

How to Make This Part of Your Everyday Life

Final in the series “*Real Talk: Honest Conversations with God*”

Deuteronomy 6:4–9; 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18; Luke 11:1–4

We are really good at beginning things — a new habit, a new promise that *this time*, we're really going to pray more. And for a while, we mean it.

Then life happens, and the habit we meant to build becomes one more thing we feel guilty about not doing.

So here's my question as we close this series: not *did we learn something* — but **how do we make this part of everyday life?** Not perfectly. Simply. Honestly. Sustainably.

Most people who want a deeper spiritual life aren't looking for more information. They're looking for a place to *start* — because prayer feels like it requires perfect words, or the right mood, or time we don't have.

That's exactly why the Lord's Prayer is a gift. Short enough to memorize. Deep enough for a lifetime. Strong enough for hospital rooms, family tables, and — as we'll hear shortly — even final breaths.

Jesus didn't just give us words for when we have none. He gave us a *rhythm*.

In Luke's Gospel, one of Jesus' disciples comes to him and says something wonderfully honest: “*Lord, teach us to pray.*”

Notice what he *doesn't* say.

He doesn't say, “Teach us to sound religious.” He doesn't say, “Teach us to impress people.” He doesn't say, “Teach us to perform spirituality so we look good in front of others.”

Just — *teach us to pray.*

And Jesus responds with what we now call the Lord's Prayer.

Which tells us something important: this prayer was never meant to be magic. It's not a formula for manipulating God into doing what we want. It's not a script we recite to unlock a blessing. It's a *pattern*. A model. A daily cadence for a life being shaped by God.

Walk through it with me — and notice how every single line turns us toward a different way of living.

"Our Father..." — Prayer begins in relationship. We're not speaking into empty space. We're speaking to a God who is near, who is loving, who is present. And notice — it's *our* Father. We never pray alone.

"Hallowed be thy name..." — Prayer trains our attention. It teaches us to notice what's holy and good and beautiful, even on the days life feels heavy.

"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done..." — Prayer aligns our lives with God's purposes. This isn't asking God to bless our little kingdoms — our plans, our comfort, our preferences. It's asking to *become* people through whom God's mercy and justice and love show up in the world.

"Give us this day our daily bread..." — Prayer teaches dependence. We stop pretending we're self-sufficient. We ask for what we need *today* — and we remember it says *us*, not *me*.

"Forgive us our trespasses..." — Prayer becomes confession and release. We receive mercy, and we ask God to help us let go of guilt and shame and resentment.

"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil..." — Prayer asks for guidance in the places where fear or anger or control or despair keep pulling at us.

"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever..." —

Prayer re-centers our hope. The future doesn't finally belong to our strength or our failures. It belongs to God.

And then — *"Amen."*

Let it be so.

Not just in this sanctuary. Not just on Sunday mornings.

In me. In us. In our ordinary, everyday lives.

That's the whole aim of this prayer. Not recitation. Formation.

If Luke shows us *what* Jesus taught, Deuteronomy shows us *where* faith is actually meant to live.

Moses tells the people: *"Hear, O Israel: the Lord is our God, the Lord alone."* And then he tells them to love God with heart and soul and strength.

But look closely at *where* he says that love gets practiced.

Talk about these words at home, away, lying down, rising up. Teach them to your children. Put them on your doorposts and your gates.

In other words — faith belongs in the *ordinary* places. At the table. In the car. At bedtime. While raising kids, caring for aging parents, paying bills, waiting in a doctor's office.

A lot of us imagine prayer as something *separate* from real life. But Deuteronomy says the opposite: let your life become the place where prayer lives.

The kitchen sink can become a place of gratitude. The steering wheel, a place of surrender. The bedside, a place of confession. Even that phone notification that makes your stomach drop can become a moment to pause before you react.

You don't need a perfect spiritual schedule. You need one anchor — one ordinary moment that already happens most days — paired with a simple prayer.

The apostle Paul writes something that sounds impossible: *"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances."*

If we picture prayer only as closing our eyes and saying formal words, nobody can do that without ceasing. But Paul is pointing toward an ongoing, prayerful *awareness* — a heart that stays open, a conversation that never fully hangs up. Less like a single phone call, more like an open line.

You'll still have to work, drive, parent, cook, care for people, make decisions. But underneath it all, there can be this quiet, ongoing turning toward God:

God, be near. God, give me wisdom. God, forgive me. God, guide me. God, thank you.

Praying without ceasing doesn't mean praying *impressively*. It means **living connected**.

There's one more thing I want you to see before we move into practice — something easy to miss if you've said this prayer a thousand times.

Listen to the pronouns in it.

Our Father. Give *us*. Forgive *us*. Lead *us*. Deliver *us*.

Jesus didn't teach us to pray, "My Father, give *me* my daily bread, forgive *me* my trespasses." He taught us to pray in the plural. On purpose.

That matters, because prayer is deeply personal — but it's never merely private.

The Lord's Prayer pulls us *out* of isolation and self-centeredness. It teaches us to think not just in terms of me, mine, and my needs, but in terms of *us*, *ours*, and *our* life together.

When we pray for daily bread, we're also praying for our hungry neighbors.

When we pray for forgiveness, we're also praying for broken relationships and wounded communities.

When we pray for deliverance from evil, we're also praying for people harmed by fear, addiction, violence, injustice, and despair.

And when we pray *thy kingdom come*, we are asking God to make our homes and our church and our neighborhoods and our world look a little more like the way of Jesus.

So this prayer doesn't only comfort us.

It sends us.

It sends us to share bread. To practice mercy. To resist evil. To seek peace. To notice the person everyone else overlooks. To become part of how God answers somebody else's prayer.

Let me show you why practicing this prayer in ordinary moments matters — because it doesn't just shape quiet mornings. It shows up in the moments we never see coming.

Pastor Adam Hamilton tells about a woman named Amy, driving to work one rainy morning, when a large SUV crossed the median and stopped just short of her car. She got out and found the driver gravely injured, bleeding, near death. Sirens were still minutes away.

Amy didn't know what to say. So the Lord's Prayer came to her. She knelt, placed her hand on his shoulder, and prayed the words Jesus taught us — for him, and for herself. As she prayed, his breathing slowed. She stayed with him in the rain until help came.

A similar thing happened after the 2009 Metro train crash in Washington, D.C. A chaplain named David Bottoms was in the wreckage with dying passengers. One begged him not to leave. So he stayed — and in that dark, terrifying place, he prayed the words he'd prayed a thousand times in worship. This time, they became a shelter.

That is why this prayer matters. Not because it gives us control over life and death — it doesn't. But because when we have no words of our own, Jesus has already given us words that hold us. **Words practiced in ordinary times become available in extraordinary ones.**

Let's get practical. You don't need an elaborate prayer regimen.

Start small. Choose one daily anchor — something that already happens most days of your life. When your feet hit the floor. When you pour your coffee. When you start the car. When you sit down at your desk. When you lie down at night.

Then pair that moment with the Lord's Prayer, or just one line of it. Here are three simple ways. Pick *one*.

First — pray one phrase a day. Walk through the prayer across a week. Monday, *"Our Father"* — remember you don't pray alone. Tuesday, *"Hallowed be thy name"* — notice one thing that's holy. Wednesday, *"Thy kingdom come"* — ask where God's love can show up through you today. Thursday, *"Daily bread"* — name what you need, and who else might need it. Friday, *"Forgive*

us" — release one resentment. Saturday, "*Lead us not into temptation*" — ask for guidance where you're struggling. Sunday, "*Thine is the kingdom*" — just worship.

Second — use the simplest pattern: Be still. Give thanks. Ask.

Release. Be still — take a breath, remember God is near. Give thanks — name one gift. Ask — name your need. Release — hand over what you can't control. Close with, "*For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.*"

Third — teach it to someone else. A child, a grandchild, a friend who doesn't know what to say to God. Don't just teach the words — teach what they mean: that God is near, that mercy is available, that the future is safely in God's hands.

And here's the truth about teaching it — it always goes both directions. Teaching this prayer helps *you* live it more deeply.

Imagine what could happen — in your life, and in this church — if this prayer stopped being just words we say in worship, and instead became a *rhythm* that quietly shapes us: a people who pause before reacting, who ask for help instead of pretending, who release resentment before it hardens.

That kind of prayer doesn't remove us from real life. **It forms us for real life.**

Take it with you — into the car, the hospital room, the quiet morning, the anxious night. Because when we pray these words daily, **they begin to pray us.** They teach us who God is, who we are, how to live.

Let's pray it together now, the way Jesus taught us.

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever.

Amen.

Let it be so in us.