

WEDNESDAY EVENING (October 16th) • Prayer & Providence

“Lord, Teach Us to Pray”

“Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples’” (Luke 11:1). Notice several things:

1. Jesus’ prayers so impressed his disciples that they wanted him to teach them how to pray.
2. Jesus’ response indicates the validity of being taught to pray.
3. John had taught his own disciples to pray. If these disciples had been taught, why wouldn’t we search for similar instruction? And what better source could there be than the Bible? Studying what is revealed by the Spirit about prayer, as well as the prayers of men and women recorded throughout the period of divine revelation, is extremely worthwhile.

Since Matthew’s account of Jesus’ instruction is more comprehensive, let’s analyze it (6:9-13):

- **Prayer and God**
 - Our Father in heaven –
 - Hallowed be your name –
 - Your kingdom come –
 - Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven –
- **Prayer and Us**
 - Give us this day our daily bread –
 - Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors –
 - Lead us not into temptation –
 - Deliver us from evil –

This “model prayer” that Jesus taught his disciples covers the basics of life: God and his kingdom, and us and our needs. Peter points us in much the same direction when he writes, “Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you” (1 Pet 5:6-7).

However, we should recognize a principle that stretches across all of God’s dealings with mankind: prayer must come within the scope of God’s will and providence. In your own words, what is the significance of praying “in Jesus’ name”?

“In the name” is not a magical formula attached to prayer or some other act of devotion; rather, to act, speak, or pray in the name of Jesus involves at least three core elements:

1. These are to be done according to, or out of, the relationship we have with God through our redemption in Christ; it is acting in harmony with his Messiahship and mission.
2. “In the name” frames the prayer as being consistent with God’s will and word and has his glory as its ultimate end (Col 3:17).
3. In using “in the name,” we recognize God’s authority and act or pray within the limits of that which he has authorized (Matt 18:15-20; 1 Cor 5:4-5).