



Prayer

FaithBuilder 2 | Lesson 28 | Word

Lesson Overview

1. Watch a Video

Watch *Why Does God Want Our Gratitude?* (5min16sec) online at bitly.com/GodGratitude.

2. Read

Praying opens us up to the Lord so He can flow in and respond by being more closely present with us. pp.1-2

3. The Lord's Prayer—A Model Prayer

What does this prayer mean to you? pp.3-4

New Church Concept Humble Attitude

The Lord therefore desires a humble attitude in us on our behalf, because when we have that attitude, the Lord can flow in with heavenly good. The same applies to worship and gratitude. *Secrets of Heaven* 5957

Video

Watch *Why Does God Want Our Gratitude?* online at bitly.com/GodGratitude (5min 16sec). (Enter the bitly link in the web browser bar at the top of your screen.)

1. What does God want from us?
2. Why does God want us to worship Him?
3. In what ways can a humble attitude help us?
4. How does God want to bless us?

Read

The Writings describe prayer as “speech with God.”

Prayer...is speech with God, and some internal view at the time of the matters of the prayer, to which there answers something like an influx into the perception or thought of the mind, so that there is a certain opening of the person's interiors toward God. See *Arcana Coelestia* 2535

Prayer invites the Lord flow into our thoughts. It can soften stubborn attitudes and help us open up towards the Lord—so He can bless us. When the Lord was on earth He prayed for help too. In fact He prayed more or less constantly—sometimes on a mountain by Himself, sometimes in the wilderness, and in the garden of Gethsemane. When He prayed, heaven was opened to Him and He received guidance from the Divine (see *Arcana Coelestia* 2535).

How Prayer Helps Us

Everyone struggles with negative thoughts and feelings at times. The Lord stands ready to defend us against these feelings. He says,

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with me.”
Revelation 3:20

Praying opens the door to the Lord in our lives and has the power to bring us closer to Him. What we can experience His presence in various ways, but the specific

If a person prays from love and faith, and for only heavenly and spiritual things, there then comes forth in the prayer something like a revelation (which is manifested in the affection of him that prays) as to hope, consolation, or a certain inward joy. See *Arcana Coelestia* 2535

New Church Concept Prayer

Jesus said, "And all things, whatever you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."
Matthew 21:22

A correspondence exists between the thoughts and affections of the minds and the actions and gestures of the body. Humility of heart, for example, brings a person to his knees, an external gesture of the body. *Arcana Coelestia* 4215.2

Prayer, regarded in itself, is speech with God, and some internal view at the time of the matters of the prayer, to which there answers something like an influx into the perception or thought of the mind, so that there is a certain opening of the person's interiors toward God. But the experience varies according to the person's state, and according to the essence of the subject of the prayer. If the person prays from love and faith, and for only heavenly and spiritual things, there then comes forth in the prayer something like a revelation (which is manifested in the affection of him that prays) as to hope, consolation, or a certain inward joy. See *Arcana Coelestia* 2535

When a person is in a life of charity, he is constantly praying, if not with the mouth yet with the heart. For that which is of the love is constantly in the thought even when a person is unconscious of it. It is clear that "praying" in the spiritual sense is worship from love. See *Apocalypse Explained* 325.12

The hope, comfort or joy we may feel are the Lord flowing in as an *answer to our prayer*.

How We Should Pray

Prayers should come from a humble heart—a heart that recognizes that without God we are nothing. One way we can show this is to kneel, bow our heads, and fold our hands. Although we may not always *feel* humble, kneeling helps put us in a humble state of mind and heart, and what is in our hearts is heard in heaven.

We should address prayers to the Lord God Jesus Christ. Saying His names can help bring His qualities to mind, for example, Helper, Heavenly Father, Savior.

We can lay our needs before the in prayer Lord, asking for His help, guidance, deliverance from evils, inspiration, courage, or desire to follow Him.

The prayer is to be a request that the Lord have mercy on us, give us the power to resist the evils that we have repented of, and provide us an inclination and desire to do what is good, since "without him we cannot do anything" (John 15:5). The confession is to be that we see, recognize, and admit to our evils and that we are discovering that we are miserable sinners. There is no need for us to list our sins before the Lord and no need to beg that he forgive them...because we searched them out within ourselves and seen them, and therefore they are present before the Lord because they are present before us. The Lord was leading us in our self-examination; he disclosed our sins; he inspired our grief and, along with it, the motivation to stop doing them and to begin a new life. See *True Christianity* 539

We can end our prayer with a promise to make a fresh start to follow the Lord, to be useful and help others, or to follow through with a new resolution, recognizing that the Lord has all power in our lives. "Amen" means, "so be it"—it is an acknowledgement of the power of the Lord's truth in our lives.

What Should We Pray For?

If we feel alone, we can turn to the Lord as a friend, asking His help to guide us—to help us know what to say or how to act. We can ask for instruction about what is best for ourselves—for His help in learning new truths so He can show us how to become better people. We can ask for strength to resist our evils, admitting that, by ourselves, we are too weak to fight against them and that we depend on His help. The Lord cares about things that have *eternal* value—that relate to our happiness and usefulness in heaven. In general these are the things we should pray for. If things like health, food and clothing affect our spirits, then we can also pray for these. One aspect of charity is wishing well for others. Praying for others can make them feel that someone cares about them, and could help them. When we think of someone, we become close to them in spirit. Our thoughts may actually influence the spirits who are with them. We should not expect that our prayers will change the Lord's mind—His Divine Providence is working for everyone throughout the universe and He will not favor one person over another, for He loves us all.

The Lord's Prayer—A Model Prayer

The Lord gave us a prayer we can use as a model for our own prayers. Reflect on each phrase in the Lord's prayer and write down what it means to you. Share your ideas with another person and discuss similarities and differences in the ways you understand the prayer. Why is the Lord's prayer such a perfect prayer?

Lord's Prayer	What this means to me
Our Father,	
who art in the heavens,	
hallowed be Thy name.	
Thy kingdom come.	
Thy will be done	
as in heaven so upon the earth.	
Give us this day our daily bread.	
And forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors.	
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.	
For Thine is the kingdom,	
and the power,	
and the glory,	
forever.	
Amen.	

The Lord's Prayer—A Model Prayer

Delve Deeper into the Lord's Prayer

Read and reflect on the following summary of the deeper meaning of the Lord's Prayer. Are there any ideas that stand out to you or surprise you? How might you put these ideas into your own words?

Lord's Prayer	A Summary of the Deeper Meaning Based on a summary by Rev. Grant Odhner
Our Father,	We are all the Lord's children. He cares for us all, and is looking out for the interests of all people.
who art in the heavens,	The Lord is <i>everywhere</i> , above our worldly consciousness. We can lift our thoughts to Him as <i>He is in heaven, among the angels</i> .
hallowed be Thy name.	When we start by honoring the Lord as holy we open our hearts and minds to receive Him.
Thy kingdom come.	We hope for heaven, and its many blessings. We hope for blessings for human community; we also hope for personal blessings of soul, mind and body.
Thy will be done	Heaven only comes into our lives in the measure that we do the Lord's will.
as in heaven so upon the earth.	We need to bring the heavenly hopes we treasure in our inner selves into expression in our outer lives.
Give us this day our daily bread.	<i>"This day... our daily bread..."</i> We cannot hoard heavenly "manna". What are we ready to accept <i>today</i> ?
And forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors.	What burdens do we hope to be freed from? What do we need to let go of? What are we holding against others? Are we holding others responsible for our happiness?
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.	We will be tested, but should not seek tests. We can effectively meet tests when we have confidence that the Lord is with us, and delivers us through the truth we accept from Him.
For Thine is the kingdom,	The Lord invites us to keep in mind that the promised goal—the kingdom of heaven—is His.
and the power,	The power to achieve heaven is the Lord's.
and the glory,	The glory of attaining states of heaven is the Lord's.
forever.	When we pray we should keep the idea that life is eternal in mind.
Amen.	Means, "It is true."