



Typically when we pray we ask God for what we want. But when Jesus teaches on prayer, he makes it about what God wants. Prayer isn't for the promotion of our kingdom; it is for the advancement of the kingdom of God. In this series we will consider how to ask God for the desires of His heart. It's all about praying for reign!

These questions are designed to extend the impact of the weekend message. Use them to go deeper in your personal study time, with your family and/or with a group.

1 Praying does not come naturally; it is a learned discipline. Learning how to pray is the most significant teaching the disciples ever asked Jesus to give (see **Luke 11:1**). Who has helped shape your prayer life and what are some positive things you've learned from them?

2 LEARNING TO PRAY is learning over. Before Jesus taught how to pray, he taught how not to pray. **Read Matthew 6:5-8.** What are some bad prayer habits you've developed through the years? What steps have you been taking to "unlearn" some of them?

3 Read Matthew 6:9-13 together as a group. What part of this prayer most encourages you and what part most convicts you? Why?

4 JESUS IS TEACHING... "Our God is a really good Father." The first thing Jesus teaches about prayer is really radical as he refers to God as "*Our Father*". What is so radical about this truth and why does Jesus invite us to pray like this?

5 JESUS IS TEACHING... "With God all things are possible." Jesus also reminds us that because our Father is "in heaven" He is not bound

by any earthly limitations. **Read Ephesians 3:20.** With that in mind, how does prayer bring the reality of heaven to bear on the realities of earth? How should that change the way you pray?

6 JESUS IS TEACHING... "To God be the glory." The hardest thing to unlearn about prayer is that it is not ultimately for our sake but for God's. **Read Ephesians 3:21.** Too often we've learned to pray for problems to be solved and our hassles to be removed. What if instead we started praying for God to honor His name however He chooses through our problems and hassles? How would that change how you live and pray?

7 PRAYER IS LEARNING that our reign is over. Memorizing the Lord's Prayer is not hard; recognizing what the Lord's prayer is asking us to admit is. We often use prayer as a way to bring order to our kingdoms. Jesus is teaching us to pray for God's kingdom to come, which is another way of teaching us that our kingdoms must go. Why do we tend to focus more on "*my will*" than "*thy will*" when we pray? How would it change the way we pray if our focus was less on our needs and more on what was best for God's name?



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1 Begin your group time by saying the Lord's Prayer together (**Matthew 6:9-13**). What was this past week like as you prayed this prayer daily? What impact did it have on your life?

2 PRAYER WANTS what God wants. Too often prayer becomes a way of trying to bend the will of God. But Jesus says prayer is a way of trying to find the will of God. **Read Matthew 6:10.** In what ways does our culture try to influence us to pursue our will more than God's? What is one action you could take today (in your family, workplace or community) to be part of God's plan to bring His kingdom to this earth?

3 "YOUR KINGDOM COME..." is an admission of surrender. Implied in the prayer Jesus is teaching is that there is more than one kingdom wanting our allegiance. **Read Mark 1:14-15.** Rick pointed out that "Repent" was not a rebuke but an invitation. With that in mind, what is the significance of Jesus beginning his ministry by inviting people to repent? Is there anything in your life that you haven't totally surrendered to God (Relationships? Finances? Work/School? Recreation?)? Invite God to have control in every area of your life.

4 "YOUR KINGDOM COME..." is a declaration of war. Disciples will always pray with a certain holy discontent because things on earth are not

the way they are supposed to be, and they won't be until heaven and earth are united. So prayer is an act of rebellion against the way things are. How does Satan try to prevent the presence of God's kingdom in the world today? How does he do it in your own corner of the world?

5 "YOUR KINGDOM COME..." is an expectation of victory. *"Your kingdom come"* is not just a request; it's a prophecy. One day God's will really will be done all over the earth. **Read Revelation 17:14.** How should this truth impact the way you pray today? What are some ways God is using His people to give the world glimpses of the coming kingdom?

6 God wants us to want His reign. As we noted earlier, we often use prayer to convince God to want what we want. Prayer is meant to help us want what God wants. How have you experienced this in your prayer life through the years?

7 Dallas Willard says that *"the greatest threat to the kingdom of God will always be my kingdom."* In what ways has that been true in your life? How can the example of Jesus (**see Matthew 26:39**) transform the way you pray and how you live? Pray this prayer as you close and as you reflect on what your NEXT STEP is today: **"Lord, help me want to want what you want."**





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1 Begin your group time by saying the Lord's Prayer together (**Matthew 6:9-13**). What did you find most challenging or encouraging about praying "Your kingdom come" this past week? As you think about the topic for this week, what comes to mind with the phrase, "Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors"?

2 The Lord's Prayer is given in the context of a larger sermon where Jesus teaches his followers that discipleship informs all of life (**Matthew 5-7**). There is no part of our day that is to be lived outside of the reign of God. Our aim is to bring every challenge into submission to Jesus. And that is a challenge every single day (**Read Matthew 6:34**). In what ways is it often a difficult to bring every part of your day into submission to Jesus?

3 THROUGH PRAYER... we get through each day. Prayer brings serenity; lack of prayer brings anxiety. **Proverbs 12:25** reminds us that "Worry weighs a person down." How have you experienced that to be true in your life? Follow up conversation: There is a better way to get through the day. **Read 1 Peter 5:7**. Recall a time when you practiced "casting your anxieties" on God. How did that change your perspective and circumstances?

4 WE ARE THROUGH... with worrying. As Jesus is teaching us to pray for reign, we are learning to

pray with faith that God will provide all we need to obey His kingdom will. **Read Matthew 6:25-34**. What are some of the ways God has provided for you recently? How should remembering that impact how you live your life today?

5 WE ARE THROUGH... with regretting. The next line in the prayer says, "And forgive us our debts..." (**Matthew 6:12a**). How does this prayer help us deal with our guilt and regrets (**see Romans 8:1**)? Why is it important for God's forgiveness to reign in our hearts?

6 WE ARE THROUGH... with resenting. The prayer continues, "...as we also have forgiven our debtors" (**Matthew 6:12b**). We've all done wrong and been done wrong to by others. **Read Matthew 5:23-24 and 6:14-15**. What is the significance of what Jesus is teaching here about forgiveness and resentment? How does prayer help equip us for the difficult daily challenge of extending mercy to others?

7 "Reign through me before the storm comes to me." Prayer asks for God's reign to come through us before the challenges of each day come to us. For the kingdom to come you must let go. What do you need to let go of — worry, regret, resentment? Spend some time as a group listening to each other and then in prayer for each other.





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1 Begin your group time by saying the Lord's Prayer together (**Matthew 6:9-13**). What part of the prayer has resonated with you the most during this series? Why?

2 Right before Jesus taught his followers how to pray he had gone through an intense season of temptation from the evil one (**see Matthew 4:1-11**). Are you aware of certain situations or seasons that you face where it is harder to be a Christian? What are some ways God has **"delivered you from evil"** during those times?

3 WE PRAY IN awareness of an enemy kingdom. The Bible teaches that we have an enemy who is devoting time and investing energy in an effort to lead us into temptation. **Read 1 Peter 5:8 and Ephesians 6:10-12, 18.** How does being aware of our enemy and who he is prepare us to take our stand against his schemes?

4 WE HANG IN with the help of the prayers of others. It is significant that Jesus taught us to pray not as individuals but as a church. Every pronoun in the Lord's Prayer is plural, beginning with the first word. What is significant about that truth and how does it impact the way we pray and live? Note: take a look at **Philippians 1:19** and **2 Corinthians 1:10-11** as examples of the importance of praying for each other.

5 WE TRUST IN the delivering power of God.

We cannot experience victory over the enemy in our own strength. Thankfully, the enemy has no rightful claim on anyone who is in Christ Jesus (**see Colossians 2:15**). James reminds us to **"Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you"** (**James 4:7**). What are some examples of things you can do to "submit" to God and to "resist" the devil?

6 WE HOPE IN the day when only one kingdom will be standing. The Bible doesn't say a lot about the enemy's origin, but it does say a lot about his destiny. **Read Revelation 11:15-17.** What comfort and encouragement do you find in these verses?

7 "Reign in us as a witness that you will reign in all!" God is inviting us to participate in this grand story of triumph. May our daily deliverance deliver a message of hope to the world. Is there any part of your life where you haven't invited God to reign? Close by inviting God to completely reign in us.

