



Connecting with God: The Lord's Prayer

"This is how you should pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name." Matt. 6:9 (NIV)

God is a _____ not a force!

WE CAN CONNECT WITH GOD BECAUSE...

1. He is a _____ Father!

"As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who honor Him..." Ps. 103:13 (NIV)

"Cast all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you!"
1 Peter 5:7 (NIV)

"So don't worry, saying, 'What shall we eat? ...or what shall we wear?'... Your heavenly Father knows you need these things." Matt. 6:31-32 (NIV)

2. He is a _____ Father!

"Every good and perfect gift is from the Father who does not change like shifting shadows." James 1:17 (NIV)

"Even if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown Himself." 2 Tim. 2:13 (NIV)

"...God will never go back on his promises." Rom. 11:29 (LB)

"My God is changeless in his love for me..." Ps. 59:10 (LB)

3. He is a _____ Father!

"God did this so people would ... reach out for Him and find Him, since He is not far from each of us." Acts 17:27 (NIV)

- He is never too busy for me.

"The Lord is near to all who call on him..." Ps. 145:18 (NIV)

- He loves to meet my needs.

"If you...know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!" Matt. 7:11 (NIV)

- He is sympathetic to my hurts.

"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." Ps. 34:18 (NIV)

4. He is a _____ Father!

"For nothing is impossible with God." Luke 1:37 (NIV)

"(God) is able to do far more than we would ever dare to ask or even dream of – infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, or hopes!" Eph. 3:20 (LB)

Small Group Life:

Today we live in perilous times, it's fitting that as we've learned of God's nature that now we learn to draw near to Him.

Nothing is more important to our spiritual life than prayer and yet it is often the most neglected discipline in our lives.

➤ What are some of the misconceptions about prayer?

- Magic wand: wave the magic wand, hocus pocus, and we get everything we want.
- Fire extinguisher: like a fire pull box, we break the glass of prayer only when we're in a 911 situation, used "in case of emergency only".
- Tug of war: trying to get a reluctant God to act who stubbornly resists us, we attempt to convince Him to do what I want.
- Religious duty: pray merely because we're supposed to but deep down inside I find no joy or satisfaction in the experience.
- Remember, none of these are remotely close to the Bible idea of prayer and approaching prayer with these misconceptions will leave us desperate, confused and frustrated.

➤ Bible is very clear however that when prayer is approached effectively it produces amazing benefits to and for the believer:

- Peace to the anxious
- Clarity to the confused
- Fulfillment to the empty
- Direction and guidance to the bewildered
- Joy to the brokenhearted
- Courage to the fearful
- Confidence to the timid
- Wisdom to the misguided

➤ **What is the most common “Greek” word for prayer?**

“Proseuche” and it is a compound of two words:

- “pros” = toward with a sense of closeness
- “euche” = wish, desire or vow
- Remember “proseuche” is much more than a simple request... it involves face to face closeness, surrender, consecration and thanksgiving.

Looking at the Lord’s Prayer, I want to focus simply on “our Father”

- Did Jesus break all the rules when He referred to God as “Father”?
- Did He also break all the existing stereotypes?
 - What He’s doing is He’s exploding all the stereotypes. God is not the angry tyrant. God is not the cosmic cop. He is not the universal killjoy. He is not the impersonal force. He’s not all these other things that people want to make God out to be. He says this: **God is a person, not a power.**
 - This is really good news, “God has a personality” we can connect with Him and have a relationship with Him.

Remember we can connect with God because the Bible says that there are four characteristics of the fatherhood of God:

1. He is a caring Father (read the scriptures for #1):

- When you pray to your Father, realize He cares very much for you.
- Ps. 103, Tells us that Our heavenly Father is compassionate.
- He see’s our distress and concerns and is moved with compassion.
- Just as we would be moved to help our child who was in danger or threat, God’s heart is moved to offer compassion when were in danger or threat.
- Some may question this...”I’ve asked God to change my employment status and He hasn’t”
- Remember, God’s view of threat may be different than ours...
- Matt. 6:31 Remember, God always keeps His promises, He will take care of your basic needs for survival, but His promises are so far above the basics.

2. He is a consistent Father (read the scriptures for #2):

- When you pray to your Father, realize that He is consistent
- James 1:17 tells us all good things come from the Father... (everything, even the air your breathing) and that He does not change...
- This God we pray to is not fickle or flakey, He never has a bad day, never wakes up on the wrong side of the bed... He does not change
- What doesn’t change? His nature to give good and perfect gifts, to do right by you... always.
- Always you ask? How about when I’ve blown it? 2 Tim 2:13.
- Bible says that “where sin abounds, grace does much more”.
- We don’t give up on our kids because they make a mistake, neither does God.

- Romans 11:29 Friends, on this planet nothing lasts. *Nothing lasts.* No relationship lasts. No wealth lasts. No health lasts. No job lasts. No economy lasts. No nation lasts. Everything on this planet is temporary. **There’s only one thing on this planet you can count on that is not ever going to change. That is the consistent loving promises of your heavenly Father.**

3. He is a close Father (read the scriptures for #3):

- Do you remember what God’s Omnipotence means? God never travels because He is everywhere, all at the same time. We’ve all experienced what God’s distance feels like but remember it’s always been us who have moved away from Him not the other way around.
- Remember He is never too busy for you. Earthly fathers are frequently guilty of this, but never our Heavenly Father.
- He loves to meet your needs. It’s wonderful to bless our children and our Heavenly Father is the one who made us that way! Remember Father God even loves to attend to the small daily needs of our lives.
- He is sympathetic to your hurts. Remember your Heavenly Father absolutely cares and wants you to draw near to Him when you’re broken hearted. His closeness is more than sentimental, it rescues, heals, strengthens, encourages, etc... His closeness is all we need.

4. He is a competent Father (read the scriptures for #4):

- The Good News is that God is more than able to handle whatever concerns we have.
- Memorize: Luke 1:37 “for nothing is impossible with God”
- Remember, we all face things that are impossible, that’s why we need to pray and bring the all-powerful nature of our Heavenly Father into all of our circumstances and burdens.
- Can you imagine any problem you have that God would consider big? Remember, it’s all small to Him. There’s nothing too big for God to handle.

CONCLUSION:

- Jesus introduced the idea that God is to be approached relationally... He’s personal and asks us to be personal, to be real.
- Remember the foundational concepts of prayer... “proseuche”
 - Face to face closeness
 - Surrender
 - Consecration
 - Thanksgiving

Mission or Ministry as appropriate – Who can you invite to your group or minister to that are having trouble trusting God...don’t let them battle that alone, help them get in a small group and open up!

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE ANSWER KEY:

God is a Person not a force; 1. He is a caring Father; 2. He is a consistent Father; 3. He is a close Father; 4. He is a competent Father