

**The Lord's Prayer**  
**Matthew 6:9-15; Luke 11:2-4**

Pray then like this: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.  
(English Standard Version – ESV)

**Background:**

- Jewish people commonly addressed God as “Our heavenly Father” when they prayed, but such intimate titles as “Abba” (Daddy or Papa) were rare.

- Jewish prayers recognized that God’s name would be “hallowed” (sanctified, shown holy) in the time of the end, when his Kingdom would come, as the Bible also said (Isaiah 5:16; 29:23; Ezekiel 36:23; 38:23; 39:7, 27). In the present, God’s people could hallow his name by living rightly. If they lived wrongly, they would “profane” his name, or bring it into disrepute among the nations (Exodus 20:7; Jeremiah 34:16; 44:25-26; Ezekiel 13:19; 20:14; Amos 2:7).

- Verse 11 alludes to God’s provision of “daily bread” (manna) for his people in the wilderness after he first redeemed them. Prayers for God to supply one’s basic needs, of which bread and water are the ultimate examples, were common in the ancient world (Proverbs 30:8).

- Regarding Jewish teaching about sins as “debts” before God; the same Aramaic word could be used for both. Biblical law required the periodic forgiveness of monetary debtors (in the 7th and 50th years), so the illustration of forgiving debts was graphic, especially since Jewish lawyers had found a way to circumvent the release of debts so that creditors would continue to lend.

- Parallels with ancient Jewish prayers, and possibly the Aramaic wording behind verse 13, suggest that the first line means: “Let us not sin when we are tested,” rather than “Let us not be tested” (Psalm 141:3-4; Matthew 4:1; 26:41). Some scholars see an allusion to the final time of suffering here, which was expected to precede the coming Kingdom of God. Jewish prayers were commonly used in liturgical contexts that ended with a statement of praise, so the addition of the benediction, “Thine is the kingdom...” to the original text of Matthew is not surprising.

**Questions:**

- + Of all the petitions in this prayer, which one do you think is the most important, and why?  
What are some reasons why Jesus presented the petitions in the particular order they appear?
- + How does one “hallow” God’s name? How do you feel when people take God’s name in vain?  
Does the petition, “Give us this day our daily bread” refer to literal bread exclusively or more?  
What does, “Lead us not into temptation” really mean, since God would never do such a thing?  
What “trespasses” do you need to confess? What “trespasses” do you need to forgive?