

God is Father – God is Almighty

Mt 6:5–15

⁵“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. ⁶But 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. ⁷“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. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. ⁹Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. ¹⁰Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹Give us this day our daily bread, ¹²and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. ¹⁴For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, ¹⁵but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Our Father – knows what you need before we ask him.

Because He is our Father

- Jesus does not refer to Him as ‘my’ or ‘the’ Father
- He is ‘our’ Father
- We can approach Him as sons and daughters
- With confident assurance
- And in the full knowledge of His goodness and concern for us

We also acknowledge though that He is in heaven

- As THE Sovereign King – seated on the throne

For that reason:

- We also approach Him with reverence
- And worship
- As the one who has sovereign authority:
 - He has all authority,
 - He has Almighty authority and power

This is the basis of our prayer...

- Our Father is Almighty
- The Almighty is our Father

Keeping all of who He is in mind:

- Helps us avoid inappropriate familiarity
 - Even though we enjoy intimacy and fellowship with Him as Father
- Helps us to avoid the 'sugar daddy' approach that is so prevalent today
 - The attitude that God must bless me
 - and give me everything I ask for,
 - regardless of how I live
 - because He is good and He loves me...
 - But there is a sense of entitlement in this approach – not humility

Keeping all of who He is in mind:

- Our Father is Almighty
- The Almighty is our Father

Helps us to:

- Approach him with both confidence (assurance)
- And reverent humility

Our confidence is not based in ourselves:

- It is based on what Jesus has done
- And so we come in His name,
- But still we are able to come boldly
- As children of the Father
- Into His holy presence
- And know that He has the heart of a perfect Father toward us

Our humility is grounded in the knowledge of:

- Our 'poverty' before Him
 - Being 'poor in spirit'
 - We have nothing without Him
 - Note: this is not an introspective, self-pitying attitude
 - That would make us beggars before God
- We come as His sons and daughters
- Not as beggars
- But we come with reverence because He is Almighty
- We come to ask Him what we bring to Him in prayer, in humility
- Knowing that He wants us to ask Him
 - As our Father
 - Who is Almighty
 - Knowing that as Almighty only He can answer all prayers

There is both confidence and humility in our fellowship with Him

There is both confidence and humility as we approach Him in prayer

The one word, or idea, that comes through in all of what Jesus teaches about prayer is that prayer is simply '**asking the Father...**'

- It is not a matter of 'many words...'
- It is not a matter of saying the right words
- It is not a matter of saying things in the right way
 - – formulas, techniques, etc.
- It is not even a matter of having enough faith
 - – it only takes a 'mustard seed' of faith
- It is first and foremost a matter of asking God, our Father...
 - With both the confidence of knowing we are His sons and daughters
 - And the reverent humility of worshippers

Even though He knows what we need before we ask

- It is the nature of His Fatherhood toward us to want us to ask...
- Is that not a beautiful aspect of His Fatherhood?

We come to Him as a Father who we know gives good things to those who ask Him

Mt 7:7–11

⁷ “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. ⁹ Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? ¹¹ If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

What do we ask for?

- This Jesus shows us in the passage we read from Matthew 6
- This prayer in Matthew 6 is an example, not a formula
- But there is nothing wrong with using these words

Notice that we do not begin with what we need but with His honour and His Kingdom

- Because He is Almighty

Firstly then, we pray, “hallowed be your name”

- May His name be honoured as holy,
- May He be worshipped for who He truly is

Everything else follows on from this...

- “Your kingdom come” – first
- “Your will be done,” – His Sovereignty will
- “On earth as it is in heaven” – there is a continual progression of this in our lives and in the world
- Our daily needs
- That our relationship with Him would be unhindered
- That He will help us make sure there is nothing in our hearts against others
- That He will help us in our battle against sin
- That He will deliver us from the schemes of the evil one...

All of this we ask of our Father... Who gives good things to those who ask Him

Some passages that help us see more of the 'how' of our asking

1 Jn 3:21–24

²¹ Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; ²² and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. ²³ And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. ²⁴ Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.

1 Jn 5:14–15

¹⁴ And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.

Jn 14:12–14

¹² “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. ¹³ Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.

Jn 15:16

¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you

Jn 16:23–24

²³ In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. ²⁴ Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

Mt 18:19–20

¹⁹ Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”