

Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this teaching series you may learn to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. A teacher will teach from the Bible that a disciple of Jesus prays. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme.

Jesus says, "Ask and it will be given to you" (Matthew 7:7). Paul says, "Pray continually" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). And James says, "The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective" (James 5:16). The Bible teaches much about prayer. The first series of 4 teachings is about "The teachings of Jesus on prayer". The topics are "the Lord's Prayer" in two parts and "The other teachings of Jesus on prayer" in two parts.

Today's teaching is: A DISCIPLE PRAYS THE LORD'S PRAYER - PART 2. If you don't know what to pray or how to pray, then learn to pray the Lord's Prayer.

In Luke 11:1 and Matthew 6:9-13 we read, "One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray. Jesus then said, 'This 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.
Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.
For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.'

POINT 6. THE FOURTH PRAYER: "Give us today our daily bread".

What does the fourth prayer mean?

Jesus says, "Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink: or about your body, what you will wear." "Your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matthew 6:25,32-33). God knows that when a Christian takes an active part in the hallowing of God's name, the coming of God's kingdom and the doing of God's will, then he needs bread. Therefore Jesus teaches us that we may depend on God to supply our daily needs. This prayer is an expression of our total dependence on God for living and an expression of our trust that he will provide.

The daily bread is strictly speaking only food. Not luxury food, but the *staple food* of the country. Moreover, the daily bread is only the portion of food that is needed for one day. Jesus thus teaches us to be moderate in our request for our daily needs. We should pray for bread and not for luxuries. Note Agur's prayer in Proverbs 30:8-9, "Give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the Lord?' Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonour the name of my God". Both Jesus and the apostle Paul teach that a very important Christian virtue is contentment. Paul says, "If we have food and clothing, we will be content with that" (1 Timothy 6:8).

How can I practically pray for my daily bread?

First. Pray every day that God may give you the food you need for that day. Before mealtimes, you thank God for what he gives you. But depending on God for your daily bread does not exclude your duty to work. The apostle Paul says, "We gave you this rule, 'If a man will not work, he shall not eat'" (2 Thessalonians 3:10). Also be content with what God gives you. In the light of so many who suffer hunger, you should never complain about food. Teach your children not to become fussy about food.

Second. Jesus teaches us to pray for *our* bread, not just for *my* bread. Thus Jesus includes the needs of Christians all over the world. Because all Christians belong to the one family of God the Father, Christians should especially do good to those who belong to this family of believers (Galatians 6:10). Therefore Jesus teaches us to pray for the daily needs of Christians all over the world and to share from our plenty with those who are needy.

POINT 7. THE FIFTH PRAYER: "forgive us our debts".

What does the fifth prayer mean?

Our "debts" are the things we owe God, but cannot pay or have not paid. The Lord's Prayer in Luke shows that "our debts" are our sins (Luke 11:4). The apostle Paul teaches, "Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another" (Romans 13:8). But we often fail in our responsibility to love. When we look back at the past day, we know that we have not done our responsibility. Maybe we have rushed around and failed to have a time of

fellowship with God. Maybe we have been selfish and refused to serve or share. Maybe we have been careless and said things that hurt others. Whatever debt, whatever sin, we stand guilty and ashamed before God again and again. That is why we need God's forgiveness. And we can receive God's forgiveness when we ask him.

But why should we forgive our debtors? Is it not God who should forgive them?

Many sins we do are wrongs we do to other people. And God in the Bible has forbidden us to do such wrongs. Thus a sin is at the same time a sin against a person and a sin against God. When a person wrongs me, he becomes my debtor as well as God's debtor. I have to do my part and God will do his part.

Jesus teaches that I must forgive my debtors. He says, "If you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive you your sins" (Matthew 6:14-15).

Why should we still pray for forgiveness? Has the death of Jesus not nailed all our sins to the cross?

The basis for our total forgiveness has been established once for all by means of Christ's death. But because we Christians still do sins, we need to apply this total forgiveness every day. Every day we need to confess our sins, receive the forgiveness of Jesus Christ and the cleansing work of the Holy Spirit.

What are the results of forgiveness in the Bible?

The first result of forgiveness.

When Jesus forgives you your sins, then *he removes the punishment of sin*. When Jesus died on the cross, he did not die, because other people wanted to kill him, but he died as a punishment for our sins. Jesus died in our place. Because the God of the Bible is a holy and righteous God, he must punish sins. Otherwise he will no longer be a holy and righteous God.

Because all people in the world have sinned, no one is righteous in God's eyes and everyone needs God's righteousness. When Jesus was nailed to the cross, he took the believer's sins onto his own body and nailed them to the cross. The death of Jesus was *a sacrifice of atonement*. His sacrifice turned the holy and righteous anger of God against our sins away. A person, who believes in Jesus Christ, believes that Jesus Christ died for all his sins. Therefore, God declares every believer in Jesus Christ 100% righteous. And therefore God regards and treats every believer in Jesus Christ as 100% righteous for the rest of his life on earth. When Jesus forgives sins, those sins will never again count against him. In Hebrews 8:12 God says, "I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no longer."

The second result of forgiveness.

When Jesus forgives sins, *he also removes the guilt and shame of sin*. In Psalm 38:3-4 King David says, "Because of your wrath there is no health in my body..... My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear."

When you sin, you lose your peace. The Bible says, "There is no peace for the wicked." (Isaiah 57:21). When you sin, two things happen.

On the one hand, you feel very guilty before God of what you have done. Guilt stands between you and God. God is disappointed and sad about what you have done. And God's holiness and righteousness must punish you, unless God forgives you.

On the other hand, you feel very ashamed before people of what you have done. Shame stands between you and other people. Other people may be disappointed in you or even mock you. You feel that the wrong that you have done has spoiled your good name and reputation. You may even become angry with yourself and revengeful unless God takes away your shame.

Guilt and shame can cause a person to fall sick, to have sleepless nights or to become very depressed.

But when you confess your sins to God, two important things happen. On the one hand, your relationship to God changes. God forgives you your sins (Psalm 32:5). On the other hand, your relationship to other people changes. They can no longer accuse you and thus shame you (Romans 8: 34). They can no longer shame your good name and reputation. When God forgives you, he cleanses your conscience and restores your self-esteem so that you may serve the living God (Hebrews 9:14).

The third result of forgiveness.

When Jesus forgives sins, *he also removes the power of sin*. Colossians 1:13-14 says, "For God has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

When God saved you the first time, he brought you out of the domain where the devil has control and brought you into the domain where Christ has control. In this kingdom of Christ, you are saved and you receive forgiveness. Together with salvation and forgiveness comes freedom from the power of the devil, freedom from the powers of darkness and freedom from the power of sin. Sin will not be able to enslave you anymore, if you do not want it to.

A person, who still feels shame and believes that he must revenge the honour of his family or country, is still under the power of sin. Not only the devil makes you a slave of sin; also your own sinful nature makes you a slave of sin. Your feelings of shame cause you to revenge yourself and kill others. But when Jesus forgives you, he removes the power of sin and the power of shame from you. Then you become free to love instead of to hate!

The fourth result of forgiveness.

When Jesus forgives sins, he *accepts the sinner*. The parable in Luke 15:20-24 tells about a young man, who took his inheritance, went to a foreign country and spent everything he possessed with bad friends in an irresponsible life-style. Then he returned home, without any possessions, with rags for clothes and no friends. The Bible continues the story. "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate." When God forgives, he accepts you completely and with joy. He removes the sins that had caused separation between you and God. When God has forgiven you, he will never hold a grudge against you. His greatest joy is that you have returned to him!

How can I practically pray for forgiveness?

First. As soon as the Holy Spirit reminds you of some sin in your life, confess it. Do not harden your heart and refuse to humble yourself. The Bible says, "He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy" (Proverbs 28:13).

Second. When you have wronged another person, take the initiative and ask him to forgive you. Also try to restore damages if possible.

Third. When another person wrongs you, immediately forgive your debtor. Ask God to heal your hurt feelings and give you his grace not to get bitter.

Fourth. Like Daniel and Moses you could also ask God to forgive the sins of others you know.

POINT 8. THE SIXTH PRAYER: "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one".

Will God actually lead us into temptation?

The Bible says clearly that God never tempts man to sin and that man is tempted by his own sinful nature, the sinful world or the devil (James 1:13-15, Ephesians 2:2-3). As people with a sinful nature, we are prone to sin and often voluntarily run into tempting situations. *Unless God sovereignly intervenes, we will give in to temptations.* So we pray to God to sovereignly intervene and not permit us to do what we would do by nature. Everybody who relies on God and prays, "please do not permit me to run into tempting situations", will not fall in his temptation and God will deliver him from evil! This prayer may be compared with the following prayer: "Lord, give me your grace to observe the rules of health that I may not become ill, but if you permit me to get sick, then give me the grace to stay close to you."

But God can allow someone to be tempted by sin as a test, without desiring that he fail the test. In such a situation, the person could pray, "Lord, give me your grace not to fail the test!" For example, God permitted the devil to tempt Job to the utmost. This was a test to see whether God or the devil was right. In his severe temptations, Job relied on God and he did not sin. In the end, God was proved to be right and to be the sovereign God and Job became a stronger and maturer man.

God can also permit somebody to follow his own sinful nature and fall into temptation. God has the right not to intervene! Especially people who do not pray prove that they are not dependent on God. And people, who do not pray, can also not rely on God's faithfulness. The temptation will be too strong for them and they will not find any way of escape out of the temptation. For example, when people exchange the truth for a lie and worship idols or their own idea of a god rather than the living God, then God gives them over in the sinful desires of their hearts, to sexual impurity and to every kind of evil practice. (Romans 1:24-32). Without God, nobody can overcome the power of sin!

How can I practically pray to God to deliver me from the evil one?

First. You ask God not to permit you to run voluntarily into temptations, like establishing a dangerously close alliance with the world; becoming unequally yoked with unbelievers (2 Corinthians 6:14); or getting selfishly absorbed in your own interests at the expense of neglecting the Lord and your family.

Second. God alone knows how many tests of faith, as well as how severe, each Christian can endure from the devil (1 Peter 5:8), from the world (John 15:19) and from his own sinful nature (Galatians 5:17). Therefore you should ask God to give you the grace to be watchful at all times, to resist the devil and his fiery darts (Ephesians 6:16), not to love the world or anything in the world (1 John 2:15) and to flee from the desire to love money and get rich (1 Timothy 6:8-11).

POINT 9. THE CONCLUSION OF THE PRAYER: “for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.Amen.”

The Bible says that the conclusion of the Lord’s prayer is missing in some old manuscripts of the Bible.

Should Christians still pray this conclusion?

Although some ancient manuscripts miss the conclusion “for yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever. Amen” it was already used in the church during the second century and is in complete harmony with the teachings of the Bible. Therefore it is good to continue to pray it. In it we submit to the fact that God the Father has the right to grant or not to grant our requests, because he is the King over all. We recognise that he has the power to do so. And we express our desire that God receive all the glory for what he does, forever!

What is the meaning of the word “Amen”?

The word “amen” comes from the Hebrew, the language of the Old Testament. It means “it is true and sure, I believe it, so be it”. It is an expression that we have prayed in faith, believing that God exists and that he has heard our prayer.

ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK

First. Pray the Lord’s Prayer regularly.

Second. See the workbooks “Go and make disciples” and Internet on www.dota.net

Third. Listen on short wave radio every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY to “Discipleship training on the air”.