

Lord's Prayer

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Pray Like Jesus - NK | August 30, 2026 | James 4:8; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Matthew 6:9-13; Ephesians 6:10-12; Romans 10:9-10; Luke 11; Exodus 16; Psalms 66:18

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Years ago, in one of our student ministry Bible studies, our student staff and interns were all there together. We finished our study for the day, and we looked at one of our interns and asked her to close us out in prayer. Pretty common. It happened a lot.

Everybody bowed their heads to go into a time of prayer and eliminate those distractions, you know. So we bowed our heads and closed our eyes, and then we didn't hear anything. There was this delay before she started to pray. Okay, that can be normal. I'll do that in here sometimes too, right? "Let's bow our heads," give you a minute to pray and go before the Lord on your own, and then start praying. So we just assumed that's what was going on with her.

Then she started to pray, breaking the silence. I want you to listen to the first line of her prayer. She said, "Once upon a time."

I was like, "What?" I opened my eyes and just sort of peeked around a little bit. I was like, "Did I hear that right?" Everybody else had this repressed smile on their faces, like they were ready to go at any moment.

Finally, she broke the ice and said, "Okay, can y'all just forget that I said that and let me start this whole thing over?"

Then everybody lost it. Everybody was laughing. We started over, she prayed, and it was all great.

I'm sure you've got a funny story or two like that around prayer. Maybe it was your kids, when they were little, praying for different things that just sort of made you giggle a little bit. Or maybe you've served in our kids ministry, and as the kids begin to pray, you just get a glimpse into their world and their minds as they go to God in prayer. It's just always so great.

I love those kinds of things because, at the end of the day, you know what it means? It means that we're praying. It means that we are talking to the Lord, and that's what this is all about. It matters.

If you've got a Bible, join me in Matthew 6. We'll pick up the second half of the Lord's Prayer today as we continue the series, Pray Like Jesus.

As you're turning, here's a recap of weeks one and two. Week one, we looked at the prayer life of Jesus, and we saw that Jesus prayed before anything else. It's important for us to have that same pattern, that we would pray before anything else - before the day begins, before we make a big decision, before we step into a new phase or season of life. We pray before anything else.

Then last week, we saw that Jesus was asked by the disciples, "How do we pray like You?" Jesus said, "Here's the pattern." That's the context of the Lord's Prayer. He said, "Hey, guys, when you pray, pray like this."

He showed us that in prayer, there's a specific starting point. We're to start with God, our heavenly Father. In prayer, we go to Him first, acknowledging Him as our heavenly Father, arms up in worship of Him before we go hands out in request from Him. That's where we start. We align our hearts to the will of God so that our desire is His desire. Hands up in worship before they are out in request.

If we put the action steps from weeks one and two together, we've got: Pray before anything else, and start your prayers with God. Arms up, then hands out.

As we dig into the second half of the prayer today, we see that we are supposed to put those hands out. We are supposed to make requests from God according to His will. As Jesus teaches, He teaches us that all of our needs - our provision, our forgiveness, our protection - find their place inside the will and the glory of God.

Our title today, if you're taking notes, is very simple: God's will, then our request. Look with me at Matthew 6, starting in verse 9:

*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,
and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.*

— Matthew 6:9-13

There are three requests in the second half of the prayer: Give us our daily bread, forgive the sins that we have in our lives, and, God, protect us from temptation and deliver us from evil.

There's a shift in the prayer. I hope you see it in the pattern: from God's name, God's kingdom, and God's will to our food, our forgiveness, and our holiness. Jesus first teaches arms up in worship and then, yes, hands out in requests.

I want to unpack those three requests this morning.

Ask God to Provide What You Need

That's point number one, if you're taking notes: Ask God to give you what you need, but do it in the context that Jesus teaches here. Right before we're instructed to ask God to provide, we are praying for His will to be done in our lives.

Pay attention. That probably means we're a little off base if we go to the Lord in prayer and say, "God, I pray

that Your will would be done in my life and that You would give me a new helicopter."

It just doesn't fit. If you have one, I'll go for a ride with you. That'd be great. But if you're praying that way, you're probably missing the direction and the point that Jesus is trying to make.

He says, "Give us this day our daily bread." Let that settle in your mind and heart for a minute. Give us our daily bread. You've probably heard that before. It might be a familiar phrase for you.

I want you to think about the massive jump that Jesus just made in prayer. Jesus is talking about the will of God in the throne room of heaven and then brings that prayer right down to our kitchen table. That should encourage you. Jesus is telling us God takes our daily needs seriously. God cares that we would have what we need, and that's why we're told to pray for it.

Now, here's an interesting grammatical note in Matthew 6. That word "daily" is used one other time in Scripture, and that's in Luke 11, where Jesus is also teaching His disciples to pray using the Lord's Prayer. The only two uses of "daily" in the Bible like that, that Greek word, are right here in the middle of the Lord's Prayer.

What's Jesus doing? He's using an unusual word to capture the attention of His listeners. Jesus is teaching daily dependence on the Lord. That's the whole point: daily dependence on the Lord.

He says you're going to have needs. You're always going to have needs. Every single day, you're going to have needs. There's no getting around that. Here we're taught, listen, don't rely on what you did yesterday. Don't rely on what you have planned for tomorrow. Trust in the Lord day by day.

Don't become so confident in yourself that you think you can get by or do it on your own. Every day, we go to the Lord and ask God to give us what we need - not what we want, but what we need.

Knowing the personalities of people, I know there are people in this room who have a hard time asking someone else for what they need. They've got a real need, a legitimate need in their life, but either stubbornness or pride keeps them or prevents them from asking for help from someone else.

I'm telling you, if that's you, break that pattern. Especially break that pattern when it comes to your prayer life with the Lord. He wants you to come before Him asking for what you need. It is daily dependence. It is a pattern that you are preaching and teaching to your heart.

It's not just found in the New Testament in the Lord's Prayer. This concept of looking to God daily goes all the way back to Exodus chapter 16, and probably before, but Exodus 16 gives us a great example.

It's the people of Israel. They've left Egypt. Remember Moses: "Let my people go." Now they're marching through the desert, and at some point they get really, really hungry. They're frustrated, they're hungry, and they're wondering, "God, where are You?"

What do they do? They cry out to the Lord. Does He give them food? Absolutely He does. He rains down food from heaven, and they're able to pick it up every single morning. But this is what He told them: Only gather what you need for today. Don't get what you need for the next week.

So they did. As they gathered food for the day, they were able to eat it, and it was good. But if they gathered enough food for the next day as well, that next day's food spoiled. God was teaching them dependence on Him - daily dependence on Him to provide. In the same way, that's what we need to do.

Now, the verse says "daily bread." We're not exclusively talking about food. We're talking about what we need to survive, that daily provision, ensuring that in the context of God's will, our needs are met - not our wants. Our needs are met.

Listen, if you're a parent, you've had this conversation with a kid before: the difference between a want and a need. There are times when your kid - well, I don't want to put this on you. My kids, for sure, and I assume your kids too - will say, "I really need this."

You can look at it as a parent, analyze it, and say, "No, I think that is a want."

Hopefully, as the parent, you've got a little more maturity and wisdom to differentiate between the needs and wants of your kids. If you know what they want isn't good for them, if you know what they want isn't going to help them grow in their love relationship with the Lord and put them in a healthy position, you're probably not going to give it to them.

Think about the most basic example of a five-year-old: "I need to eat Blue Bell for dinner."

Okay, Mom and Dad know that's not really a need. They know there are much better things for you that can build you up and make you healthy, strong, and growing. As a parent, you're going to give your kid what they need to make them healthy and strong.

Just like a kid asking for ice cream, I have no doubt that I've asked God in my life for things I thought I needed when really I just wanted them. I'm sure you have too. But God, with His infinite wisdom and knowledge over the entirety of the universe, has given me what I've needed instead of what I've wanted in many of those circumstances, for my good and for His glory.

Pray that God's will is done. As you're praying for God's will to be done in your life and in your family, ask Him for what you need.

We're praying, "God, provide for my family today. God, provide for our food and our meals today. God, provide for our shelter today. God, provide work for us today."

We're asking God daily to provide for us on a regular basis. When we do that, we can do it knowing that He cares and that He hears us.

Later in the same chapter, Matthew 6:32, Jesus looks at those things you need every day, those daily provisions, and says, "Don't be anxious about them. I'm your heavenly Father. I know that you need them, and I will provide them for you." Seek His name. Seek His will. Seek His face, like the pattern of prayer we have here, and He's going to give you what you need.

When we come to the Father daily, we're showing Him and our own hearts that every single day we are dependent on Him. It's one of the ways God works in our hearts on a regular basis.

Ask God to Forgive You

Verse 11 says, "Give us this day our daily bread," and then, "Forgive us our debts, our sins, as we have forgiven those who sinned against us."

Point two, if you're taking notes: Ask God to forgive you.

We're moving now in the prayer from daily dependence to daily forgiveness. I want to talk about this for a minute to make sure we understand what Jesus is teaching.

To help us understand, I want you to think of forgiveness in two categories here: positional forgiveness and daily forgiveness. One of these describes our standing, our status, our position before God. The other describes the intimacy we're able to cultivate in our relationship with God.

Look at positional forgiveness first. When you trust Christ as Savior, you're forgiven, and you've now got this new position before God. You're a child of God. You're in the family of God. You've got the righteousness of Christ on you because of what He did on the cross. That is your position before God when you trust in Him.

Romans 10:9-10 says:

If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

— Romans 10:9-10

When we trust Jesus, these verses and many more across the New Testament tell us that we are justified, meaning that we are made right before God. That is a position shift in our lives. A lot of the language in the New Testament is death to life. We are now alive in Christ as children of God.

It's important for us to know that if this is real in us, if we really believe that with all of our heart, if we really believe like Scripture teaches us to believe, then we're children of God. That position does not change. It can't be undone.

Second Corinthians 5:17 says:

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

— 2 Corinthians 5:17

The old isn't put in the closet to go wear later when you want to wear it. The old is gone, and you're made completely new in Christ. That's a position that does not change.

But still, Jesus teaches us to pray, asking for forgiveness every single day. It's a regular deal. This daily forgiveness we're asking for is not about our position. It's about our intimacy with the Father.

The reality is, we're going to mess up. We are. I'm not perfect. You're not perfect. One day, when we get to heaven, everything's made new. But for now, sin can and will harden our hearts. Sin will dull our ears to the Word of God and to the voice of God in our lives.

What Jesus is saying here is, "Listen, when it comes to sin, when you make decisions that go against the will and the way and the Word of God, you've got to address that sin in your life. Don't let it continue to grow and harden your heart. Daily, come to the Lord asking for forgiveness."

Listen, you can go back and ask my parents about me as a kid, and they'll tell you I was far from the perfect son. But when I disobeyed my parents, you know what they didn't do? They didn't kick me out of the family. My position as their child never changed. My status as a son was set, and it was absolutely solid with them.

But my poor choices, you know what they did? They disrupted fellowship. They disrupted intimacy. They made things way harder than they needed to be in our home and in our family. It was going to stay like that until there came a moment when God got ahold of my heart and said, "You need to ask forgiveness here. You're messing this thing up. You need to go before the Lord and before them, confess and ask forgiveness, and restore that intimacy with your parents and, ultimately, that intimacy with God."

I want you to understand that daily forgiveness restores that intimacy with God. It keeps your heart clean before Him and pure before Him so you can hear, see, and know His will and His voice, and so you can walk in constant fellowship with Him.

You need to know that sin is a big deal. Sin will disrupt any intimacy you hope to hear or have from God. Don't play around with sin. Don't manage sin. Don't let sin float into your life and stay there. Don't let it float into your kids' lives and stay there. Jesus is teaching us to address it each and every day as we come before the Lord in prayer.

Psalms 66:18 says:

*If I had cherished iniquity in my heart,
the Lord would not have listened.*

— Psalm 66:18

You know what that's saying? Sin in our lives, unaddressed and unrepented of, disrupts our prayer lives. It disrupts that ongoing conversation and intimacy with the Lord.

The opposite has to be true as well. James 4:8 says:

*Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts,
you double-minded.*

— James 4:8

Draw near to God, and what's He going to do? He's going to draw near to you. Cleanse your hands. Ask for forgiveness. Purify your hearts. Ask for forgiveness.

Unaddressed sin disrupts intimacy. It disrupts our prayer lives. It's a big deal. Regularly follow the pattern we're given in Scripture here. Daily, ask God for forgiveness. Walk closely with the Father.

What does that prayer sound like? Something like this: "Father, forgive me for where I've been messing up. Forgive me for my attitude. Forgive me for my pride. Forgive me for the harsh words I've spoken to people who

are close to me. Forgive me for arrogance. Forgive me for impure thoughts. Forgive me for spiritual laziness or apathy. God, forgive me for when I've stepped out of Your will and chosen mine instead."

Get specific in your life. You know where you struggle. You know where you've messed up. "God, help me to walk closely." Just ask God to forgive you of those things. You know your heart, and He knows your heart. Come before the Lord. Keep that intimacy flowing with Him as you ask for forgiveness on a regular basis.

Forgive Others as You've Been Forgiven

That brings us to point 2B. It's still under this forgiveness category. When we ask God to forgive us, according to Jesus here, we have to forgive others the same way we've been forgiven. We've got to forgive others as well.

A couple of notes on this: Jesus is showing that we have no room to ask for forgiveness from God if we're not willing to forgive others as well. The way we forgive reflects our own understanding of our forgiveness.

This is the only part of the prayer where Jesus adds some teaching at the end to further explain it. If you look at verses 14 and 15, Jesus goes on to say:

For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

— Matthew 6:14-15

Jesus is not teaching that we earn forgiveness by forgiving others. That's not it. What He's teaching is that a person who has genuinely received forgiveness from God cannot withhold forgiveness from others.

Unforgiveness becomes a prayer blocker in our lives. When we harbor grudges, when we harden our hearts toward other people, that messes us up spiritually when it comes to intimacy with the Father.

In Matthew 18, Jesus tells a parable about a servant who had a massive debt he could never repay. It's interesting when people try to look at the dollar amount of this guy's debt. There are a lot of scholars who say that man would have had to work 200,000 years straight, making the average daily salary at the time, to pay back that debt. Impossible. He had a debt he literally could never repay.

The way things worked back then, the king was able to take that man and his family and sell them off into slavery to have the guy's debts repaid. The servant gets on his knees, begging and asking for the debt to be forgiven. The king shows mercy and forgives him of that debt. He forgives him of it and lets him walk away free. Nothing happens to his family, nothing happens to him. The debt is free and clear.

You'd think that would change a person, right? You'd think that would help him understand the importance and the reality of forgiveness.

Well, the guy leaves and finds someone on the street who owes him about four dollars and says, "Hey, you've got to pay me that debt back."

The guy says, "I don't have it right now. I'll get it, but I don't have it."

So what does the guy who has been forgiven do? He doesn't choose to forgive. He has that man thrown in jail, and he's ready to start selling off his family in order to have the debt repaid. It's a complete misunderstanding of the nature of forgiveness.

The king hears about this guy who's been forgiven of much and won't forgive anybody else. The king calls him back in and says, "Hey, that forgiveness is retracted from you because you don't understand it. You're not living like you're supposed to when it comes to forgiveness."

His debt is put back on him, and he gets thrown into prison. The guy was forgiven of much and was unable to forgive someone of something so small in his life.

Listen, as children of God, we're going to take on the characteristics of God: grace and faith and love and hope and joy and peace and forgiveness. We're going to be forgiving. Forgive as you've been forgiven.

You can't accept forgiveness from God for this massive sin debt we could never repay and then turn around and withhold forgiveness from other people.

There's a lady who gave us a beautiful picture of forgiveness a couple of years ago. Her name is Mary Johnson. She had a son, Laramiun, and her son Laramiun was murdered in a senseless act of violence.

She's in the court as this whole thing happens. The man is convicted and sentenced, and then she has the opportunity to get on the stand and say whatever she wants to him. You've probably seen some of those videos where family members get on the stand and completely roast and obliterate with their words the person who has sinned against them and their family.

That's not what Mary Johnson did. Mary Johnson got on the stand and said, "Hey, listen. If my son had taken your life, I would expect him to pay the price, the punishment, the consequences of his sins and what he's done. But as for me, here and now today, I forgive you. I forgive you for what you've done. I want you to know that because my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has told me that I need to forgive others the way that He has forgiven me."

She stood there in the midst of unbelievable pain, when she could have carried that grudge and that anger around for the rest of her life, and she released it into forgiveness.

You know she meant it because she went to visit Oshea in prison, spent time with him over the years, and developed an actual friendship. When he got out of prison, he moved in right next door to her. They started a nonprofit together to help people avoid these kinds of senseless acts of violence.

It's a great story of forgiveness. It's a great story of forgiveness. But here's what C.S. Lewis, in **Mere Christianity**, says about those great stories of forgiveness: "Everyone says forgiveness is a lovely idea until they have someone to forgive."

You're probably not going to have Mary Johnson's story. Prayerfully not. But people are going to hurt you. People are going to wrong you. People are going to hurt your kids. They're going to wrong your kids. Things are going to happen to you that are just unfair.

Scripture says that, as a child of God who has been forgiven of much by our heavenly Father, you've got to be ready, willing, and able to forgive others also.

What does that look like? I did a whole message on forgiveness earlier this year. We don't have time to recap all of it. Let me just tell you what it's not.

Forgiveness is not pretending that you're not angry anymore. Forgiveness is not staying close to someone who is showing no remorse. That's not it either.

Forgiveness is releasing revenge. It is no longer harboring a grudge in your heart. It is wishing them well, and it is staying open to reconciliation if that's possible and if they are willing.

That means there are going to be moments in your life when you have to tell someone, "Listen, I forgive you, but I don't trust you right now. I forgive you, but I can't be close to you right now." Healthy boundaries display godly wisdom.

Now, if you were to say, "Listen, I forgive you, but I don't trust you, and I never will, and I hope your life is ruined from this point forward," that's not forgiveness from your heart. Maybe those are words from your mouth, but that's not forgiveness in your heart.

We've been forgiven much. Forgiven much. We have to be people who forgive.

Ask God for Spiritual Protection

The last request Jesus teaches us to make before the Father is for our protection. Look at verse 13:

*And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.*

— Matthew 6:13

Point three: Ask God for spiritual protection in your life, in your kids' lives, and in your family.

Can you ask that He would keep you safe when you're driving down the road? Absolutely. Can you ask God to keep your kids safe while they're playing a sport? Absolutely. It's part of our daily provision and daily needs. We've covered that earlier in the prayer.

This request is different, though. This request is about our heart and soul and mind. This request reminds us of the reality of an ongoing spiritual war in our lives. It's going on around us all the time.

Look at Ephesians 6. Paul talks a lot about this. Here are a few verses, starting in verse 10:

*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.
Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.
For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.*

— Ephesians 6:10-12

Listen, we've got to have spiritual protection from God. We have a real spiritual enemy, the devil. He is scheming and plotting for ways to wreck your heart, to wreck your soul, and to destroy the intimacy you have with God.

His schemes look different for a lot of different people. His scheme in your life could be to involve you in some kind of gross sin where you just feel trapped and can't get out, and you begin to spiral more and more and more. That could be it. We need spiritual protection from God to guard our hearts, minds, and souls and to deliver us from those things.

But that's not the only way the devil schemes. Maybe the scheme he's running in your life is just to get you to stop praying. It's to get you to stop reading your Bible. Maybe his scheme is to lull you to sleep spiritually, to where you're spiritually lazy or spiritually apathetic.

Whatever he can do to work against your heart, his goal is the destruction of your heart and soul. John Piper is so right when he says, "Until we come awake to the great spiritual war that surrounds us, we're never truly going to know the privilege and power of prayer."

We've got to understand what's at stake here. Jesus teaches us to pray every day for that spiritual protection.

Now, make no mistake. Jesus is not saying that God would ever tempt you. He's praying that God would lead us away from what tempts us. Again, you know your heart. You know your soul. You know your struggles. You know your personality. Make those prayers specific.

"God, lead me away from this because it tempts me to go against Your will. God, lead me away from this because it tempts me to go against Your will. God, I pray spiritual protection over my kids. Lord, lead them away from this because I know the damage it could cause to their hearts and souls if they get sucked into it."

We're praying for spiritual protection and that God would deliver us from the plans the enemy would have to entrap us in sin. Ask Him to lead you away from any temptation.

If you find yourself face-to-face with what tempts you the most, if you have to make a decision between the will of God and the schemes of the devil, pray in the moment: "God, deliver me from this. God, help me to say no and to run to You with this. God, help me to stay on fire for You, even in the middle of this."

If you're there in the middle of it, I'm telling you, praying in the moment pours cold water on any attraction to sin that there might be in your heart or in your mind. Go to the Lord in prayer in the moment. Pray. Ask God for spiritual protection against the schemes of the devil.

That's the pattern Jesus gives us right there in the Lord's Prayer.

The Seven-Minute Challenge

I'm going to give you three weeks of sermons in just one minute to recap the first half of this series. If you've been asleep, or if your neighbor's asleep, wake them up. Tell them, "Hey, you can get it all if you just listen to this right here." This will catch them up.

Here's what we've learned from Jesus about prayer so far: We pray before anything else. That's it. That's where it starts. We pray before anything else.

Before school, before work, before the day begins, before big decisions, before changes or shifts in life - whatever it is, we pray before anything else. That's what Jesus did.

When we pray, we start with God. There's a starting point. We start with the Lord. We acknowledge Him as our heavenly Father. We worship Him in prayer, and then we can stick our hands out and make requests of God according to His will.

I want to encourage you: Make a note in your phone. Write it down on paper. Be intentional to pray before your day begins, following this pattern. Not because it's my pattern, not because I think it'd be a good idea, but because it's the pattern Jesus uses to teach us to pray.

In fact, I'm going to give you a challenge here this morning: a seven-minute challenge for the next seven days, spending time in prayer according to this pattern in God's Word.

I'm going to walk it out for you and show you what I mean by praying through the Lord's Prayer in your own life every day. This is the prayer I have while walking my dog every morning, before the sun is up, before the kids are moving around. I just follow this pattern of prayer in my mind, in my heart, and in my life before the Father.

If you're not currently in the habit of a daily pattern of prayer before the day begins, this is the pattern I'd encourage you to use. Just commit seven minutes for seven days this week, and then let's talk about it next Sunday morning.

Here it is, the seven-minute challenge. We start just like Jesus. We say, "Heavenly Father," and then we begin to acknowledge who He is as our heavenly Father - that He's not distant, He's not far off, and He's not indifferent to our needs and desires. He's not indifferent to our hearts and to our protection. We acknowledge Him as our heavenly Father.

Then we say, "Hallowed be Your name. God, You are holy. You are great. You are mighty. You are above all. You are for all. You are through all. You're the Creator of all. God, help me live my life according to the reality that You are holy above all things."

Then just say, "God, let Your will be done."

My life has variables. My life has decisions that have to be made. My kids have variables and decisions that have to be made. My prayer, God, is that Your will would be done in our lives.

Then I'll get specific when it comes to education, school, work, friends, relationships, or whatever it is. "God, we pray that Your will would be done in the midst of all these things. God, we pray that You'd continue to show me what Your will is in the middle of these things so that I can live according to Your will."

Then, hands out: "God, I've got some needs. Lord, I pray that You'd provide in this area of my life. I pray that You'd provide in that area of my life. I pray that You'd provide for my kids, my family, and my friends."

We're talking provision right now. If someone is sick, I'm asking God, "God, provide healing for them. God, provide grace for them. God, provide comfort for them."

Anything I can think of that I would need for myself or someone else in my life, I'm praying according to the will of God. "God, would You please provide that for me or for the people I care about? God, provide for us."

Then, in that prayer pattern, it's, "God, forgive me. God, forgive me of areas in my life where I haven't been honoring to You. Forgive me where I've chosen my will over Your will, Lord. God, restore that fellowship and that intimacy."

Again, this is that area where you know your heart. Name your sin before the Lord. Ask for forgiveness. Ask Him to cleanse you of it so that it does not harden your heart and so that it does not dull your ears to His voice.

If you let sin remain unchecked in your life, if you continue going back to that well of sin, I'm telling you, your heart is going to get hard. It's going to get harder and harder to hear the voice of the Lord as He's speaking to you.

Address that sin in your life daily before it gets big. Address it when it's small.

Then we wrap up our prayer: "God, protect my heart and mind. I know the enemy is real. I know the enemy is strong, but Father, You're stronger. God, lead me away from things that would tempt me. Father, in the moment when I'm facing something..."

Remember, this prayer is at the beginning of the day, before your day begins. You're praying, "God, when I come face-to-face with that challenging decision I've got to make later in the day, when my heart is going to be torn and I'm going to be wrestling back and forth between giving in to sin and living according to Your Word, God, I pray that You would deliver me if I come across that today. Deliver me from the plans of the evil one, and help me to continue walking in faithfulness and purity before You."

I'm praying that for my own heart. I'm praying that for my family's heart, for Chelsea's heart, for my kids and their hearts and their lives and what's going on there. I'm praying that over our church family on a regular basis.

"God, protect our hearts. Help us to walk closely and intimately with You."

That's the pattern Jesus gives. Then you wrap it up by thanking Him: "Thank You for being a Father who knows, a Father who loves, a Father who cares."

Go to the Lord in prayer. Seven minutes a day, seven days this week.

Listen, if you've got a prayer pattern already, I'd encourage you to bring this into it. But if you aren't regularly beginning your day with prayer, set your alarm a few minutes earlier or trade out time with something else. Put that note on your phone and pray through it until it becomes second nature to you, where you're in that constant flow of communication and prayer with the Lord before the day begins.

That's what Jesus teaches us to do with the way He lived His life and with the pattern He gave us for prayer.

In James chapter 1, James gives us an analogy. He says there are a lot of people who will hear the Word of

God. It's like they look into it, they look intently into it, and they're nodding along and shaking their heads up and down, like, "Yeah, that's good. That's right. That's good. That's right. I'm glad Jesus said that."

But then they walk away from what they've seen in the Word of God, and nothing in their lives changes. They don't begin to live out what they've read.

James says people who do that are looking into the perfect Word that gives freedom, and then they're walking away, forgetting it and not living it out. He says those people are deceiving themselves. They think looking into the Word is enough, when God's call is for us to live it out.

I want to encourage you: Don't just think about prayer on a Sunday morning. Don't just think, "I'm glad Jesus gave us the Lord's Prayer and that pattern, that model to follow." I want to encourage you to live it out. I want to encourage you to begin to really grow in that area of prayer.

No matter where you're at on the scale, say the scale is one to ten. If you're a one, I want to encourage you to develop that prayer life and really get praying more. If you'd say you're a ten, I'd say nobody's perfect, but strive for an eleven.

Everyone, let's grow in our prayer lives over the course of this fall, and then just step back and watch what God can do with an entire church family that is solely committed to Him.

We begin our days with prayer. We're praying like Jesus and asking Him to do what only He can do. Let's be a church that prays.

A Guided Prayer

Would you bow with me this morning?

As you bow your head, right where you're at, I want you to practice that prayer pattern. I'll sort of lead you through it, but I want you to practice it.

Just say, "Heavenly Father." Acknowledge Him this morning, that He is your heavenly Father and that He is a good Father.

Say, "God, hallowed be Your name. You're great. You're mighty. You're over all things and through all things. Everything was made by You and for You. God, help me to live a life that communicates the truth that You are holy and above all."

"God, let Your will be done."

Make it specific right now. There are decisions in front of you. I know there are. They're in front of you, in front of your kids, or in front of your family.

"God, Your will be done, not our will. Our name isn't hallowed above all things. God, Yours is. You know best. God, Your will be done."

"God, provide. Provide for what I need."

You know what you need right now. Maybe it's provision. Maybe it's work. Maybe it's healing. Maybe it's restoration of relationships. Whatever it is, "God, provide."

"God, forgive me."

Just confess anything right now in your life that you know goes against the will and the way and the Word of the Lord.

"God, forgive me. Help me to turn from that sin and to You. God, as I continue, lead me away from the things that would tempt me again. God, through the power of Jesus, deliver me from the plans of the enemy in my life. Thank You for being a good, good Father."

That's how Jesus teaches us to pray. Let your prayer before Him this morning be, "God, help me to do that. Help me to grow in my prayer life with You moving forward."

Listen, we talked about how the Father listens to His children. We saw about halfway through the message that we become children of God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ alone as our Lord and Savior.

In just a minute, we're going to stand and sing one last song. If you've never trusted in Christ as your Savior, I want to encourage you to come talk to one of these prayer partners down here and just say, "I'm ready to trust Christ." We'll walk you through exactly what that looks like and what that means.

If you've got another prayer need and you want some believers to come alongside you in prayer over that need, we'd be honored to. Our prayer partners will be down here at the front, and when we stand and sing, that's your invitation to come and pray.

Father, we love You. We thank You for hearing, God, and for caring. We thank You for Jesus and the relationship we have with You because of Him.

God, teach us to pray. God, help us to walk in closeness and intimacy with You because of a deep, rich prayer life, day in and day out.

It's in Your name we pray. Amen.