

PRAYER



WEEK THREE // DAY ONE

Woah, we're half way there
Woah, livin' on a prayer
Take my hand, we'll make it I swear
Woah, livin' on a prayer

- **Bon Jovi**

Prayer is something we've all probably done, but still don't understand. In fact, I'm not sure it's something we'll ever understand. While it's simple to do, it's a divine mystery in it's profundity.

Whether you pray every day, every moment, or every time you get yourself in trouble, we've all probably seen or heard or spoken a prayer.

While we may all have a concept of prayer, how well do we really understand it?

If you struggle with it, don't feel like you're alone. There's a lot to learn and a lot which is still unknown. None of us have this mastered. It's an art, not a science in the same way that relationships cannot be put in a formula, but change case by case and season by season. The goal of prayer is a relationship.

There are many places we could look in the Bible to study what prayer is and how it works, but as we experiment with The Way of Jesus, let's begin with Jesus' own words.

If you feel like you don't understand prayer, don't worry. You're not alone! Jesus' own disciples need some instructions!

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray..." [Luke 11:1 NIV]

Then, Jesus teaches about how to pray. For this week, we're going to break down what he says.

"This, then, 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.

And 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.)

[Matthew 6:9-13 NIV]

Maybe you've heard this before. It's often called The Lord's Prayer which is interesting because the word *Lord* never shows up. In fact, the words Jesus uses are much less formal than *Lord* would depict.

Jesus begins the prayer in an incredibly shocking way. This is a time in Jewish history where God is not a kind, loving, personable god. In this day there were really two options; God was either a distant deity who was insignificant to normal life. He wasn't relevant and didn't matter. Or, God was a demanding disciplinarian who was angry, rigid, and formal.

**Maybe Who we are praying
to is more important than
what we are praying about.**

Maybe it wasn't just them.

It's really not that different than the world we live in now. Right now, nearly 33% of 18-22 year-olds in America would say that Christianity is *extremist* or *irrelevant*. They would say it's extreme; it's a demanding, disciplinarian religion. Or, it's irrelevant; it's a distant deity religiosity in which God is insignificant to normal life.

Maybe it isn't just them.

Do you see God as *distant*? Do you see God as a *disciplinarian*?

Because Jesus sees God as a *daddy*. The word Jesus uses here for “Father” is the word Abba, like the Swedish disco group. Abba is not a formal name for a father. It’s an intimate name that a father would call their dad.

Jesus begins by teaching us that God is nearer than we think. He’s closer than we expect. When we pray, we’re not speaking to a god who is far away, nor a god who doesn’t care. We’re talking to God who is a dad.

But, he doesn’t end there. He says, *hallowed be your name*. Hallowed is a fancy word for holy and holy is a fancy word for “set apart”. While God is accessible, He is also revered. The name Daddy is what sets Him apart from other gods.

How would this change the way we pray? If we didn’t see God as a distant deity or a demanding disciplinarian? Instead, what if we saw God as a dad? And not even like a formal “Father”, but a colloquial “Daddy”?

My kids talk to me. I know. I know. We haven’t reached the teenage years yet. But, they speak to me with very little filter. They love me and I love them, but they speak with imperfect English, in short, simple phrases with no pretense and lots of authenticity.

That’s how children speak to a daddy.

However, when many of us pray we begin speaking a form of English don’t use any other time. “Thine” and “Thou” are thrown around like we’re in a Shakespeare play. We use eloquent phrases and formal English and while it may seem very impressive, it means very little.

And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. - JESUS

[Matthew 6:7 NIV]

Let’s try praying and let’s remove the formalities and add in familiarity. Try talking to God - out loud if you feel comfortable - and speak to God in a normal conversation. I believe God is much more interested in earnestness than eloquence. Maybe who we are praying to is more important than what we are praying about.

The Lab.

EXPERIMENT: PRAYER

I get it... You may be thinking, "I don't pray." This may be a little weird, but just give it a try. Try saying words - out loud if you're comfortable - to talk to God. Don't use any formalities, just talk familiarly.

Here are some topics you can talk about to God:

1. What you did today.
2. People you're concerned about.
3. Something cool you learned.
4. A problem you've encountered.
5. Something bad that happened.
6. Something good that happened.
7. Your family.
8. Your kids.
9. Your pets.
10. Your Netflix queue.

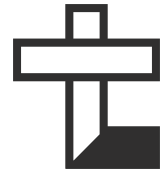
All of these count as prayer.

You did it! You prayed!

JOURNAL

How weird was that?

PRAYER



WEEK THREE // DAY TWO

The moment I wake up
Before I put on my makeup
I say a little prayer for you.

- **Dionne Warwick**

Both pairs of my grandparents lived well outside of city limits. As a kid, this really came in handy around the 4th of July. Every Independence Day we would get as many fireworks as we could afford to shoot off on these unincorporated properties.

One year, we had a huge fountain of fireworks all ready to go. It was going to be a huge show and the whole thing was going to be set off by a single fuse. I bent down to light the fuse, but the flame wasn't setting the fuse off. I tried a few more times, but it still didn't seem to be working right.

Suddenly, my dad came running toward me and yelled for me to get out of there. Apparently, the heat had reached the fireworks and they were about to launch. As we were running away he yelled to me, "Get out of here or those are going to blow you to kingdom come."

What does that mean?

To kingdom come...

In our world, kingdom come is the day that God's kingdom comes to earth. By most thinking, this is at the end of time. Like the apocalypse. With or without zombies. The end of the world is the beginning of the kingdom of heaven.

I'm not sure that's true. In Jesus' template for how to pray (The Lord's Prayer), Jesus drops this second line:

Your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
[Matthew 6:10 NIV]

Can we start with the first word real quick? Your...

Your reminds us of something. In prayer, we're asking for a kingdom to come. Now, every kingdom has a king. By saying *Your kingdom* we are reminded that we are not the kings of this kingdom. It's *your* kingdom. Not ours.

And we're asking for this kingdom to come.

This kingdom is the kingdom of heaven. It's the kingdom which God established at the beginning of time. It is good. It's where there is no disease, no disappointment, no divorce, no depression, no death.

That sounds dreamy, but it also sounds distant.

Jesus is saying the kingdom of heaven *can* be lived out here on earth. That we're not waiting on His kingdom to come if we allow His will to be done. It can be done here on earth just as it is in heaven.

When you pray, or when you've thought about prayer, it's usually seen as a way to tell God *how we want Him to act*, but what if prayer is a way for God to tell us *how He wants us to act*?

I don't think this is how we pray. Often, it's not how I pray. I tell God the things I want Him to do for me. I rarely ask what He wants me to do for Him.

Would you pray this way? Would you pray and ask how you can bring the kingdom of heaven. Would you ask how you can act in a way that eases disease, gives hope to the disappointed, brings reconciliation to the divorced, restores joy to the depressed, and exchanges life to those who are spiritually dead.

The Lab.

EXPERIMENT: PRAYER

Would you pray that God will give you opportunities *this week* where you can bring the good of His kingdom to this broken world?

Here are some topics you can talk to God about:

1. Think of someone at your job who needs someone to help them out. Ask God to provide an opportunity for you to lend them a hand.
2. Think of a friend who is going through a serious sickness and ask God to heal them. Send them a note or take them a meal.
3. Think of a person who is going through a breakup, divorce, or mourning a death. Ask God to give them a comfort and wisdom. Pray that God would show you a way to help comfort them.

All of these count as prayer.

You did it! You prayed!

JOURNAL

Who came to mind? What did you ask God for? What did you do to help bring the kingdom of heaven to earth?

The Lab.

PRAYER



WEEK THREE // DAY THREE

You've got to pray just to make it today.

— M.C. Hammer

When my wife, Marie, was pregnant with our firstborn, we were invited out to dinner with friends. We were entering the “wear-sweats-stay-in-to-watch-Dateline” stage of life, and our friends were still in the “dress-up-go-out-and-stay-up-late” stage of life.

A new, hip restaurant had just opened and our friends got us all reservations. It was one of those places where the servers were required to have visible tattoos and treat their clients just a bit rudely.

It was great.

Our friends - the ones who actually had social lives - set up the reservation for 8pm which was later than we would've liked. Especially my for Marie. She's very small, but she was eating for two and meals seemed too far apart already.

We got there at 7:45 hoping a table had opened up early. It hadn't.

So, we waited until 8pm.

Then waited until 8:15.

Finally, at 8:30 we were seated.

We were starving. We searched the menus so we could order as quickly as possible. They had all kinds of exotic foods, which were organic and locally sourced. As soon as we saw a server, we began unloading our orders.

Marie wasn't playing games with her order. She wasn't going to try something new. She wanted something she could trust to be good and filling. So, she proudly ordered the macaroni and cheese.

The rest of us ordered foods that adults eat.

The server left and put our orders in. We sat talking with our cool friends. We chatted for quite awhile as we passed time waiting for our food.

Finally, they brought us enormous plates stacked with food. My meal came first, then our friends' meals. Each of us looked at our plates wondering how we'd be able to finish what was in front of us. Marie sat, trying to patiently wait for her food.

When the server emerged with her food, he wasn't holding a huge plate, but a small bowl. A ramekin to be exact. It was so small. It was like one ice cream scoop full of macaroni and cheese in a three inch wide bowl.

I looked at poor Marie.

She didn't pout, she didn't protest. Instead there was just one little tear rolling down her cheek.

(Post Script: We never went back to that restaurant.)

I think we often see the provision of God like that ramekin of macaroni. True, it's small, it's something, it's just not enough.

In our culture we think we have to get what's ours. The world isn't inherently generous. We see the world (and therefore the Maker of this world) as not having nor being enough. There are only shortages and scarcity.

In his prayer, Jesus uses this phrase:

**"Give us today our daily bread."
[Matthew 6:11 NIV]**

You may have heard this phrase before. It's really a simple idea. Jesus is asking for physical provision. For actual, tangible food. I don't know if you are the kind of person or family (or grew up in the kind of family) that prays before meals. Whether you do or don't, this is a good idea. Taking a second to thank God for His provision, and His sufficiency is a great idea. When you realize that all things come from God - the Maker of all things - all things are His and He gives to us out of His abundance.

If you take a second to thank God for what He has given you, it's always a good idea. Gratitude is never a bad idea.

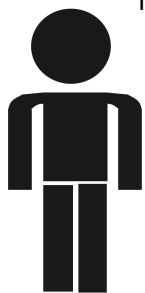
What Jesus is saying here is much deeper than just giving us bread every day. He's recalling one of the greatest stories in the Bible called the Exodus (we read from Exodus a couple weeks ago). The Exodus was one of God's first public acts where He rescued His people from slavery. They had been in slavery for 400 years. Generation upon generation had been born into slavery. They didn't know anything but shortages and scarcity. You worked for what you got, and even then it was just small. It was something. It was just not enough.

After God rescues His people, later called the Israelites, they have left the only life they ever knew. And God draws them out of slavery and into the desert. They have no infrastructure, no economy, and no food. And this is not a small problem. In fact, it's a huge problem.

In fact, let's take a look at just how big this problem really was. The book of Exodus tells us:

There were about 600,000 men on foot, besides women and children.
[Exodus 12:37 NIV]

The Israelites had 600,000 men.
Not including women
or children.



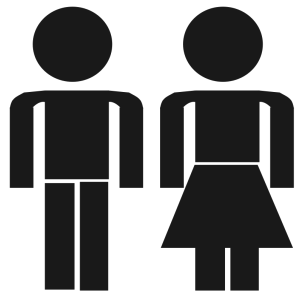
600,000
Men

For the sake of round numbers, let's
assume there were
400,000 women.



400,000
Women

Which puts us at 1,000,000 men and women.



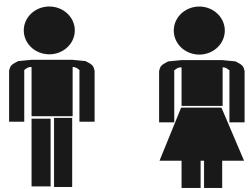
**1 Million
Men & Women**

Now, let's add in kids. In America today, the average family has 2.4 kids.

Source: White, Marian. "The Top 10 Largest U.S. Cities by Population." *Moving.com*, Moving.com, 17 July 2018, www.moving.com/tips/the-top-10-largest-us-cities-by-population/.

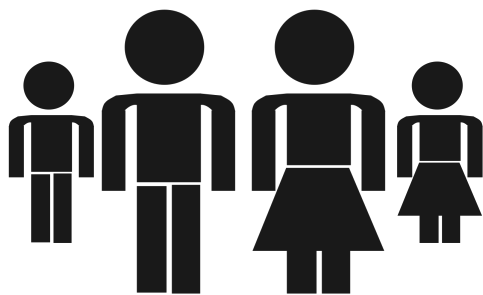
So, conservatively, let's say to each couple, there were two kids. (This was a time before any methods of birth control. Likely there would have been more children than two per family.)

This puts us at 1,000,000 children.



**1 Million
Children**

When we add the 1,000,000 kids with the 1,000,000 adults we get a grand total of:



**2 Million
People**

Two million people is a lot of people by any standards.

In America, our top five largest cities are:

New York City // Population: 8,550,405

Los Angeles // Population: 3,971,883

Chicago // 2,720,546

Houston // 2,296,224

Philadelphia // 1,567,442

• Source: White, Marian. "The Top 10 Largest U.S. Cities by Population." *Moving.com*, Moving.com, 17 July 2018, www.moving.com/tips/the-top-10-largest-us-cities-by-population/.

This would have made this group of Israelites the 4th or 5th largest city in the United States. It's a big city with big problems. They have no infrastructure, no food, and no economy. They are just a group wondering through the desert living their lives in tents without campgrounds.

God didn't bring them to the desert to starve or to suffer. He brought them to this place to sustain them. The desert wasn't to punish them. It was to provide for them.

Then the Lord said to Moses, "I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and *gather enough for that day.*"

[Exodus 16:4 NIV]

And God provides in spectacular fashion:

"This is what the Lord has commanded: 'Everyone is to gather as much as they need. Take an omer for *each person* you have in your tent.'"

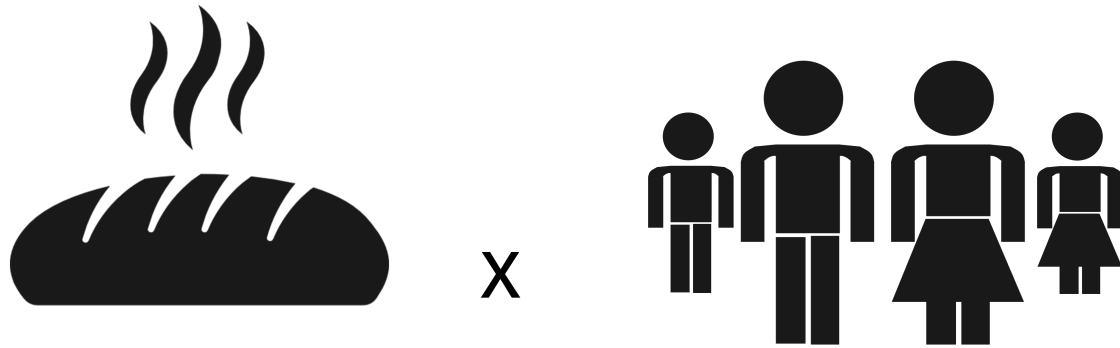
[Exodus 16:16 NIV]

Manna was (and still is) a bread made with no yeast. It's a flat bread.

An omer was a unit of unit of measurement for volume (it was about three liters). If that three liters was full of manna, it would weigh about 3 pounds. So, let's take this math just a bit further.



The verse above states it was one omer *per person*. So, let's multiply three pounds by 2,000,000 people.



**3 Lbs. x 2 Million People
= 6 Million Pounds of Manna**

EVERY. DAY.

To put it in perspective, that's 3,000 tons.



An empty Boeing 747 weighs just under 300 tons.

An average Ford F-150 truck weighs between 2 and 3 tons.



An average box car on a train can hold 50 tons.





That's 60 box cars full of
manna every day.



That's a whole lot of manna God is providing. While God provided so dramatically, he also provided *daily*. Remember, his instructions:

"I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and *gather enough for that day.*"

[Exodus 16:4 NIV]

In Exodus, we see that some people go and take more than they needed. They took some for the next day and the day after. They took more than an omer per person. They were afraid. They thought God was a god of scarcity, of not having nor being enough. They only saw shortages and scarcity.

When they would take too much, God would make it grow maggots so the next day they would have to go out and collect again - this time only taking as much as they needed.

This was God's way of reminding His people that He was enough. That He would provide day in and day out. That He was not a god of shortages nor scarcity, but that he was the God who supplies all of our needs if we rely on Him.

Back to the prayer...

When Jesus prays,

"Give us today our daily bread."

[Matthew 6:11 NIV]

He's reminding us that he is praying to the same God who said,

"I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and *gather enough for that day.*"

[Exodus 16:4 NIV]

He's reminding us that he is praying to the same God who provided, saying,

"Everyone is to gather as much as they need. Take an omer for *each person* you have in your tent."

[Exodus 16:16 NIV]

And when we pray, we can thank God for the way He has provided for us this far and remind ourselves that He has, is, and always will be a God who is enough.

The Lab.

EXPERIMENT:

What we're going to do is simple. We are going to share our gritudes. These are going to be things you may share with your group or your Growth Partners.

Start by thinking of the *daily* provisions you have in your life. The simplest things which God has provided.

Make a list here of the simplest things which you can thank God for:

Now the spectacular. The big things; the things you've come through, the things you've overcome, the worst and best you've experienced.

Make a list here of the spectacular things which you can thank God for:

You did it! You prayed!

Now, just take a second and stop and tell God - out loud or just in your own mind - thank you for these things. Thank him for the simple things and the spectacular things. The big and small, the good and bad. Thank Him for these things, then ask Him for today's necessities. Not this week. Not this month. Ask Him for what you need to get through today.

The Lab.

P R A Y E R



WEEK THREE // DAY FOUR

I hope you're somewhere prayin', prayin'
I hope your soul is changin', changin'
I hope you find your peace
Falling on your knees, prayin'

— Kesha

In my neighborhood there's a small building - not quite a house, not quite a shed - which stands on a small plot of land. The building is not a home. It's not a business. I have no idea what it is. I'm can only assume it's a safe house for CIA agents who are monitoring the activities of retirees in the suburbs of Tampa Bay.

All over this small structure there are signs posted which read NO TRESPASSING!

I told you it was the CIA. That's the only logical explanation.

My son is learning to ride his bike around our neighborhood. The other day he asked if we could go for a ride down to the "trespassing house". So, we rode down to the corner lot and stood on the sidewalk staring at the building covered in signs reminding us not to trespass.

Then, my son, Oliver, looks at me and asks, "Dad, can we go over there and look at the Trespassing House?".

I answered, "No, bud. We can't."

"Why not?" he asked.

"Because, that would be trespassing." I explained.

He wasn't satisfied with that.

"Why can't we look at the Trespassing House?"

"Because, that would be trespassing."

"Who told us we can't trespass?"

"I'm assuming the CIA." I answered. *

I watched him stand with his toes as close to the edge of the sidewalk as possible. His shoes were nearly to where the sidewalk ended and the grass began. He leaned forward as if the house had a magnetic pull toward it.

He wanted so badly to trespass. You could see the inner turmoil displayed on his face. He wanted to step from what was permissible to what was not permissible. He wanted to go from the place that was fine to the place that was forbidden.

We've all been there. The moment where we see a line - a clear cut line of what is right and what is wrong. We go as close to the line as we can. We put our toes up to the line. We question, why is this line here. We wonder who put this line there in the first place?! We rationalize why we should cross the line.

In The Lord's Prayer, there's a phrase in the prayer you may have heard before.

**"Forgive us our *trespasses*
as we forgive those who *trespass* against us."
[Matthew 6:12 (sic)]**

What's interesting is *trespass* is not the actual word in this prayer. In the original Greek, that word *trespass* is clearly translated *debt*.

The most accurate translation is

**"Forgive us our *debts*
as we forgive our *debtors*."
[Matthew 6:12]**

William Tyndale was the first notable translator of the Bible from its original languages into English. In his translation, he used this word *trespass* instead of *debt*. There are a couple reasons this may be:

1. In just a couple verses Jesus will talk about trespasses.

[Matthew 6:14-15 ESV]

2. He was under severe scrutiny by Henry VIII - who was King at the time - and had to get a little creative with the words he wrote. If he wrote something King Henry didn't like he could be killed. For reals.

But, today millions of people still recite The Lord's Prayer. Of the millions who recite it, millions have the prayer memorized. Of the millions who have it memorized, millions pray this prayer with the word *trespass*.

Trespass has stuck around. I think it's because we understand what it means to trespass. *Trespass* paints a picture we can all visualize. We all know what it means to cross lines and to overstep and we've all done it.

Notice what Jesus *doesn't* say... He doesn't use the word we're all expecting. He doesn't say *sin*. *Sin* is slippery. *Sin* is something that we debate, but *trespassing* is objective. We know when we have or haven't trespassed. We know when we have overstepped.

Trespassing also gives us a different point of view. It means someone else is involved. We are now leaving our territory and stepping into someone else's territory. That's the way *sin* works. *Sin* is never just against God. *Sin* always hurts other people. When we steal, cheat, kill, hurt, gossip, fight, lust, etc. there will always be someone who is hurt by it. We are *trespassing* into someone else's territory.

So, today you may need to pray a little differently. You may need to pray asking forgiveness from God, but also from others.

**"Forgive us our *trespasses*
as we forgive those who *trespass* against us."
[Matthew 6:12 (sic)]**

We not only need to ask for forgiveness, but we also need to forgive others. We may need to pray that we would learn to forgive.

DISCLAIMER: There is no actual CIA activity in our neighborhood. (That we know of.)

EXPERIMENT:

What we're going to do is simple. We are going to share our gratuudes. These are going to be things you may share with your group or your Growth Partners.

This may be difficult:

What are some things for which you may need need forgiveness from God?

What are some things for which you may forgiveness from others?

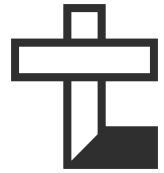
What are some things for which you may need to extend forgiveness to others?

Now, just take a second and stop and tell God - out loud or just in your own mind - ask for forgiveness from Him. He'll always extend forgiveness when it's asked for. Then, ask Him for strength to seek forgiveness from others. Lastly, ask for His strength to forgive others.

You did it! You prayed!

The Lab.

PRAYER



WEEK THREE // DAY FIVE

I pray you'll be our eyes
And watch us where we go
And help us to be wise
In times when we don't know
Let this be our prayer
As we go our way
Lead us to a place
Guide us with your Grace
To a place where we'll be safe

— **Andrea Bocelli**

Temptation is something we all understand.

That thing you want to eat.

That thing you want to buy.

That thing you want to do.

That thing you want to say.

That person you want to hurt.

There's always stuff to be tempted by.

I was recently in Vegas with a group of church planters. Let me say; it's weird to be in Vegas with a bunch of pastors. We were invited there by a church from the Vegas area.

We walked the strip one night. Our host warned us, "Don't take any handouts people give you." If you know the strip, you know you'll be handed cards of naked women, or invites for free drinks, or free chips to gamble.

Any of these could be called temptations. People are all different and are tempted by different things. For some it may be lust, for others it may be substances, for still others it may be money. But, all of us have a weak point. None of us are above it.

So, when Jesus prays in his most famous prayer:

**“Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.”
[Matthew 6:13]**

This also could be translated:

**“Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from *the evil one*.”
[Matthew 6:13]**

There are three promises about temptations we should understand:

1. No one is above temptation. Jesus himself was tempted. [Matthew 4:1-11]
2. God doesn't tempt us. It's just a byproduct of a broken world. [James 1:13-15]
3. Temptation doesn't have to win. [1 Corinthians 10:13]

Temptation *is not* sin. They are not the same thing. You should not feel ashamed nor be shamed for temptation.

What's interesting here is that Jesus is reciting this prayer in a Roman context. The Roman world was extremely oppressive toward Jews and especially those who would come to follow Jesus.

Some theologians believe Jesus is saying not to be tempted to be violent or be tempted to retaliate against oppression and that the evil one is not *the* Satan, but those who hurt us, those who oppress us.

We need to pray for this. Not just to be kept from temptation, but to be *delivered* from it. We should pray that God wouldn't let us near what tempts us, but that He'd also keep us from actual sin as well.

For me, there are days where I know my triggers. I know my stress, my pain, my hurts and how they can easily make my temptation turn into my sin. Those are days where this prayer is more pronounced and more transparent.

I want God to keep me from any evil. Evil hurts my soul, but also the soul of others. So, let's pray that God would keep us from temptation and even more so from evil.

EXPERIMENT:

What we're going to do is simple. This won't be shared with anyone.

This may be difficult:

Are there temptations which have become a little too close for comfort?

Are there temptations that have turned into sin?

How have you seen your temptation become sin?

Now, just take a second and stop and ask God this exact prayer:
Lead *me* not into temptation, but deliver *me* from evil.

You did it! You prayed!

PRAYER



WEEK THREE // DAY SIX

I close my eyes and see a better day
I close my eyes and pray

— Justin Bieber

We've looked through this whole Lord's prayer now. But, right before this prayer Jesus says a perplexing sentence.

**"For your Father knows what you need before you ask him."
[Matthew 6:8]**

So, God already knows what we're going to ask for before we actually ask him?

Then what's the point of asking? What's the point of prayer if God already knows what we're going to say?

As I said on day one of this week... prayer is a great mystery.

I had a friend who was in Rome on vacation. While he was in Rome, he thought it would be cool to visit the Vatican. They had an early mass that he planned to attend.

The morning of the mass, he missed his alarm. He woke up just a few minutes before the mass was to begin. He got dressed as quickly as he could, got in a cab and sped toward the Vatican. He got out of the cab and ran to the Basilica of St. Peter. He got inside of the church right when the mass was about to commence.

To his surprise, Mother Teresa was in the service. She was apparently not feeling well and got up to leave. Now, Mother T didn't travel alone. She was accompanied by an entourage.

Mother Teresa and her posse were exiting the basilica as my friend entered and purely by happenstance - like it was slow motion - she walked right by him.

Mother Teresa made eye contact with him and said to him, in English, "Pray for me."

Now, my friend is a good person. But, Mother Teresa is asking *him* to pray for *her*? It's very confusing. How does it work for Mother Teresa to be asking someone to pray for her. Doesn't she have a direct line? Isn't she connected? Wouldn't she have this taken care of?

Prayer is a mystery.

Does God hear us?

Who is He listening to?

Who is prayer for?

There's a final line in the Lord's prayer which we often recite. The traditional way The Lord's Prayer is said goes:

"This, then, 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.

And 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.)

[Matthew 6:9-13 NIV]

That last parenthetical line is *not* in the original manuscripts of the Bible. In fact, we really don't know where this line comes from. It just got tacked onto the end of this prayer. However, I think it's a really beautiful line.

This line reminds us that *we* are not the kings of the kingdom. Rather, we are a part of His kingdom.

This line reminds us that *we* are not the powerful ones. Rather, He is the powerful One.

This line reminds us that *we* are not the ones to be glorified. Rather, He is the One to be glorified.

My son, Oliver, has this incredible gift of spilling things. It doesn't matter if it has a lid, a cap, or a handle. He can make it spill.

A couple weeks ago my family was at Disney World and it got cold (for Florida). Like all the way down to 60°. My kids spotted the Starbucks within Disney and convinced me they were so cold that they *needed* hot chocolate. And I'm a sucker.

So, we got them kids' sized hot chocolates and my wife got a tall hot chocolate. I think for three hot chocolates at Starbucks in Disney World, it only cost us \$87.

We walked out of the Starbucks while Oliver took his first sip. We barely exited the building when Oliver spilt his hot chocolate all over the place. It was on his shoes. It was on his pants. It was on Disney's Main Street. It was everywhere.

Without missing a beat, Oliver looked up at my wife and said, "Well, I guess I'll just have yours then."

My wife loves our kids a lot, but she also loves hot chocolate a lot. She told him she still had her drink and his was all over the ground.

I think that's how we view glory. It seems there are times where we think we can take God's glory from Him. Until we realize that His glory is His alone and ours is just spilled out all over the ground.

We cannot compete for His glory. He has made the sun, the moon, and the stars. He has created the mountains, the oceans, and the sand. He has designed the solar system, the ecosystem, and the nervous system.

I don't think our glory could ever compare to His.

Let's go back to the original question: **Who is prayer for?**

Is prayer for God's benefit? Is it a time where we run down our checklist of action items we want God to accomplish? Doesn't he "already know" what we'll ask for?

Or is prayer a time where we ask not our will for God, but His will for us. Where we listen to Him and His will, His wants, His desires and we align our hearts with His? Because HIS is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

EXPERIMENT: MEDITATION

You read that right. We're going to meditate.

It's been said, meditation is the listening side of prayer. This isn't the part where we tell God what we want, but where we listen for God to tell us what He wants. This is going to possibly be a stretch for you, especially in our fast-paced lives and culture. But, let's try this ancient practice together.

If you don't audibly hear God's voice, don't be surprised. He doesn't always speak out loud. It may take more than one time to hear or feel something. On the upside, 10 minutes of meditation a day is scientifically proven to increase your happiness levels!

1. Find a spot where you can be alone for five whole minutes with no interruptions.
2. Sit in an upright position. Place your hands with palms upward in front of you.
3. Welcome the silence.
4. When things come into your mind - things you need to get done - don't try to fight those things, just let them float out of your mind like a stick lying in a stream. Just let it float through and leave.
5. When five minutes is up, write about your experience. Try this again tomorrow!

How was the meditation?

You did it! You prayed!