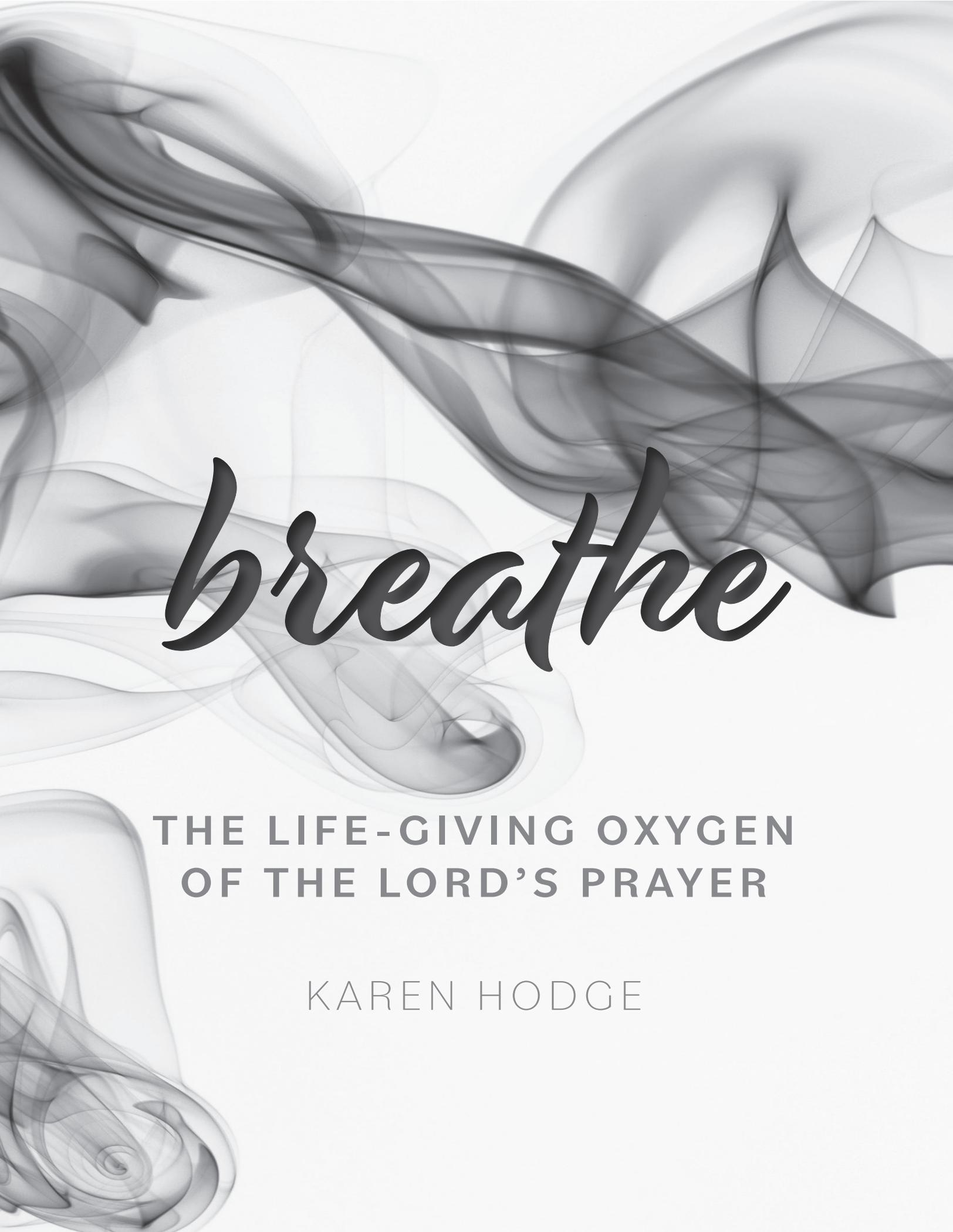
The background of the entire page is an abstract, flowing pattern of translucent blue and teal colors. The shapes are organic and fluid, resembling smoke, water, or ethereal light. The colors range from a pale, almost white blue to a deep, vibrant teal. The overall effect is one of movement and grace.

breathe

**THE LIFE-GIVING OXYGEN
OF THE LORD'S PRAYER**

KAREN HODGE



breathe

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OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

KAREN HODGE



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Although many publishers do not capitalize terms, and particularly pronouns which refer to the Trinity, in this study CDM publications has capitalized those elements for clarity of reference.

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Introduction

Breathe

“To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing.”

Martin Luther¹

Take a deep breath and exhale. Refreshing, right? Breathing is very complex but is primarily a subconscious activity. Did you know an average person breathes in and out around 22,000 times a day? Oxygen is the body's life-giving gas. It is crucial to help boost our immune system and overall health. Our sensitive brains require lots of oxygen to think. When your oxygen levels dip and you get lightheaded, concentrating can be hard. We often don't think about breathing until we can't catch our breath.

There is a danger in familiarity. We may become casual in our relationship with God, taking His presence for granted. Martin Luther said, “To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing.” Prayer is a lifeline for believers. It is the life-giving means God designed to build our relationship with Him and others. He created it to be an ongoing conversation, starting with His speaking to us through His Word and our responding to Him in prayer. It would be ridiculous to think you would only need to breathe one hour, one day a week. Paul admonished us to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17). Prayer ought to be the natural overflow of our time in Scripture. As spiritual infants, the more our Father speaks to us, the more we will begin to mimic His words. As we grow and mature in truth, the healthier and more robust will be our walk with Christ. These means of grace are as inextricably entwined as breathing in and breathing out. Cutting off these vital lifelines means we are more susceptible to the schemes of the father of lies. But the good news is when we are in trouble, God is only a prayer away. We need only to cry out, “Help, Lord!” Spiritual vitality begins with inhaling truth and exhaling prayers.

The deeper we breathe, the stronger we grow. For years I studied voice, and the core exercise of vocal training is breathing techniques. Learning to breathe deeply from your diaphragm enables you to sustain notes and sing on key. The deeper the singer breathes, the more she exercises this muscle and then becomes a stronger singer. Spending time in God's Word and prayer is our daily, life-giving breathing exercise. The more we enjoy Him and build our relationship through prayer, the stronger our spiritual muscles will be for serving in His kingdom.

The Bible is the truth-saturated voice of God to our very soul. Every single word in the sixty-six books is God-breathed (2 Tim. 3:16). God is truth (Isa. 65:16). Jesus is the truth (John 14:6). And the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth (1 John 5:6). If for a minute we doubted whether we could trust His words fully when fears and trials impede, Jesus reminds us, “Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth” (John 17:17). We are not smart or clever enough to understand His Word or converse with Him in prayer on our own. We must have the Spirit's help.

The first inspired description of the Spirit is found in Genesis 1:2. “The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.” The word for Spirit here is “breath or wind.” God created man through a breath. “The LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature” (Gen. 2:7).

Before Christ redeems us, we do not just struggle to breathe; we are dead in our sins. Nicodemus asked Jesus a question that was a matter of life or death: “How can a man be born when he is old?” Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit” (John 3:4-8). We need the same life-giving breath from heaven to live as faithful followers.

Enrolling in the School of Prayer Together

At the beginning of Jesus's early ministry on a mountainside outside of Capernaum, He shared the teaching we call the Sermon on the Mount. We study it in Matthew 5–7. Jesus was teaching His followers the kingdom of God is not about a list of rules we are to follow legalistically but rather is an invitation to a relationship He has framed with grace for us to be conformed into His image. It is not about externals and self-righteousness, but it zeros in on what is going on in the heart. Right in the middle of the sermon, He offers an oasis of grace. It is a daily pattern on how to commune with the Father. Jesus is not focused on how we pray but what we pray. These words lay the groundwork for our vertical relationship with the Father and our horizontal relationships with those around us. The first three petitions cast our eyes upward towards God's name, reign, and kingdom. The last three petitions extend horizontally towards how God will meet our material, spiritual, and relational needs. God's glory above our needs—this is the ideal order of prayer.

I am excited for us to learn to pray together.

How To Use This Study

Jesus gathered a group so they could learn how to pray together. Why would we think we could learn any other way? As we will see, there are no singular pronouns in the entire prayer. It is covenantal, or relational, through and through. I want to encourage you to study, pray, and live this out together. Our grand purpose is to consider in the context of community what it might look like if the words of the Lord's Prayer were written over every aspect of our lives, homes, work, church, and community. It is a short passage, but we will be amazed at the rich learning-layers found as we gaze at the multifaceted truths together. It is good for us to slow down, read, pray—and take a deep breath.

Each Weekly Chapter Offers

TEACHING

Weekly Focus and Identity Themes

We will offer complimentary video-teaching, but even better, consider asking a team of women in your local church or neighborhood to lead you through the study.

BREATHING EXERCISES

Bible Study Homework and Prayer Journal

We will spend time each day inhaling God-breathed truths. We will consider how our position in Christ determines our posture in prayer.

We encourage you to spend time exhaling what He teaches you in prayer by making space to reflect on it in your prayer journal. This Bible study and prayer journal are designed to be very interactive. Pick up your Bible and your favorite colored-pens and enjoy filling the pages of this book.

PRAYER PROMPT

Each day your prayer prompt will apply an age-old prayer model to the content we are learning:

ACTS - Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication.

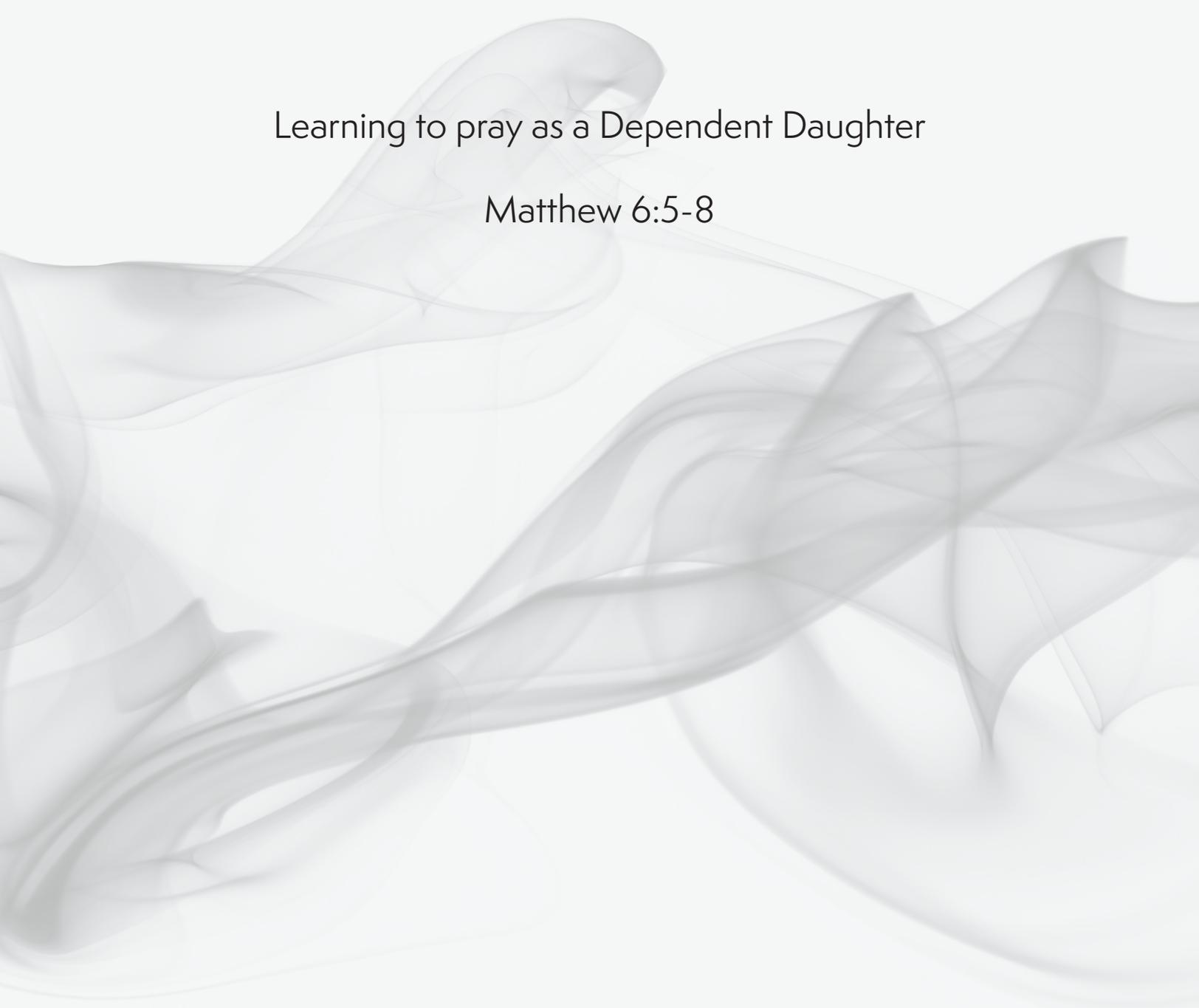
Each week will also include a confessional question and answer about prayer as well as time in the Prayer Book of the Bible, The Psalms.

WEEK	FOCUS	IDENTITY Learning to pray as . . .	PASSAGE
1	Position & Posture	Dependent Daughter	Matthew 6:5-8
2	Proximity	Interdependent Sister	Matthew 6:9a
3	Presence	Holy Pilgrim	Matthew 6:9b
4	Priority	Loyal Steward	Matthew 6:10
5	Provision	Grateful Neighbor	Matthew 6:11
6	Protection	Forgiven Follower	Matthew 6:12-13

P.S. We are excited to offer a downloadable children's curriculum, *Building on the Lord's Prayer*, so you and your family can learn to pray together across the generations.

Let's study and pray together!

1 Martin Luther as quoted in George Sweeting, *Talking it Over* (Thomas Nelson: Nashville, 1985), 88.



Week One:
Position & Posture

Learning to pray as a Dependent Daughter

Matthew 6:5-8

Teaching

WEEKLY FOCUS AND IDENTITY THEMES

Matthew 6:5-8

And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

Our Position in Christ Determines Our Posture in Prayer

Throughout the years, we have been blessed to have many of our friends adopt children into their families. Each addition has added a layer of thanksgiving as they became living pictures of how our Father God chooses us, not because of our merit but out of sheer grace. The Thomas family taught me another dimension that struck me to the heart. We hosted them for dinner when they returned home with their beautiful daughter from Kazakhstan. We asked them questions about their experience. We asked them to describe the orphanage. They began by describing the old building and then went on to talk about the staff and children they had met. They told us of the overwhelming smell of the cabbage cooking. But then they shared something I will never forget. They said, “It was eerily quiet except for the very creaky red door.” I was shocked: “In a building full of babies?” They explained the babies had ceased crying because they had been conditioned that no one would come and feed or change them when they cried. My heart broke at this unhappy picture—the deafening silence of an abandoned orphan. As I looked across the table at our new covenant child, I was simultaneously overjoyed and convicted.

Pretending Hypocrites

Jesus starts the school of prayer by reminding the disciples it is not *if* but *when* they pray. Prayerlessness is as foolish as trying to exist without breathing. Prayer can often be forgotten or only used as a last resort. Why? Because we prefer self-sufficiency, actively seeking control of a situation. Putting together a well-developed plan seems more efficient. Waiting on the Lord can be inconvenient. Jesus is our Father, and He knows what His children need to learn. They need to learn to pray. Prayer is to be our *first* resort—a vital lifeline for every moment of our day. Prayer begins as an orientation or posture of our hearts and lives.

Our position in Christ will determine our posture in prayer. Prayer is forward-facing dependence. It is actively seeking God’s face. Prayer challenges us as followers of Christ to embody the Latin phrase *coram deo*, which translated means “as a believer we live life in the presence of, under the authority of, and for the glory of God.”¹ Prayer is encompassed in adoration, confession, thanksgiving, intercession, and supplication.

Our posture is not just physical but also spiritual. It is an orientation of our hearts that determines our prayers. Jesus begins the school of prayer with a stunning contrast so we will not be confused. Throughout Scripture, we see people kneel or lie prostrate. In verse 5, we see a hypocrite’s posture is to stand in the fear of man for the purposes of self-glory. The word *hypocrite* originally was a theatrical term meaning to

wear a mask or play a part. Their stage is a synagogue where they can be esteemed for their devotion and religious activity. They also posture themselves publicly on street corners so that they may be seen by others. Hypocrites are practical atheists in their prayer life. Hypocrites act like orphans living as though their Father does not exist. Their prayers are filled with empty words and are focused outward rather than upward. We see a fundamental disconnect in their hearts between what they profess and what they possess. But the Father unmasks and exposes these pretenders. Their aim is to be seen not by God but by man. God allows them their heart's desires. The passing praise of men is their singular reward.

How about you? Do you wear the mask of religious popularity? Do you try to polish your prayer with just the right words to convince others you are more of a devoted follower than you actually are? How do you know if you are praying like a hypocrite or a dependent daughter? The answer lies in who gets the glory.

Prayers that are meant for the ears of others will never reach the ears of God.

Spiros Zodhiates²

What is deadly to the church is when the external forms of religion are maintained while their substance is discarded. This we call practical atheism. Practical atheism appears when we live as if there were no God. The externals continue, but man becomes the central thrust of devotion as the attention of religious concern shifts away from man's devotion to God to man's devotion to man, bypassing God. The "ethic" of Christ continues in a superficial way, having been ripped from its supernatural, transcendent, and divine foundation.

R.C. Sproul³

Dependent Daughters

Jesus will address us corporately as He moves into teaching us His prayer, but in verse 6, He is addressing us as individual children. The inner room of a home is the place where valuables or treasures are stored. All children of God have an inner room or prayer closet. The question is whether we go in or stay outside. Imagine the immediate connection a little child experiences when she steps into her Father's room. He is waiting there expectantly. His posture as the door opens is to extend His open arms in love. Imagine this inner room as an intimate, private place. It is modest with no windows. Its simplicity brings focus and clarity, leaving the distractions of the day at the door. It is a place where you leave your reputation behind and, instead, rest. What do you bring into the room? You bring your praise and your petitions. The ever-present invitation is to come quickly and often. It is a place where you are seen, known, and dearly loved. You can sit at the feet of the Master Intercessor where He intercedes for you, and you can intercede for others. The inner room is a treasure room. It's the place where treasures from Christ are waiting for you. The riches of His grace, compassion, wisdom, and love are accessible. It is a holy habitation where a little child and the loving Father commune.

Babbling Babies

I have had the privilege to travel with Susan Hunt and a team of women's ministry leaders to minister in Japan. We traveled to seven cities in ten days. At the center of each of these communities, you would find a Buddhist temple. I was fascinated by the architecture and the large trees and bell towers outside these shrines. Devoted Buddhist followers would come to the temple and write their prayers on slips of paper and then tie them to the tree branches. Afterward, they would ring the bell so that Buddha would be alerted to their prayers. The temple tree was covered with these prayer-filled papers in each town, and we often heard bells tolling.

Jesus now contrasts the prayers of dependent daughters with another type of orphan-like prayer. To the Jews of Jesus's day, Gentile prayers sounded like the mindless babbling of a baby. Babies mimic the sounds they hear from adults over and over again. We, too, may utter traditional words or rote prayers like verbose mantras. These prayers are aimlessly thrown into the wind rather than towards God. The danger of babbling prayers is the lack of heart and mind engagement. Genuine prayer should be the overflow of the Christ-centered heart and mind, and this type is the overflow of an insecure and immature person. God is never impressed with our many words. He looks to the sincerity of our hearts. As we continue our study and explore the Lord's Prayer, we must be careful not to recite this prayer in a rote or incantational way. Remember the adage: familiarity breeds contempt.

I Need Thee Every Hour

I need Thee every hour,
Most gracious Lord;
No tender voice like Thine
Can peace afford?

Refrain:
I need Thee, oh, I need Thee;
Every hour I need Thee;
Oh, bless me now, my Savior,
I come to Thee.

I need Thee every hour,
Stay Thou nearby;
Temptations lose their power
When Thou art nigh.

I need Thee every hour,
In joy or pain;
Come quickly and abide,
Or life is vain.

I need Thee every hour,
Teach me Thy will;
And Thy rich promises
In me fulfill.

Robert Lowry and Annie Hawks⁴

Not Rules and Ramblings, but a Relationship

Watching the Thomas family adopt their daughter was a classroom in Covenant Theology for our church. Covenant Theology is a biblical framework to understand the special relationship between God and His people. They prayerfully and joyfully chose their daughter from the other side of the world. The pursuit of bringing her into their family was costly, lengthy, and well-planned. Their daughter was not chosen based on what she could give her parents but solely on unconditional love. Becoming a member of their family required legally changing her name. At that moment, she went from orphan status to beloved daughter. She immediately had access to all the rights and privileges that were afforded to her as a member of the Thomas family. We are beloved daughters of the King and have been adopted into the family of families. His adoption plan for us was predestined before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:5).

Our condition was far direr than the orphanage in Kazakhstan. God set His electing love on us when we were orphans of the fall, enemies of the cross, and children of wrath. We were adopted not because of our merit or works but solely by His grace. Crying out to God as Abba, Father, or Daddy is never conditional on what we have or have not done on a given day. We can cry out to Him in prayer because we have been redeemed through the blood of the Lamb. Our status has moved from orphan to daughter, from a slave of sin to freedom in Christ. His adoption of us (as unworthy as we are) is at the heart of the gospel. Our adoption is not about us; it is all about our Father.

Our position in Christ as a dependent daughter will determine our posture in prayer. We are to come as a humble and reliant child, yet as a child who does not hesitate but instead runs needy and messy to her Father. At any given moment, daughters can come not only boldly yearning, crying, and lamenting but also confidently asking, seeking, and knocking. We can ask for big things because God is big and for small things because He cares about every detail of our lives. This prayer position of humility is the antithesis to a self-orientation. Bowing to Him rids our lives of self-reliance, self-rule, and selfish desires. The inner room is where, on our knees, the battle is wrought for who will have authority, control, and influence. Will it be me or Thee?

Prayer=Helplessness

God wants us to come to Him empty-handed, weary, and heavy-laden. Instinctively we want to get rid of our helplessness before we come to God . . . Prayer is bringing your helplessness to God . . . The very thing we are allergic to—our helplessness—is what makes prayer work. It works because we are helpless. We can't do life on our own. Prayer mirrors the gospel. In the gospel, the Father takes us as we are because of Jesus and gives us His gift of salvation. In prayer, the Father receives us as we are because of Jesus and gives us His gift of help.

Paul Miller⁵

Breathing Exercises

BIBLE STUDY HOMEWORK & PRAYER JOURNAL

Weekly Prayer List

Write the Lord's Prayer over your life this week. Spend time writing out your prayer requests in these four areas. Come back to this list daily to continue to ask, seek, or knock. Put a star next to answered prayers. And then on day seven, reflect and praise God for what He has done and allow the remaining items to shape your prayers for next week.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your 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 lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil (Matt. 6:9-13).

Personal Prayer

Family Prayer

Church Prayer

Prayer for my neighbors
(work or community)

Day One: The Problem of Prayerlessness

How would you describe your current prayer life? (circle one)

Non-existent

Sporadic

Growing

Vibrant

INHALE GOD'S WORD

Read

Note the Prayer Postures (action verbs)

Matt.
7:7-8

Jer.
29:12-14

Col.
4:2-3

1 Thess.
5:16-18

Now ask the Lord to make these the daily postures of your life.

EXHALE IN PRAYER ~ ADORATION

Dear Lord, I worship you as my Father . . .

Day Two: Position & Posture

INHALE GOD'S WORD: OUR ADOPTION PAPERS

Read

List all the Family Words

John
1:12-13

Rom.
8:14-17

Gal.
4:4-5

Eph.
1:4-6

EXHALE IN PRAYER ~ ADORATION

Dear Father, I praise You for bringing me into Your family and for these covenantal blessings:

GO BACK TO YOUR WEEKLY PRAYER LIST AND SPEND TIME IN PRAYER.

Day Three: Pretending Hypocrites and Babbling Babies

Understand your prayer default. Write your own comparisons.

Orphan-like Prayer

Independent

Prayer as a last resort

Flashy public prayers with little private prayer

Anxiety-driven prayer

Plan first and pray later

Daughter-like Prayer

Dependent

Prayer as your first line of defense

Frequent prayer which overflows into public prayer

Adoration-oriented prayer

Pray first and plan as an overflow

INHALE GOD'S WORD

Read Luke 18:9-14. Write in your own words a description of the posture of the . . .

Pharisee:

Tax Collector:

Now read Luke 18:15-17 and write the benefits of coming as a dear child.

EXHALE IN PRAYER ~ CONFESSION

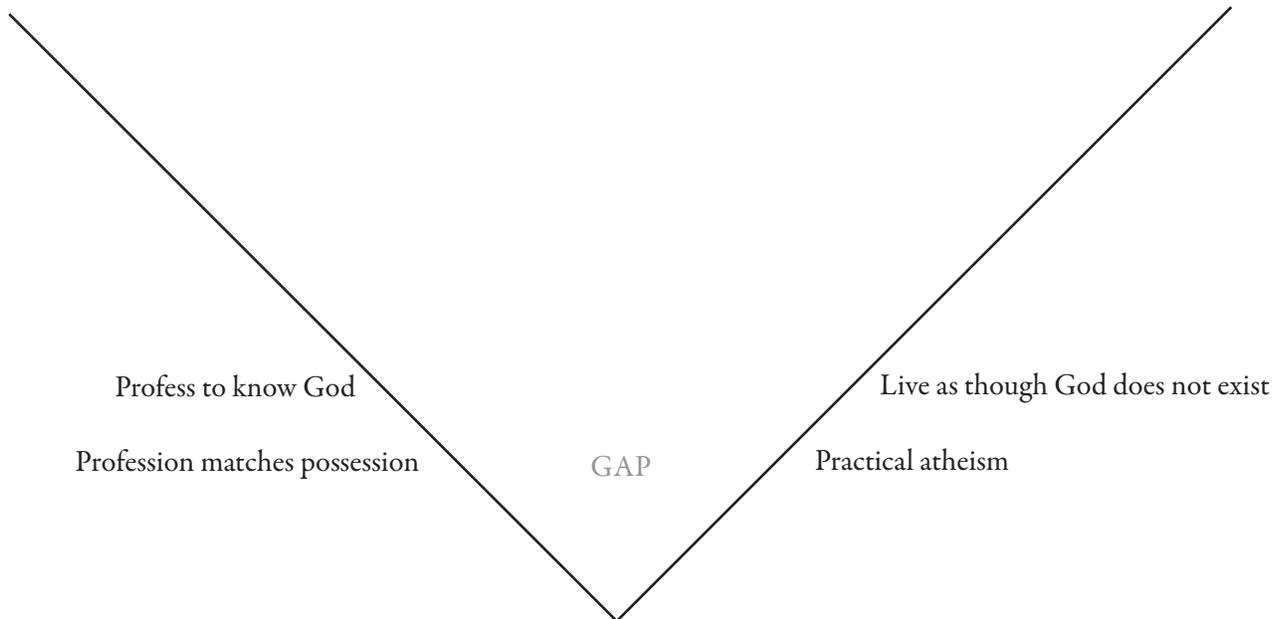
Dear Father, I confess my poor postures in these areas of my life. . .

GO BACK TO YOUR WEEKLY PRAYER LIST AND SPEND TIME IN PRAYER.

Day Four: Pretending Hypocrites and Babbling Babies

INHALE GOD'S WORD

Read Titus 1:15-16. Prayerfully examine the gap in your life between what you say you believe about God and how you live. This gap, the hypocrite's posture, is to stand in self-reliance looking for the approval of man.



List specific ways in the gap above where you have lived as a . . .

- **PRETENDER:** Times you have worn a mask or played a part.
- **APPROVAL CRAVER:** Ways you have lived in the fear of man, seeking others' approval.
- **LOOK AT ME!:** Words you have spoken or deeds you have done this week to be seen by others.
- **GLORY HOUND:** Areas of your life you have taken credit for instead of giving glory to God.

EXHALE IN PRAYER ~ CONFESSION

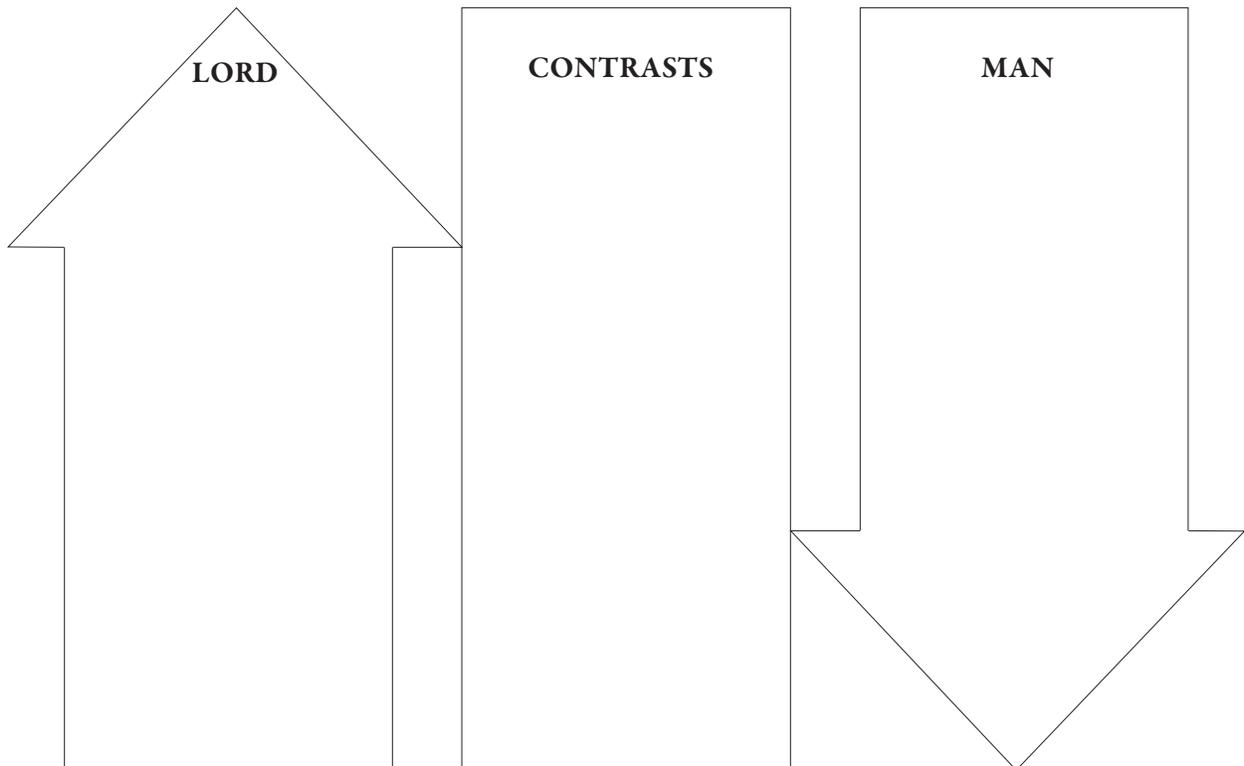
Dear Father, I repent of my desire to be seen by others as . . .

GO BACK TO YOUR WEEKLY PRAYER LIST AND SPEND TIME IN PRAYER.

Day Five: Prayer Book – The Psalms

INHALE GOD’S WORD

Read Psalm 8 and fill the first arrow with the scriptural descriptions of our covenantal, relational LORD and fill the second arrow with the ways Scripture describes mankind. Note any contrasts in the middle.



EXHALE IN PRAYER ~ THANKSGIVING

Dear Father, I am thankful for these many blessings this week:

GO BACK TO YOUR WEEKLY PRAYER LIST AND SPEND TIME IN PRAYER

Day Six: Dependent Daughter

INHALE GOD'S WORD

Read through the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chapter 12, on adoption and circle the benefits of being a dependent daughter. Spend time reading the scriptural proofs.

God guarantees the adoption of all those who are justified in and for the sake of His only Son, Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:5; Gal. 4:4-5). Those adopted enjoy the liberties and privileges of God's children (Rom. 8:17; John 1:12), have His name put on them (Jer. 14:9; 2 Cor. 6:18; Rev. 3:12), receive the Spirit of adoption (Rom. 8:15), have access to the throne of grace with boldness (Eph. 3:12; Rom. 5:2; Heb. 4:16), and are enabled to cry "Abba, Father!" (Gal. 4:6). They are pitied (Ps. 103:13), protected (Prov. 14:26; Ps. 27:1-3), provided for (Matt. 6:30, 32; 1 Peter 5:7), and disciplined by Him as a father (Heb. 12:6). They are never cast off, however (Lam. 3:31-32; Heb. 13:5), and are sealed until the day of redemption (Eph. 4:30) and inherit the promises (Heb. 6:12) as heirs of everlasting salvation (1 Peter 1:3-4; Heb. 1:14).

EXHALE IN PRAYER ~ THANKSGIVING

Dear Father, I am thankful to You for the following benefits which I am privileged to access as a dependent daughter.

GO BACK TO YOUR WEEKLY PRAYER LIST AND SPEND TIME IN PRAYER.

Day Seven: Writing His Prayer over Your Life

INHALE GOD'S WORD

Read back through our passage for this week, Matthew 6:5-8.

What are three takeaways that you learned this week through your personal study, prayer journaling, or your small group discussion?

- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
-

EXHALE IN PRAYER ~ SUPPLICATION

Dear Father, would You write Your prayer over my life, family, church, and neighbors.

RETURN TO YOUR WEEKLY PRAYER LIST

- Place a star next to answered prayers.
- Spend time giving praise to God.
- Reflect upon His persevering grace for what remains on your prayer list.
- Ask God to apply what you have learned this week as you seek His face to write your prayer list for next week.

-
- 1 R. C. Sproul, "What Does Coram Deo Mean?" Ligonier.org (November 13, 1997), <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/what-does-coram-deo-mean>.
 - 2 Spiros Zodhiates, *The Lord's Prayer* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1998), 5.
 - 3 R.C. Sproul, "What is Practical Atheism." Ligonier.org (January 12, 2015), <https://www.ligonier.org/posts/practical-atheism-vs-biblical-christianity>.
 - 4 Annie Hawks and Robert Lowry, "I Need Thee Every Hour" *Trinity Hymnal* (Suwanee, GA: Great Commission Publications, 2021), 674.
 - 5 Paul Miller, *A Praying Life* (Colorado Springs, CO: Nav. Press, 2009), 54-55.
 - 6 Chapter 12, *Westminster Confession of Faith* (Lawrenceville, GA: CDM, 2007), 56.

Building on the Lord's Prayer



Introduction

Sweet Mama,

Do you enjoy talking with your child? Do you like to listen to him tell you about the events of his day? Do you delight in hearing her hopes and dreams? Does your heart ache when she shares her fears, disappointments, and hurts?

Just as you enjoy hearing the sweet voice of your child, our heavenly Father enjoys hearing from His children. Many times, we don't always know what to say.

This is a journal to use with your child. Over the next six weeks, your child will have the privilege of studying the Lord's Prayer with you. Although there is nothing magical about those words found in Scripture, they do provide a helpful framework in learning how to talk with God. Each week your child will have opportunity to memorize a small piece of the prayer Jesus taught His disciples as a model for prayer. Using a simple Bible story each week, your child will be learning how those words help him/her talk with God. Finally, using the journaling space each week, your child will keep track of special prayer requests he or she has.

If you haven't started the habit already, this would be a good time to take time each day to pray with and for your child: set aside time after breakfast, sit close on the couch after reading a Bible story, or snuggle together in bed after a long day.

Jesus teaches us that God is our Father. Like a loving father, He wants to hear from us. He wants to know our fears and struggles, our needs and desires, our words of adoration and thanksgiving. Spend time with your children reminding them to tell God whatever is on their minds—good or bad. God will listen.

Blessings,
Heather Molendyk

God has surely listened; he has attended to the voice of my prayer. Psalm 66:19

How To Use These Lessons

PIECES OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

Each week highlights a small piece of the Lord's Prayer. This small piece is used to guide the meditations and prayers of you and your child. You may have your child memorize the Lord's Prayer as you go, or you may simply use it as a guide to teach your child to pray.

THOUGHTS FOR MOM

Written as a themed devotional based on a piece of the Lord's Prayer taught that week, this section provides an opportunity for you to reflect on the Word of God. It provides scriptural meditations, historical or biblical context, and thought-provoking questions to guide you in preparation for leading your child in prayer.

BIBLE STORY

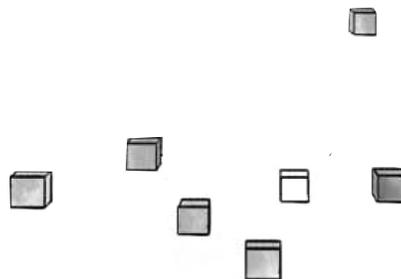
Each Bible story is retold using language easy for young children to understand yet staying true to the original biblical text. For older children or teenagers, feel free to use the provided Bible story references to read the passages from the Bible.

JOURNAL SPACE

This is a section that your child can use to record his or her prayers each week. The prayer journal is structured so that children can easily input their prayer requests. Each week's prayer builds on the week before. This allows time for you and your child to grow comfortable praying aloud together. If your children want to record their own prayers, any notebook can be used. In fact, most teenagers may be more comfortable keeping their own journals and prayer time private. Very young children will need help filling in the spaces. You know your child best. Feel free to assist, guide, or let go as needed.

ACTIVITY SUGGESTION

Each week provides an activity that you can do with your child. These are completely optional! Activities help children connect what they are learning with the concrete world around them. Take the suggestions as *suggestions*. Do what works best for you and your family situation. (Tips for teens: Even though my teenagers roll their eyes and grumble over family activities, they often enjoy them in the end. It's okay to do the activity by yourself and let the teenager watch. They may surprise you and engage with the activity in the end.)





Week Two

Devotional Thought for Mom

The first part of the Lord's Prayer focuses our eyes on an amazing invitation for us to call the God of the universe—the God who created and controls everything—a most intimate, personal name. Jesus offers an invitation for us to call God our “Father.” The knowledge that God wants us to call Him “Father” opens up astounding implications in our relationship with Him. Covenant Theology teaches us that God Himself establishes and guarantees this relationship with His people.

When we pray to God, we do not need complicated incantations or mindless repetitions to reach the ear of our Maker. We can speak to Him as we would a loving father. Knowing God is a loving father means we can trust that He desires the best for us. He desires to protect, provide, love, encourage, teach, and know each of us in a personal way.

Understanding God as our heavenly Father can prove to be a challenge for some. It can prove to be a challenge for you and/or your child. Not everyone has a good example of fatherhood in their lives. You or your child may have an earthly father who has proved less than worthy of that title. Be patient with yourself if you struggle with understanding a godly example of fatherhood. Remember that no earthly father is perfect; however, God is. Our earthly fathers will disappoint us and make mistakes, but remember that God never makes mistakes. He loves us with an unfailing love. He has planned our days from the beginning of time and will always do what is best for us.

Meditate on the following verses:

For my father and mother have forsaken me, but the LORD will take me in (Ps. 27:10).

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are (1 John 3:1a).

Bible Story (Matthew 6:9 and Luke 11:9-13)

Jesus was teaching the people how to pray. Men, women, boys, and girls had come to hear Jesus teach. They wanted to know God better. Jesus was about to tell them how to talk to God. He would first tell them what to call God.

“When you pray,” Jesus said, “start with ‘Our Father in heaven.’”

The people were surprised. They were to call God their “Father”? That did not sound important enough. That did not sound big enough.

Jesus explained.

“Some of you sitting here today are fathers. You have children that you love very much. Which of you fathers, if your son is hungry and asks for a fish to eat, will give him a snake instead? Or if your daughter asks for an egg, will you give her a scorpion to eat?”

All the fathers listening to Jesus shook their heads. Of course, they would not give their children snakes or scorpions! The fathers loved their children. They only wanted to give them the best they could. Jesus continued His lesson.

“If you then, even though you are not perfect, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him! So, I tell you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”

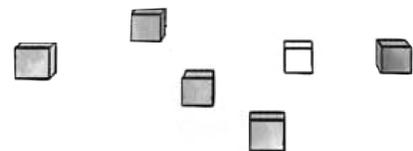
What a wonderful lesson to learn about God! The people felt so loved. God was a God who cared for them like a dad cares for his children. God wanted the best for them. God wanted to know them. God would take care of them and meet their needs.

God cares for you and me too. He wants what is best for us. More than anything, He wants us to know Him and that He will take care of us and give us what we need. What a wonderful God!

Activity Suggestion

CELEBRATE GOD AS YOUR FATHER by having a special Father’s Day celebration in His honor. Bake a cake, blow up balloons, make Him a Father’s Day card, or create a poster together. Have fun celebrating God as your Heavenly Father.

We are God’s children now (1 John 3:2a).

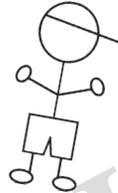


Journal Space

In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus tells us to call God "Our Father." There are also other names for God found in scripture. Look up the following verses. Each day this week, call God by one of His names, think about what that name means, and write out (or draw) your prayer using that name for Him.

EXAMPLE: ~ God, You are *our Father*.

Dear Father, thank You for making me Your child . . .



DAY 1: REVELATION 1:8 ~ God, You are _____

DAY 2: EXODUS 3:14 ~ God, You are _____

DAY 3: JOHN 8:12 ~ God, You are _____

DAY 4: ISAIAH 41:14 ~ God, You are _____

DAY 5: ISAIAH 9:6 ~ God, You are _____

SAMPLE

