

Afterword

The last 19 lessons on the words used in the Lord's Prayer were based on the Prayer that Jesus taught his disciples according to Matthew 6:9 – 13 as found in the *Textus Receptus*. The prayer was not intended to be memorized and repeated word for word. Just before teaching them this prayer, Jesus says: "Do not use vain repetitions" (Matt 6:7). If the prayer is recited without thinking and without sincerity, then it becomes exactly what Jesus has warned against, merely vain repetition. However, when the prayer is prayed from the heart, so that the person praying really means what he or she is speaking, then it is most powerful and effective. Matthew 6:9 starts by saying, "In this manner, therefore, pray." So, Jesus is teaching his audience the manner in which to pray, not a word for word recital.

The Lord's prayer is found twice in the New Testament. It is found in Matt 6:9-13 and also in Luke 11:2-4. Luke's version is shorter and if we had used it for the basis of our lessons, then we would only need the first 14 lessons. For Matthew's version we need to add Lessons 15 to 19.

Some scholars believe that both versions were spoken by Jesus but at different times in his ministry. The first occurs in the sermon on the mount. Matthew reproduced it for a Jewish audience. The second version was penned by Luke for a Gentile audience. It is assumed that the first prayer was given in Galilee and the second in Judaea. The second is very much like the first only with some omissions, making it shorter.

Adam Clarke says: "Forms of prayer were frequent among the Jews; and every public teacher gave one to his disciples. Some forms were drawn out to a considerable length, and from these abridgments were made."

Matthew Henry says: "The petitions are six; the first three relate more expressly to God and his honour, the last three to our own concerns, both temporal and spiritual." Other scholars think there are seven petitions. I also find seven petitions in the prayer.

The number 3, and the number of perfection, 7, are numbers often used in the Bible. God Father, Son, and Holy Spirit form a trinity. Noah had three sons. Three men visited Abraham when the Lord announced to him that Isaac would be born. Moses was hidden three months before Pharaoh's daughter found him and adopted him. The Israelites were to have a feast in Jerusalem three times a year. God delivered the Midianites into Gideon's hand with three companies of only 100 men each. Jonah was in the belly of the great fish for three days and three nights. Jesus died on a cross, one of three that were erected on Golgatha. Jesus arose on the third day. He took three of his disciples onto the Mount of Transfiguration. They were Peter, James and John. Peter suggested making three tabernacles, one for Moses, one for Elijah, and one for Jesus. Yet, Jesus fulfilled the Torah, Psalms and Prophets, a trinity which represents the totality of Old Testament prophecy. So now we look to Jesus alone. Peter denied Jesus three times. The good Samaritan was one of three men that journeyed and saw the man who had fallen among the thieves. The good Samaritan was the only one that had compassion on Him. Paul was three days and three nights without sight after encountering Jesus on the road to Damascus. And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest among them is love.

Seven is the number of perfection. On the seventh day God rested from all his works. Jacob served Laban seven years for the hand of Rachel. A week has 7 days. There were 7 years of plenty and 7 years of famine at the time of Joseph. When Moses fled from Pharaoh he came to the priest of Midian, who had seven daughters. At the feast of Unleavened Bread, the Israelites eat unleavened bread for seven days. Before the fall of Jericho, the children of Israel marched around the city of Jericho for seven days and they did so seven times on the seventh day. Seven priests bearing seven trumpets led the marching procession. Naaman dipped himself in the Jordan seven times and was healed from his leprosy. Seven sons and three daughters were born to Job. By the way that makes ten, another significant biblical number. Psalm 119:164 says: Seven times a day I praise you, because of your righteous judgments. There were seven churches in Asia Minor that were addressed by Jesus in Revelation. Moreover in Revelation we read not only of seven churches (1:4), but also seven Spirits (1:4), seven golden lampstands (1:12), seven stars (1:16), seven seals (5:1), seven horns (5:6), seven eyes (5:6), seven angels (8:2), seven trumpets (8:6), seven thunders (10:3), seven heads and ten horns (12:3), seven diadems (12:3), seven plagues (15:1), seven golden bowls (15:7), seven mountains (17:9), and seven kings (17:10),

The seven petitions in the Lord's Prayer are as follows:

Petition 1: May your name be hallowed, O Father in heaven.

Petition 2: May your kingdom come.

Petition 3: May your will be done, (on earth as it is in heaven).

Petition 4: Provide us with our physical needs

Petition 5: Forgive us

Petition 6: Do not lead us into temptation

Petition 7 Deliver us from the evil one.

Matthew Henry probably considers "Do not lead us into temptation but deliver us from evil" as a single petition, so only finding six.

The nineteen lessons cover a wide variety of theological truths.

1: "*Our Father*" teaches us that we do not pray for ourselves alone. We include others. We are made in the image of God, and we are his children.

2: "*In Heaven*" shows us the omnipotence, sovereignty, and supremacy of God, as well as giving us a suggestion that heaven is our future home. After all, our Father is there.

3: Hallowing God is our purpose on earth. We will always grant him the greatest respect and honour him above all else.

4: The Name of God reveals the character of God to us. His many names teach us about his attributes.

5: The *Kingdom of God* is a spiritual reality. It is within us. We can experience it now, but also inherit it in the world to come.

6: “*Thy Will be Done*” is something that Jesus did not only pray, but that he manifested by the way he lived and died. If we can truly pray: *Thy Will be Done*, then the Kingdom of God has come into our lives.

7: “*On Earth as it is in Heaven*” gives us pause to reflect on how the will of God is done in heaven. It teaches us how to pursue living according to God’s will on earth.

8: “*Our Daily Bread*” is an expression including more than just bread itself. Bread is used as a figure of speech where the part is used to refer to the whole. In literature this is called a synecdoche. The prayer for bread can include all our physical needs. First Jesus teaches us to pray for God’s purpose to be fulfilled. The kingdom of God comes first and then the other things are added. God’s will includes providing for our physical needs.

9: “*Give Us*” once more includes others, as we do not pray “*Give Me*.” After seeking God’s will first, we now turn to our concerns.

10. “*Today*” teaches us to take one day at a time. Jesus tells us not to worry about tomorrow, and also not to neglect the things of today. We bring today’s concerns to the Lord, and we can count on his help today.

11: “*Forgive Us*” is a prayer everyone must pray because otherwise we cannot stand before a holy God. That is because we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. 1 John 1:9 teaches us that if we confess our sins and ask for forgiveness, God not only forgives us but also cleanses us from all unrighteousness. If we think we need not ask for forgiveness, we are self-righteous, a righteousness that will condemn us. It is the righteousness of Christ, freely given unto us that gives us everlasting life.

12: “*As We Forgive*” shows us that Jesus did not come just in order to reconcile us to God, but also to reconcile us with others. God forgiving us is conditional on us being willing to forgive others as well.

13: Lesson 13 explores the topic of *Temptation*. In Jesus Christ there is victory over temptation. Temptations can be overcome. Temptation itself is not sin because Jesus himself was also tempted, yet without sin. In him, we too can be overcomers.

14: Lesson 14 explores the topic of evil. The word translated *evil* cannot also be translated *evil one*. The greatest evil is sin. God can deliver us from sin, but also from other types of evil.

15: The Lord’s Prayer according to Luke ends with Lesson 14. The Lord’s Prayer found in Matthew according to the *Textus Receptus* continues and once more emphasises that the Kingdom belongs to God. This repetition underscores the importance of God’s Kingdom, which is not a Democracy, but a Theocracy. He rules. We do not decide what sin is or what rules govern the Kingdom. It is God’s will that is to be done.

16: All power has been given to Jesus Christ, who is with us until the end of the age. Humans have some power, but all things are possible with God because he is the Almighty and his power is all-encompassing. Lesson 16 examines certain powers which belong to God exclusively. Through His Holy Spirit he empowers the followers of Jesus to be overcomers and do take part in Christ’s mission on earth.

17: Lesson 17 examines the glory of God.

18: Lesson 18 looks at the word forever and how it is used in Scripture.

19: The last word in the Lord’s Prayer is Amen. Lesson 19 explains what that word means and how it is used in Scripture.

20. We conclude with the current lesson, Lesson 20, which is a reflection of the 20 lessons which have explored in more detail the words used in the Lord’s Prayer.

I hope that these 20 lessons have been helpful and informative.

Questions

1. How many times is the Lord's Prayer found in the Bible?
2. Do you think Jesus wanted it to be recited word for word? Explain.
3. Besides Matthew, which other Gospel records the Lord's prayer?
4. How many petitions are there in the Lord's prayer?
5. What are the first three petitions?
6. What are some Biblical numbers of significance?
7. What do the words "Our Father" teach us?
8. What is a synecdoche? Which word represents a synecdoche?
9. What does the word "Amen" signify?
10. Share something that you have learned from the Afterword.