

The Gospel According to  
**Luke**

**“Daddy Day Care”**

Chapter 11:1-4

Introduction

Growing-up, I was led to believe that the reciting of certain formal prayers would have a mystical effect upon my soul. For example: If I did bad things, I was told to recite a set of memorized prayers a certain number of times. These prayers, along with some words spoken to me in Latin, were supposed to clear me of my wrongdoing and make me acceptable to God.

Later in life, I came to the conclusion that no amount of formal praying could excuse my sin. I had broken God’s Law. There was something wrong with me - spiritually wrong - at a very deep level. I saw how far short I fell from being acceptable to God.

That’s when Jesus became real to me. I understood that He was God, but that He came to earth as a man. He died on the Cross, at a place called Calvary, for my sins. Then He rose from the dead. All I needed to do was believe Him.

It began with a prayer... **But it wasn’t a formal prayer.** It was very informal, very intimate – what you would call a ‘sinner’s prayer.’ It was just words, but they were words from my heart; and by the changes that took place in my life from within my heart, I knew my words had been heard in heaven.

We’ve just read the Lord’s Prayer. The Lord’s Prayer was one of those formal prayers I had recited hundreds of times. I see now that it is not so much a *formal* prayer, as it is a *form for* prayer. It’s not wrong to recite it; but it is better to regard it as a model or a pattern for how to pray.

We'll organize our thoughts about it around two points: #1 Talk To Your Father As If You Were Already Sitting Right Next To Him In Heaven, and #2 Talk With Your Father As If He Were Always Standing Right Next To You On Earth.

#1 Talk To Your Father As If You Were  
Already Sitting Right Next To Him In Heaven  
(v1-2)

The Lord's Prayer seems to move from heaven to earth:

1. In verses one and two, you have a sense of being seated with God in heaven as you talk with Him in prayer.
2. That sense changes, in verses three and four, and it's like God is standing next to you as you talk to Him, in prayer, about issues on the earth.

*I'm already excited!* Think of it: You can live your life as if you are seated in heaven with God. **Every spiritual resource in heaven is available to you.**

Allow me to point out a few things before we get started on the verses:

1. First - 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.
2. Second – 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.

Now we can begin our look at how Jesus taught us to pray.

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.”

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.

“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.

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

Then, too, 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.

The disciples were asking Jesus for a formal prayer, or set of prayers. His answer was not a formal prayer, but a form for all their praying.

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.

There are some differences between Matthew and Luke. The differences are not because the Bible is contradicting itself. The differences are because Jesus was giving pointers for prayer – not a pat-prayer.

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* at all. 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 heaven 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.

**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, only then will 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; you are part of a large, happy family of believers from every ethnic group all over the earth and throughout human history. Seated right next to your Dad, in heaven, you understand the big picture, and will talk to Him about how you can better reveal His name to others and speed-up the coming of Jesus to the earth.

## #2 Talk With Your Father As If He Were Always Standing Right Next To You On Earth

Spiritually speaking, you are seated right next to your Dad, in heaven. But physically, you are on the earth. Jesus gave His disciples a perspective on their journey from earth to heaven: Live as though Dad were standing right next to you!

Your Dad is standing right next to you on earth, to **provide** what you need:

Luke 11:3 **Give us day by day our daily bread.**

Scholars have a tough time translating these words. The particular word **daily** is only found here and in Matthew's version of the Lord's Prayer – nowhere else in Greek literature. It can mean both *today's bread* and *tomorrow's bread*. So, which is it?

*It's probably both!* If you're praying in the morning, you need today's bread. If you're praying at night, you need tomorrow's bread. The point is that you live in total dependence upon your **Father** to provide what you need on earth.

**Bread** is a basic staple of life. In the context of Jesus teaching you how to pray, you are to be confident that your **Father** knows what you need and will provide it.

You can draw at least two stunning conclusions from this:

1. If He doesn't provide something... *Then you don't need it!*
2. He will sometimes provide a kind of **bread** you don't necessarily want, but that you need; e.g., suffering.

Your Dad is standing right next to you on earth, to help you with other **people**:

**Luke 11:4** *And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us.*

This is one of those times when the King James Version of the Bible gives us a better understanding. There we read,

**Matthew 6:12** *And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*

The key that unlocks the meaning is the simple word, **as**. Let's say you are having a problem with someone. You are holding a grudge against them; or have some bitterness towards them. Your Father is right there, standing next to you. But if you are out of fellowship with the other person, *you are also out of fellowship with God*. You see, if you pray that God would forgive you **as** you have forgiven them, **you are actually asking God to withhold His forgiveness the way you are withholding yours!**

Looking at it more positively: God has forgiven you so much! He is your example of forgiveness, and He can empower you to forgive others who have wronged you.

Your Dad is standing right next to you on earth, to help you through all your **perils**:

**Luke 11:4** *And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."*

The word for **temptation** means a trial or testing which, if yielded to, will lead to sin. There are two things you need to know about temptation:

1. First – God does not tempt you to sin.
2. Second – God will allow you to be tempted.

**Temptation** comes from **the evil one**. That's not to say you are constantly being attacked by the devil himself. It is a general principle. Satan tempted Adam and Eve, not God. God allowed it. They yielded, and it led to sin. The encounter in the Garden of Eden set the stage for you to be tempted.

Jesus came along. He, too, was tempted by **the evil one**. He prevailed by depending upon His Father to help Him. There, in a bleak wilderness, tempted by Satan after forty days of fasting, Jesus relied upon the Word of God, and was victorious.

Your Dad is standing right next to you on earth, to help you resist the peril of **temptation**. You can be confident that none of the temptations that He allows are beyond your ability to resist, provided you will depend upon Him and not your own strength.

To put it another way: You can follow the example of Jesus in the wilderness rather than the example of Adam and Eve.

Your **Father** *provides* what you need; and He is standing there to help you with *people*, and through your *perils*. Those principles will guide you when you talk with Him.

## Conclusion

I wonder if the disciples weren't just a little disappointed? After all, they wanted a formal prayer, and Jesus was encouraging them to pray informally.

Because of Jesus, you can call God your **Father**; your *Abba*; your Daddy. If you understand the intimacy, you understand prayer.