

Memory Verse

“Let my prayer be set before You as incense, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.” (Psalm 141:2)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Work [Behavior]
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Understand the meaning of the Lord’s Prayer.2. Understand the meaning of fasting.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God is our Father.2. God is our provider.3. God is our protector.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Worship Him through prayer daily.2. Seek Him for all of our needs.3. Fast and pray when distress and trouble come.

Overview

Spiritual Teachings

- A. The Lord’s Prayer
- B. Fasting

Life Application

1. Learning How to Pray
2. Spending Time with God in Prayer

Memory Verse

Conclusion: With the Lord’s Prayer as our guide to worship Him, whether in times of distress or trouble, fast and pray to rely on God’s intervention.

A. The Lord's Prayer

The Lord's Prayer contains many great teachings and is filled with incredible meaning. Thus, we must take the time to stop and reflect on the meaning of each phrase. Let us read Matthew 6:9–13.

Meaning

Our Father in Heaven—We start by calling God our heavenly Father. He is our Father because we are His sons (Jn 1:12–13). He adopted us as His children (Gal 4:5; Eph 1:5), and He sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts (Gal 4:6).

Hallowed be Your name—God wants us to honor His name. Why? His name is holy and awesome and must be revered (Ps 111:9; Rev 15:4). Hallowed is another word for “sanctified,” or “holy.” Ezekiel 36:23 says, “‘And I will sanctify My great name [...] and the nations shall know that I am the LORD,’ says the Lord GOD, ‘when I am hallowed in you before their eyes.’”

Your kingdom come—Jesus started His ministry by emphasizing repentance, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mt 4:17). Jesus tells us that God's kingdom “is not of this world” (Jn 18:36), but is “within you” (Lk 17:21). In other words, God's kingdom is where He rules: in heaven, within our hearts, and in the church, which is God's kingdom on earth (Heb 12:18–29).

Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven—We need to ask God to fill us “with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding” (Col 1:9) so that we can know and do His will (Mt 7:21).

Give us this day our daily bread—Bread represents God's provision for us. This provision is not a one-time provision, but a “daily” provision. God understands our needs (Mt 6:8, 32), so when we ask Him for our daily bread, He will answer us. It is important to trust that God will provide all our needs, every day, no matter what they may be.

And forgive us our debts—We are not perfect. Even after water baptism, we may still commit wrongs. So we must confess our sins before God and ask for forgiveness (1 Jn 1:7, 9).

As we forgive our debtors—Jesus wants us to forgive those who have hurt us in addition to asking God to forgive us our trespasses. God cannot be present in a heart filled with anger and hatred. Matthew 6:14–15 says, “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” It is the Lord's will that we forgive one another, just as Jesus forgave us (Col 3:12–13).

And do not lead us into temptation—God does not tempt anyone (Jas 1:13), but we need to ask God to save us from falling into sin, lest we be ensnared by it (Mt 26:41). We need to ask God not to let us be tempted beyond what we can bear, and trust that “with the temptation [God] will also make the way of escape, that [we] may be able to bear it” (1 Cor 10:13).

But deliver us from the evil one—The evil one may try to harm us physically, spiritually, or mentally. Satan's goal is to steal, kill, and destroy (Jn 10:10). For this reason, we should ask God to deliver us from the evil one and remember that “the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one” (2 Thess 3:3).

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever—These words remind us that our citizenship is in heaven (Phil 3:20). One day, we will reign with the Lord in His kingdom (2 Tim 2:12; Rev 22:5), which is “not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom 14:17). And since God is the Creator, all power and glory belong to Him.

The Lord’s Prayer ends with *Amen* (v. 13), a Greek word transliterated from Hebrew, meaning “verily” or “so let it be.” In saying this, we affirm the sincerity of our prayer and ask God to fulfill it.

B. Fasting

Let us study Matthew 6:16–18. Fasting in the Bible generally means going without any food and drink for a period (Est 4:16). Fasting is a form of self-affliction, originally taken from the Hebrew expression “*inna napso*,” which means “to afflict the soul.” There are many examples of fasting in the Bible:

- The Israelites fasted on the Day of Atonement (Lev 23:27–32; Num 29:7; Jer 36:6).
- Nehemiah fasted upon learning that Jerusalem was laid in ruins (Neh 1:4).
- Prophetess Anna “served God with fastings and prayers night and day” at the temple (Lk 2:37).
- Jesus fasted for forty days and forty nights before Satan tempted Him (Mt 4:2).
- Paul and Barnabas fasted and prayed for the appointment of elders in the churches (Acts 14:23).

What is the purpose of fasting?

Fasting prayer is powerful, as it increases one’s spiritual strength from God. While fasting is not mandatory, there are occasions when it becomes a necessity.

1. To seek deliverance from calamities
 - a. During the reign of Jehoshaphat, the king proclaimed a fast throughout the land, and with God’s help, the Jews had a complete victory over their numerous enemies (2 Chr 20).
 - b. When Haman, minister of Persia, was about to eliminate all the Jewish people, Queen Esther, Mordecai, and the Jews fasted and prayed (Est 4:15–16). God listened to their prayers, and consequently delivered the Jews from genocide.
 - c. When heresy is prevalent (Mt 24:23–24) or when persecutions are imposed upon the church (Acts 8:1–3), the whole church should unite, fast, and pray to God earnestly for deliverance.
2. To seek forgiveness of sins
 - a. Sincere prayer with fasting is exceedingly powerful. The people of Nineveh, for example, responded to Jonah’s warning and proclaimed a fast. Even the king fasted for his sins by putting on sackcloth and sitting in ashes. God saw their repentance, so He decided not to destroy them (Jon 1:1–2; 3:1–10). Personal fasting is a way to humble oneself before God, and it can also be used for special petition or intercession to the Lord.
 - b. God may use poverty, disease, or hardship to remind His followers to return to Him. Therefore, if we fall short of His glory, we have to confess our sins and contritely ask the Lord to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 Jn 1:9).
3. To seek scriptural understanding
 - a. Daniel fasted for three weeks in order to understand the vision given to him. During the period of fasting, he prayed to God for understanding. As a result, God gave him the meaning of the mysterious vision (Dan 10:1–3, 12).
 - b. Numerous passages in the Bible are too profound to understand. But if you are eager to know the meanings of these verses, in addition to conducting research, fast and pray so that God may grant you spiritual understanding.

4. To receive the spiritual power to cast out demons
In response to the inability of the disciples to cast out a demon, Jesus stressed the importance of prayer and fasting (Mt 17:14–21). We may feel that we lack power and that our prayers are ineffective. Under such circumstances, we need to fast and pray for power and faith (Mt 17:20). If done with sincerity, we can even drive out evil spirits.
5. To pray for the growth of the church
 - a. In the church at Antioch, many prophets and teachers fasted and prayed for the growth of the church. The apostles were then sent out by the Holy Spirit and preached the words of God, performing miracles and leading many to believe in the Lord.
 - b. In the same way, the appointment of elders in every church was done with prayer and fasting (Acts 14:23). When we ask God to open a door of grace to the Gentiles, we must pray with fasting as well (Col 4:3; Acts 14:27).
 - c. In addition to assisting us in the preaching of the gospel, fasting and praying is important when we need God’s guidance. Ezra and Nehemiah both fasted and prayed before setting forth to do His work (Ezra 8:21–23; Neh 1:3–4, 11). It is a manifestation of our devotion to God and our service to Him.

What manner of fasting is unacceptable to God?

1. Do not fast as a formality—Oftentimes, people fail to understand the purpose of fasting and treat it as a mere formality. They fast only because others do, and may even feel proud of their “achievement.” This is wrong.
2. Do not fast hypocritically—As taught by the Lord Jesus when He prayed in the wilderness, we should fast for a definite good cause while leading a normal prayerful life in private.

(For supplementary material, see Manna Issue #5: What you need to know about Fasting.)

Check for Understanding

1. **What is the spiritual teaching in the phrase “and give us this day our daily bread”?** God is the one who provides for our needs. We need to trust Him. Further, He is the one who offers us spiritual food and drink that will fill our hearts.
2. **What is the spiritual teaching in the phrase “as we forgive our debtors”?** We must forgive those who have hurt us or sinned against us. Only those who forgive others can be forgiven by God—and those who choose to forgive others are loved by Him because forgiving and loving others is God’s will.
3. **Where is God’s kingdom, and why should we pray for it?** It is both in heaven, our hearts, and in our church, which is God’s kingdom on earth. We must pray that His kingdom be established firmly in our hearts and minds, and that we can spread it to those who have not yet received His word.
4. **For what purpose did the people of Nineveh fast? What was the result?** They fasted and prayed to seek forgiveness for their sins. Even the king of Nineveh fasted. As a result of their contrition and repentance, God refrained from destroying the city.
5. **For what purposes do we fast today?** For the repentance of sins, for a petition or intercession, for the purposes of serving our Lord, and for the power to drive out evil spirits.
6. **What manner of fasting is unacceptable to God?** Fasting as a formality or for the sake of self-accomplishment, and fasting hypocritically, for the sake of receiving praise or showing others what we are doing.

Life Application

1. Learning How to Pray

God desires for us to come near to Him and pour out our hearts. When we do, He will be there to meet our needs. To help us learn how best to pray, He has given us the Lord’s Prayer as a model prayer for us to follow. Let’s re-examine the prayer, this time looking at how we can use each line as the foundation and guideline for our other prayers.

The Lord’s Prayer	Purpose	Our Own Prayer
Our Father in heaven	Acknowledge God’s presence in heaven.	“Dear Father, I adore You. You are the God of the Most High—You rule and reign. You’re worthy of my praise!”
Hallowed be Your name	Do not profane God’s name: by doing so, we sin and dishonor God (Prov 30:9; 1 Tim 6:1); We cannot be counted as true if we do not keep His name holy in our thoughts, speech, and conduct.	“Dear God, there is no other name on earth that is more holy than Your name. I will not profane or blaspheme Your name in vain because Your name is sacred.”
Your kingdom come	As Christians, we should pray each day for God’s kingdom to be revealed and joyfully anticipate the Lord’s second coming, when we shall enter that everlasting place (2 Pet 1:11).	“Dear God, I pray that Your kingdom will come! As we live, we await and look for Your return and have this blessed hope that You will reign forever and ever in our hearts and in heaven.”
Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven	Ask God for His will. We need to put our all before His presence and actively seek and fulfill His will so that it may truly be done on earth as it is in heaven.	“Dear God, I want to know Your will in my life. As Ephesians 2:10 says, ‘I am Your workmanship, created in You to do good works, which You have prepared for me that I should walk in them.’ Teach me to do Your will and to submit to Your plan and purpose.”
Give us this day our daily bread	We will not worry about tomorrow because God is our provider. Seek first His kingdom and righteousness and live for Him, and He will provide all of our needs, both spiritual and physical.	“Dear God, thank You for food, clothing and a home. You said men should not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Thank You also for spiritual nourishment each time I read Your word!”
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors	Ask God to reveal to us the hidden bitterness in our hearts. Do not forget that we first have to forgive our debtors and show mercy to those who have wronged us.	“Dear God, help me to forgive everyone who has trespassed against me so that You can forgive me my debts. I will be merciful, tender, and compassionate toward those who have wronged me. I refuse to be resentful or upset.”
And do not lead us into temptation, but	Help us not to place ourselves in tempting situations. Ask for	“Dear God, I know that You are faithful and that You will deliver me from

deliver us from the evil one	vigilance and the power of the Holy Spirit to be alert so that we are on guard every moment. Ask God to deliver us by finding a way to escape temptation.	tempting situations. By the power of the Holy Spirit, I will be alert and watchful. Please deliver me from evil.”
For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.	God’s kingdom, power, and glory belong to Him.	“Dear God, I want to praise You because the kingdom and the power and the glory belong to You! I will continue to adore You and praise You for who You are. Your lovingkindness is better than life, and my lips shall praise You forever and ever! Amen.”

2. Spending Time with God in Prayer

Prayer is a source of joy and strength. It is a time for us to draw closer to God. Those who have attended a student spiritual convocation know its power. Since prayers are significantly longer, after a week of regular prayer from early morning to bedtime, we feel as though we have touched God.

Do you have time to pray daily? Is it often a short, hurried prayer? Instead of only spending these few, rushed moments with God, let us resolve to do the following:

1. Pray daily to the Lord. “Evening and morning and at noon, I will pray, and cry aloud, and He shall hear my voice” (Ps 55:17).
2. Use the Lord’s Prayer as our guide to worship Him, to praise Him, and to give all our petitions to Him. As a result, God’s provision and protection will come.
3. In times of distress or trouble, fast and pray to rely on God’s intervention.

Memory Verse

“Let my prayer be set before You as incense, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.” (Psalm 141:2)

Meaning

1. Incense, which has a sweet odor, was burned as an offering to God in His temple. According to Mosaic law, only a high priest could make an offering of incense at the altar of incense (Ex 30:7), marking the simple act as a privileged act reserved for those who serve God. Today, we who are God’s high priests have the privilege of communicating directly with God, but instead of burning incense or making sacrifices, our very prayers, when in alignment with His will, are like a sweet and pleasing aroma to Him. This makes our prayers not only a form of petition, but also a form of worship.
2. When we pray to God, we are fully entrusting our problems to Him. He wants us to pour out our hearts to Him, because it is a sign of our love for Him and of our reliance on our Father in heaven. The Bible tells us, “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us” (1 Jn 5:14). Whatever petition we have—intercession, a cry for help, for comfort, or even a prayer of joy and thanksgiving—God will hear it; He has promised His help to those who call out to Him.

Conclusion

Jesus has given us a model prayer (Mt 6:9; Lk 11:2). Use the Lord's Prayer as our guide to worship Him, to praise Him, and to give all our petitions to Him. As a result, God's provision and protection will come. And in times of distress or trouble, fast and pray to rely on God's intervention.

Let us set a goal to acknowledge Him and His presence before we start each day. Remember to pause, worship, and ask God for His divine intervention, guidance, provision, and protection.

Lesson 6 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What does it mean to have prayers like incense?
Incense was burned as an offering to God in His temple. Our prayers, when in alignment with God's will, are like a sweet and pleasing aroma to Him. This makes our prayers not only a form of petition, but also a form of worship.
2. Choose a line from the Lord's Prayer, write it down, and explain what it teaches us about God.
See Section A of the Spiritual Teachings section. (Example: "Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" – God's purpose never changes, and His will never hindered. However, those who serve Him are often obstructed from following His will because of Satan.)
3. Name two examples of people fasting in the Bible and explain why they fasted.
See Section B of the Spiritual Teachings section. (Example: Esther, Mordecai, and all the Jewish people. They fasted because Haman, the king's advisor, was about to destroy all of the Jewish people. They needed God's deliverance. Esther also needed God's strength to help her stand in front of the king despite the danger to her life.)
4. What are four purposes for which we fast today?
For the repentance of sins, for a petition or intercession, for the purposes of serving our Lord, and for the power to drive out evil spirits.
5. Why is prayer so important? What is a common excuse we often make for not praying?
It deepens our relationship with God, gives us spiritual strength and wisdom, and helps us resist temptation so that we can follow God's will.

Personal answers. (Examples: Not enough time; do not have anything to pray about; once a day is enough even if it is short.)

6. Write down at least one goal or action plan for the week that will help improve your prayer life.
*Personal answers. Remind the students to write down an **actionable** goal or plan, something that is checklist-able and achievable. Praying an hour a day, for example, is likely far too high a goal for someone who only prays five minutes every morning.*

(Examples: Pray about one line of the Lord's Prayer each day, considering its teachings, why it is included in the Lord's Prayer, and what it teaches us about God. Write a list of prayer requests or people to pray for, and pray for one or two of the items on the list each day.)