

Of the Lord's Prayer.

by John Gill

The Lord's Prayer is a summary of prayer, a pattern to be followed, and a directory to prayer, teaching us to pray to God as our Father, in heaven.

Scripture: Matthew 6:9

Topics: "The Lord's Prayer", "Prayer as a Model"

Description

John Gill emphasizes the significance of the Lord's Prayer as a comprehensive guide for prayer, illustrating its structure and the importance of each petition. He explains that the prayer serves not as a rigid formula but as a model that encapsulates the essence of prayer, urging believers to approach God with reverence and sincerity. Gill highlights the relational aspect of addressing God as 'Our Father' and the need for humility and dependence on Him for both spiritual and physical sustenance. He also discusses the importance of forgiveness and the necessity of seeking deliverance from temptation and evil, concluding with a doxology that acknowledges God's sovereignty and power.

Transcript

A Body of PRACTICAL Divinity

Book 3--Chapter 6

OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

The whole Scripture directs to and furnishes with matter for prayer; but more particularly the prayer which is commonly called "The Lord's Prayer," may be considered as a directory to it; and so it seems to be designed by our Lord, when he says, "After this manner therefore pray ye," in such a brief and concise manner, in a few comprehensive expressions, in words to this purpose, or to the sense following; which he directed to in opposition to the many words, much speaking, and vain repetitions of the Scribes and Pharisees; indeed, the evangelist Luke has it, "He said unto them, when ye pray, say," the following words, that is, "after this manner," or to this sense, as it is explained in Matthew, where both the introduction to the prayer, and the prayer itself, are more fully expressed; for that it was not intended as a prescribed set form, in so many words, is clear; since then it would not have been varied, as it is by the two evangelists, by whom it is recorded; for though they both agree in the main, as to the sense, yet not in the express words: the "fourth" petition is in Matthew, "Give us this day our daily bread," which is a petition for present supply; in Luke it is, "Give us day by day our daily bread," which is a prayer for a continued

supply, for the future as it may be needed, as well as for the present: the "fifth" petition is expressed in Matthew, "Forgive us our debts," and in Luke, "Forgive us our sins;" in Matthew it is, "as we forgive;" in Luke, "for we also forgive": and the doxology, which Matthew gives at large, is wholly left out in Luke; "For thine is the kingdom," &c.

And that it was not understood by the disciples as a form of prayer to be used by them as such, seems evident; since we do not find that they ever so used it; but a most excellent summary of prayer it is, for its brevity, order, and matter, and a pattern of it worthy to be followed; and it is very lawful and laudable to make use of any single petition in it, either in the express words of it, or to the sense of it; and even the whole of it, provided a formal and superstitious observance of it is avoided, as used by the Papists.

The matter of it is very full and comprehensive; by one of the ancients[1] it is said to be, "a breviary of the whole gospel;" and by another[2], "a compendium of heavenly doctrine." It may justly be preferred to all other prayers, because of the author, order, and matter of it; though not to the slight and neglect of other petitions the scriptures furnish us with: there were a set of men in the twelfth century, called Bogomiles, who among other odd notions, had this, that only the Lord's prayer was to be reckoned prayer; and that all other was to be rejected as vain clamour[3]: the Socinians say[4], this prayer is an addition to the first command of the law; and which with other things, add to the perfection of the law, which they suppose to be imperfect until Christ came, and as if such prayer was unknown to the Old Testament saints; but though this prayer is not formally, and in so many words, expressed in the Old Testament, yet it is materially, or the matter of it is to be found there; especially in the Psalms of David, of which this prayer may be said to be the "epitome," as the Psalms may be considered and made use of as a "commentary" on that; it is indeed, the summary of the prayers and petitions used by good men, in and before the times of Christ[5], selected and put together, and inserted in this prayer by him in this manner, as a directory to his disciples; in which may be observed, a preface, petitions, and a conclusion, with a doxology. 1.A preface, "Our Father which art in heaven;" in which the object of prayer is described, by his relation to us, "Our Father," and by the place of his habitation, "which art in heaven". 1a.

First, by the relation he stands in to us, "Our Father" which may be understood of God, essentially considered; of the Three Persons in the Godhead, who are the one God, the Creator, and so the Father of all; in which respect this term, "Father," is not peculiar to any one person in the Deity, but common to all three, being equally "Creators," (Eccl. 12:1) as in the original; and so are addressed as the one God, Creator, and Father of all (Isa. 64:8; Mal. 2:10), and in this sense every man, good and bad, regenerate and unregenerate, may use this prayer, and say, "Our Father": or else this is to be understood of God personally, that is, of one Person in the Godhead, even of God the Father, the first Person, who stands in the relation of a Father in a special sense, the Father of our Lord Jesus, who, such, is the object of prayer (Eph. 3:14), and our Father in Christ; "I go to my Father and your Father," says Christ (John 20:17), my Father by nature, yours by grace; mine by natural filiation, yours by special adoption; our sonship is founded on our conjugal union and relation to Christ, the Son of God, and on our relation to him, as the firstborn among many brethren.

God, as the Father of Christ, has not predestinated us to the adoption of children by him, and to be conformed to his image; but has actually put us among the children, and taken us into his family, by an act of special love and favour (1 John 3:1), of which adoption an evidence is given in regeneration; for such who have "power to become the sons of God," are those who are "born of God;" whom he, as the God and Father of Christ, has "begotten again of abundant mercy," of free grace and favour, of his own good will (John 1:12, 13; 1 Peter 1:3), so that the Father of Christ is our Father, both by adoption and regeneration;

and as such may be addressed by us, as here directed; which shows the true order and manner of prayer, which is to be made to the Father, the first Person; not because of priority of nature, but of order in the Deity; and through the Son, who is the mediator; and by the Spirit, the Spirit of grace and adoption; and which are all laid together in one text (Eph. 2:18), no man can come to the Father but by Christ; and as no man can call Jesus Lord but by the Spirit, so no man can call God "Father," in this special relation, but under the testimony of the Spirit of adoption.

Now the consideration of God as "our Father," in our addresses to him, is of great use: 1a1. To command in us a reverence of God; a son honours and reverences a father, or ought to do; and if God is our Father, he expects honour and reverence; and when we approach him, it should be with "reverence and godly fear;" not with slavish fear, as a servant, but with filial fear, as a son. 1a2. It tends to encourage us to use freedom with him, as children with a father; to pour out our souls before him, and tell him all our mind and all our wants; and "where the Spirit is," as a Spirit of adoption, crying, "Abba," Father, "there is liberty". 1a3.

It will serve to give us boldness at the throne of grace, and a fiducial confidence that we shall have what we ask of him (Luke 11:13). 1a4. The idea of God as our Father, excites in us, and inspires us with sentiments of the tenderness of his heart, of his pity and compassion, and of the great love and affection he bears towards us, and therefore cannot deny us any good thing needful for us (Ps. 103:13; Isa. 63:15, 16; Luke 15:20, 22; 2 Thess. 2:16). 1a5. It cannot but fill us with gratitude for the many favours which he, as a kind indulgent Father, has bestowed on us; having nourished and brought us up, fed us all our lives long, clothed us, and provided everything for us, and protected us from all evils and enemies; and we may say, with David, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, our Father, for ever and ever!" (1 Chron. 29:10). 1a6.

This may teach us subjection to him, the Father of Spirits, and submission to his will, in all things we ask of him (Luke 22:42). 1a7. Addressing him as "our Father," instructs us to pray for others as well as for ourselves, even for all saints; for all the children of God, to whom he stands in the same relation, being the Father of us all (Eph. 4:6). 1b. Secondly, the object of prayer is described by the place of his habitation and residence; "which art in heaven" (see Ps. 123:1).

Not that God is limited, included, and circumscribed in any place, for he is everywhere, and fills heaven and earth with his presence; but as such is the weakness of our minds that we cannot conceive of him but as somewhere, in condescension thereunto he is represented as in the highest place, in the height of heaven; for as he is the high and lofty One, he dwells in the high and lofty place; heaven is his throne, the habitation of his glory, where is his palace, where he keeps his court, and has his attendants; and so is expressive of the greatness of his Majesty, and therefore he ought to be approached with the highest reverence; and such a view of him will lead us to some of the divine perfections, which greatly encourage in the work of prayer; as the omniscience and omnipresence of God (Ps. 11:4, 115:3, 135:5, 6), and "since God is in heaven," and we "upon earth," our "words should be few," but full, and be expressed with great lowliness and humility, with great modesty and self-abasement, as being "but dust and ashes" who speak unto him (Eccl. 5:2; Gen. 18:27), and the consideration of his being in heaven, should draw off our minds from the earth, and all terrestrial things, and from asking them, and teach us to look upwards, to God in heaven, and seek those things which are above, from whence comes every good and perfect gift; and since our Father is in heaven we are directed to pray unto, we should look upon heaven, and not this world, as our native place; if we are born again, we are born from above, are partakers of an heavenly birth, and of an heavenly calling, and should seek the better country, the heavenly one; our conversation should be in heaven, and our hearts be where our treasure is; our Father is in heaven, and our Father's

house and mansions of bliss in it are there; there is our portion, patrimony, and inheritance.

From the preface I pass to consider, 2. The petitions in this prayer, which are six, some make them seven; the first three respect the glory of God: the other our good, temporal and spiritual. 2a. The first petition is, "Hallowed be thy name;" which teaches to begin our prayers with the celebration of the name of God, and with a concern for his glory, and as the end for which he has made all things; nor will he give it, nor suffer it to be given to another; this we should have in view in all we do, and in whatsoever we ask of him; this should be uppermost in our minds, that his great name be glorified (Josh. 7:9).

By his name may be meant God himself, as when saints are said to trust in his name, to fear his name, and to love his name, and the like: or his nature and perfections; as when it is said, "What is his name?" that is, his nature, "if thou canst tell;" and "how excellent is thy name in all the earth!" that is, what a glorious display is there of thy perfections in all the earth (Prov. 30:4; Ps. 8:1), or any of the great names and titles of God, by which he has made himself known; as the Lord God Almighty, Jehovah, &c. (Ex. 6:3) and, indeed, everything by which he has manifested himself, particularly his word, his gospel, which is called his name, and which he has magnified above all and every of his names, and in which the greatest discovery is made of himself, his perfections and glory (John 17:6; Ps. 138:2).

Now when we pray that his name may be "hallowed," or sanctified, for hallowed is an old English word, now in little use, and is the same as sanctified; the meaning is, not that God can be made holy, or be made more holy than he is; for he is originally, underivatively, immutably, and perfectly holy; there is none holy as the Lord: not the holy angels; "The heavens," that is, the inhabitants of the heavens, "are not clean in his sight," when compared with him: but the meaning is, that he be declared, owned, and acknowledged to be holy; as he is by the seraphs in Isaiah's vision, and by the four living creatures around the throne, who continually say, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!" and when the glory due to his holy name is given him, and particularly when thanks are given at the remembrance of his holiness: and he may be said to be hallowed, or sanctified, both by himself and by others, and both may be prayed for in this petition.

He is sanctified by himself when he makes a display of his perfections, as he does in all his works; in the works of creation, of providence, and redemption, and particularly of his holiness and justice (Ps. 145:17), and when he shows his resentment against sin, takes vengeance on it, and inflicts punishment for it; thus he says of Zidon and of Gog, that he shall be known that he is the Lord when he "shall have executed his judgments" on them, "and shall be sanctified in them," (Ezek. 28:22, 38:16, 23) he may be said to sanctify his name, by giving his holy word and holy ordinances to men, which direct them in the paths of holiness and righteousness; and especially by making his people an holy people; he has not only chosen them to be holy, and called them with an holy calling, and unto holiness, but he implants principles of grace and holiness in them, and at last brings them to a state of perfect and unblemished holiness and purity: and his name may be sanctified by others; by civil magistrates, when they act for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well; and by ministers of the word, when they speak according to the oracles of God, that he in all things may be glorified; and by common saints, when they "sanctify the name of the Lord," (1 Peter 2:14, 4:10; Isa. 29:23) and this they do when they exercise the grace of faith, fear, and love; when they believe him, to sanctify his name, the not doing which was resented in Moses and Aaron; and they sanctify him when they make him their fear and dread, and love his name (Num. 20:12; Isa. 8:13; Ps. 5:11), and when they show a regard to his word, worship, and ordinances; "which is but our reasonable service," (Rom. 12:1) and when they study to promote holiness of life in themselves and others (2 Cor. 7:1; 1 Peter 1:15, 16; Matthew 5:16), and are careful that the name of God may not be blasphemed through them, or on their account: and whereas nothing is more contrary to the sanctification

of the name of God, than the profanation of it, by taking it in vain, by swearing falsely by it, and by the horrid oaths and cursings of wicked men; it is sanctified when magistrates punish for these things, ministers inveigh against them, and every good man discountenances and discourages them: and in the use of this petition we pray that the glory of God may be more and more displayed and advanced in the world, in the course of his providence, and the dispensations of it; that his word may run and be glorified, in the conversion and sanctification of sinners; and that there may be an increase of holiness in all his people; and that all profanation of the name of God among men, may be prevented and removed. 2b.

The second petition is, "Thy kingdom come;" the Jews have a saying[6], that prayer, in, which is no mention of the kingdom, that is, of God, is no prayer. It may be inquired, 2b1. First, whose kingdom this is; by the connection of the petition with the preface, it seems to be the Father's kingdom; "Our Father--thy kingdom come;" but as the Father and the Son are one in nature and power, their kingdom is the same; and so it appears to be on one account or another in every sense of it.

There is the kingdom of providence, in which both are jointly concerned; "My Father worketh hitherto," in the government of the world, and the disposition of all things in it, and "I work" with him, says Christ (John 5:17) so that this "kingdom" is also "his": the mediatorial kingdom, which seems more peculiarly Christ's, is in some sense the Father's, since he is the Father's King, whom he has set over his church; and the kingdom he has is by his appointment, for which he is accountable to him, and at the end will deliver it up to the Father (Ps. 2:6; Luke 22:29).

The kingdom of grace, set up in the hearts of the Lord's people, is the kingdom of God, which lies in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; this also is the kingdom of God's dear Son, into which men at conversion are translated. Both the spiritual and personal reign of Christ, the Father has and will have a concern in. When the kingdoms of this world are converted to Christ, they will become the "kingdoms of our Lord," of our Lord God the Father, "and of his Christ," the Son of God.

Christ speaks of drinking wine in his "Father's kingdom," (Matthew 26:29) meaning either in the personal reign, or in the ultimate glory, which is a kingdom prepared by the Father, and is in his gift; and yet is called, "the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:11). 2b2. Secondly, It may be further inquired, which of these kingdoms it is, the coming of which is to be prayed for, as future. It seems not to be the kingdom of providence, since that took place from the beginning of the world; though it may be prayed for, that it might more fully appear, and that there may be a greater display of the power and providence of God in the government of the world; that men may know, as Nebuchadnezzar did, that the most High ruleth in it, to the terror of the wicked inhabitants of it, and to the joy of the righteous (Ps. 97:1, 99:1).

But rather the gospel dispensation, often called the kingdom of God, and of heaven, may be meant, which when this petition was directed to, was not yet come, though near. John and Christ began their ministry with saying, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand;" and which soon came, though not with observation, with pomp and splendour: upon our Lord's resurrection, and especially at his ascension to heaven, it appeared more manifest, when he was made and declared Lord and Christ, and multitudes in the land of Judea became obedient to the faith of him; it had a further advance when the gospel was carried into the Gentile world, and the apostles were caused to triumph every came with power, seen in the destruction of the Jews for their unbelief and rejection of him, those enemies of his who would not have him to reign over them (Matthew 16:28; Mark 9:1), and still more when paganism was abolished, and Christianity established in the Roman empire; on occasion of which it is said, "Now is come the kingdom of our God,

and the power of his Christ," (Rev. 12:10) but this kingdom will come in glory, and which is yet to come, and so to be for, at the destruction of antichrist, and when the spiritual reign of Christ will take place; and this voice will be heard in heaven, "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth!" (Rev. 19:1-6) and still more gloriously, when Christ shall appear a second time in person, and take to himself his great power and reign, called, "his appearing and his kingdom," (2 Tim. 4:1) when he will come in person, and the dead in him shall rise first; which happy dead will be made kings and priests, and shall reign with Christ a thousand years, during which time Satan shall be bound, as to give them no disturbance.

This is yet to come; no such of Satan, and reign of Christ with his saints (Rev. 20:1-10), have as yet been[7]; the personal coming of Christ, and reign with his saints, are still future, and to be prayed for; as by John (Rev. 22:20), and seems to be chiefly intended in this petition, since it is so closely connected with, 2c. The third petition; "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven;" which as yet has never been done in the full sense of it, by any man on earth, excepting our Lord Jesus Christ, but will be done by all the saints in the personal reign of Christ.

The will of God is either secret or revealed; the secret will of God is the rule of his own actions, in creation, providence, and grace (Eph. 1:11; see Rev. 4:11; Dan. 4:35; Rom. 9:15). This is unknown to men, until it appears, either by prophecies of things future, or by facts and events that are come to pass; it is always fulfilled; "Who hath resisted his will?" it cannot be resisted, so as to be null and void. There is no counteracting the will of God; whatever schemes contrary to it, formed by men, are of no avail; "the counsel of the Lord shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure" (Isa. 46:10).

The providential will of God, or what appears in the dispensation of his providence, are a guide to us in our actions; we should say, as James directs us, we will go here and there, do this or that, "if the Lord will," (James 4:14, 15) and even as this will of God appears in adverse dispensations, it should be acquiesced in and submitted to, without murmuring and repining; with respect to every event it should be said, "The will of the Lord be done," (Acts 21:14) in imitation of Eli, Job, David, Hezekiah, and others, and even of our Lord himself (1 Sam. 3:18; Job 1:21, 2:10; 2 Sam. 15:25, 26; Ps. 39:9; Isa. 39:8; Luke 22:42).

The revealed will of God is either what is made known in the gospel, and which expresses the good will of God, his grace and favour, declared in the way and method of saving sinners by Christ, or what is signified in the law, which is the "good, acceptable, and perfect will of God;" the matter of it is "good," and when a right use is made of it, and when rightly and truly obeyed, is "acceptable to God," through Christ, and is a "perfect" rule of life, and conversation to men.

To the doing of which will the knowledge of it is requisite (Col. 1:10). Faith in God; without which it is impossible to please him (Titus 3:8). The grace and spirit of Christ; without which nothing can be done to any purpose; this may be expected, since it is promised, and may in faith be prayed for (Ezek. 36:27) and when it is done aright, it is done with a view to the glory of God, and without any dependence on it; acknowledging, that when we have done all we can, we are unprofitable servants.

The rule of doing the will of God, as expressed in this petition, is, "as it is done in heaven;" meaning not the starry airy heavens, though the inhabitants of them do the will of God, in their way, in a perfect manner; the sun knows, and punctually observes, its rising and setting, and the moon its appointed seasons of change and full, of increase and decrease; and the planetary orbs keep their stated courses; sun, and moon, and stars, praise the Lord, as they are called upon to do, and even the meteors in the air (Ps. 148:3, 8).

But rather the third heavens are meant, the inhabitants of which are glorified saints, the spirits of just men made perfect, and are perfect in their obedience, and the holy angels, who may be chiefly designed; these readily, cheerfully, and voluntarily "do the commandments of God, hearkening to the voice of his word," at once to fulfil it; so in this petition it is desired, that saints do the will of God, "not by constraint, but willingly;" at least not by any other constraint but that of love; angels are thought by some to be called "seraphim" from their flaming love and burning zeal for the glory of God; saints are desirous of being fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, and that in sincerity, in singleness of heart; angels do the will of God speedily, and without delay, hence wings are ascribed unto them, and Gabriel is said to fly with the Lord's message to Daniel; so saints desire, with David, "to make haste, and not delay" to keep the commandments of God; and not some of them only, but all; not a part, but the whole will of God (Ps. 119:60, 61, 128), angels do the will of God constantly, they always behold the face of our Father in heaven, and serve him incessantly, day and night; and saints would, as they should, be "stedfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord;" and though they cannot, in the present state, do it perfectly, as the angels do, yet they are desirous of it, and reach towards perfection; and when the kingdom of Christ comes on earth at his appearing, then will this petition be fulfilled. 2d.

The fourth petition is, "Give us this day our daily bread;" by which is meant, either spiritual or corporal food: some understand it of spiritual food; as the word read, preached, and heard, which is that to the soul as bread is to the body, refreshing, nourishing, and strengthening; and the ordinances, called the goodness and fatness of the Lord's house, particularly the Lord's Supper, the bread of the eucharist; but that was not instituted when this directory was given; and when it was, was not to be administered daily; rather Christ, the bread of life, with respect to which the disciples made a request to Christ similar to this petition; "Lord, evermore give us this bread!" but it seems best of all to understand it of corporal food, which sense the order of the prayer directs to; and which, if not intended, would be imperfect; since then there would be no petition in it for temporal mercies, which yet is necessary.

"Bread," with the Hebrews, includes all the necessities and conveniences of life (see Gen. 3:19, 28:20); the epithets of it are, "our" bread and "daily" bread: ours, not by desert, for we are not worthy of the least mercy; not what we have a natural right to, and a claim upon; Adam had a grant of all good things, sinning, all were forfeited; men in common now enjoy them, through the indulgence of providence; only believers in Christ have a real and proper right unto them; which they have through interest in him, and by being coheirs with him: ours, what we have in a lawful way, by inheritance from our parents, by legacies from our friends, by our own labour and industry, and in a way of lawful trade and commerce: "ours," and not another's; not what is got from others, neither by fraud, and is the bread of deceit; nor by force and rapine, and is the bread of violence and oppression; nor by theft, and is the bread of wickedness; nor enjoyed in sloth, and is the bread of idleness; such bread is not ours, but another's; and, indeed, to live upon alms, is to live on another's bread; and though lawful, is not desirable, but to be deprecated; "Give me neither poverty," &c. and when we are directed to pray, give us our bread, we are taught to pray for others as well as for ourselves; that our fellow creatures and fellow Christians might have bread as well as ourselves; even "the congregation of the Lord's poor," (Ps. 74:19) the other epithet, "daily" bread, the word used, for it is only in this place, and differently rendered; in the Syriac version, "The bread of our necessity," or indigence, what is "necessary for the day," as the Persic version; and seems to be the same Job calls his "necessary food," what is necessary for the support of life, and what our heavenly Father knows we have need of; food that is fit to eat, such as a father will give to a son; not a stone, nor a scorpion, but proper food; as every creature of God, designed for that purpose, is good; so *epiousiov* may signify, that which is fit for our nature, substance, and being, as a learned Lexicographer interprets[8] it; what is fit for the

sustentation of our bodily substance, and the preservation of our life and being; and is what Agur calls food "convenient," suitable to our nature, condition, and circumstances; and as much of it as is "sufficient".

The manna of the Israelites might with great propriety be called their daily bread; since it was rained about their tents every morning, and was gathered by them every day, and that by everyone, "according to his eating;" that is, as much as he could eat, or was proper for him to eat (Ex. 16:16-18). The petition is, "Give us" our daily bread; which shows it is to be prayed for, and to be expected as the gift of God, from whom every good gift comes; and it may be expected, because promised; "Bread shall be given him": and though it is our bread, gotten by our labour and industry, yet it is to be ascribed to the bounty and blessing of God, and acknowledged a gift of his; for it is "the blessing of the Lord upon the diligent hand that maketh rich," (Prov. 10:4, 22) and when we pray that this may be given, we pray for other things to be given with it, or it will be of no avail; as that God would give us health and appetite; for if our bones are chastened with strong pain, and our bodies filled with diseases, we shall be like the sick man, whose "life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat;" and likewise that God would give nourishment with it; for this is not from food itself alone, nor at the option and will of men, but is of God; and therefore a blessing is to be asked upon our food, or otherwise how can we expect it should be nourishing unto us? (see Deut. 8:3; 1 Tim. 4:5) yea, a "power to eat" of what we have is to be asked of God; for some are so unnatural and cruel to themselves, as to withhold from themselves what is meet, as well as from others; for, for a man to eat of the fruit of his labours in a sober way, is the "gift of God," (Eccl. 5:18, 19, 6:2) and what we ask, and God gives us, is for our use, and not to be abused by us; which is neither for true pleasure, nor profit, nor honour; and since what we have is by gift, we should be content with such things as we have, and be thankful for them: and this petition teaches us, that we should be daily dependent on God, and his providence, and not trust in the gift, but in the Giver; and not think to set our "nest on high," out of the reach of providence, and as if delivered "from the power of evil;" but remember, that he that gives can take away (1 Tim. 6:17; Hab. 2:9).

The time when food is to be prayed for is, "this day;" which may teach us the brevity and uncertainty of life, since we cannot boast, promise, and assure ourselves, of a tomorrow; and may instruct us to depress all anxious and immoderate care of what we shall eat, and drink, and wear on the morrow, since we know not what a day may bring forth; and sufficient for the day is both the evil and good of it: and we may learn by it, that our wants may be expected to return on us daily; the food of yesterday will not suffice for this day, nor the food of this day for the morrow; it must be asked for every day: and from hence it appears, that we should pray daily, always, and without ceasing; as the word of God directs. 2e.

The fifth petition is, "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors;" by debts are meant "sins," as appears from Luke 11:4 where the same petition is, "Forgive us our sins;" these are called "debts," not as owing to God; it is obedience we owe to God, and in case of sin, satisfaction to his law; and in failure of obedience, and not making satisfaction, we owe a debt of punishment, and become liable to the curse of the law, to eternal death, which is the wages and demerit of sin; and these debts are numerous, we owe ten thousand talents or more, and cannot answer to one debt of a thousand: men are incapable of paying their debts themselves, nor can any creature pay them for them; and so are liable to a prison.

Christ only is the surety of his people, he has undertook to pay their debts, and has blotted out the hand writing against them. And when we are directed to pray for the forgiveness of these debts, or sins, it supposes a sense of sin, and of the guilt of it, chargeable upon us; and likewise an acknowledgment of it, which God requires, and we are encouraged to give; since if we confess our sins, God is just and faithful to forgive them; also a sense of our inability to pay our debts, and of others paying them for us: and by

application to God for the forgiveness of sins, it shows that we believe that God can forgive sin; and he only, as indeed none can but himself; and he forgives sin freely and fully; we not being able to pay, he frankly forgives, and even all trespasses, and that for Christ's sake, on account of his bloodshed, and satisfaction made: and therefore there is encouragement to pray for the forgiveness of sin, as David, Daniel, and other saints did, and as Christ's disciples and followers are directed to; that is, for the manifestation and application of pardoning grace; which is all that can be meant, and we want; it is not a request that Christ may be sent again to pay our debts for us, and his blood be shed again for the remission of sins, or a new act of pardon pass in the mind of God; but that we may have a fresh application of pardon, already procured and passed; and this we are to pray for daily, since we are daily sinning, in thought, word, and deed; and therefore forgiveness is to be prayed for, as frequently as we pray for our daily bread, with which petition this is joined.

The reason or argument made use of to enforce this petition is, "as we forgive our debtors;" or, as Luke has it, "for we also forgive everyone that is indebted to us;" pecuniary debts are to be forgiven when the debtor is unable to pay; and criminal debts or sins, and injuries committed by one Christian against another, are to be forgiven, as Christ has forgiven them: not that our forgiveness of others is, the cause of God's forgiveness of us; for the moving cause of God's forgiveness is his free favour, grace, and mercy; it is according to the multitude of his tender mercies, and according to the riches of his grace; and not the deserts of men; the meritorious cause of it is the blood of Christ, shed for the remission of sins; and the satisfaction of Christ, for the sake of which they are forgiven.

Nor is our forgiveness of fellow creatures the model of God's forgiveness of us; there is no perfect comparison between them, much less an equality. God forgives as Lord of all, and who has an absolute power so to do; but men forgive those who are their equals, and sinners like themselves; God forgives for Christ's sake, and upon a satisfaction made; but men without, and at most upon repentance; God forgives great sins, and, indeed, all manner of sin; but what man forgives are trivial offences, injuries to their persons or properties; but not sins committed against God.

But this is an argument taken from God's own grace, in the hearts of his people, and as an evidence of it; that if he has given them such grace as to forgive their fellow creatures and Christians, then they may hope and expect, that he who is the God of all grace, and from whom they have received theirs, will forgive their sins, of his rich grace, and for Christ's sake; the reasoning is much the same with that in Luke 11:13. Nor is it to be expected, that God should forgive us our sins without our forgiving the sins of others; nor can we put up such a petition without forgiving others,(see Matthew 6:14, 15, 18:28-35; Mark 11:25, 26). 2f.

The sixth petition is, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil," which some make to be a "sixth" and "seventh;" but they seem to be two parts and branches of the same. 2f1. First, "Lead us not into temptation". There are various sorts of temptation. 2f1a. Some are of God, as, by enjoining things hard, difficult, and trying; so God tempted Abraham, by ordering him to take and offer up his son, on one of the mountains he should show him, whereby he tried his faith in him, his love and obedience to him, and his fear and reverence of him (Gen. 22:1-12), and sometimes by laying afflictions upon his people; which, though they cause heaviness, should be accounted joy; because they try and prove faith and patience, whereby they become more illustrious and precious (1 Peter 1:6, 7; James 1:2, 3), but not by soliciting any to sin (James 1:13), yet there is a sense in which God may be said to lead into temptation, or there would be no occasion to deprecate it; and that either providentially, as Christ himself was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil (Matthew 4:1) and as when things occur in providence, and

objects are presented, which, though good and lawful in themselves, yet meeting with the corruptions of nature, are incentives to, and occasion of sin; as the Babylonish garment, the shekels of silver and wedge of gold spied and found by Achan, were to him; and as a train of circumstances, by meeting together in providence, which led on to David's sin with Bathsheba, (Josh. 7:21; 2 Sam. 11:2) or however permissively; so Satan was suffered to tempt and beguile Eve, and to move and provoke David to number the people, and to sift Peter, and put him on denying his Lord and Master, for which he desired to have him; and God may be said to lead into temptation, when he withdraws the influence of his grace, which only can keep from it; leaves men to the corruptions of their own hearts, as he did Hezekiah (2 Chron. 32:31). 2f1b.

Others are more immediately from Satan himself; hence he is called "the tempter," (Matthew 4:3; 1 Thess. 3:5) he solicits to sin, as he did our first parents, and does all men, both good and bad; he tempts by suggesting evil things into the mind, as he did into Judas, and Ananias and Sapphira; in the one to betray his Lord, and in the other to lie against the Holy Ghost; and by filling good men with doubts and fears, with unbelieving and desponding thoughts about their interest in the love, favour, and grace of God, and even with things blasphemous and atheistical, contrary to the dictates and sentiments of their own minds; all which are very distressing and afflictive, and therefore expressed by buffetings, siftings, and fiery darts; and his temptations with all sorts of persons are managed with great art and cunning, and are suited to the age, circumstances, conditions, constitutions, and tempers of men. 2f1c.

There are other temptations, which are from the world; some from the better things in it, as from riches, which are deceitful, and draw men to set their hearts upon them, and to trust in them, and to covet after them, and to seek to gain them in an illicit way; by which they fall into temptation and a snare, and into foolish and hurtful lusts, and pierce themselves through with many sorrows: and from the honours of it; seeking great things for themselves, honour from men, and not that honour which comes from God; and so are diverted from Christ, his gospel and interest, loving the praise of men more than the praise of God: and from the pleasures of it; the love of which detracts from the love of God; not only the pleasures of sin, to which few have the courage of Moses, to prefer afflictions with the people of God; but even lawful recreations men are tempted to carry to an excess; nay, the very necessities of life, table mercies, prove a snare; the good things of life are abused in their using.

Some temptations arise from what may be called the evil things of the world; as poverty, which may be a temptation to steal, or to do things unwarrantable, either to prevent it, or to relieve under it. And afflictions of various sorts, under which even good men may be tempted either to neglect, overlook, and slight them; or to faint under them, and to murmur and repine at the hand of God upon them. The customs of the world, which are usually vain and sinful, are very ensnaring; and therefore the apostolical advice is, "Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed;" and it is no wonder that worldly and fleshly lusts, or that the sinful things in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, should be enticing and ensnaring, and which, by promising liberty, make men the servants of corruption.

There are temptations to good men from the men of the world; by whom they are enticed to join them in things sinful, and whose conversation and evil communications corrupt good manners. Joseph, by being among Pharaoh's courtiers, learnt to swear by the life of Pharaoh. And the reproaches, menaces, and persecutions of the world, are temptations to men, either to make no profession of religion, or when made, to drop it; such a time is called, the "time of temptation" (Luke 8:13; Rev. 3:10). 2f1d.

There are temptations from the flesh, from indwelling sin, from the corruption of nature, which of all are the worst and most powerful; "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed," (James 1:14) there is a deceitfulness in sin, in internal lust, which sadly entangles, ensnares, and captivates; "the flesh lusteth against the spirit". Now in this petition, "Lead us not into temptation," we pray to be kept from every occasion of sinning, and inclination to it, and appearance of it, and from every object which may allure to it; and that we might be kept from the sin which most easily besets us, or we are most inclined to; and that God would not leave us to Satan and our own corruptions, but hold us up by his power, when only we shall be safe; and that he would not suffer us neither to enter into, nor to fall by a temptation; and especially that we may not sink under it, and be overcome by it; but that we may be able to resist every temptation, and be victorious over all. 2f2.

Secondly, the other branch of the petition is, "but deliver us from evil;" either from the evil of afflictions, called "evil things," because the effects of sin, and disagreeable to men (Luke 16:25), from these God has promised to deliver, and does deliver, and therefore may be prayed for in faith; or from the evil of sin, from committing it; this was the prayer of Jabez (1 Chron. 4:10) and from the guilt of it on the conscience, by the blood of Christ, the same with the forgiveness of it; and from the dominion of it, that it might not reign in us; such a prayer see in Psalms 19:13, 119:133, and from the being of it, and the sad effects of it (see Rom. 7:23, 24); or from evil men, unreasonable and cruel; from falling into their hands, and being ill used by them (2 Thess. 3:9), and especially from the "evil one," Satan, and from his temptations; and agrees with the former part of the petition. 3. his prayer is concluded with a doxology, or ascription of glory to God; "For thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, for ever" (see 1 Chron. 29:11); and these may be considered as so many reasons, pleas, and arguments, for obtaining the things requested, and to encourage faith therein; "For thine is the kingdom," of nature, providence, grace, and glory; and so all things appertaining thereunto, are at the dispose of God: "and the power;" to give daily bread, to forgive sin, to preserve from temptation, to support under it, and deliver out of it: "and the glory;" arising from all this, to whom alone it is due; and to be for ever given: "Amen," a note of asseveration of the truth herein contained; and used as an assent to the petitions made, and as a wish for the fulfilment of them; and as expressive of faith and confidence, that they would be answered. ENDNOTES:

[1] Tertullian. de Oratione, c. 1.

[2] Cyprian. de Orat. Domin. p. 265.

[3] Harmenopolus apud Witsii Exercitat. 6. de Orat. Domin. s. 28.

[4] Cateches. Racov. Qu. xix. and xx.

[5] Of the Agreement between them see Gill on "Matthew 6:9" and following, in which I have the happiness to agree with those celebrated writers, Witsius in Exercitat. 6. de Orat. Dominic. s. 32. & Vitringa de Synagog. vet. l. 3. par. 2. c. 8. p. 962. et c. 18. p. 1099.

[6] T. Bab. Beracot. fol. 40. 2.

[7] "Quos mille annos ligati Satanae in ecclesiae historia non invenio; nunquam enim tamdiu ligatus fuisse videtur diabolus." Witsii Orat. Dominic. Exercitat. 9. s. 24. p. 151.

[8] ο επι της ουσιας ημων αρμοζων, Suidas in voce, επιουσiov.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/john-gill/of-the-lords-prayer/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net