

## WHAT MUST I PRAY FOR EVERY DAY – WITHOUT FAIL?

Read Matthew 6.5-15

**“And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.**

**<sup>6</sup> But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.**

**<sup>7</sup> “And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words.**

**<sup>8</sup> Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.**

**<sup>9</sup> Pray then like this:**

**“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.**

**<sup>10</sup> Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

**<sup>11</sup> Give us this day our daily bread,**

**<sup>12</sup> and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.**

**<sup>13</sup> And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

**<sup>14</sup> For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you,**

**<sup>15</sup> but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.**

(Please see Lesson #4 / parts 1, 2, 3, & 4 for preceding Lesson content...)

### The 10 ‘Prayer Prompters’

Here is a summary of the 10 prayer prompters – then we will begin to address them in a little more detail as they apply to our own personal particular prayers concerns:

1. **I must pray every day...without fail** to delight in God
2. **I must pray every day...without fail** with confession of my sins
3. **I must pray every day...without fail** for the grace of God to forgive those who have offended and violated me in any way
4. **I must pray every day...without fail** for the salvation of those who are lost
5. **I must pray every day...without fail** for my church’s ministry – for the pastors, elders, deacons, and leaders of my church
6. **I must pray every day...without fail** interceding for pressing needs I know of that are afflicting those I know

7. **I must pray every day...without fail** for my personal growth in grace and in knowing Jesus Christ - Christlikeness
8. **I must pray every day...without fail** for God's will to be fulfilled and accomplished in my day's activities
9. **I must pray every day...without fail** that God will improve my preaching, teaching, and witnessing to make me more effective in ministering His Word [this is for me – you will need to adapt it to your personal prayer needs...]
10. **I must pray every day...without fail** that God's Word will run throughout the whole earth and that Christ will be proclaimed and glorified...here, there, and everywhere

**NOW, LET'S TALK ABOUT EACH ONE AND HOW TO PRAY THEM...**

**6. I must pray every day without fail ... interceding for the pressing needs I know of that are afflicting those I know.**

*Prayer Prompter Words: "Give us this day our daily bread"*

*"our daily bread"*

Now, this prayer prompter teaches us to pray for our daily needs, and particularly our daily physical needs. That's what Jesus means when He uses the words "daily **bread**" – He's talking about what we need to physically live and live well from day to day. It includes not only our food and what we eat, but it will also include all our daily provisions that are necessary for life.

And these things are usually what we think about, and pray about, and ask for when we talk about "prayer requests." Most often, when we talk about "prayer requests," it has to do with our health, our finances, our state of mind, our circumstances, our jobs, our families, our relationships - and then all the events that are going on around us: what's going on in our communities, our nation, and the world. All of those sorts of things are included in "**our daily bread.**" And we all have lots of these needs and concerns, and we care about them deeply. And, we should.

**The most familiar "prayer prompter"**

Without a doubt, we are probably more familiar with this prayer prompter than we are with any of the others that are in this same Disciples' Model Prayer that Jesus taught us to pray by. Out of all the prayer prompters we are proposing and considering, this one is surely the most-used one among us.

We are more familiar with and practiced in praying for our physical needs than we are [for example]: in praying to delight in God (as in "Our Father, who is in Heaven, hallowed be Your Name...), or in dealing with our indwelling sin and transgressions (as in "Forgive us our debts as we have also forgiven our debtors..."), or how we are

progressing in our daily walk with Christ and growing in His Grace and likeness (as in “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil...”).

And, I’m not saying there is anything wrong with praying for all our physical needs and circumstances – Jesus is certainly teaching us here to do just that. I’m just saying that it is probably very often out of proportion and out of balance with how much attention and care we give the other essential spiritual exercises and needs of our daily lives.

In fact, there are those who would disparage us for praying for what we commonly call “prayer requests,” saying that it is unspiritual, and shallow, and even carnal and too self-centered. However, Paul actually calls them “requests” when he counsels us to pray for them in **Philippians 4.6**, “...do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.” And the ‘requests’ he is referring to here are our requests for the physical provisions and circumstances of our daily lives. These are also the needs and “requests” we are most often anxious about.

Paul here is obviously echoing and repeating Jesus’ teaching in **Matthew 6.25-34**. Jesus talks about our common responses of anxiety to the daily needs and events of our physical lives. “**Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on ...Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your Heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you**” [verses 25, 31-33].

So, here it is from Jesus Himself in Jesus’ own words: Don’t be anxious about any of your daily needs and provisions in whatever form or circumstance you need them. Pray, and ask your Father in Heaven to give you everything you need!

Earlier, in this same sermon/lesson/discourse, Jesus says: “**Pray then like this**” – so learn to pray this way also: “**Give us this day [or, day by day] our daily bread...**”

Here’s what we learn from this simple prayer prompter:

**It is a prayer of desperate need and abject dependence on God.** We are desperately needy and abjectly dependent on our Father for every single atom, element, and item of our daily lives and provisions ... there is absolutely not one atom of anything we are and have that we made and provided for ourselves. Remember what Paul preached to the pagan Athenians in Acts 17.28: “In Him we live and move and have our being.”

**It is a prayer of recognizing God’s immediate and personal Presence in our daily lives.** Our Father personally and immediately gives and is giving us everything we receive and enjoy on a daily basis in our daily lives ... our Father is personally present

and actively engaged in every single gift, benefit, and provision we receive, use, and enjoy each and every day of our lives. In that same classic sermon in Athens, Paul also said “...nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything” [Acts 17.25].

**It is a prayer of sincere and profuse thanksgiving to God.** We must and we should *ask Him to give it to us and provide it for us* to keep us sensitive to how desperately we depend on Him and how grateful we should be toward Him for what He does give.

**It is a prayer of delighting in God.** When we pray like this, we are reminded afresh of His goodness, His generosity, His grace, His Lordship, and His faithfulness in our daily lives ... in other words, this is another way and means in which we delight in God!

So, over the years, this is how I have learned to pray to our Heavenly Father from this prayer prompter – with all this in mind, sometime during the day ... every day ... and most often sometime in the morning of the day, I will pray to our Father in words like these:

“Our Heavenly Father, I thank you for giving us this another day and the life to live it. Thank you for giving us another 24 hours of time to know You, love You, serve You, and enjoy You ... and I pray we will. Thank you for the breath with which I’m praying, for “You give to all life, breath, and all things.” I thank you for the mind with which I’m thinking these thoughts. Thank you for everything we are and everything we have because “it is in You that we live, and move, and have our being.” Thank you for being God, for being our God – for giving Yourself to us to be our God, and for taking us to Yourself to be your people. Thank you for being there – thank you for being here with us. Thank you for your generosity, your constancy, your faithfulness. We know that your mercies are renewed every morning and that your faithfulness is great. We love you, we trust you, and we depend on you. May we live for your pleasure today with the life and the time you have entrusted to us, and may we represent you well before a watching world.”

And then, I begin to pray and ask our Heavenly Father for the resources and the wherewithal I will need to live the life He has given me to live for another day.

***“Give us this day [or, day by day] our daily bread...”***

That prompts us then to make this commitment: ***“I must pray every day without fail for the pressing needs I know of that are afflicting those I know...”***

I’m adding the caveat “*for the pressing needs I know of*” because it’s obvious that we don’t know all the needs of those for whom we’re praying, but we also have this confidence that God, our Father, does know. When Jesus was teaching us how to use this Disciples’ Model Prayer, He told us to pray about all our daily physical needs and ask our

Father to give them to us and provide them for us, but not to be anxious about them. In **Matthew 6.8**, He says **“for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.”**

And, I’m also adding the words “I must pray every day without fail for the pressing needs I know of *that are afflicting those I know...*” because we don’t even know about the needs of those we don’t know. But, we do know some of the pressing needs of those we do know – and we must pray for them. We must **“bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” [Galatians 6.2].**

AND NOTE THIS! THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT! This is NOT just about “Give ME this day MY daily bread” – that is NOT what Jesus taught us to pray. He tells us to pray “Give US this day OUR daily bread”! This supplication and intercession must be made in community with our brothers and sisters, and for the community. Yes! Pray to your Father in Heaven and make supplication for all the essential needs and provisions for YOUR ‘daily bread’ ... but you are in community with all your brothers and sisters also! “Give US day by day OUR daily bread”!

***“I must pray every day without fail for the pressing needs I know of that are afflicting those I know...”***

This is also NOT JUST for those we like, but for those we don’t like and who may not like us – and even for those who are our enemies, and who mistreat us, and treat us spitefully. ***Read Matthew 5.43-48 again ...***

***“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in Heaven.”***

Many of these pressing needs we will be praying about are related to sicknesses, distresses, and trials of many, many kinds. ***“Give us this day our daily bread.”*** And so, in praying for myself, and for you, and for all the pressing needs I know of that are afflicting those I know, I must pray that God will make Himself known to all, and that all of those who are suffering and are in need will recognize and experience the Presence of God and the fullness of His Grace, and that He will get glory to Himself through all our trials and afflictions.

***“I must pray every day without fail for the pressing needs I know of that are afflicting those I know...”***

You will note, for example, that in all the prayers of Paul for the saints in his epistles<sup>1</sup>, when he prays for them and all their needs, it is almost always for some spiritual grace to be granted to them or for some spiritual benefit to be granted and added to their lives because of whatever it is they were experiencing. He prays that they will enjoy the peace

of God that surpasses our comprehension. He prays that they will enjoy the Presence of God in their lives, and especially in all their afflictions and tribulations. He prays for their faith, trust, and confidence in the grace of God – that their faith will not grow weak or be shaken, but that their faith in God’s provisions will grow stronger and stronger. And, especially, he prays for them that whether their physical circumstances improve or not, whether they get the physical answers and responses from God that they want or not ... that their service for Christ will not falter and their witness for Christ will continue to shine by their obedience to the faith they profess.

And, that’s what I pray for you, too – and what we all should pray for one another!

<sup>1</sup> For example: Ephesians 1.15-23; 3.14-21; Philippians 1.3-11; Colossians 1.9-14