

IMPROVING YOUR PRAYER LIFE--LESSON TWO

LUKE 11:-1-2

BEGIN WITH THE DIVINE CONCERNS

Introduction:

Jesus revealed the heart of God is this Model Prayer. My son John spoke to a group at FBC, Lubbock last year and we were there. You learn so much when you hear your sons preach, things even about yourself. John was sharing with the group about prayer, and how one of the secrets of effective praying is to ask what the Father wants.

He confessed to the group something that he had learned about me as his father across the years. He and his mother have always more anxious to go out to eat than me. I would usually prefer a peanut butter sandwich at home to a big meal in some restaurant. He told the group that he had learned that when he wanted to get me to take him and his mother out to eat that I was more likely to do it if he mentioned one of my favorite restaurants. For instance he mentioned that he knew that I preferred a cafeteria to a regular restaurant, even Furr's. And I must confess that he was right.

Well in this prayer the Son of God who knew our Father better than any of us will ever know Him, gives us some help. He gives us a list of things that the Father prefers. You can pray for any one of the things in this prayer with confidence that the Father is inclined to answer.

The prayer divides itself into two parts, just like the Ten Commandments. You will remember that God divides the Ten Big Ones into Four that have to do with our relationship with Him, and then six that relate us to others. The first four tell us what it means to love God supremely, and the second table of the law tells what it means to love others with all our hearts, or as ourselves.

So the Second lesson in this series tells that prayer should always begin with a focus on God's glory. We first express concern about His name and then concern about His kingdom.

I. HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME.

1. Name is the revelation of the person's identity and character.

To know the name of the Lord is to know who He is and the kind of person He is.

2. God's name does not need to be hallowed for He is eternally holy.

God is who He is regardless of what we think or do. There is nothing we can do to add anything to the name or person of God.

3. But the world needs a fresh revelation of the identity and holiness of God.

This needs to begin in my heart. We know who God is only as He reveals Himself to us. God must reveal Himself in either word or deed before we will know who He is.

4. We need to be brought to a fresh recognition of the holiness of God, and to give Him the Recognition that He deserves.

It is a prayer that each of us and the world in which we live might know the God who made us and the God who saves us better. Nothing would help us as much as knowing God better.

John McArthur teaches us: To apply the concept of hallowing God's name to your prayers, here is a sample you could use: "Our Father, who loves us and cares for us, and who has in heaven supplies to meet our every need; may Your person, Your identity, Your character, Your nature, Your attributes, Your reputation, Your very being itself be hallowed." To hallow God's name is not some glib phrase

inserted into a prayer ritual; it is your opportunity to glorify Him by acknowledging the greatness and wonder of His character.¹

Think with me for a moment. What kind of world would this be if

I personally revered the name of God and gave Him the honor that He deserves;

And our family properly revered God and gave Him the proper honor He deserves in everything;

And our church properly revered God and gave Him that proper honor that He deserves:

And our city properly revered God and gave Him the proper honor that He deserves;

And our state properly revered God and gave Him the proper honor that He deserves;

And our nation properly revered God and gave Him the proper honor that He deserves;

And every business in the country properly revered God and gave Him the honor that He deserves;

And Hollywood and all of the media properly revered God and give Him the honor that He deserves;

And indeed, all of the nations of the earth properly revered God, and gave Him the honor that He deserves;

And each individual in each nation properly revered God and gave Him the reverence that He deserves.

O that is what my heart wants as it is touched by the Spirit of God, and that is what we pray for as we utter these inspired words in the ear of our Heavenly Father.

II. YOUR KINGDOM COME.

¹ MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1995). *Alone with God* (57). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

It is obvious from Scriptures that God has ruled over His creation in sovereign love since day one. Since Genesis 3 with its record of the Fall of Man, He has had to deal with a planet in rebellion against His rule. This rebellion began in the heavenly world among the angels and was transmitted to the earth by the serpent in the Garden. So while God's kingdom is present in the world, most of the citizens of earth have no regard for Him or His rule.

We are able to see the kingdom of God in the affairs of earth by the way God over-rules the decisions of evil men for good. We see it when he overturns the decision of the ten brothers of Joseph to sell him to be a slave in Egypt as a way to prepare for the future food-crisis that these very men and their father will face. We see it even more profoundly in the way God overturned the judgment of the leaders of Israel and Rome that brought about the death of the Son of God on a Roman Cross, and made it the means of salvation for all men who will receive Him as Savior. Our God does reign on earth even now through His providences.

1. This is a prayer for a greater manifestation of the rule of God in our present situation.

Every time a person receives Jesus Christ as Lord of their lives, the rule of God in the present situation is extended; it becomes very personal in the life of that individual. That new convert is participating in the rule of God right now. The Holy Spirit works from within to keep that life under the Lordship of Christ so they may participate in kingdom today.

In a real sense each local church is actually a little colony of this kingdom. When we come together, we come as persons who share a common relationship with the King of glory, He rules in our hearts, maybe not perfectly, but He rules. And when we pray this prayer we are praying for an expansion of His rule in our hearts and in our world as others come to know Him.

This surely involves our destroying our personal thrones, and throwing away our kingdom claims and bowing as willing subjects before the only One who truly has the right to reign over us.

2. This is also a prayer for the coming consummation of the kingdom of God, the realization of His rule over all men and all things.

The Scriptures assure us that Jesus the Messiah will sit some day on the throne of David, and will rule over the nations of the earth. Some of us believe that this will happen at the coming of the Lord Jesus to the earth at the close of human history, and that He will reign for a thousand years. All of us believe that the new Heaven and the new Earth shall receive a New Jerusalem from which Jesus will rule over all for all eternity.

Eighteenth-century hymnwriter Frances Havergal beautifully captures that sentiment in these words to Christ in "His Coming to Glory":

Oh, the joy to see Thee reigning,
Thee, my own beloved Lord!
Every tongue Thy name confessing,
Worship, honor, glory, blessing
Brought to Thee with glad accord;
Thee, my Master and my Friend,
Vindicated and enthroned;
Unto earth's remotest end
Glorified, adored, and owned.

Why is it that we rarely ever pray for the coming of the King and His kingdom? Why do we spend all of our prayer energy on praying for the earthly kingdoms around us? While I commend our praying for Awakening in this country, we must never forget that this nation and all other nations are destined for the destruction of the fire of God. That the only hope for this world is for it to come under the

rule of its rightful King and Sovereign, Jesus Christ , the Son of God, the Prince of peace, the King over all nations.

So let's pray for the coming of the King