

This is episode 3 of our 'By Bread Alone' podcast series, entitled "The Principal Prayer".

- Many of us are familiar with what has been endearingly called 'The Lord's Prayer'. Chances are, you learned it as a child. But there's an unfortunate side-effect: Being so familiar with "The Lords Prayer" can cause the real tendency of detachment from it. Many people don't realize the power in the principles it lays out that align us perfectly to the Father's will, and we risk minimizing its potential to fundamentally change the trajectory of our lives by simply reciting it from rote memorization.
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Let's take The Lord's Prayer seriously.

- As many of us know, The Lord's Prayer is a very familiar passage of scripture.
- If you're like me, you remember reciting it in front of your Sunday School class as a child, and you can still recite it today by heart, verbatim without giving any conscious thought to the words themselves within the prayer.
- But if we know anything about our Lord Jesus Christ, or by His Hebrew-given name, Yeshua Ha Mashiach, we know His words carry the very power of creation, and it would be a waste to simply reduce them to mere lines to memorize.
- He is too precise in His wording and too inclined to our human condition to risk marginalizing any of His actions concerning us, or anything says; especially the Lord's Prayer.
- To put this in perspective, let's imagine for a moment the severity of His purpose.
- Given only 3 years, the time He spent was demanded upon Him to be highly efficient and strategic.
- There could be absolutely none wasted or idle.
- His Father's will to repair the hearts of men around the world, He accomplished by learning obedience to it through the things He suffered.
- His words were sharp and piercing; cutting directly to the heart of men's issues; but for bringing their issues to the forefront, men despised Him for it, and rejected Him.
- Paying the price of repairing men's hearts, He bore our grief and was acquainted with sorrow.
- And for the grief He bore, He shed real blood on a real cross; and literally the entire world clings to His free gift of Salvation.
- Looking at the life and ministry of Christ this way explains a lot.
- This is why He was the most polarizing figure to ever walk the earth; and it shows.
- When people loved Him, they REALLY loved Him; to the point of martyrdom.
- When people hated Him, they REALLY hated Him, to the point of crucifixion.
- The magnitude of impact His words had on the world around Him cannot be overstated.
- There is absolutely no nation on the earth that is unfamiliar to some degree of the life and story Jesus Christ.
- So it would be in our best interest to take everything He said and did during His walk on earth very seriously; especially The Lord's Prayer.

When we examine The Lord's Prayer closely, we can see that it is categorized into three parts.

- The first category acknowledges the acceptance of the holiness and sovereignty of God the Father.
- Matthew 6:9 says:
9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.
- Notice how attention is immediately directed to the Father in terms of acknowledgement of His holy name, and allowing for His sovereign will to be upheld regardless of what the remaining prayer is.
- There's a well-known paradigm in theology known as the Principle of First Mention.
- The general concept is the Bible has the tendency of setting precedent by way of sequence. That is, truth principles that are mentioned FIRST, as a matter of necessity, are the weightiest or most critical, and set the tone for supporting truth principles.
- This means, God's method of teaching us His word is characterized by order of prominence; if He mentions something first within a sequence, then scripture throughout the Bible tends to support that it was of prominent importance.
- Here's an example:
- Exodus 20 gives us the 10 Commandments. The very first commandment in verse 3 says: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me".
- This demands that God be foremost in an individual's life; therefore, it's impossible to keep all the other commandments without the perspective that the first commandment is most important.
- Keeping the Sabbath holy doesn't make much sense if you're doing so without the idea that God being foremost is the underlying theme.
- And this is the idea of The Lord's Prayer: There's no need in praying to the Father at all if there's no acknowledgement first of "Thy Kingdom come; thy will be done".
- So if we expect results when we pray, then we need to take this principle seriously.
- The problem is, our post-modern church-world era is typically person-centric.
- Through the norms of this culture, God has inadvertently become an object of people's self-interests; as opposed to people coming into alignment with His interests.
- It is my sincere belief that once we take this principle seriously, then the Lord will take our prayers seriously.

Finally, after we've established that the Father's will is to be done, we make our requests known.

- This is the second category of the Lord's Prayer.
- Matthew 6:11 reads:
11 Give us this day our daily bread.
- Remember, the idea is we're praying that The Father's will be done; and fortunately it is His will that our needs be met.
- Matthew 7:11 reads...
11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?
- When my 7 year-old comes to me in the morning and says, "Dad, I'm hungry", his mindset is already geared towards being entitled to breakfast.
- There's no "please make me breakfast".
- There's no "thank you for making me breakfast".
- When he says something like "Dad, I want a bicycle", again, there's no 'please', no 'thank you'.
- But when I as his father look at his facial expression, his eyes and tone of voice tell me that he feels perfectly comfortable asking me for whatever he wants, and has the full expectation of a favorable response.
- And, even if I am not in a position to get him the bicycle right away, he knows it's still my good pleasure to grant him that request.
- But many times when we pray, especially when we've reached a point of desperation, we find it necessary to say "Lord, PLEASE so on and so on...".
- Or, when we deem our prayer request to go above and beyond what one would consider to be a 'need', we find it necessary as if to make an additional step of faith by excessively using the phrase 'THANK YOU'.
- But notice the word 'please', and the phrase 'thank you' are both missing from The Lord's Prayer.
- It's the servant, not the son, who needs to ingratiate himself with the master.
- Remember a son never questions whether or not he is entitled to receive anything of the Father.
- So using words like 'please' and 'thank you' are indicators of our mindset when we pray.
- But don't get me wrong... it's always appropriate to assume a position of humility and make our requests known with thanksgiving; but whether or not we're humble and grateful is not the issue.
- The issue is our mindset 'for' being humble and grateful.
- Think of it from The Father's perspective.
- Would you be more inclined to grant the request of an individual who you detect is only superficial in their humility; throwing out platitudes and flattery to gain favor for serving their self-interests, or would you be more inclined to grant the request of an individual who has placed their full child-like trust and hope in your willingness to come through?
- When you make your request known, mindset is everything.
- Falling into proper alignment with The Father's will mandates that we take this seriously.

After we've made our requests known, we enter the last category of The Lord's Prayer.

- This category has to do with our spiritual and eternal state.
- Matthew 6:12-13a reads:
12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:
- Remember the Principle of First Mention. The whole idea is that we're praying that the Father's will be done, and His will is that we all be saved.
- 1 Timothy 2:3-4 reads:
3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;
4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.
- Because it's not His will that any of us perish, then our spiritual and eternal state must be accounted for.
- The fact is, God is a just God, and He takes our sin debt seriously; so serious in fact, that He allowed His only begotten son to hang between Heaven and Earth for the payment of those debts.
- The post-modern church world of today tends to gloss-over this, and trivialize this highly important aspect of The Lord's Prayer.
- Have you ever heard of the Christian sinner's prayer?
- The modern Christian tends to see Romans 10:9 as a quick formula for procuring their own salvation through simply referring to the mantra "If I confess with my mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in my heart that God raised Him from the dead, I shall be saved".
- The ultimate goal has become avoiding Hell; opposed to coming into alignment with The Father's will.
- As a result, 'self-interests' is the driving factor: the prayer has become solely based on THEIR will to not perish; rather than the Father's will that they not perish.
- But to digress, this third category of the Lord's Prayer also acknowledges the direct opposition against us: the serious threat of temptation, and the serious threat of evil.
- Being inclined to our human condition, the Lord prescribes that we be led of the Father to avoid temptation; rather than try to resist it.
- He also prescribes that the Father rescues us from evil, rather than leaving us to prove ourselves by overcoming it on our own.
- Finally, the third category ends with a reinforcement of the first.
- Matthew 6:13b reads:
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.
- If you haven't guessed it by now, the Father is the centerpiece of our existence, and this should be reflected in our prayer.
- If there is any attempt to short-circuit that reality in our prayers and inadvertently place our self-interests above His interests, then one has every reason to expect the Father to have a 'deaf ear' when we pray.
- When the Father sees that our prayer is in full alignment with The Lord's Prayer, He will take our prayers seriously.