

Transforming Daily
“... our Father which art in heaven ...”
Matthew 6:9-13

Even though many Christians today carry some other translation of the Bible (or no Bible at all) than the King James “authorized version,” they will still recite these six words from it. The reasons are varied for this, but one reason is attributed to the ongoing popularity of what many call the Lord’s Prayer or the model prayer. The Lord’s Prayer or model prayer, as it is referred to, is so popular that even non-believers know it, and in a crisis, revert to its recitation.

Matthew 6:9-13, a part of what’s known as the Sermon on the Mount, while demonstrated by Jesus, is not actually the Lord’s Prayer. The prayer is genuine enough, but Jesus was using it as an illustration for His disciples to distinguish genuine acts of ministry and prayer. If you read the context in which this prayer is spoken, you’ll find that Jesus was comparing disingenuous religious acts with those of genuine religious acts, hence the reason it is sometimes referred to as the model prayer. Ironically, this prayer is often used diametrically opposed to Christ’s intention. In many cases, it is recited as a mantra or as a special magic, “abba cad abba,” in repetition to keep the one reciting it from harm or ill treatment. The whole notion of the prayer was to instruct the disciples to communicate with God more intimately as in a personal relationship with a personal living God.

However, there is a great deal of benefit from memorizing and even reciting this prayer, if done so with the right heart and mind. For instance, when reciting this prayer do so with a fresh sense of fellowship with God, not by rote memory. When reading, memorizing or reciting this prayer look deeper into the passage itself with respect to the surrounding verses as well. For example, notice the respect (Our Father), the reverence (in heaven, hallowed name), submission (Your kingdom, will), humility (give us), surrender (forgive us, as we forgive), dependence (lead, deliver), praise and worship (kingdom, power, glory, forever) that should be present in all of our prayers.

If you would like to see the real Lord’s Prayer, and one after which to model all of your prayers, read John 17:1-26. The question is, are you praying in the first place? Do you take the time to commune with God in prayer outside of trouble, distress, calamity, loss or tragedy? It really doesn’t matter what form, formula, model or method you use as long as you approach God with reverence, respect, humility, submission and praise. However, “our Father which art in heaven,” isn’t a bad start.