

# Even 1

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Luke 11:1 Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."

Luke 11:2 So He said to them, "When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.

"Lord, teach us to pray..." was the request of the disciples. Commentators and historians say that it was common for religious leaders to teach their disciples formal prayers, by which they would have a sense of their uniqueness. Apparently, John the Baptist followed that tradition.

How interesting, then, to notice that Jesus had not taught His disciples any formal prayers! They may have felt somewhat second-rate. Here they were, committed to following Jesus – yet they had no formal, identifying prayers. When they went to the Temple, or synagogue, it would be embarrassing. John's disciples would be reciting formal prayers; so would disciples of various rabbi's. Jesus' disciples had no such prayers.

Jesus was not interested in formal prayers, or formal praying. He would introduce an intimacy in prayer that was radical and revolutionary.

While we call this the Lord's Prayer, it is really the Disciple's Prayer. Jesus didn't "pray" this prayer. In fact, Jesus could not pray this prayer, because in it, you ask for forgiveness – and Jesus had no need of forgiveness. Still, we will call it the Lord's Prayer because that is how it has been known throughout the history of the Church.

The Lord's Prayer as it is recorded by Luke differs in certain phrases from the one recorded by Matthew. In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus gave the multitudes this prayer in His Sermon on the Mount. Here, in Luke, He gives it to His disciples. One of the things you conclude from these differences is

that Jesus was definitely not teaching it as a formal prayer, since it differs. He taught it as a form for prayer.

Jesus spent a lot of time praying. It's been said many times that if Jesus spent so much time praying, how much more do we need to spend time in prayer. True; but don't miss the underlying motive. Jesus came to earth from Heaven. For all eternity, He had been in Heaven, with the Father and the Holy Spirit. On earth, He continued His fellowship with them through prayer. In other words, it wasn't a formal activity; it was, for Jesus, His joy to communicate with heaven while physically confined to the earth.

I sometimes think more praying would occur if we remembered the joy of it, rather than stressing it as a duty.

You'd think that one of the very first things Jesus would emphasize is prayer. Instead, He waited for them to catch-on. He waited until they wanted to pray.

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Jesus began with a gracious comment, saying, "When you pray." He didn't tell them they had to pray; He didn't tell them how often they needed to pray. He left it up to them. He leaves it up to you.

"Our Father." This was radical; this was revolutionary. God was only called Father a few times in the Old Testament and never as a term of personal endearment by a single individual. He was the Father of the nation of Israel. Jesus was telling His disciples to call God their Father in a personal, intimate relationship. It's the Greek word, *Abba*, which some go so far as to translate, "Daddy."

Don't overlook the word "our." God is "our Father." The disciples didn't need formal prayers to identify themselves to others. Instead, they were part of a family who were on an intimate basis with God. Their intimacy was better, and greater, than anything more formal.

Intimacy is something precious, something personal. Anyone can call me Gene, or Pastor Gene. Only my kids can call me Dad or Daddy.

Here's another way of looking at it. When my kids talked to me, they never addressed me by saying things like, "O provider of all my food." Or, "You who hold the keys to the car." They didn't use "Thee" or "Thou" ever! They were respectful; but I was their Dad.

Is God your Father? You can only address God as Father if you have been born into the family of God by believing on Jesus Christ to save you.

The next words are, "in heaven." The words are literally translated, *in the heavens*. The Bible uses the word heaven in three ways:

1. There is the atmospheric heavens all around earth.
2. There is the stellar heavens, what we might call space.
3. Then there is Heaven – the dwelling place of God.

Your Father is in "Heaven," above the heavens. He is seated over the heavens, overseeing and supervising everything that occurs beneath Him.

You are seated right next to Him as He is in control over all the universe He has created. Since you are seated right next to God, you have access to everything Heaven has to offer you as a resource.

"Hallowed be Your name." The name of God is always shorthand for His nature and character. "Hallowed" means *to set apart*. The idea here seems to be that you desire, above all else, that God's true nature and character be set apart. In other words, you want God to be revealed.

Alan Redpath said, "First and foremost, I desire in my life and through my life to others to reveal the name of Jesus and the character of God" (*Victorious Praying*, page 30).

This radically affects your prayers. Whatever happens, you desire first and foremost to reveal God's grace, mercy, love, forgiveness, longsuffering, and compassion. Circumstances don't necessarily need to change; you want to change within them, revealing your Father within them.

“Your kingdom come.” The word, “come,” is in a verb tense meaning *come once and for all*. Your prayers are to be influenced by the future hope of the Lord’s return. From your vantage point in Heaven you realize that the ultimate help for this earth and all the people on it is the return of Jesus to establish His kingdom. When earth is ruled the same way Heaven is ruled, then peace and prosperity be possible.

“Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.” *Heaven is in great shape!* There are no problems there. The earth is a mess. It got that way because Adam and Eve sinned and have passed-on their sin to their offspring. Human history is the story of God intervening to save the human race from Hell for heaven. Your prayers should be influenced by the fact that God is accomplishing His will on the earth.

For example: The apostle Peter tells us that God is not willing any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Then, just a few verses later, he encourages you to be the kind of person who is interested in speeding up Jesus’ return to earth! If your prayers follow the form, “Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven,” you will find yourself praying a lot more for the spiritual resources you require to serve the Lord rather than your mere physical needs.

You **do** have needs on earth, and we’re going to look at them in a moment. First, linger in the heavenlies! God is your Dad. Seated right next to your Dad, in Heaven, you understand the big picture. You can talk to Him about how you can better reveal His name to others and speed-up the coming of Jesus to the earth.

