

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER IN MATTHEW 6:9-13**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Churches seeking numerical growth look for programs that draw more people, possibly working hard to entertain and satisfy the visitors and converts. Prayer helps Christians and the church engage with the Lord, who alone can help Christians grow spiritually and numerically. Churches often feel overwhelmed due to a lack of resources and discouraged due to a sense of powerlessness and insignificance. What is needed is a deeper realization of God as the true resource for growth and the only one who can bring transformation and maturity. The research employ an expositional methodology in engaging the biblical framework (Matthew 6:9-13), as it relates to prayer. The model prayer that Jesus taught could correct false concepts and practices of prayer while also connecting the praying Christians to God. Jesus emphasized this amidst the Sermon on the Mount. The Lord's Prayer is one of the spiritual disciplines that direct Christians in spiritual formation. Although Christian prayer may entail seeking God's benefits, its deeper purposes are relationship and transformation. True Christian prayer as explicated in Matthew 9:6-13 honors God and allows God to use the person to accomplish His purposes.

Keywords: Christians, Jesus Christ, Luke, Prayer.

## INTRODUCTION

The Old Testament presents Abraham as a model of prayer because he walked in God's presence listened to him and obeyed his will. Like Abraham, Moses frequently interceded before God on behalf of the chosen people. Because of intimate communication with God, Moses is seen as a model of contemplative prayer.<sup>1</sup> In the New Testament, Jesus absorbed in prayer; He fasted and prayed for 40 days and nights before he began his public ministry (Mt 4:2) and prayed before choosing his apostles (Luke 6:12). He often withdrew from the crowds to pray and taught his disciples the importance of doing so (Mk 6:31). Jesus, who taught us to pray constantly, made his whole life a prayer to his father in heaven.

A prayerless life is an unfruitful life. Yet all believers at times have felt the poverty of their prayer life. Wrong assumptions about prayer exist, including the assumption that everyone knows what prayer is and how to pray. This was true even of the Apostles, for, realizing their inadequacy; they asked the Lord Jesus to teach them to pray (Luke 11:1). This research helps understand and learn from the Matthean form of the Lord's Prayer that has blessed Christians and the church for years. God intends for Christians to grow and to be transformed into the image of God. God commissions Christians to be his partners in accomplishing his kingdom purposes in the world. The Lord's Prayer is an excellent expression of these beliefs and values.

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<sup>1</sup> K. Henry, *The Means through which Man communicates with the Almighty: Prayer* (London: Herald, 1997), 34. There really is no way to define prayer because one can only experience the subjective, not write about it. N. H. Ridderbos, *The Key Concept of Spiritual Growth and Development: Prayer* (Chicago: U.S.A, 1986), 945. Perhaps the simplest definition of prayer is "just talking with God," or "the soul's converse with God," and the best description of prayer is "the soul's approach to God." Bounds, E. M. *The Complete Works of E. M. Bounds* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990), 21.

## Background of the Text

There is a parallel account of Matthew 6:9–13 in Luke 1:2–4. It seems difficult to determine the relationship.<sup>2</sup> The Matthean prayer is fuller and contains all that the Lukan prayer gives. It is probable that Jesus taught this prayer model repeatedly.<sup>3</sup> The author of Matthew likely wrote the Lord's Prayer as he had learned it as part of his church's teaching.<sup>4</sup> As *Didache's* use of a text most like that of Matthew's confirms, the Matthean form of the Lord's Prayer became the prayer of the church at an early stage.<sup>5</sup> This may be due to the popularity of Matthew's Gospel and the apostolic status accrued to the author.<sup>6</sup>

The Lord's Prayer is located in the middle of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:9–13), which is the general context.<sup>7</sup> The main message of the sermon addresses kingdom living. It teaches the disciples who they are and how they should live.<sup>8</sup> In the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7), Matthew gives a comprehensive summary of Jesus' teaching on how his disciples should live. Jesus' teaching focuses on the hearts of

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<sup>2</sup> Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1992), 324.

<sup>3</sup> Although Luke's form suggests that it may be closer to the original, yet the Matthean wording seems to indicate authenticity. Stein, *Luke*, 324.

<sup>4</sup> Darrell L. Bock, *Luke* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996), 1045–46.

<sup>5</sup> It is also the prayer that the early church chose to use liturgically. Leon Morris, *Luke: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity, 1988), 3. 211.

<sup>6</sup> Marshall quoting Bruce Metzger in I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Exeter: Paternoster, 1978), 454.

<sup>7</sup> Green argues that the beatitudes are numerical arrangements of saying which are common in gnomonical literatures. The sermon shapes and strengthens the community's identity and lifestyle, which differs from the dominant society. The community is reminded of the importance of their interaction with God, one another and the surrounding society. H.B. Green, 'Matthew, poet of the beatitudes', *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, suppl. Ser, 2001, 176.

<sup>8</sup> It contains a revolutionary message, but the kingdom revolution does not come by force or violence.

people. Jesus instructs his disciples about attitudes and practices that distinguish them from other people and exhorts them to persevere faithfully.<sup>9</sup> It sketches a society of justice in contrast to the values, commitments and practices of the majority who do not form part of the kingdom of heaven.<sup>10</sup>

The Lord's Prayer is an invitation and instruction from Jesus. Perhaps this is the prayer that most formed the early Christians and the church spiritually.<sup>11</sup> It is traditionally named "the Lord's Prayer" in English-speaking Christianity.<sup>12</sup> Christian growth does not come automatically; growth in prayer is no exception. The disciples of Jesus recognized it and asked Jesus to teach them. In response Jesus gave his disciples the Lord's Prayer. Jesus expected the disciples to learn to pray from this prayer.<sup>13</sup>

The Lord's Prayer is one of the resources that God has placed in the hands of the disciples. However, the power is in God who works in the Lord's Prayer, and it serves the purposes of the kingdom that the sermon proclaims.<sup>14</sup> Jesus warned the disciples not to pray to impress people or try manipulation by piling up words (Matthew 6:5–8). God works in and through the prayers of Christians. The fact that Christian prayer cannot be considered magical is clearly in the thrust of the Lord's Prayer. This is a prayer for spiritual formation; Jesus

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<sup>9</sup> W. Carter, 'Matthew and the margins: A socio-political and religious reading', *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, suppl. ser. 2000, 8.

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<sup>11</sup> Joachim Jeremias, *The Prayers of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1967), 89.

<sup>12</sup> Jeremias, *The Prayers of Jesus*, 96.

<sup>13</sup> Kenneth W. Stevenson, *The Lord's Prayer: A Text in Tradition* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004), 25.

<sup>14</sup> John R. W. Stott, *The Message of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7): Christian Counter-Culture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1985), 147.

connects the disciples with God, with each other, and with the other practices discussed in the Sermon on the Mount.

### **Exposition of Matthew 6:9–13**

This research identifies and amplifies the parts of the prayer that enriches the relational and transformative impact of the Lord's Prayer as it occurs in Matthew 6:9–13 with explanations of each part in its context. Therefore, this exposition is guided by the aims of seeking to highlight parts and insights that yield the results for exploration of the Lord's Prayer for spiritual formation. The Lord's Prayer has two sections: the first is about God (Matthew 6:9–10) and the second is about us (Matthew 6:11–13). The order of the Lord's Prayer is similar to that of the Ten Commandments.<sup>15</sup>

“Our Father in Heaven”: The First-century Judaism and Christianity used the term “our Father” to address God.<sup>16</sup> The striking difference was that in early Christian worship *πατήρ* is preferred to *Yahweh*, *adonai*, *kurios* or *theos*. Meanwhile, forms of address in Judaism were formal.<sup>17</sup> As seen, Jesus offered a living and loving relationship with God the Father. Jesus invited his disciples to a relational life of faith beyond ritualism. The New Testament use of “Father” is based on the relationship between God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ.

Jesus always addressed God as “Father,” or “*Abba*” in Aramaic, when he prayed (Mark 14:36). “*Abba*” a homely family-word; meaning, Jesus spoke to God like a child to its

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<sup>15</sup> The first part concerns people's relationship with God and the second part concerns people (Exod 20:1–17). God introduces himself as the deliverer who rescued the Israelites out of Egypt in Exod 20:2. In Matthew Jesus introduces God as the Father who is willing to adopt people as his children through the redeeming work of Jesus Christ, his Son.

<sup>16</sup> Jeremias, *The Prayers*, 97.

<sup>17</sup> William H. Willimon, Stanley Hauerwas, and Scott C. Saye, *Lord, Teach Us: The Lord's Prayer and the Christian Life* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996, Kindle), 50. Karl Barth et al., *Prayer* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002.), 21.

father, simply, inwardly, confidently.<sup>18</sup> Jesus' use of *abba* in addressing God reveals his relationship with God.<sup>19</sup> Although the concept of God as father was present in Jewish thought (Deuteronomy 32:7; Psalm 103:13; Hosea 11:1), Jesus' personal and intimate approach was radically new.<sup>20</sup> It is no doubt that familiarity and intimacy was offensive to many Jews and seemed blasphemous (John 5:18).<sup>21</sup>

When Jesus tells his disciples to address God as "our Father in heaven," he invites them to an intimate personal relationship; such that believers now have access to God's presence with boldness (Heb 4:16). This is congruent with God's basic purpose: Jesus, the Son of God, came to reconcile people into a blessed relationship with God. The Lord's Prayer grew out of the life and work of the Jesus himself.<sup>22</sup> Thus, only those who accept Jesus as the Son of God can enjoy God as "our Father". *Abba* stresses the importance of a childlike attitude to enter the kingdom of God.<sup>23</sup> Jesus' permission to pray "our Father" is to pray beside and with Him. Jesus is Immanuel; God with us. Christians are placed at God's side, being invited to participate in his work.<sup>24</sup> When Christians pray, Jesus intercedes for them and the Spirit prays within them (Romans 8:26–27, 34).

The Jewish understanding of *Abba* - father concept is no longer just a religious idea; but a loving relationship that Jesus revealed.<sup>25</sup> "It has become the characteristic use of the

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<sup>18</sup> Morris, *Luke: An Introduction and Commentary*, 214.

<sup>19</sup> Jeremias, *The Prayers*, 62.

<sup>20</sup> Gerhard Kittel, "ἄββᾶ," *TDNT* 1:6.

<sup>21</sup> Kenneth Stevenson, *Abba Father: Understanding and Using the Lord's Prayer* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse, 2000), 34.

<sup>22</sup> Morris, *Luke: An Introduction and Commentary*, 215.

<sup>23</sup> N. T. Wright, *The Lord and His Prayer* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 13.

<sup>24</sup> Jeremias, *The Prayers*, 64.

<sup>25</sup> Arndt, Danker and Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 252.

Church, which knows God through Christ the Son. Accumulated terms for God give way to simplicity previously unknown.<sup>26</sup> Whereas in Judaism awe of the Holy One led to fear of the very name of God, both cult and fear, both accumulation and concealment of names, are now overcome by the one word 'Father'. The Lord's Prayer depicts a humble person who accepts God's revelation and submits to His will. Believers are adopted into the family of God, they are born anew by God's word and his Spirit (John 3:3–5); this is made clear in the usage of Father. The revealed understanding of Father encapsulates the whole gospel! Every time Christians address God, "our Father," they remind themselves not only of who God is but also who they are (Ephesians 5:1).

"Heaven": This implies the sovereign rule of the Father. God is not only personal and loving, but he is also all-powerful.<sup>27</sup> He is imminent, yet transcendent.<sup>28</sup> He is the Creator who rules all things with all authority from heaven. To describe God as "Father in heaven" is to confess that God is superior to a father on earth.<sup>29</sup> God the Father created everything on earth, including man.<sup>30</sup> In Matthew, οὐρανῶ is often linked with God's authority and residence, which is inherently represented as heaven.<sup>31</sup>

Bruner reads the plural "heavens" as "skies," and understands that God is the Father of all creatures under the skies; he

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<sup>26</sup> Karl Barth et al., *Prayer*, 21.

<sup>27</sup> Carson, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 592.

<sup>28</sup> Stevenson, *Abba Father: Understanding and Using the Lord's Prayer*

<sup>29</sup> Stott, *The Message*, 145.

<sup>30</sup> This contradicts the Confucius taught that parents are to be revered with highest honor. In the same vein deceased parents become the object of worship. The Bible is a rival to ancestral worship. The Bible also teaches us to honor our parents but never to worship them. The language of the prayer pushes us to practice an exclusive devotion to God.

<sup>31</sup> Kolawole O. Paul, "A Critical Examination of the Concept of Righteousness in Matthew," *Asia-Africa Journal of Mission and Ministry* Vol. 20, Mission and Society Research Institute <https://doi.org/10.21806/aamm.2019.20.6>, 96–106, Aug. 31.

understands “our” to imply the whole of humanity.<sup>32</sup> Carson points to Matthew 5:45–48, a passage that reinforces distinction between believers and Gentiles, and thinks that “our Father” does not imply he is the Father of all people indiscriminately. He also points to the practice of the early church that forbade non-Christians from reciting this prayer, to show that early Christians emphasized exclusivity as well.<sup>33</sup>

The fatherhood connotes a vertical relationship with God, while the word “our” implies a horizontal relationship between people. Even if the Lord’s Prayer is for believers, this does not exclude the fact that God as heavenly Father loves the whole of humanity with fatherly love and invites each person into the intimate father child relationship with Him,<sup>34</sup> just as he sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

The horizon expands as God seeks all people to be His children Christians not only celebrate their salvation but seeks the salvation of others.<sup>35</sup> The Lord’s Prayer is an invitation to share intimately in the life of God with His Son, Jesus Christ. Through this prayer Christians live in him and he lives in them. People’s search for self ends here and their journey with God begins; once alienated, but now at home; once lost, but now are found. The Lord’s Prayer is an evangelistic prayer. <sup>36</sup> The prayer is concerned with God’s sanctity. <sup>37</sup>

Congruent with the earlier stated assertion that the ten commandments is similar with the Lord’s Prayer, it is clear

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<sup>32</sup> D.A. Carson, and Walter L Liefeld, “Theology of Church Growth,” in *Theology and Mission* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), 596.

<sup>33</sup> Carson, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, 595.

<sup>34</sup> Frederick Dale Bruner, *The Christbook: A Historical/Theological Commentary: Matthew 1–12* (Waco: Word, 1987), 39.

<sup>35</sup> Dutch Sheets, *Intercessory Prayer* (Korean by Bethany Publishing House, 1997), 42.

<sup>36</sup> D. A. Carson, *Matthew. The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelain, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 169.

<sup>37</sup> Stevenson, *Abba Father*, 34.

that the first three commandments are similar in content with the first petition of the Lord's Prayer; with the rest of that petition, for the name of God to be hallowed, believers cannot have other gods or idols, nor can they misuse God's name (Exod 20:3–7).

“Hallowed Be Your Name”: ‘Name’ stands for the person who bears it.<sup>38</sup> It is more than a label; it is the character of the person, or even the person himself.<sup>39</sup> Thus, God's name is God himself as he is and as he revealed himself.<sup>40</sup> Jesus came to reveal God's name. When people see Jesus they see the Father (John 14:9). He glorified the name, and he continues to make it known to people (John 17:26). Praying for the sanctity of God's name confesses that honoring God in one's life and speech will have the highest priority. This connotes that God is active in the process.

This prayer asks God to reveal himself for his glory. It is not because of God's need for human efforts to consecrate him, but because of what such praying will do to the person who utters it. Through actions and words God's name is often not held as sacred and it is often profaned (Ezekiel 36:23; Malachi 1:6–8). Stott compares the contemporary Aramaic prayer and explains that the petition involves both the person's action and God's action: “human knowledge, human action, and human experience are made possible, encouraged, and supported by God.”<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> It can be described as a student's matriculation number in a higher institution, where whatever is done to the matriculation number binds on the student because the matriculation number, though is the identity can also be taken as the student; such that wherever the matriculation number appears or used; the person is involved.

<sup>39</sup> D.A. Carson, & D. T. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Leicester: Apollos, 1992), 174.

<sup>40</sup> Jan Milic Lochman, *The Lord's Prayer* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 39.

<sup>41</sup> Stott, *The Message*, 147.

The Lord's Prayer teaches God's sanctity and honor, focusing adoration toward him, while admitting that only he is wise and able to bring honor equal to his own name.<sup>42</sup> After addressing God, "our Father," the next is that God's name be known and glorified. In praise, which is the acknowledgement of God's revelation, Christians see God and reality as they are. People can become who they are supposed to be only by hallowing God, their Creator and Redeemer. Praise transforms people into who they truly are.<sup>43</sup>

"Your Kingdom Come": Jesus came announcing that the kingdom of God was at hand (Matthew 4:7); although the Jews were expecting the coming of God's kingdom, the redemption of Israel (Luke 2:25). Jesus did not meet their expectations for a messiah, so they rejected him and crucified him.<sup>44</sup> With this, Jesus did not break the Roman bondage but the bondage of sin and death hanging on humanity.<sup>45</sup> The kingdom was breaking into the world even during the time of Christ's ministry (Matthew 12:28) and not consummated until the end of the age (Matthew 28:20).<sup>46</sup>

οὐρανῶν a noun, was used in the genitive masculine plural genitive case which signifies the possession of the word by the subject of the text.<sup>47</sup> In the context of Jesus' statement, the research argues that 'the kingdom of God' here is understood as an abode; the hope of those who prays shows Matthew's

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<sup>42</sup> Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 318.

<sup>43</sup> Stott, *The Message*, 147.

<sup>44</sup> Carson, *Matthew*, 170.

<sup>45</sup> B.L. Mack, *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Guides to biblical scholarship*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1990), 39-63. G.A. Kennedy, *Classical rhetoric and its Christian and secular tradition from ancient to modern times*, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1980), 82-85.

<sup>46</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *Israel's Praise: Doxology against Idolatry and Ideology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 68. B.L. Mack, *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Guides to biblical scholarship*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1990), 39-63.

<sup>47</sup> A.F. Connors, 'Matthew 3:13-17', *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible & Theology* 64, 2010, 402-404.

conception of the heavens as a place where wages for good deeds are stored up and kept “with” the Father to be repaid at the second coming of Christ (John 16:27).

‘Your kingdom come’ is to ask that God’s saving, royal rule be extended throughout creation.<sup>48</sup> The verb in this petition is in the aorist tense, which signifies a simple action in contrast to a continuing one. In other words, it suggests the consummation of God’s kingdom. Kingsbury explained that the petition looks for its ultimate fulfillment in the *eschaton*.<sup>49</sup> Like the first petition, this acknowledges that the world is not as it should be. It is under the curse because of people’s rebellion and Devil.

Many are still living in the domain of the darkness and even believers contend with the darkness within and between themselves as well as in the world around them. This prayer implants within the believer God’s desire to see the kingdom spread.<sup>50</sup> It prompts believers to imagine how they might be an agent of kingdom expansion. It also reminds believers that they await greater fulfillment of God’s purposes soon. God’s kingdom is that realm where His will is done, but its often not so on earth. Sin is rebellion against God and his will. The world is full of sin. The world is characterized by dishonoring God by rejecting his rule. Although Christ fought and won the decisive battle, the Prayer reminds Christians that they are engaged in fighting the remaining skirmishes as victors and conquerors in Christ’s victory.

“Your Will Be Done on Earth as It Is in Heaven”: this is a transition in focus which occurs between the first three

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<sup>48</sup> John Ylvisaker, *The Gospels* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1932), 780.

<sup>49</sup> Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 19. Benjamin Wisner Bacon, *Studies in Matthew* (New York: H. Holt and Company, 1930), 89-95.

<sup>50</sup> Carson, “Matthew,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 592.

petitions and what follows in the prayer.<sup>51</sup> Jesus came to do the will of the Father; He prayed this prayer in the garden of Gethsemane and gave himself up on the cross. His prayer was “not my will but your will be done” (Matthew 26:39). The defeat of the cross is a victory won through Jesus’ surrender to the Father’s will. This invites Christians to also surrender to the will of God. Christians must explicate their heavenly life on earth to demonstrate the blessing of the obedient life to the will of God. The church on earth must exhibit heavenliness to show the glory of God and attract people to the heavenly living on earth. The earth itself is meant to be a stage on which God’s will is enacted not just in the lives and community of believers. The prayer seeks to make people one; with God and each other. Christians are invited to imagine an earth in which the benevolent rule of God holds sway and dominates what happens.<sup>52</sup> This has social implications that the remaining prayer expands.

“Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread”: The petition for daily bread is difficult to interpret, for the word customarily translated “daily” (*epiouvSION*) is unknown, elsewhere in Greek, and its meaning is uncertain. Early Christian authors such as Origen and Jerome understood it to mean “supersubstantial”.<sup>53</sup> The creator and redeemer is also the sustainer. Like children who are dependent on their parents, Christians are dependent on God. Children often take the blessings they enjoy for granted. Christians also to take God and all his blessings for granted. Thus, the prayer coaches Christians to be appreciative by teaching the source of the daily bread.<sup>54</sup> When people have enough things or money, they

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<sup>51</sup> Lochman, *The Lord’s Prayer*, 79.

<sup>52</sup> Arndt, Danker and Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 822.

<sup>53</sup> Lochman, *The Lord’s Prayer*, 80.

<sup>54</sup> Luz lists five possible meanings: (1) the bread that “unites with our substance” or “surpasses all substances,” (2) the bread that is “necessary for existence,” (3) the bread “for today,” (4) the bread “for the coming day,” and (5) the bread “for the future.” Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A*

tend to forget their dependence on God (Deut 8:11; Prov 30:8; Luke 12:13). Yet everything we have comes from God (1 Cor 4:7).

This prayer gives the picture of a day laborer who needs to provide enough bread for his family to survive. It emphasizes sustenance, sufficiency, and necessity. This entails the necessities of life. The prayer reminds of God's concern about the mundane matters of life. Understanding this helps to see the connection between God and daily sustenance, drawing attention to the Creator's intent to provide for all. "Our" bread connects Christians to others. "When we have more than enough, then our bread becomes theirs."<sup>55</sup> When such sharing takes place, the gospel becomes visible, and God will be glorified. This is a daily petition, and it teaches Christians that the Lord intended for us to pray every day. With the usage of 'bread', obviously, Jesus meant necessities rather than luxuries of life. By making modest request for necessities, this encourages the person praying to find proper satisfaction in modest amounts. "

"Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors": For many, this passage gives difficulty because it teaches that receiving forgiveness from God is conditional on forgiving others. This may seem contrary to the concept of "justification by faith alone, without works." Nelson attempts to overcome the difficulty by making two kinds of forgiveness: salvific and sanctifying.<sup>56</sup> Salvific forgiveness is for salvation and the sanctifying forgiveness is for sanctification. Therefore, Nelson argues that Matthew 6:12–15 is dealing with the sanctifying forgiveness, not the salvific one.<sup>57</sup> Hultgren thinks that

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*Commentary Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible*, 320. Lochman thought of bread as "everything necessary for the preservation of this life" and made a long list of the items necessary for living. Lochman, *The Lord's Prayer*, 79.

<sup>55</sup> Stott, *The Message*, 149.

<sup>56</sup> Randy A. Nelson, "Exegeting Forgiveness," *American Theological Inquiry* (on line) 5, no. 2, (2012), 33.

<sup>57</sup> Nelson, "Exegeting Forgiveness," 40.

Matthew 6:12 is a “performance utterance,” which accomplishes forgiveness by saying it is a “declaration of amnesty.”<sup>58</sup> He also explains Matthew 6:14–15 as an exhortation: the problem is resolved when one begins to understand that the latter statement is a rhetorical unit.<sup>59</sup>

Complex attempts to reconcile Jesus’ high standards with certain versions of the doctrine of justification by faith may be unnecessary. In the sermon Jesus has already highlighted broken human relationship as an obstacle to worship (Matthew 5:23-34).<sup>60</sup> It is logical to acknowledge that Jesus connected man’s relationship to God and with other people. Jesus is interested in people’s hearts. Forgiveness is not so much an object or a status people can possess, but it is a restoration of relationship with God. We owe to God not our achievements but ourselves.

The issue of forgiving others is easier said than done. Jesus is serious about this matter of forgiving each other. Those who ask God for forgiveness must be willing to forgive. Barth’s argument reminds that Christians are new creature walking with Jesus in this road of forgiveness and freedom.<sup>61</sup> The Lord’s Prayer helps the Christians imagine having God’s attitude toward sin and relationships, shaping them into partners with God in his saving work of reconciliation.

“Lead Us Not into Temptation, but Deliver Us from Evil”: In a sense, this relates to the previous phrase. It deals with sin and weakness. Both deal with believer’s daily waLuke with God; spiritual formation.<sup>62</sup> God works transformation through these petitions. Christians must be aware of their weaknesses as

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<sup>58</sup> Arland J. Hultgren, “Forgive Us, As We Forgive (Matthew 6:12).” *Word and World* 16, no. 3, (1996), 289.

<sup>59</sup> Lochman, *The Lord’s Prayer*, 114.

<sup>60</sup> . Hultgren, *Forgive Us, As We Forgive (Matthew 6:12)*, 116.

<sup>61</sup> Barth, *Prayer*, 57.

<sup>62</sup> Byron D. Stuhlman, “The Lord’s Prayer in Worship.” *Word and World* 22:1 (2002) 81.

well as the powerful enemy who is eager to destroy them. Jeremias compares this petition with a very ancient Jewish evening prayer that Jesus would have known and explains that when “translated, ‘lead’ and ‘bring’ have a permissive nuance.” Thus, he thinks the phrase here should be rendered; “let us not succumb to temptation.”<sup>63</sup> The idea is not merely of entering temptation but of going “inside” it in the sense of falling and succumbing to it.<sup>64</sup>

Christians must be aware of their extraordinary weakness and the extraordinary power of our enemy. The devil tempted the first human couple in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:1–7). The tempter also tried to entice the second Adam in the wilderness but failed (Matthew 4:1–11). The devil will attack every aspect of life to make Christians fall. Christians must also remember that in spite of man’s failures and weaknesses, the Lord who taught this prayer, has already defeated the devil by His death and resurrection.

“For yours is the kingdom, power, and glory, Amen”: Jeremias explained that this doxology is absent in early manuscripts; he argued that it is a response of the early church to the Prayer.<sup>65</sup> Metzger posits that some form of this expression occurs at least as early as the *Didache*.<sup>66</sup> Metzger thinks that it was composed in order to adapt the prayer for liturgical use in the early church.<sup>67</sup> It is liturgically fitting and theologically sound, but it is arguably not part of the original Gospel text. Christians can appreciate and learn from the doxology. As the early Church responded beautifully, the church today should also respond faithfully. The doxological addition is an example of doing so and provides an opportunity to give brief

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<sup>63</sup> Jeremias, *The Prayers*, 105.

<sup>64</sup> Timothy N. Boyd, “The Churches’ Use of the Lord’s Prayer,” *Biblical Illustrator* 39, no. 1 (2012) 58–61.

<sup>65</sup> Jeremias, *The Prayers*, 105.

<sup>66</sup> Bruce A. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (New York: American Bible Society, 1994), 17.

<sup>67</sup> Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 18.

consideration to the ways in which the Lord's Prayer has functioned in historic Christian communities.

## **Conclusion**

Prayer is not mechanical. God honors a heart attitude, not necessarily our logic or eloquence. Jesus instituted this because he is aware the devil would like nothing better than to get Christians away from prayer or to get them praying in an ineffective manner. Of a truth, the Lord's Prayer has blessed and formed the church for many years. Prayer is not intended to manipulate God, but rather to communicate with God. In the Lord's Prayer, Christians find purpose in life. The Lord's Prayer is relational; it reiterates and reminds Christian identity and God's fatherhood. Christians daily lives are lived by God's grace and because of God's love. The prayer reconnects Christians with the Father, who restores our spirits and realigns our broken lives. The prayer is God's invitation to become His children and live with him in his presence. Through this prayer we dedicate ourselves daily to God's kingdom and for its service. Jesus' immediate concern in teaching his own prayer to his disciples was to teach them that it was important for them to pray, and that they must pray with the right motive and attitude. Therefore, when Christians take this prayer seriously and commune with the Father daily, transformation into the likeness of the Father by the indwelling Holy Spirit working within is sure.

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