

Weaving the Word

The Lord's Pattern

Part 34 – June 7, 2015

Welcome to where we're trying to learn to discern the difference between religion and good news!

How much of your faith do you own?



And how much is on loan, *piggybacking* on someone else's faith?

Nothing reveals ownership like our prayers.

This is where you get to open up to the Lord on an intimate level; because, **He cares about what you care about.**

We can share our innermost self, and adore and appreciate Him.



But, **do you struggle to put your thoughts into prayers?** It's common. It's normal. But **it's a problem that needs to be solved ... with God's help.**

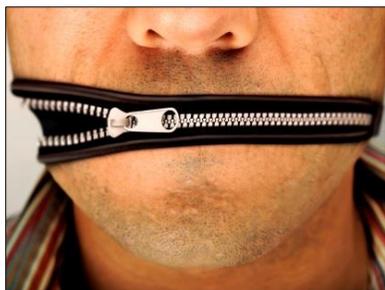
Now, the simplicity of the Lord's Prayer is deceiving. **It's easy to think of it as nothing more than a nice little prayer.**

Wrong on all accounts!



It's not NICE. It's radical! Disagreeable. *So unlikable* that it took Jesus' disciples two-and-a-half years to adopt it! (Luke 11:1)

They couldn't stop babbling through the traditional Jewish, 10-minute, Amidah prayer three times every weekday. *That's Fifteen times a week!*

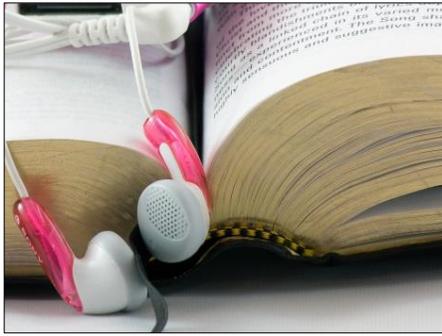


And, **it's not LITTLE. It's all-encompassing**, especially considering the warning against offering a *sacrifice of fools*. (Ecc 5:1)

Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. **God is in heaven** and **you are on earth**, so **let your words be few**. – Ecclesiastes 5:2 NIV

For your sake and for heaven's sake learn to listen!

And where does the Father speak the loudest and the clearest? In the *Word*.



That’s why learning scripture is vital to conversing with God.

And, **it’s definitely *not* a PRAYER.** The disciples didn’t say, “Teach us a prayer,” they said, “Teach us to pray.” (Luke 11:1)

It does it a disservice to call it the Lord’s *Prayer*. **It’s the Lord’s *Pattern*.** It’s a radical, all-encompassing, pattern! It’s a brilliantly abbreviate Amidah. And, although it’s fine to recite as is, **it’s a tool intended to be used as a memory aid.**

It’s a template for talking to God, known in Jesus’ day as an *Index Prayer*. **It converts scattered thoughts into thoughtful words. You recite a segment of the index and add your own content.**

Our Father: What’s that mean to you? What’s *He* mean to you? Tell Him.

A few good, true words require thoughtfulness and practice.

In heaven: in charge, on the throne, with all authority.

The Lord’s Pattern is not only a condensed Amidah, it opens with a reminder of *why it’s condensed:* “God is **in heaven** and you are on earth, so let your words be few.” (Ecclesiastes 5:2)

And, **it’s not even “A” radical,** all-encompassing, pattern; **it’s “the” radical,** all-encompassing, pattern, in a class by itself. **It’s amazingly comprehensive and remarkably concise, revealing a perfect blueprint for personal prayer.**

There’s your solution!



Let’s recite it together, and I’ll stop us intermittently to discuss the details of each segment. Let’s begin: **“Our Father ...”**

Hold it! You went way too far; now we have to back-track. **There are no wasted words in God’s Word.**

We can’t ignore the sweet “our” of prayer!



Remember the prayer shawl (tallit) used as a portable prayer tent or personal tabernacle? And, remember the fringes/tassels (*tzitzit*) on each corner – like the ones the woman touched on Jesus’ garment when she was healed?

Remember how Jesus warned ‘em not to pray like hypocrites?

Just after they finally embrace the Lord’s Pattern for prayer, He reiterates His warnings about the trumpet-sounding Pharisees.



“Everything they do is done for men to see: They make ... the tassels on their garments [i.e. prayer shawls] long;” – Matthew 23:5 NIV

Why?

God commanded the Israelites, through Moses, saying:

Throughout the generations to come you are to make tassels on the corners of your garments, with **a blue cord on each tassel**. – Numbers 15:38 NIV



The length wasn't specified, but the color was. The word translated “blue” (tēkeleth) refers to an unknown substance used to make the dye (possibly a Mediterranean muscle).

Anywho, it was *expensive*. And, **the longer the tassels, the more the wearer could show how wealthy and, in their mind, favored they were.**



So, those Pharisees *loved* their expensive threads.

However, about 40 years after the cross (70^{AD}), the Temple was destroyed and along with it, the formula for the blue tassels. And ever since then, it's not been possible to include the commanded blue thread of the *tzitzit*. So, **not only did God remove the Temple, but even the personal tabernacles that represented it.**

Now, Jesus continues with something very pertinent to His pattern:

“... they love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them ‘Rabbi.’ [teacher] But you are not to be called ‘Rabbi,’ for you have only one Master and you are all brothers. [including you sisters] And **do not call anyone on earth ‘father,’ [patēr]** for you have **one Father, [patēr]** and he is **in heaven.**” – Matthew 23:6-9 NIV

He doesn't mean that the word “pater” cannot be applied to others (Jesus does so himself [Luke 16:24]); **He's warning them not to regard any man in the role reserved for our Father, in heaven.**

And, who did they universally, refer to as their *father*? Abraham.

“Abraham is **our father,**” [patēr] they answered. – John 8:39 NIV

“Are you greater than **our father** [patēr] Abraham?” – John 8:53 NIV

And, how does the Lord's Pattern begin? “**Our Father** [patēr] **in heaven ...**”

Jesus says **the relationship must be between you and the Father, not you and Abraham, and Abraham and the Father**, or you and *whoever* (parent, spouse, or friend), and *them* and the Father.



So, is your faith in our Father or the faith of another?

There are no *piggyback rides* to the throne of God.

The Amidah begins by calling out to “**the God of Abraham**, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And, when they said, “The God of Abraham”, they thought, “**The God of our father, Abraham**”.

This is what Jesus replaces with, “**Our Father in heaven**”.

He’s basically telling ‘em to stop praying to someone else’s God!

The God of Abraham is as much your Father as He is Abraham’s ... or anyone else’s.

What did Jesus say, just before giving them the Lord’s Pattern?

“But when you pray, go into your **room**, [*tameion* (G5009): inner chamber; secret room] close the **door** [*thyra* (G2374): opening] and pray to **your Father**, [*patēr*] who is **unseen**. [*kryptos* (G2927): hidden; concealed; in secret] Then **your Father**, [*patēr*] who sees what is done in **secret**, [both good and bad] will reward you.” [for carrying out the good and humbly confessing the bad] – Matthew 6:6 NIV

So, what’s the big secret?

Well, I certainly don’t know *yours*, or it wouldn’t be much of a secret now would it?!

Everyone was praying what everyone else was praying and everyone knew what everyone was praying. And everyone was under their prayer shawl riding father Abraham’s coattails to the throne.

But, **in the very first word of the Lord’s Pattern, Jesus wants it known to His own that we belong in our Father’s presence. The Father wants to hear your secrets and to reveal His.**

Forgive us our debts: I’ll bet you’ve got some big secrets there! Sins. Transgressions. That’s an easy index subject to add content to.

Lead us not into temptation: Who couldn’t elaborate on *that* one?

The Lord’s Pattern is an index on which to hang our darkest secrets and our deepest needs, and fears, and hopes, and praise.

And, the thoughtfulness and practice that it takes to personalize the Lord’s Pattern with your own words will definitely make your faith your own.