say, I've asked God for good things. There is no way that it could have been a snake. I've asked for healing. Protection or provision How can you explain that? The only response that I've been able to come up with that doesn't minimize our experiences is...I don't know. I don't know why the healing didn't happen

B) WHAT I DO KNOW IS THAT GOD HIMSELF, GOD THE SON KNOWS WHAT IT'S LIKE TO PRAY AND FEEL LIKE IT FALLS ON A DEAF EAR

1. C.S. Lewis—in eternity we will thank God for unanswered prayers.
 - a. WE CAN LOOK BACK AND SEE SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL FROM HIS UNANSWERED PRAYER.
 - i. By Jesus being denied his request, we are given our ultimate desire.
 - ii. You see, our truest desire, not our strongest desire, but our truest desire is for God himself.
2. We can come and sit on the chair and get into his lap and press our face against his and say, Father.
 - a. Only God can bring us to the place where we are earnestly seeking him.
 - b. When you begin to experience a spiritual appetite for him and his presence, we will know that we belong to him.

1 John 3

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. **2** Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. **3** All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

Matthew 6:5-13

(v.6) Pray to your **Father** who is in secret. And **your Father** who sees in secret will reward you.

(v.8) **Your Father** knows the things you need before you ask Him.

(v.9) “Therefore, you should pray like this: **Our Father** in heaven,

- b. Your Father sees,
- c. Your Father hears
- d. Your Father knows

WHY WE NEED THIS FOUNDATION (V.5, 7)

<p>“Whenever you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by people. 7 When you pray, don’t babble like the idolaters, since they imagine they’ll be heard for their many words</p>
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A) WHEN WE OUR FATHER AS FOUNDATION WE WILL BUILD LIVES ON ANOTHER

1. (v.5, 7) Jesus gives an example of others that are fastidious in their prayer but don’t have a deep foundation as adopted child of God.

(v.7) When you pray, don’t *babble* like the idolaters, since they imagine they’ll be heard for their *many words*

- a. We tend to use **pagan** in pejorative terms. We think that to be a pagan is to not be spiritual or religious.
 - i. But when Jesus tells his disciples how not to pray, he points to the religious leaders and says, don’t pray like them. Their prayer is pagan.
 - ii. When they’re praying it’s really just another form of incantation.
- b. When **Our Father is your foundation**, it digs up the dirt of self-righteous praying—pagan approaches to God.
 - i. KJV says, **vain repetitions**, so many people have discounted praying written forms of prayer.

- ii. **That's not what Jesus is saying here.** The original language, the word
 - 1. **For Babble** is translated as (empty)
 - 2. **For Many** words is translated as (anxious)

- 2. One preacher says that the difference between the Christian prayer and pagan prayer is in how we approach God.
 - a. We will either approach God as an employee or a child.
 - b. An employee is someone that has worked for their paycheck, *or* hasn't worked hard enough for their paycheck.
 - i. And if you want to know the Test of whether or not you are praying as a child or as a border, Look at your prayers when they're not answered.
 - 1. Are you Angry (empty/cold) because you've worked for it?
 - 2. Or Anxious (many words) because I haven't worked hard enough?
 - c. Jesus doesn't start the Lord's prayer our king, creator, or friend (hybrid)

- 3. Plenty of people in the church that pray, that even pray our father pray without the heartbeat.
 - a. They don't go to the Father.
 - i. They have a pagan relationship to God.
 - ii. Here's how you can know if your prayer is pagan or Christian
 - 1. What is the reason for which God hears you?
 - a. Going to church, being religious, praying up a storm.
 - b. Why do you think you're being heard?
 - 2. Pagans think they're being heard for one reason, and Christians for another.

b. Lot's of people that can come and pray, but few that go to God as "our Father."

4. At the root, Jesus says, 'they are **idolaters (v.7).'**'

a. Kierkegaard says that the essence of sin is when we build our identity on anything other than God.

i. According to Augustine, this is **DISORDERED DESIRES (DISORDERED LOVE)** is the fundamental driver of human action,

ii. When desire becomes misdirected or disoriented from its proper end ("telos"), it turns to false "gods" like wealth, power, or pleasure, and according to **Augustine, such idolatrous desire is the essence of sin.**

iii. It's an attempt to reach the throne (my throne) by the overthrowing of power and authority—in this case, Christ's authority.

B) JESUS TELLS HIS DISCIPLES, YOU DON'T NEED TO DO THAT ANYMORE

3. LION KING ILLUSTRATION:

a. Since Scar didn't get the victory over Simba, he tricks Simba into believing that Mufasa's death was really Simba's fault and that Simba should run away and never return to Pride Rock.

i. Simba does run away, escaping Scar's second murder attempt, and sets up camp in a far off paradise.

ii. Simba grows up carrying the secret burden of his father's death. His new friends know nothing of his past or who he is and that allows Simba to avoid his responsibilities as king of Pride Rock, thinking he is too full of shame to receive his inheritance because of Mufasa's death.

iii. Then, with the help of two friends who *do* know who Simba really is, Mufasa appears to Simba in a vision:

Mufasa's ghost: [from above] Simba.

Adult Simba: Father?

Mufasa's ghost: [appears among the stars] Simba, you have forgotten me.

Adult Simba: No. How could I?

Mufasa's ghost: You have forgotten who you are and so have forgotten me. You are more than what you have become. You must take your place.

Adult Simba: How can I go back? I'm not who I used to be.

Mufasa's ghost: **Remember who you are. You are my son, and the one true king. Remember...**

C) What are some of the indications that perhaps we are not entirely secure in the Father's love?

THE WAY THIS FOUNDATION FORMS US

Matt 6:9-12

A) JESUS GIVES THEM WORDS TO BUILD ON THEIR FOUNDATION—**THE LORD'S PRAYER**

1. This isn't the first time that these men have heard this prayer.
 - a. Most scholars agree that Jesus probably repeated this prayer during His ministry.
 - i. Prayer is far more than sharing our desires; prayer shapes our desires.
 - ii. The Lords' prayer is unique in that way.
2. Why? Isn't it vain repetition to pray **the same words (written prayers)** over and over again?
 - a. Think of the Lord's prayer as learning to play music.
 - i. Of course playing music involves just doing it.
 - ii. But in the same way that playing a piece from another musician helps a growing musician to become acquainted **with timing, rhythm, and patterns** (although not exactly in the same way),

- iii. So also we are helped to find our own way in prayer by seeing how others have prayed, and by praying with them.
- iv. And overarching everything we have the Lord's prayer as our guide.

B) The Lord's prayer isn't something that Jesus randomly mentioned. It is a model that he mentioned & taught repeatedly.

1. It's a way for us to experience our theology—it's a way for us to experience the warmth of God with the Light of his word.
 - a. It begins to form our interior lives.
 - i. As we pray it, we experience an **intelligent mysticism**.
 - ii. Augustine (16 centuries ago): "Whatever else we say when we pray, if we pray as we should, we are only saying what is already contained in the Lord's prayer.—Augustine
 - iii. J.I. Packer (A more modern Theologian) declared:
 - b. This prayer is a pattern for all Christians...Every prayer of ours should be a praying of the Lord's prayer *in some shape or form*. We never get beyond this prayer. Not only is it the Lord's first lesson in praying, it is all the other lessons too."—J.I. Packer

C) *How* does the Lord's Prayer begin to shape our deepest desire?

1. Prayer gives us a *JOY* beyond ourselves (*Your Name, Your Kingdom, Your Will*)
 - a. What factors hinder us from the pursuit of holiness in our own lives?
 - b. How would our lives change if we prayed "Your kingdom come" and understood the implications of it?"
 - c. If we saw God as King, rather than Cosmic Life Coach
2. Prayer gives us a *GRATITUDE* to break dissolve our discontent (Daily Bread)
 - a. How does this short petition—"Give us this day our daily bread"—address our self-sufficiency and comfort?
3. We pray for a *HUMILITY* leading to *VICTORY* (*Forgive us, Deliver us*)

- a. If we desire God's forgiveness, how should we build confession and repentance into our lives?
 - i. If we want to nurture a culture of grace (and forgiveness), we'll have to develop an authentic language of grace. Which language (law or grace) do you use the most?
 - ii. Jesus says **Blessed are poor in spirit.**
 1. If you are withholding forgiveness you are middle class in spirit.
 - b. What is some of the evil within us that we need the Lord's help to combat?
 - i. How does naming the evil reduce its power and hold in our lives? What is the connection between this naming and the idea of confession that is fairly common in Scripture?
4. Prayer gives us a Community that frees us from individualism (**Give US!**)
- a. How important do you think community is to our spiritual formation? Why?
 - b. How different would the Lord's Prayer be if it had started "My Father in the heavens...?"
 - c. virtual community help or hinder genuine connectedness? Why?

THE WAY OUR PRAYER CAN RISE

A) THE ENTIRE FOUNDATION OF JESUS' LIFE IS BUILT UPON "OUR FATHER"

1. Abba, Father
2. Abba, If any other way.
3. My God, My God why have you forsaken me?

B) THIS IS WHY OUR PRAYER LIFE CAN SOAR

1. Behind Closed doors so many of us have given into seduction of sin,
 - a. But behind closed doors Jesus lived under the full weight of the temptation to sin—yet he bore it for you.
 - b. So that now, we can go into our room, close the door and say, "Hi Father."

ONLY WHEN WE BUILD OUR LIVES ON THE FOUNDATION OF "OUR FATHER" WILL WE FIND LASTING SECURITY.

C) WHEN WE PRAY OUR FATHER...

1. WE WILL PRAY WITH BOLDNESS

- a. Imagine a man that goes to a kingdom and pounds on the door of the castle.
 - i. He has alcohol on his breath, and tattered clothes on his back.
 1. But the moment he says, I have come in the name of the king.
 2. He has called for me
 3. They let him in.
 - ii. That's what your prayers are like.
 - iii. But when you say, I come in the name of the king.
- b. When we pray "Our Father," We're trespassing. We're walking in the way of the Son. Letting the light of the Father pour out to others. That others would come to faith. We are invited into a huge world when into this prayer. God is becoming Our Father. We're the beloved to make these bold pronouncements of goodness into a world hostile

2. WE WILL PRAY WITH A HUMBLENESS:

- a. Martin Luther's life==sown into his jacket, "We are beggars
- b. 7 word prayer

3. WE WILL PRAY WITH A JOYFULNESS:

- a. Abba, "Always glad to see" Sinclair Ferguson says story of prodigal son, says most important point is that how The reality of the love of God for us is often the last thing in the world to dawn on us.

Romans 8:14-17

For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. 15 The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." 16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

17 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.

Group Prayer (5 Minutes)

As a large group pray through the prayer below phrase by phrase and add prayers as suggested below.

This rhythm involves saying together a line of the prayer, waiting a few seconds in silence to reflect on the words, and then adding small additional prayers around the suggested themes. Begin each line with, “As our Heavenly Father you...”.

Our Father

As our Heavenly Father you have shared your name with us by allowing us to call you “our Father.” You willingly allow us and invite us to be identified with you!

Ten seconds of silence.

Thank God for adopting us as sons and daughters. Pray through some of the various names of God. Thank God for his ‘father love’.

Your Kingdom come

You have told us about your kingdom. You demonstrated it to us through the life of Jesus and invited us into it.

Ten seconds of silence.

Ask to align yourselves with God’s kingdom purposes. Pray through some of the ways Jesus demonstrated God’s kingdom purposes while on earth. Pray that the same kind of demonstrations would happen in our local and global community.

Your Will Be Done

Father, you have given us clear instructions about what your will is and how we can see it take place. You have promised us your provision and fulfilled Your promises. You have shined Your light on our paths and have provided all we need to walk in it.

Ten seconds of silence.

Pray for Gods will to be done in areas of your life: school, vocation, relationships... Physical, emotional, spiritual...

Forgive us

You have offered us complete forgiveness and called us to forgive as You do.

Ten seconds of silence.

Pray for God to forgive your own sins. Ask God to help and guide us to forgive those who have sinned against us, not in a general way but in a specific manner.

Lead Us...

Dear Father, you have delivered us from our own path and from the path of the evil one.

Ten seconds of silence.

Pray for God's protection over ourselves and our communities. Pray especially for those places or for those persons who are experiencing darkness either because of war, famine, addiction, temptations and so on.

Yes, we are so thankful that you are OUR Heavenly Father!

Ten seconds of silence.

Pray again specific prayers that others prayed during the group prayer time. Pray for others during this time, drawing on the term 'our heavenly Father'.