

The Pattern of Prayer

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Pray Like Jesus | August 23, 2026 | Galatians 4:4-7; Matthew 6:5-15; Luke 11:1-4

Prepared from the spoken message and lightly edited for readability. Scripture quotations and spoken phrasing are preserved as delivered.

We started a brand new series last week. We're calling Pray Like Jesus, and we have said that we're making it our goal this fall to go deeper in our walk with the Lord, to grow in intimacy with Him, to pursue His presence at a greater level than we've ever experienced Him before. And the way to do this is through prayer. And I don't know of a believer that has not been at one time in their walk with the Lord frustrated with their prayer life. You know, I meet with a lot of people, and if there's two areas of weaknesses, if you will, that they say, Man, I wish I could grow in this area, it typically boils down to two areas. One is sharing their faith, and the other is prayer. We know we should pray. We've been commanded to pray, but it's a frustration for many of us. We go to our prayer rooms and we sit down to pray, and we don't even know where to start. And so, you know, after three to five minutes of sitting there in silence, we kind of throw up our hands and go, Oh, I just can't do this. You know, what is this? Or we rush right into our list of needs, and we pray for our needs. We need this and this and this and this. And after about two or three minutes, we're done with our needs and our blessings, and we don't know where to go next. So you have this desire to pray. You sit down, but your mind wanders, or you have this thought. You know, we'd never say it out loud, but we've had the thought, haven't we? God, why am I praying? You know what I need anyway. Just let's do this, all right? And there's your prayer. And so we often, I often, run into believers who know that there's a greater dimension, if you will, to the Christian faith, but you're just not experiencing it. And so many are living in defeat because of the non-existent prayer life. You're not tapping into the power that is yours that comes by way of prayer. And while many are sincere, God-loving, God-fearing, faithful to the church, you're not going to give up on God. You just know that there's something more. My friend Daniel Henderson, who is leading the Resilience Conference, he's been here on a number of occasions, led us in our prayer and praise times, and he'll be leading the conference in October that we're hosting. He wrote this in his book, *The Power of Transforming Prayer*. It goes right along with what I'm talking about as it relates to wanting to go deeper and desiring to walk with God in a greater way. He said, In spite of our common environment of spiritual superficiality, religious routines, and massive distraction, I am convinced that true believers carry an unquenchable appetite for legitimate life change. We hunger for worship encounters with His holy presence that mark us and make us more like Jesus. Deep within, we know there is another dimension of Christian living beyond a cultural faith that simply checks in with God at church or in times of crisis. We are tired of feeling bored, inept, confused, frustrated, or weary in any sense with the idea of prayer. Now, don't raise your hand if Henderson just read your mail there. But I believe it's true. I think it was true for the disciples who came to Jesus and said, Lord, would you teach us to pray? That's what we're looking at today. We're looking at the Lord's Prayer. It's been called the model prayer. Other places it's called the Disciples' Prayer. We read it twice in Scripture, once in Matthew in the context of the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus is teaching how to pray, and he's holding it in contrast to how hypocrites pray, or what he refers to as the

Gentiles, the pagans pray. We read it again in Luke's Gospel, where the disciples come to Jesus and they say, Jesus, will you teach us to pray? So whether it is one moment retold twice at different places in the Gospels, or whether it's two distinct moments in the life of Jesus, it really doesn't matter. What matters is, is that both instances in which this prayer is given, Jesus is giving us a pattern of how to pray and what to pray. I'm calling this message, if you're taking notes, you can write the title down, The Pattern of Prayer. Now this is part one. We're going to divide the Lord's Prayer, this model prayer, up into two parts this week and next week. And what we're going to learn here is very important. Remember what we said last week, that 25 times we have recorded in the Scripture Jesus praying, but only eight or nine of those times we have the exact words that Jesus prayed. This is one of those times where we have the exact words, the red letter edition, okay? This is what Jesus said as it relates to prayer. So we need to lean in because if it was important for Jesus to teach it in this way, it's there for a reason. Now, before Jesus teaches his disciples to ask for anything as it relates to personal needs, he's going to teach them to engage with the Father first and foremost, okay? Goes right in line with what we said last week. Remember how we defined prayer? We said for Jesus, prayer wasn't a box to check; it was a life to share. This is exactly where he starts in the model prayer. He starts with relationship. Now we're going to look at this in Matthew's Gospel as told in the Sermon on the Mount, and rather than just reading the Lord's Prayer, I do want to read it in the larger context in which Jesus was speaking, where again, he was contrasting it to hypocrites and to pagans, how they prayed. We'll start in verse number five, Matthew chapter six. The Bible says this, And when you pray, notice, when you pray, it is just a given that followers of the Lord are going to pray. They're going to cry out to God. You must not be like the hypocrites. All right, these are the play actors of the day. You've probably heard this before, hypocrite, where we get that word. They put a mask on and perform and be a different person. Jesus says, Don't pray like that. They're pretenders. Don't be a pretender when you pray. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. And Jesus is saying prayer is not a show. He says, Truly I say to them, to you they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. Now, if you take notes in your Bible, I want you to circle the word Father. You're going to find it four times in this series of verses that we're looking at, and if you trace it through the Sermon on the Mount, I believe there's 17 times Jesus refers to God as his Father. Now, we're going to highlight this more in just a moment, but I just want you to see it. We'll talk through it. So he says, You go into a room. This is a sacred act. Prayer is first and foremost personal and private. You are sharing life with the Father, and you can bet that when you go into your secret place and share life with the Father, that he sees you. And Jesus even says that. He says, Your Father who sees in secret, he sees you. He'll reward you. And when you pray, don't heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they'll be heard for their many words. Prayer is not mechanical. It's not, you know, this magic, you know, recitation of words, if you will, and if you just say it the right way, then ta-da, the answer is going to happen. Jesus says that's not prayer. Even the model prayer, which we should memorize and we should recite together, we're going to recite it together at the end of our time together today. We should know it and pattern our prayer lives after it. But if we just say that prayer without thinking about what we're saying, that kind of prayer, just babbling words, is not going to move the hand and heart of God. This is what Jesus is saying. You're not going to be heard just by saying words, babbling on and on and on. And he even says in verse 8, don't be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you even ask him. Pray then like this: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, forgive us our

debts as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. There are seven petitions in this Lord's Prayer that Jesus is encouraging us to pray. We're going to look at the first three this week. We'll look at the following four next week. Again, this is a little two-part series here. Now, the first three petitions, you're going to notice, are all God-centered. They're all Godward. This prayer, as given in Luke 11, remember it comes in response to the disciples saying, Jesus, teach us to pray. I just want you to think about that for a moment. Like Jesus' disciples, they knew him better than anybody else. They saw him behind closed doors, so to speak. They traveled with him for three years, shared meals with him. They saw him in tense situations. They saw him do mighty miracles. They come to Jesus, and notice what they don't say. They don't say, Jesus, your leadership is incredible. Teach us a little bit about leadership. They don't say, Jesus, your teaching, man, you've got the crowd right where you want them. They're in the palm of your hand. Would you teach us how you communicate like you do? They don't say, your miracle-working ministry, man, we see you doing these mighty works. Teach us how to do those. They don't do any of that. They see his prayer life. And they say, Jesus teaches to pray, and he teaches them. And in this prayer, seven petitions. First three with the Lord and his purposes. The next four set of petitions have to do with man and his personal needs. But before any of the ask, before any of the petitions, look at where Jesus starts, right where we started last week. Prayer is not a box to check. It's a life to share with the Father. And what Jesus teaches is that prayer begins with relationship. It's all about relationship. One of the most remarkable truths that Jesus communicates is this whole idea of using this word Father. Now historically, this is not unique to Jesus. You can read in the Old Testament God being referred to as Father. Isaiah chapter 63, verse 16, God is referred to as our Father. Jeremiah chapter 3, verse 19, God himself speaking, saying, I thought you would refer to me as Father and not turn from following me. This language of God as Father is not unique to Jesus, but Jesus does take it, and he turns it a little bit and makes it a lot more personal. In other words, he gives another layer to this idea of Father, not just in God being Father in the sense of headship, like the fatherhood of God, but instead he turns it and makes it more tender, more personal. More intimate. We take trips to Israel. I'm prayerful that at the end of '27 we can go again. We'll let you know and keep you posted on it. But when we go to Israel, you can be in a marketplace somewhere, and you'll hear little children running around crying out, Abba, Abba, Abba. And what are they crying out? Daddy, Daddy, Daddy. That's the language that Jesus uses here. But it's not just like a toddler. It's tenderness. It's relationship. Like when my dad, who I've told you before, my hero, one of the greatest men I've ever known, I talk to him on a weekly basis. When I call him and he answers, I don't go, Well, hello, Father. No, it's Dad. What's going on? There's this relationship. This is what Jesus is stating at the outset of this model prayer, that when we begin prayer, it begins with relationship. Now, the question that every single person in this room has to answer, the question people watching online have to answer is, are you in a true relationship with God? Because not everybody is. You can't call God Abba, Daddy, unless you know Him in a personal way. And the only way you can call Him Abba, Daddy is by trusting in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. The fact that Jesus died on a cross for your sins, shed His blood in your place, that He was buried according to the Scriptures, raised on the third day. When you trust in the sacrificial death of Christ and in His resurrection, that that's what forgives your sin and makes you right with God, it is at that moment that you are adopted into the family of God. That's when you become a son or daughter of God. Paul would write about this once in Romans chapter 8, again in Galatians chapter 4. In fact, look at this Galatians passage. I'll put it on the screen for you. He says, But when the fullness of time had come... God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law so that we might receive,

look at this, adoption as sons, sons and daughters. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. So you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God. See, if you don't know the Lord in a personal way, if you never put your faith and trust in Him, He might be your Father in the sense of He's the Father of all creation. But until you, by faith, trust in Him, He's not your Abba Father. Only when you call on the name of the Lord and are saved, it is at that moment that you are adopted into the family of God and become a true son or daughter. That's when the Holy Spirit lives in you, and as Paul said, that Spirit is what allows you to call Him Abba. So you've got to answer the question before you leave today: Do you know God in this way? Is He your Abba? This is where prayer begins. You know, it's amazing. This week, many of you were asking me as I was shaking hands before the service, How'd you do dropping off your daughter at school? Horrible, all right? And the follow-up question, Did you cry? Yes, I cried like a baby all the way home, all right? And this past Thursday, we moved her in. It's amazing. You see these—first of all, these girls spend more money on this dorm room than I do on my living room, kitchen, and master bedroom combined, all right? It is amazing. And these dads, they're, man, they come in wearing work belts. I mean, they're ready to go. I mean, they mean business. And they're putting furniture together, and they're getting everything done. And I mean, our room, Kelsey's roommate, her dad's trying to get these curtains up that they want. And I mean, you could tell when they first got them up that it wasn't quite right. And I mean, it was hot in that room, and he's sweating. You can just tell, man, this is not his best day, right, having to put up these curtains. But he's not. You think he's saying a word about it? No way. He's going to get them exactly where his baby girl wants them. You know why? Because there's tenderness there. He's Abba. And that little girl wants them looking good, and her daddy was going to stay and get them done until they were just right, because he's Abba. When we were getting ready to tell Kelsey bye, we went out. I didn't know Debbie had snapped this picture. She sent it to me later, but here's the picture of me telling Kelsey bye. I got my gooder sunglasses on because I'm crying like a baby. This is right after I told her, Listen, if you want me to unpack your room right now and take you back to Houston, we'll do it, all right? Let's go. I didn't tell her that. I'm speaking words of life over, praying for, encouraging her, telling her she's ready. But I want you to look at this picture, and I want you to have this in mind when we talk about prayer as relationship. If you're a son or daughter of God, this is what I'm talking about. This is how God sees you. When you enter into your prayer room, that's it right there. Doesn't matter what you've done. Doesn't matter where you're at in life. If you're a son or daughter of God, when you enter into prayer, when we say prayer begins with a relationship, this is how you have to see God holding you. You know, I fear that some, because of their earthly father, maybe he was not a good dad, hurt you, abandoned you, maybe even abused you. You got to get that picture out of your mind. And when you're dealing with your Father, it's the picture that was just up that you have to wrap your mind around. And so he introduces this idea of relationship. This is what prayer is. It's sharing life with our Father. And then he lists these petitions, and we're going to look at the first three. Now, as I pray through this, my heart, I need you to hear me on this. Do not see prayer as not a box to check. So I'm going to give you these in steps, if you will: one, two, three, four. But that's not what prayer is. Remember, prayer is not mechanics. Prayer is more movement. It flows. It's a relationship. And so while I give you these in steps, don't think, okay, I'm going to enter into my prayer closet and I'm going to do one, two, three. Don't think that way. This is more movement, okay? But there's petitions. The prayer is going somewhere. There is a direction to it. It starts with the relationship, our Father. But then it moves to petition number one. And Jesus teaches his disciples that this prayer is that God's name will be honored. That's what he means when he says, Hallowed

be your name. Now, some teach this as a declaration of praise or worship, and it is to a degree. But more than that, it is a petition. God, we want, I want Your name to be revered. The word hallowed, it means to sanctify, to make holy. It's to treat something or someone with the highest degree of respect and honor. God, I want Your name to be made much of. I want Your name to be hallowed, respected in my life, in this home, in our church, in this workplace. Hallow Your name, O Lord. Name in the ancient days represented the totality of someone's being. It represented their character. It represented their nature, all right? I named my girls their names because I thought it sounded good coming out of loudspeakers, you know, at a soccer game or a basketball game, something like that. In the ancient day, your name was so much more than that. You know, my friend, he terms it as like an academic CV or a professional resume. That's what name represents. It encompasses the totality of a person. So when we say the name of the Lord, we're declaring this is who God is. This is what He does, right? In the Old Testament, He would reveal Himself through names. So like Isaac and Abraham instance, when there's a ram provided in the thicket, the substitute, what does Abraham name the place? He says, The Lord is our provider. So we know the Lord by His name, Jehovah Jireh, God that provides. Jehovah Shalom. He is our peace. So, name, God, I want your name to be honored. I want it to be revered. I want it to be set apart as holy. In the words of D. A. Carson, he says this: In other words, Christ followers are asking their heavenly Father to act in such a way that they and an increasing number of others will reverence God, glorify Him, consider Him holy, and acknowledge Him. The name of God, who He is, is sacred, holy. Like, this is one of the top ten, right? Exodus chapter 20, verse 7, third commandment: You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain. Anytime you treat His name in a way that is not holy or sacred, you are taking His name in vain. This week, I love how God does this. You can't make this up. Like, my systematic reading through the Scripture, this week I'm reading through the book of Leviticus. I'm in Leviticus chapter 24, okay? Leviticus is hard to get through. It's just hard. But Leviticus 24, I'm reading it, and there comes a time in the chapter where there is a son of an Israelite woman, and all it says is that that son blasphemed the name of the Lord. It doesn't say what that means. It just says he blasphemed the name, and you can tell the community of Israel is like, whoa, they don't know what to do. They're actually wait on the will of God. They put him in custody, they lock him up, and they say, We're going to wait till God tells us what to do. He blasphemed the name. God shows up, speaks to Moses, Leviticus 24. Verse 13. Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, Bring out of the camp the one who cursed, and let all who heard him lay their hands on his head, and let all the congregation stone him. And speak to the people of Israel, saying, Whoever curses his God shall bear his sin. Whoever—look at this—blasphemes the name of the Lord. Whoever treats the name of the Lord as anything less than most holy and most sacred, surely he shall be put to death, and the congregation shall stone him, the sojourner as well as the native. When he blasphemes the name, shall be put to death. Don't think the Lord takes His name being honored and revered seriously. In the Old Testament, you profaned the name of the Lord, it was death. And so in this prayer, we start with relationship in the very first petition, is, God, I want You to make sure that I'm reverencing Your name. I'm honoring Your name, who You are. And this whole prayer is turning our focus Godward. Petition number two. This prayer moves from God's name to be honored to the second petition. It's a prayer that God's kingdom will come. This is Matthew 6:10, the first part: Your kingdom come. Now, the kingdom of God is an incredible concept. We did a whole series on the kingdom of God two years ago. You can go get it online, all right? If you're really bored, go back and listen to it, all right? It's a good series. We define kingdom as this: it's the realm of God's rule and reign through His people. All right, when we talk about God's kingdom, there is an

already-not-yet element to what we're talking about here. Theologians call this an inaugurated eschatology. Here's what that means. Put it on the screen for you. The kingdom of God existed in eternity. God's always reigned supreme. Understand that? It was initiated on earth the first coming of Jesus. You read Mark 1:15. He came preaching the kingdom of God. When Jesus showed up, the kingdom is at hand. It was inaugurated at the resurrection. He rises from the dead. He ultimately ascends to the Father. His Holy Spirit lives in us. We are His kingdom barriers, right? Heaven has come to earth when God's Holy Spirit lives in us. When we are sons and daughters of God, we are walking around. We are salt and light. We are representatives of the King while we walk this earth. That was inaugurated at the resurrection, and it will ultimately be consummated at the return of Christ. When Jesus returns, we will rule and reign with Him forever and ever and ever. So just leave this description on the screen, and I want you to think about what Jesus is teaching His disciples to pray when we pray, Your kingdom come. We're sharing life with the Father. It's all about relationship. We're asking God, Your name be honored. Your name be referenced. And we say, Lord, Your kingdom come. That kingdom that existed for all of eternity before the fall of man, we want that kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven. The kingdom of heaven that came when Jesus walked the earth, and He would cast out demons, and He would heal diseases, and He would preach, and people would leave their life of sin. Lord, we want that kingdom to come. That kingdom that was inaugurated at Your resurrection and ascension, and now Your Spirit lives in us. God, let me be an answer to Your kingdom come as I go to school today, as I work today. Lord, consummate this today. You come and let us rule and reign with you forever and ever and ever. See, prayer one is all about worship. God, we want Your name to be lifted up in praise. Petition two, that's all about God's kingdom coming. It's all about just this whole idea of rule and reign. God, You rule, You reign. Your kingdom come. Advance Your kingdom. Expand Your kingdom. Not my kingdom, Your kingdom. In God's kingdom, what He says goes. In God's kingdom, light extinguishes darkness. In God's kingdom, the blind can see, the deaf can hear, those in chains are set free. Your kingdom come. And then the third petition is God's will to be done. It's the second part of verse 10: Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. You could actually put that last phrase, on earth as it is in heaven, before every one of these petitions. Lord, I want Your name to be worshiped in my life on earth as it is in heaven. God, I want Your kingdom to come on earth through me as it is in heaven. Your will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. See, prayer one, all about worship, name being revered. Prayer two, all about rule and reign, God. You reign supreme. You rule this day. Your kingdom come. Prayer three, all about alignment to God's purposes. God, Your way, not mine. You'll never pray, Your will be done, if you don't know and believe and trust that God knows what is best for you and wants what is best for you. You'll never pray it. Jesus, we'll see Him model this in His own life in the Garden of Gethsemane. It's one of the weeks we'll study warfare prayer when He's in the garden, and ultimately, you know what He says? Not My will be done, but Yours. God, I know You want what's best for me. I know You know what's best for me. And ultimately, your prayer is so God-centered. We say, Lord, we want Your name lifted up and glorified, Your kingdom to come, Your will to be done. That's what I want. So be it. It takes faith to pray like this, knowing God to pray like this. And that's why all of these petitions up front are centered on the Lord. Now, before we take the Lord's Supper, which this is a beautiful passage to preach on a day of taking the Lord's Supper, I want to give you, just in the flow of school getting back in session, some homework this week, okay? This is the application of the message. Seven—I'm calling it the seven-minute challenge, okay? Show it to you on the screen. I've been thinking about this application all weekend. I was praying about it this morning. I think I came up with the seven-minute challenge on the way here this morning, all right? That's application. You're getting bread right

out of the oven, all right? Not sitting on this meal. So here it is right here, seven-minute challenge. Now, some of you are varsity-level prayers, all right? And this seven-minute challenge is going to be like no big deal for you. But I'm trying to get our entire church, no matter where you are, just to begin, to know where to start so that you don't feel so frustrated. So this is where I know to start. We're only going to cover the first half of this prayer. Seven-minute challenge. I want you to spend one minute every day this week. You're going to do seven minutes in the morning, all right, just what we talked about last week. Get alone and get a routine. I'm giving you a routine. Starts this week. So you're going to spend one minute thinking about your relationship with the Father. You ain't even got to pray. You know, it's one statement: God, I'm coming to you as Father, and I want you for one minute to just think about that picture of crawling up in Abba's lap, Him holding you. He's doing it not based on anything you have done or haven't done, just because you're a son or daughter of the King. He's got you. And I want you to just think about that picture before you do anything else, because it's all about relationship. And from relationship flows to worship. And I want you to spend two minutes hallowing the name of the Lord, asking that His name be revered and honored in your life. You say, What if I'm done in two minutes? Well, again, this is not rigid, okay? This is meant to be more of a path, not a step. But I want you to, if you get done, pray it over somebody in your family. God, I want my life, I want Your name to be honored in my life. I want it to be honored in my wife's life. I want it to be honored in my church. Just two minutes. God, I'm reverencing Your name. I want it to be all about Your name today. Two minutes. Your kingdom come. Not my kingdom. God, I want your kingdom to come. You're gonna pray that. And then two minutes, Lord, your will be done. You've got a decision before you. God, you know my heart. I want this to happen, but ultimately I want to pray like Jesus. I want your will to be done. Will you help me to want your will over mine? Two minutes. You do this every day, all right? Seven minutes. And if you do that, for some of you, this will be the first time you've spent a concentrated time in prayer in seven minutes for the first time in your life. Concentrated prayer. So I'm just trying to give you a routine, and we'll worry about the next four next week, okay? Thank you for joining us for Champion Forest Online. We hope today's message encouraged and inspired you. At Champion Forest, we focus on advancing the kingdom of God by making disciples, loving our community, and strengthening the church. We would love the opportunity to get to know you. To connect with us, just go to championforest.org/connect. We're so glad you joined us today, and we'll see you again next time.