

# Learn to Pray, Part 5

Jack Hughes

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We're still continuing on [in] learning how to pray. If you have your Bibles, you can turn to Luke 11, where we are going to chisel away at another little piece [of the Disciples' Prayer] this morning.

In the book *The Kneeling Christian*, chapter 5 is entitled "What Is Prayer?" and the unknown author who wrote the book begins the chapter with this story about evangelist and preacher Dwight L. Moody.

Mr. Moody was once addressing a crowded meeting of children in Edinburgh. To get their attention he began with a question: "What is prayer?"—looking for no reply and expecting to give the answer himself.

To his amazement scores of little hands shot up all over the hall. He asked one lad to reply, and the answer came at once, clear and correct: "Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God for the things agreeable to His will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of His mercies."

Mr. Moody's delighted comment was, "Thank God, my boy, that you were born in Scotland."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Available from <http://www.prayertoday.org/classics/kneelingchristian/5.htm>

The boy's answer was good. [First], it was good because prayer *is* “an offering up of our desires to God for the things that are agreeable to His will.” We pray, ask[ing] Him for things, but we do it wanting His will to be done. That is right on. Second, prayer is to be offered up in the name of Christ. It is only in having a relationship with Christ that we can have access to the throne of grace to find “help and mercy in a time of need” [see Hebrews 4:16]. Third, prayer must be offered up with our sins confessed. He had that right, too. Even a believer's prayers, the Scriptures say, are not heard unless he has his sins confessed [see Isaiah 59:2]. Finally, we need to pray in thankful acknowledgement of God and His mercies, realizing that even prayer itself, let alone [its] answer, is a mercy given to us that we do not deserve.

Where do you suppose that young boy, and obviously many others in that room, in front of Dwight L. Moody, learned such a[n] amazing definition [of] prayer? It was [from] the Westminster Shorter Catechism. A “catechism” is a teaching tool [in which] you put together certain truths. In this case, the Westminster Catechism is a synthesis of some of the essential doctrines found in the Bible. The Westminster Shorter Catechism was written in 1640 by none other than the Puritans, who assembled at Westminster Assembly, producing three great documents: the Westminster Confession of Faith<sup>2</sup>, the Westminster Larger Catechism<sup>3</sup>, and the Westminster Shorter Catechism<sup>4</sup>, which was for those who were basically unlearned. The Shorter Catechism is written in question and answer format. The first question is pretty famous, and known by a lot of people: “What is the chief end of man?” The answer: “To glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.”

It just so happens that there are 107 questions in the Westminster Shorter Catechism. The last nine questions in the Shorter Catechism are all focused on the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6. Children, growing up, were taught to memorize the catechism. Their parents would ask them the ques-

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<sup>2</sup>Available from [http://www.reformed.org/documents/wcf\\_with\\_proofs/index.html](http://www.reformed.org/documents/wcf_with_proofs/index.html)

<sup>3</sup>Available from [http://www.reformed.org/documents/wlc\\_w\\_proofs/index.html](http://www.reformed.org/documents/wlc_w_proofs/index.html)

<sup>4</sup>Available from <http://www.reformed.org/documents/wsc/index.html>

tion, and they were to reply back. [The parents] would keep pushing [their children] until they had it memorized. If you have a child, you know that when they're very young they can really suck up a lot of information, can't they? When you're old, it's like trying to push water into a granite boulder, but when you're young, [your brain is] like a sponge.

I remember when Leah was three years old. We would read books to her, and so when I would get home, I would read books, and she would always bring this little Cinderella book. It had a picture with a few little lines [of text] below each picture. She would always bring that and other books. She loved that book. One night, I was just kind of kidding her, and I said, "Oh, you read it to Daddy." I opened it up to the first page, and she read it. I said, "This one," [and] she read that page. We went through and she read the whole book. Now, what was amazing [was] that she didn't know how to read. She had memorized the entire book, and when I would point to a picture, she knew all the words to say with that picture. It was then [that] I realized, "OK, away with the fairy tales. We're getting into 'Bible Stories for Tiny Tots' and Louis Berkof's *Systematic Theology*."

What's amazing is [that] all those boys sitting in front of Dwight L. Moody had memorized all the way down at least through the first ninety-eight questions [of the Shorter Catechism]. Most of them surely had all of the Westminster Confession of Faith memorized. You could ask them pretty much any question on any doctrine and [they would give a] perfect scriptural answer. That's why we have AWANA here, isn't it? We have AWANA because we want to hide God's Word in people's hearts because God's Word saves people [and] God's Word sanctifies people. So we get little kids together when their brains are soft little sponges, and we stuff them full of Scripture. But we should not only stuff them full of Scripture, but [of] doctrine [as well]. Scripture [is] the Word of God; doctrine [is] the synthesized truths of what the Bible as a whole teaches.

The ninety-eighth question [of the Westminster Shorter Catechism] is: "What is prayer?" The ninety-ninth question is: "What rule has God given for our direction in prayer?" See if you can answer these in your mind as I

go through the last few questions [of the catechism], and see if you could do as well as the little kids in the room [with Moody did]. Answer: “The whole Word of God is of use to direct us in prayer, but the special rule of direction is that form of prayer which Christ taught His disciples commonly called the Lord’s Prayer.”

Question 100: “What does the preface of the Lord’s Prayer teach us?” [Answer:] “The preface of the Lord’s Prayer, which is, ‘Our Father who is in heaven,’ teaches us to draw near to God with all holy reverence and confidence, as children to a father, able and ready to help us; and that we should pray with and for others.”

Question 101: “What do we pray for in the first petition?” [Answer:] “In the first petition, which is, ‘Hallowed be your name,’ we pray that God would enable us, and others, to glorify him in everything by which he makes himself known; and that he would cause all things to work for his own glory.”

Question 102: “What do we pray for in the second petition?” [Answer:] “In the second petition, which is, ‘Thy kingdom come,’ we pray that Satan’s kingdom may be destroyed; and that the kingdom of grace may be advanced, ourselves and others brought into it, and kept in it; and that the kingdom of glory may be hastened.”

Skipping question 103 because it pertains to Matthew 6, which, of course, has a couple phrases [the Disciples’ Prayer in] Luke doesn’t, [I’ll move] down to question 104: “What do we pray for in the fourth petition?” or the third petition in Luke. [Answer:] “In the fourth petition, which is, ‘Give us this day our daily bread,’ we pray that of God’s free gift we may

receive a competent portion of the good things of this life, and enjoy his blessing with them.”<sup>5</sup>

It is [to] this last petition that I want to turn our attention this morning: “Give us [each] day our daily bread” [Luke 11:3]. We have already learned from the first few verses [of Luke 11] that Jesus was praying. He was an example. The disciples saw this example, and they themselves wanted to learn how to pray like Jesus. They asked Jesus to teach them, and He says [that] the first thing you need to know, as we just read from the Confession, is that you pray to the Father—a loving, compassionate, dear, close, intimate, literal heavenly Father to those who know Jesus Christ as their Savior. Second, pray that the Father would be glorified—His name would be hallowed, revered, respected in all things, that God would bring to pass the glorification of Himself in all things. Thirdly, to pray that the Father’s kingdom, which is the kingdom of Christ, the Messianic kingdom, the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth following His Second Coming, would be established on the earth.

So, we have the Person [to whom] we are to pray, and then the first two highest priority prayer requests: that God’s name would be glorified, and that the kingdom of Christ would come so that God’s will would “be done on earth as it is in heaven” [Matthew 6:10]. The grand purpose of prayer is the glory of God. Now, you may be out there thinking, “Jack, you already told us this.” Well, I’m going to tell you again because a lot of our prayers still aren’t fixed. There are still a lot of selfish prayers going on in the Church, [in which] we pray for ourselves and for our ends. When we pray correctly, [however], we pray that God might be glorified, and God is always glorified when we pray that His will would be done, not ours. In the Church today as a whole, there is so much selfish prayer that has no desire to give God glory at all. If we don’t know something is God’s will, we should at least pray, “Yet not [my] will, but Yours be done” [see Luke

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<sup>5</sup>Available at: <http://www.reformed.org/documents/wsc/index.html>

22:42]. The first two petitions are about God, His glory, and His kingdom, and these should be our greatest concerns when we pray.

As I pray through the prayer sheet each week, I can still tell that we [as a congregation] are not applying what we're learning, because there [are] tons of prayer requests about physical healing, but very few "Thy will be done's" on the end of them. Often, people pray for physical healing above salvation. They pray for physical healing above sanctification, and believe me it's more important that someone goes to heaven than that they live a healthy life and die to go to hell. It's more important that someone grow in godliness and die young than continue to live and not grow in godliness. It's actually better to die, isn't it? I mean, isn't that what we believe? "To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord" [see 2 Corinthians 5:8]? It is much better, then, to be absent and present with Christ than to continue on in this sin-cursed world, in this sin-cursed body.

So why are we praying so diligently for people to remain on in the curse? When someone knows the Lord, the Scriptures say, "they will live even if they die" [see John 11:25], right? "He who believes in Me will live even if he dies." Knowing God, knowing Christ, knowing sound doctrine, [and] growing in godliness is more important than physical, temporary things. Therefore, they should take up the bulk of our prayer under the glory of God. Why? [It is] because they feed into the glory of God, because they feed into the kingdom of Christ to come. How is that? [It is] because the only way we can give God glory is if we grow in sanctification, if we know Christ. First you [have] to know Christ to give Him glory, then you have to grow in holiness to give Him glory because the only way we can express love to God is if we obey Him.

Regardless of our health, our age, our physical condition, knowing God, knowing the Word of God, knowing sound doctrine, and living the truth are eternal issues. You can always pray for those and know it's God's will. You don't even have to put "if it be Thy will" [in a prayer for those things because] He says it in His Word. I would encourage you, when you're reading your Bible (and I know you are, right?) every day, and you come across a

prayer in the New Testament, just stop and don't just read it, but read what's being prayed for. You'll find out that there are all kinds of prayer requests for people to learn the truth and [for] people to obey the truth. Why? [It's] because that's how we give God glory.

Having said that, this doesn't mean that God is not concerned about temporal things. It doesn't mean He doesn't care about food, and clothing, and jobs, and cars, and things. But if you're only going to pray [for] ten minutes a day (and I know you're all at least praying that, right? Amen. That's right.), then at least pray for the high-priority things: the glory of God, the kingdom of Christ, those things that are going to contribute [to] and focus [on] God being glorified. Pray that God's name would be lifted up, exalted; that Jesus' kingdom would come. But know that God, in His great mercy, is even concerned about temporal things like your health, finances, clothing, and [even] iPods. (If you don't know what an iPod is, it's because you're too old. Just be thankful. [Young people] don't know what an "album" is. They think you put pictures in it.)

Look at Luke 11:1, [and] follow along as I read down through verse 3:

It happened that while Jesus was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples." And He said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread.'"

We're going to stop here for this morning. This morning, we arrive at this third prayer request [in] Luke's version of the Disciples' Prayer, found in verse 3, "Give us each day our daily bread," a prayer request for having our personal needs met. Now, listen very carefully. It's not that we're leaving the glory of God or the kingdom of Christ [behind]. [We are to pray for] God's name to be glorified, and then the kingdom of Christ to come. We aren't saying, "Now, what we're doing by praying for our daily needs is we're setting these [first two] things aside so that we can now pray for

things for us.” No. With the glory of God in mind, and the kingdom of Christ on the horizon, we pray for our daily needs *so that* we can give God glory and hasten the coming of the kingdom. So, the glory of God and the kingdom of Christ, the shadow of that, the umbrella of that, needs to still be over prayer requests for even basic needs.

As you can imagine, in a church like this—in a building like this, not a church, you are the Church, this is the building the Church meets in—there are a lot of doors. Every one of these doors has a key. When I first came here, Don [Churnock] said, “Let me give you the keys to the church,” and he handed me this wad [of keys]. It was like an anchor.

I said, “You’re kidding.”

He said, “No, if you want to get in the doors of the church, this is what you need.” And he [said], “But I’m working on fixing that.”

I said, “OK.” What happens is [that] you have one key that gets you into a door [or] area. Then there are some other keys that actually get you into two or three areas. They’re kind of keys with a little more power. Then, if you have a very special key, a key that Don Churnock calls the “\$3,500 key” because it costs \$3,500 to re-key all the locks if you lose it, you have the grand master [key]. [It’s] right here, and if you want to borrow it, the answer is “no.” That \$3,500, grand master key opens everything.

The grand master key for you giving glory to God is to know Jesus Christ as your Savior, to repent of your sins, to believe that Christ died for you, that He was buried and rose again on the third day. [When] you get saved, it unlocks to you the ability to give God glory and to participate in the kingdom of Christ to come. As we pray, even for daily, temporal, earthly needs—for things like health, and cars, and things destined to perish—we keep our eyes, our aim, on the glory of God and the kingdom of Christ to come. As we pray for all these little things, these temporal things, we pray for them in light of those two great things. That’s how we must pray.

Do you remember what James says in James 4:3? “You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.” You want a new luxury car? Why? [Is it] so you can spend

it on your pleasures? You want a TV, a stereo, an appliance, a whatever? Why? [Is it] so you can indulge your flesh? You want a new iPod—one of the new eighty-gigabyte-ers? Why? [Is it] so you can stuff your head with secular music that is dishonoring to God? You want to get healed of some illness? Why? [Is it] so you can live longer in rebellion against God? Why do you ask for the things [for which] you ask? [The reason] must be the glory of God [and] the kingdom of Christ to come.

Thomas Watson, in his work *The Lord's Prayer*, said:

One man is sick, and he prays for health that he might be among his cups and harlots; another prays for an estate; he would not only have his belly filled, but his barns; and he would be rich that he may raise his name, or that, having more power in his hand, he may now take a fuller revenge on his enemies. It is impiety joined with impudence to pray to God to give us temporal things that we may be better enabled to serve the devil.<sup>6</sup>

So why do you pray for what you want? That is the question. Our prayers must be motivated by the glory of God and the kingdom of Christ to come, and if you cannot pray with those clear motives, then don't pray for that thing. If you're not sure, then just say, "Lord, but not my will, Thine be done. I want the BMW, I think it might be able to be used for Your glory, but I'm not sure. Not my will, but Yours be done." If God gives you more than you need, you should thank Him, and praise Him for it, but know that when Jesus [in His prayer in Luke 11] goes from a Godward focus to the manward needs, He's not departing from the two great, overarching priorities in prayer. He is merely addressing the physical needs so that we can do the first two. You need food so you can glorify God. You need things so you can lead others to Christ.

Having said that, let's look at the third request in [Luke 11]:3, [from which] we can extract five principles for praying to the glory of God. [If]

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<sup>6</sup>Available from <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/watson/prayer.vii.html>

you're thinking, "How do you get that out of there?" You will see. (And actually there were a couple more, but I left them off because time is going to run out.) One: Pray, acknowledging [from] where all things come. Jesus already told us to pray to the Father, [and] now He tells us to acknowledge that all things come from God. It is indicated by the word "give." When we come to God, and we say, "Give us," what we're really saying is: "Lord, we know You have the resources, and we want them from You because all things come from You." That's good.

Moses said, in Deuteronomy 8:18: "But you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth." God enables people to make money. It's never their industry; it's never their intelligence; it's God and it's only God. You could have been born without a brain and died [immediately]. You could have been born in a country where you were poor and destitute. You could have died as a teenager. God is the one who has preserved you. God is the one who gave you your brain. God is the one who gave you your opportunities, your education—everything you have. God is the one who gives you the power to make wealth. It isn't you; it's God.

David prayed in 1 Chronicles 29:12: "Both riches and honor come from You, and You rule over all, and in Your hand is power and might; and it lies in Your hand to make great and to strengthen everyone." Did you see that? Riches, power, strengthening, [and] greatness all come from God, not ourselves. Forget what the world says, [it's] wrong. It's God. It's not you and your great abilities. "Oh, man, I can run faster than you." Yeah, but who gave you your legs?

"I've got a higher IQ than you." Well, who gave you your brain?

"Oh, yeah, but you don't know. I mean, hey, I am skilled at what I do." Who gave you those skills? "Well, I worked on it." Who gave you life while you worked on it?

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 4:7: "For who regards you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?" Hello! It's not you! James says, in

James 1:17: “Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.” Every good thing you have is from God. He is the giver of all good things, and you need to acknowledge that. It’s important for you to acknowledge that God is the source of all good things.

[Two]: Pray for yourself. Look at the second word in [Luke 11]:3: “Give *us*” [emphasis added]. “Us” is a first-person plural pronoun, and the “us” includes yourself. When you say, “Give us,” you include yourself in that. You are to pray for yourself. God expects you to ask [for] things for yourself. Is this selfish? Is this wrong? [You might think], “Jack, you shouldn’t be asking [for] things for yourself.” Well, it depends. If you ask [for] things for yourself so you can indulge your flesh, pump up your pride, look good in the business world, and attract attention to yourself, yeah, that would be bad [because] you’re asking [for] things from God [with which] to sin, to self-glorify yourself. But what if your motive is the glory of God? What if you want things for yourself so you can give God more glory? That’s good. “Lord, if it be Your will, I would like a new car so I can get involved in church, drive people around, [and] have reliable transportation.”

“Lord, I want a house so I can host Bible studies, practice hospitality, and have guests over.” Now, if you pray those things, don’t think you’re going to be fooling God, thinking, “Well, if I could just trick God into giving me these things, I could then indulge my flesh.” God knows. You may be able to fool us, but you’re not going to be able to fool God. He knows your heart.

Some prayers are, by nature, directed at God’s glory. They’re easy, like, “Lord, help me glorify You.” What do you think [are] the [chances] of that prayer being answered? They’re pretty good—probably right at 100 percent.

“Help me to be more like Jesus.”

God’s up there, “I don’t know. I don’t know.”

“Help me share the gospel with the lost.”

“Hmmm. I don’t know if I should help you out with that one.”

“Help me to abstain from sin.” There [are] a lot of prayers that you could pray that you’re just definitively certain that God is going to answer. Those are great prayers to pray because you know God is going to pull through [on them]. Jesus said, in Matthew 7:8: “For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.” Jesus said in Matthew 21:22, said: “And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.” Part of prayer is asking God. Ask, and ask big, *if* it’s for His glory.

Just think about this. If I’m asking for something for God’s glory, why would I ask for little things? So I could give Him a little glory? “Lord, I just pray that this year You’d help me share the gospel with two people.” Oh? Why not 100? Why not 1,000? God can answer the prayer any way He wants, but why not pray big? If your motive is really the glory of God, why not pray big? “Oh, Lord, help me get at least a four percent pay increase so I can give some more [money] to the building fund.” Why not a 300 percent increase so you can *really* give? If you ask for things with a desire to give God glory, then ask big so you can give God *lots* of glory.

Alexander the Great had a faithful courtier, who[m] he wished to reward. And he told him, “Ask for anything you want.”

And so, the courtier did, and his request was so large that it staggered and offended the king’s treasurer, who basically said, “How could you dare ask that much from the king?”

And the courtier replied, “Well, it’s not so for Alexander. Though it was much for a subject to ask, it was not too much for Alexander to give.”<sup>7</sup>

When you pray to an all-powerful God, there is no request that is too great for Him to give, for He is the God of the impossible. If your motives are pure, and if your motives are for His glory, then quit asking Him for grains of sand. Ask big. If He gives you the grain, fine, but ask big. Quit dabbling around in little, puny prayer requests. “Oh, great! I got to share the gospel with somebody this year.” Oh, incredible! Well, praise God, it’s

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<sup>7</sup>Paraphrased from Spurgeon, “Savior’s Charity,” vol. 61.

better than zero, but why not [pray to reach] 1,000 [people]? If your motive for asking great things is yourself, don't bother, [but] if it's [for] God's glory, bother big.

[Three]: Pray for others. The first-person plural pronoun [used in Luke 11:3], "us," not only includes ourselves, [but] it also includes others. "Give us" means we need to be praying for others. After Paul exhorts us to put on the full armor of God in Ephesians 6:10–17, he then says in verse 18: "With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints." We are to be praying for all other Christians—not only [those] in this congregation, but all of them [everywhere].

Paul says to Timothy in 1 Timothy 2:1: "First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men." He's talking about the Church; he's talking about even corporate worship here. We are to be praying for all men. What do you think we need to pray for them first? [We need to pray] for their salvation. If not for their salvation, then we need to pray that at least, if they're going to stay unsaved, that they will allow us to live a godly life, a tranquil life, so that we can continue to proclaim the gospel and worship our God. [We must have] God-glorifying motives. You need to be praying for all the saints, and all men, and guess what the motive is? It's still the glory of God. As we have mentioned, all of this begins with their salvation.

Thomas Watson said:

Spiders work only for themselves, but bees work for the good of others. The more excellent anything is, the more it operates for the good of others. Springs refresh others with their crystal streams; the sun enlightens others with its golden beams; the more a Christian is ennobled with grace, the more he besieges heaven with his prayers for others.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Available from <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/watson/prayer.vii.html>

Just attack heaven with prayers for other people. Don't stop. [Do] you know somebody who [you] want to get saved? You pray for him; you pray him into the kingdom. You keep banging on the door. (As soon as we get to the latter part of [Luke] 11, if that ever happens, we'll see what that is [see Luke 11:5–8].) We all know that one of the distinguishing characteristics of the Christian is love. Love seeks to do what is best for the other person, and what is best for the other person is that you pray for him. John 13:35 [reads]: "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." If you love people, you're going to pray for them. That's what we are to be doing.

There are times when people complain about my preaching. "Oh, it's too long. Oh, it's too technical. I can't handle it. I don't like [how you] said this."

I just feel like saying, "Listen, have you been praying for me every day?" I know the answer. "Well, you get what you pray for. I'm the product of your own lacking prayer life. Get on it! You want me to be a better preacher? Throw down some hours for me. I need the power!"

Think of all the petty grievances, annoyances, frustrations, anger, and bitterness that are churning in the church because, "Well, this person got into my ministry."

"This person stole this person away from my ministry."

"Oh, I don't like that person. That person offended me. That person did this." You need to just stop all that, and say, "Have I been praying for that person?" You get what you pray for. Could you handle [that person] if he was just like Jesus? "Well, yeah." Then, what are you waiting for? Pray him into Jesus' likeness. Don't get all frustrated, complaining, and angry because he's not like Jesus. Pray for him: Pray for his sanctification [and] growth. Pretty soon he'll become so godly you'll love him. "I love being around that person. Man, he is godly." You can praise God that He answered your prayer. You might even become more godly in the process.

Surely, when we're praying, we need to be praying for other people. I don't know if you're one of those people who [goes] for short little prayers

that are all about you and what you want, and dealing with your sin, but you need to branch out. Sickness and physical death, you need to remember, can't kill a Christian, so let's not be praying just for [the] physical well-being [of others]. Believers live even if they die. Paul reminds us in 1 Timothy 4:7–8: “Discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the” death to come? No, [for] “the life to come.” You live now; you live then. [If] you pray for somebody to be godly, [and] he's godly now, he [will] take that godliness with him. [If] you pray for somebody to get a car, it stays behind. [If] you pray that somebody's physical body stays healthy, it rots in the grave until the Resurrection. Pray for those things that will have promise, not only in this life, but [also] in the life to come, because those things are the things that will generate glory to God for all eternity. Pray for others. Yes, you can pray for their physical healing, their vacations, their safe travel, their jobs, maybe even for their cat (I don't know about that one), but pray that whatever you are praying for gives glory to God.

Four: Pray for God's daily supply. If you look at [Luke 11:]3, you will see that Jesus instructs us to pray, “Give us *each day* our *daily* bread” [emphasis added]. This might be translated, “Give us the bread we need for the coming day, or the days yet future.” Why do you think Jesus tell us to do that? Think about that. Why would Jesus say, “I want you to pray for daily needs”? You [might] think, “Well, that's kind of basic, you know?” [Jesus instructs us to pray that way] because you need those daily needs [in order] to glorify Him, to lead others to Christ, to serve Him, [and] to love other people. That's why. Also, [you are to pray that way] because it's important for you to humble yourself and [to] realize that even the basic necessities of life come from God, and you need to ask [Him] for them.

One of the things that I'm trying to work on in my life is ask[ing] God to help me in everything. Sometimes you can kind of rationalize, “At the beginning of the day I had my prayer time, and I [therefore] kind of get some overarching, blanket prayer, [like] God help me today, [and that cov-

ers the whole day].” Then, through the day, you forget about God and do things on your own. Well, I don’t want to be that way. I don’t want to say, “Well, hey, Lord, it’s New Years’ Day. Bless me this year [and] help me to glorify You. I’ll catch You next year.” I want to ask God to help me when I sit down and I’m going to read my Bible [and] when I’m going to call somebody. “Lord, help me to encourage this person, and [to] listen, and [to] speak with wisdom.” [Then], “Now that I’m working on my sermon, help me to understand the text, to have good insight, to illustrate it well, and [to] make it clear, concise, and helpful to people.” And, “Now that I have to clean my desk off, help me to be efficient, [to] get things put in the right place, and [to] do what I need to do.” And, “Now that I’m going back to deal with this person who is coming in, help me to counsel him wisely.” So all day I’m asking God for help, and not just once, but through the process, I’m asking God. Why? [It’s] because when I do that all day long, every day, I can look back at the end of the day, and I have tons of things to praise God for because I see how He has met my every little need.

But if I don’t do that, then what happens is [that] God still meets those little needs, but I don’t give Him glory, [and] I don’t acknowledge my trust in Him, that I need Him. I basically become presumptuous, and I take those things He supplies all day long for granted. I [end up] only us[ing] God for a fire escape. When there’s a big thing, I go to God. When there’s an emergency, I go to God. When someone needs [to be] saved, I go to God. When somebody is in the hospital, I go to God. But, the rest of the time, I [act as though I only] need me, and [like] I can handle it myself. That’s why you need to come to God and ask for the basics, because when you ask for the basics, then you know you need everything else. It keeps you humble, it gives you the right perspective, and it keeps you from trusting in yourself.

[Five]: Pray for the things that you need. “Give us each day our daily bread.” Why does Jesus tell us to pray for bread here? Why not [catch a] fish or something? Why not rice? Well, if He [had been] in Asia, He probably would have used rice. “Bread” was just a staple food that everybody ate at that time [and in that location]. The Jews ate bread. It was just a standard

staple that they needed to survive. So, the type of food is not significant here. The meaning of that food, or the significance of the bread, is that [it represents] the basic necessities [that we must have] to sustain us in life. That's what the emphasis is here. And you know what? Most Americans have no idea what a "need" is. We are so rich, so spoiled, and so affluent that we *think* we actually need cars. We actually think we need more than one set of clothing. We actually think we need makeup, and our daily Starbucks, and if not that, at least home-brewed coffee. We *have* to have a TV, at least one radio, at least one computer, a washer, a dryer—or at least access to those things—a toaster, hair curlers, and whatever. You know? If [someone says], "Oh, you don't need that," [the response is]: "What? I do too need my TV!" No, you don't.

It would be good for all of us to go visit Beth Mack for a week in South Africa, and go to that little settlement, actually the big settlement, outside of Johannesburg—Katlehong—where over a million people are living in little, ten[-foot] by twelve[-foot] tin shacks with dirt floors and no running water or electricity. And to just be there for a week, and wander around, and talk to people, and observe them. And to realize that here in this little, ten[-foot] by twelve[-foot-] shack [in which you] have six or eight people living on old, dirty mattresses lying on the floor. And you see that woman out there, with a very wrinkled face, and bony fingers, scrubbing her clothes, and her children's clothes, in a beat-up tin with no soap. And to look around and to see little children running, and laughing, and playing, totally content. And to see people who don't have jobs standing outside along the street, talking, visiting, enjoying one another's company, though they have no furniture, they have no electricity, no running water, no job, no insurance. They can't even afford a Starbucks [coffee]. They don't even know what that is. And they live that way every day, and you know what? I would say that most of them are happier than most of us. How can that be? [It is] because they have their needs met, [and] because wants often drag us away from God and turn us into practical atheists and self-indulgent sinners.

Jesus wants us to pray for the things we *need* to keep ourselves reminded of what is essential and what is optional so that we get a good picture of just how graced we are, living in this country. Don't get me wrong. I'm not saying that God wants us to feel guilty because we [have] nice things, houses, lots of clothes, and just a super-abundance. Not at all. What I am saying is [that] you need to realize you [have] it, that it has come from God, that you don't deserve it, and you should be thankful for it.

Let's say you enter some sweepstakes and you win a car. God did that. It was not chance, it was not luck; it was God. He gives you things. He gives you more things than you need. Praise Him for it! Thank God for it, and use it for His glory. God knows the plans He has for you [see Jeremiah 29:11]. He knows exactly what you need. If He knew you could handle great riches, He'd give [them] to you. If He knows you can't [handle them], He won't [give them to you], unless He wants to punish you with [them]. Sometimes God will bless people just so He can punish them with it. "OK, all right, you aren't learning your lesson? OK, I'm going to give you a huge chunk of cash so you can really bottom out and learn your lesson." Sometimes He teaches us with poverty, sometimes with riches, but He knows what He's doing, and He never makes a mistake.

You can ask for daily needs, and when He gives them to you, great. If He gives you that great job, that great car, lots of things, fine, but if He takes them away, don't fall into a depression because you don't have what you want, because you don't have what you never deserved in the first place. Do you remember when Agur prayed in Proverbs 30:8-9:

Keep deception and lies far from me, Give me neither poverty  
nor riches; Feed me with the food that is my portion, That I not  
be full and deny You and say, "Who is the Lord?" Or that I not  
be in want and steal, And profane the name of my God.

Watson comments that many pray "give me not poverty," but few pray, "give me neither riches." Have you ever prayed that one? Abundance often

leads us away from God, so be content with what you have because when God gives us an abundance, we often say, “Who is the Lord?” because we become our own gods.

When you leave here today, acknowledge [that] all things [are] coming from God. Ask for things for yourself for the glory of God. Ask [for] things for others for the glory of God. Ask [for] things daily so you can be humble [and] acknowledge [that] you need God day by day. Ask God for even the most basic needs so that you realize that everything you have, down to the paperclips, are from God. That will give you a proper perspective. So, keep praying at least ten minutes a day. It’s OK if you pray more. Some people have come up to me, and said, “I’m doing my ten minutes.” It’s OK if you go over. If you slip over into eleven, twelve minutes, that’s fine, but [definitely] do [at least] ten. We’re going to keep doing this until we make it a habit, and then we’re going to stretch it out toward the end. Let’s pray.

Father, we thank You for what we learned in this text. What amazing, amazing truths are packed into the Disciples’ Prayer. Father, we want to be people who pray for Your glory, who pray for Your kingdom to come, who, Father, acknowledge that You are the giver of all things; that, Father, we need to pray for ourselves; that we need to pray for others; that we need to pray daily; and that we need to pray, acknowledging that everything we have, even the little things, must come from You. Oh, Father, help Calvary Bible Church become a church of prayer, and help our prayers align themselves with Your will and the pattern of prayer that You have established in Your Word for us, that we might give You more glory, and that in turn, we might be more blessed that we might give You more glory. We pray this in Jesus’ name, Amen.

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