

..... **Daily Devotions**

Devotions – October 15-21, 2017

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Sunday, October 15

Text: Matthew 6:9

“This then, is how you should pray:”

Some years ago, I was in a small group of women from my church that chose random areas of the Bible to study. Whoever was the leader for that month was able to choose the study. When we were led to this section, I was quite surprised because “everyone knows the Lord’s Prayer”. We all had been in confirmation classes where we studied the petitions and committed them to memory. However, I was quite surprised as we studied the words and discussed them. The passage was no longer just rote, but took on new meaning for me.

First of all, “This then, is how you should pray...” Have you ever noticed that when praying as part of a congregation in worship we tend to speed forward through this prayer? Everyone knows it so well that we tend to recite it without thinking about the words. My husband is a retired pastor. I asked him why we pray this prayer so fast. He responded: “Have you ever tried to slow the congregation down during the Lord’s Prayer? The pastor ends up following instead of leading.”

I have tried different ways to pray this prayer with meaning. The best one for me is to read it out of the hymnal or bulletin. I sometimes become self-conscious that those beside me think that I don’t have the prayer in memory, but reading the petitions helps me to think of their meaning. This prayer is an example for all of our prayers. We should praise God, pray for the needs of the world and pray for our own needs and daily help.

I suggest that we all should give some thought as to the importance of this prayer and what each petition means. This should slow us down as we pray prayerfully.

Let us pray: *Dear God, I pray that your example, the Lord’s Prayer, will bring meaning to me every time that I pray, whether alone or as part of a group. Amen.*



Monday, October 16

Text: Matthew 6:9

“Our Father who art in heaven,”

I'm from the baby boomer generation. I think that my parents were typical parents of the time. My mom stayed home with me and my younger brothers and my father worked. We had one car and my mom didn't drive, so we didn't travel to very many places. My dad did the yard work, took out the garbage and grilled out on weekends. My father was rarely in family pictures, because he was the one taking the pictures. When I was a toddler, my dad often took me for walks around the block. I can still remember my small hand in his big hand.

At the time, I was deathly afraid of dogs. I don't know why, but any dog, large or small, caused me to scream and cry. It was also a time when people did not tie or leash their dogs, so we would often encounter at least one dog on our walks. My father would always protect me from my unreasonable, but very real fears. My father was always my trusted, personal and loving protector.

My father felt that it was important for him to protect me from every hurt. Of course as I grew older, that became impossible. There were many hurts, loss of family or friends, broken relationships and sometimes just a broken heart. He could not stop the hurts, but he was always with me holding my small hand in his big hand.

As I pray this prayer, I think of my heavenly Father in this same way. I know that God would protect me from all hurts, but the world can still be an evil place. As I cry over any loss, large or small, my heavenly Father walks with me with my small hand in his big hand. My heavenly Father is my trusted, personal and loving protector.

Let us pray: *Dear Father in heaven, thank you for always being with me. You are majestic and holy, but still always close and loving. Amen.*



Tuesday, October 17

Text: Matthew 6:9

“...hallowed be your name,”

I can remember my grandma and then my dad saying that they could not believe society today. We had an elderly neighbor that used a lot of four letter words, but did not use the Lord's name. However, it seems that today it is a different story. You find more and more people swearing in any situation. Swearing has become “acceptable” in too many circumstances. Books, movies and television have loosened any restrictions on what language is being used. And of course, the more you hear it, the easier it is to use it yourself.

I am ashamed to say that I often speak first and then repent later for using the Lord's name in an unholy way. As a young person, I listened to my parents about using “that kind of language,” but as I age, I slip more often. I am a part of the “society” that my grandma and dad complained about.

When I say the Lord's Prayer, I am reminded that the Lord's name is to be hallowed. There are times when I feel that I should pause right then and apologize for any outbursts that I have recently had. And I do when I am praying alone. I think about it.

Let us pray: *Dear God, your name is holy and should not be used in any other way. I pray that you would help me and our "society" to speak as you would have us. Amen.*



Wednesday, October 18

Text: Matthew 6:10

"...your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

As I come to this section of the Lord's Prayer, I know that God's kingdom is a mystery. There are many parables that Jesus told about the kingdom of heaven. It is hard to understand. God's kingdom came to earth when Jesus was born. God's kingdom is in our hearts through the work of the Holy Spirit. And God's kingdom will be complete when Jesus returns again. We pray for this.

Part of the coming of God's kingdom is that God's will shall be done. God's purposes for our world are perfect. However, the evil one still has much power. We pray that we have the belief and strength to do what we know is right. We know in our hearts the difference between right and wrong, but the pull of peers can sway us from our beliefs. Greed can cause people to do whatever they have to do to get the possessions they want. It is a constant battle to think before we act: Is this in keeping with God's will?

Even Jesus, who is perfect, deferred to his Father's will.

Let us pray: *Dear God, we often struggle with what is right and perfect and your will. We know that you walk with us and we are in your kingdom. Help us to do what you would have us do to follow your will. Amen.*



Thursday, October 19

Text: Matthew 6:11

"Give us today our daily bread."

This always makes me think of the Israelites and their flight from Egypt. They were in the desert and had only what God provided for them. They were only provided with what they needed each day. When God sent the manna from heaven, they were only to collect what they needed for that

day. Any extra that they collected spoiled. Then later in this chapter, verse 19 reminds us to “not store up for yourselves treasures on earth.”

Our church has started its stewardship emphasis for the season. It seems that when we pray the Lord’s Prayer, we only ask for what we need for the day. It reveals that we believe that all that we have comes from God. And that we can trust in what is provided. In other words, it is not our doing that we have what we need. It is God’s doing. When we talk about stewardship, it seems that God has a fair plan for us. God will provide everything that we need for our days, and only expects us to use one tenth of that to care for our neighbor.

I used to believe that I was entitled to anything that I wanted that I could afford. Over the years, I have found that “things” require a lot of time and care. Having a big house requires cleaning. Having a fancy boat or car requires time to care for them. At this point in my life, I don’t get life from caring for possessions. I find that I get life from caring for others.

Let us pray: *Dear God, thank you for providing all of my daily needs. Help me have faith and trust that you will always give me my daily bread. Amen*



Friday, October 20

Text: Matthew 6:12

“Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us.”

This phrase seems easy enough, until you get to verses 14 and 15. “For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”

Wow! This requires a lot of work on my part. Forgiveness is hard. Whether it is a small infraction, like getting cut off in traffic, or something big, like someone at work throwing you under the bus to make themselves look better; or maybe even worse, when a sibling works to get more than their share of a family inheritance. I will be honest. These and many other situations are not fair and I feel justified in holding a grudge. It is easy to ask God for forgiveness, but often very difficult to grant forgiveness to others.

I often will pause at this part of the Lord’s Prayer as well. It makes me think about my ability to forgive others. I know that I sin and need forgiveness from God and I also need forgiveness from those that I sin against. Only being perfect can excuse us from forgiving and none of us is perfect.

Let us pray: *Heavenly Father, I ask for your forgiveness and I need your help as I struggle to forgive others. Amen.*



Saturday, October 21

Text: Matthew 6:13

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”

There are so many fancy things in the world that can tempt us. Commercials tell us constantly that we deserve expensive possessions. We find ourselves feeling the need to have just as much as our neighbors. Homes, cars, boats, furniture and jewelry are all shone to us in magazines, catalogs and television. These things cause us to become greedy and hoard what God has given us.

As I write this, the news is reporting that a gunman took 58 lives in Las Vegas and wounded over 500 others. Hurricanes and fires have devastated huge areas of our country. Terrorism is a constant fear for people all over the world. The evil one has brought much fear and when you think that the worst is over, some other evil is committed. Who can we turn to, but God?

When I pray the Lord’s Prayer alone, I often repeat over and over “but deliver us from evil.”

This prayer gives us so much to think about. Each petition deserves our complete attention. We do not praise the Lord when we race through the words without concentrating on what we are saying. I hope that these devotions will raise awareness of the significance of the Lord’s Prayer.

Let us pray: *Dear Lord, we thank you for teaching us to pray. Help us to slow down and devote our attention to each word. Amen*

