

SPIRITUAL FORMATION TOOLS · NO. 1

The Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:9–13 · A framework, not a script.

I said the Lord's Prayer probably four thousand times before I actually prayed it.

You know what I mean. Words on autopilot. “Ourfatherwhoartinheaven” said as one long word, already thinking about the drive home. There's nothing wrong with memorizing it — Jesus wanted us to know it that well. But he didn't hand it to us so we'd recite it. He handed it to us so we'd pray it.

This is the first tool in a series we're building at Restoration Church — practical ways to grow deeper with God, not just learn more about him. We're starting here because Jesus started here. When his disciples asked, “Lord, teach us to pray,” this is what he gave them. Not a formula to unlock God's favor. A shape for an honest conversation.

Six lines. Each one opens a door. Below is the why behind each line, the how to actually pray it, and a place to pause and see what shows up.

“This, then, is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’” — Matthew 6:9–13 (NIV)

HOW TO USE THIS

Find a quiet five minutes — not a spare five minutes, a chosen five. Read one line at a time, out loud if you can. After each line, stop. Don't rush to the next phrase. Let it sit long enough to ask: What is this stirring up in me? Then pray it in your own words before moving on.

Some lines will land easy. One or two will sting a little. Stay there longer than feels comfortable. That's usually where God's doing something.

1. Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name

WHY

Jesus doesn't open with a request. He opens with a relationship. Before you ask God for anything, he wants you to remember who you're talking to — not a distant deity, not a vending machine, a Father. And in the same breath: hallowed. Set apart. Holy. Close and holy at the same time. Don't flatten one to get the other.

HOW

Say the word “Father” slowly. Notice what rises — warmth, resistance, a memory of your own dad, good or bad. Bring that honestly to God; he can hold it. Then name something true about who God is — patient, faithful, near — and let “hallowed be your name” become worship instead of a phrase you skip past.

PAUSE AND PRAY

“God, when I picture you as Father, what comes up in me is _____. Here’s what I know is true about you anyway...”

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

WHY

This is the line that flips prayer inside out. Most of us come to God with a list of what we want done. Jesus teaches us to ask, instead, for what God wants done — and to offer ourselves as the place it happens. Your kingdom. Your will. Not mine.

HOW

Ask yourself where you’ve quietly been running your own kingdom this week — a relationship, a decision, a grudge, a plan you haven’t handed over. Name it specifically. Then pray the line again, out loud, as surrender rather than a formality.

PAUSE AND PRAY

“God, the place I’m still holding onto my own kingdom instead of yours is _____.”

3. Give us today our daily bread

WHY

Jesus gives us permission to ask for ordinary things. Not just the big spiritual stuff — wisdom, faith, breakthrough — but bread. Rent money. Patience for your kids. Sleep. And notice: today’s bread, not a year’s supply. This line trains us to depend on God daily instead of stockpiling and calling it faith.

HOW

Actually list what you need today. Out loud or on paper. Don’t edit it down to sound more spiritual. If it’s real, it belongs in the prayer.

PAUSE AND PRAY

“God, what I actually need today — not eventually, today — is _____.”

4. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors

WHY

Let's be honest: this is the line we'd rather skim. Jesus ties God's forgiveness of us to our forgiveness of others in the very same sentence. Not because forgiveness earns forgiveness — but because a heart that won't release what it's owed can't fully receive what it's been given either.

HOW

Confess something specific — not a vague “forgive my sins,” but the actual thing from this week. Then name a person you're still keeping a ledger on. You don't have to feel like forgiving them. Just say the words and ask God to help the feeling catch up.

PAUSE AND PRAY

“God, forgive me for _____. And help me release the debt I'm still holding against _____.”

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

WHY

This line is an admission: I am not strong enough to navigate this alone. Jesus doesn't teach us to pray for a stronger willpower. He teaches us to ask for a different path — to be led around the trap, not just rescued after we're already in it.

HOW

Name the actual temptation or vulnerability you're carrying into this week — the scroll that turns into an hour, the drink, the comparison, the old wound that makes you say things you regret. Ask God specifically to lead you elsewhere before you get there.

PAUSE AND PRAY

“God, the place I'm vulnerable this week is _____. Lead me around it before I need rescuing from it.”

6. For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen

WHY

This closing line isn't in the earliest manuscripts of Matthew — the church added it in worship, and Christians have prayed it that way for most of two thousand years. Scholars debate its origin; nobody debates its truth. The prayer ends where it began: pointed at God, not at us. We asked for bread, forgiveness, protection — and we close by remembering none of it depends on our own strength.

HOW

Say out loud one thing you're trusting God for right now, beyond your own ability to make happen. Let “Amen” mean what it actually means — so be it — not just “we're done here.”

PAUSE AND PRAY

“God, the thing I'm trusting is yours to handle, not mine, is _____. Amen.”

This Week's Invitation

1. Pray through these six lines once a day this week — slowly, one at a time, out loud if you're able.
2. Journal about whichever line stung the most. That's usually the one worth staying with.
3. Teach this framework to one other person — a spouse, a friend, your kids at dinner.

Start there.

A Simple Prayer

God, teach us to pray the way Jesus taught his friends — slowly, honestly, expecting you to actually be listening. Forgive us for the times we've said these words without meaning them. Meet us in the pauses. Amen.