

## *Day Two*

*And it came about that while He 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." -Luke 11:1*

### *Lord, Teach Us To Pray*

When Jesus' disciples asked Him to teach them to pray, He began with the premise that what they desired was sincere. After all, why would anyone enter into prayer by compulsion? Turns out, many pray from guilt or obligation. But, that is not the loftiest premise to begin our prayer life, you must admit.

He begins with the ABC's of prayer. The fundamentals of talking to God. The elementary primer, if you will, of prayer. Unfortunately, for many, this is as far as they get. The Lord's 'Model Prayer' as it really ought to be known, can be said in under a half a minute in the most leisurely of readings. So, what did Jesus do for the rest of the night when He went up into the mountains to pray?

If we were to teach children to pray, this model prayer would be the beginning. But, if this is all they ever learn, it would be as if a student never went beyond reciting the ABC's to learn to read.

In our human efforts to understand and decipher, for lack of better terms, we strive to understand the complexity of what Jesus presented on even the most elementary levels. For, contained in the model prayer that He delivered we find much more than we can grasp in a single sitting. To that extent, we shall look into this prayer to find the greatness of such a short, but powerful prayer.

Just as the alphabet is the basis for our English language, the prayer Jesus uttered to His disciples contains the elements of all prayers uttered. For our examination I shall use this prayer in a slightly different form in Matthew 6 from the New American Standard Version. *"Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. 'Give us this day our daily bread. 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen' -Matthew 6:9-13*

In the days that follow, we shall look at the elements of this beautiful prayer. A prayer unequalled in beauty and simplicity. Yet, it is only the 'form' of the prayer we are to use, not the actual repetition.

Strong's Greek Dictionary defines the word 'manner' (KJV) or 'in this way' as such:

**Manner:** οὕτω houto (*hoo'-to*) *in this way* (referring to what precedes or follows): - after that, after (in) this manner, as, even (so), for all that, like (-wise), no more, on this fashion (-wise), so (in like manner), thus, what.

We should not think this is a recitation to be made as we would, say, the twenty-third Psalm or a passage of scripture. Though, to recite it often would not be contrary to any teaching we might have. It is a beautiful passage. But, left on its own, we are hardly honoring the spirit of what is contained within it.

Within the context of this passage from Matthew's Gospel we find this just after Jesus warns the hearers of practicing righteousness before men. Especially so, was the admonition to avoid what the hypocrites did in seeking the praise of men by praying in the synagogues and on street corners. If what we desire is the praise of men for eloquent prayers, we shall get that, but no more. Our prayers are not grammatical masterpieces of eloquence; they are speaking of the heart to a God who desires our hearts. To that extent, our prayers need to be our own and not those of others or those to be heard only by others.

*Prayerful Thoughts: Father, hear the words of my heart that I pour out to Thee.*