

The Lord's Prayer in Context

During Jesus' earthly life, He often taught about prayer. But He summarized much of His teachings in one model prayer, which we call the Lord's Prayer.

This prayer occurs in a passage called the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew, chapters 5, 6, and 7. In this sermon Jesus gives lots of strong, practical wisdom about the way we should live day to day, here and now. Much of what He teaches here will at first seem strange and difficult, even backward:

- *"Blessed are the poor in spirit . . . Blessed are those who mourn . . . Blessed are those who are persecuted."* (5:3-4, 10, NIV)
- *"If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also."* (5:39, NIV)
- *"Love your enemies."* (5:44, NIV)
- *"Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear."* (6:25, NIV)

But behind all this Jesus lifts up a picture of our loving Heavenly Father, always with us, always caring for us. As we become aware of His presence and start looking to Him, everything begins to change. We begin to live in response to Him rather than in reaction to our needs and fears.

We have a loving Father who cares for everything we need. Thus we can depend on Him rather than scramble to look out for ourselves. Worry is unproductive and unnecessary. We are freed from the burden of self-concern, freed to love other people just as our Father loves them.

We can talk to Him person to person. He becomes our focus: we live to please Him alone, and we learn to trust Him with all our concerns.

Since our Father is always with us and always loves, heaping up lots of words in our prayers is unnecessary and distracting. He already knows what we need. We don't have to badger, beg, or convince Him. Simple trust needs only simple prayer. We can bring our needs to Him openly and directly as His children. He already knows the details. He is always listening, and He always wants the best for us.

Jesus gives us the Lord's Prayer in this setting as a model for simple, personal conversation with our loving Father.

Hymn: [Today, Father](#)