



grow. pray. study.

## Week #6 Day #1

### “For THINE is the Kingdom, Power and Glory” *Prayer as Jesus Taught Us*

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: [For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.] *Matthew 6:9-13*

Questions in this GPS marked with an arrow bullet point are particularly recommended for group discussion. Group leaders may add other discussion questions, or substitute other questions for the marked ones, at their discretion.

### David’s doxology—a model early Christians followed

#### Week #6 Day #2 1 Chronicles 29:10-11

None of the earliest existing manuscripts of Matthew and Luke include the “doxology” (“For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever”) with which we usually end the Lord’s Prayer. It seems clear to most scholars that one or more devout scribes added it later. They may well have drawn the language at least in part from David’s prayer in today’s reading. “The late addition, “for yours is the kingdom . . .” fits the church’s use of the prayer; Jewish people often added such doxologies at the close of prayers.” \*

- David was king—an absolute monarch. He held all the power in Israel that a human could have. What does it tell you about his inner life that he said that God, and God only, is the source of all power and greatness? How similar or different to David’s is your perspective on life, and on any of your successes or power? For what reasons?
- There are moments in most of our lives when we’re tempted to think we’re being generous with our time, talent (and maybe money), that God is lucky we’re willing to share “our” stuff with him. King David expressed a different point of view, thanking God for all that he and Israel had, and humbly giving all the glory and praise to God. How easy or hard do you find it to do the same thing?

**Prayer:** Lord God, I’m not a king like David, but I feel an inner tug to bask in any honor or splendor that comes my way. Remind me, often, that yours (not mine) are the kingdom and the power and the glory. Amen.

\* HarperCollins Christian Publishing. *NIV, Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible, eBook: Bringing to Life the Ancient World of Scripture* (Kindle Locations 219300-219302). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

### Yours is the kingdom. . .

#### Week #6 Day #3 Mark 9:33-35; Luke 13:22-30

Jesus kept telling his disciples what awaited him in Jerusalem (cf. [Mark 9:31-32](#)). They kept debating which of them would be greatest when Jesus set up his (earthly) kingdom. Others had ideas and questions about his kingdom too. Scholar William Barclay noted the idea behind the question asked in Luke 13:23: “When this questioner asked his question it would certainly be on the assumption that

the kingdom of God was for the Jews and that gentiles would all be shut out.” \* The questioner thought he must be one of “the few” God would save.

- Most of us can relate at some level to the disciples, wanting to be sure Jesus and others properly appreciated their value. Jesus taught a different focus for our natural ambition: “It was not that Jesus abolished ambition. Rather he recreated and sublimated ambition. For the ambition to rule he substituted the ambition to serve. For the ambition to have things done for us he substituted the ambition to do things for others.” \*\* To what ends do you direct your ambition? If you need to redirect it, how can you do that?
- Jesus didn’t give a numerical answer about whether God would save “only a few.” Instead, his comment about the “narrow gate” was “an image for the demands Jesus makes on his followers.” \*\*\* Have you been trying to ignore or put off responding to any of Jesus’ serious spiritual demands on your life? How can you respond more fully to God, instead of hoping to get by on past activities or status?

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, in your kingdom, the last are first—and you know I hate to be last. Turn my values right side up, that I may truly be a citizen of your kingdom. Amen.

\* William Barclay, *The Gospel of Luke. The Daily Study Bible series, Rev. ed.* Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975, p. 183.

\*\* William Barclay, *The Gospel of Mark. The Daily Study Bible series, Rev. ed.* Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975, p. 223.

\*\*\* Richard B. Vinson, study note on Luke 13:24 in *The CEB Study Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013, p. 141 NT.

**...and the power...**

#### **Week #6 Day #4 Acts 1:6-8; Ephesians 3:18-21**

Just before he left this earth, Jesus boldly told his followers they would be his witnesses “to the ends of the earth.” At that point he had a group of about 120 committed followers (cf. [Acts 1:15](#)). He promised them power—not to overthrow the Roman occupation, but to carry on his mission. To talk about reaching even Jerusalem, which had crucified their Lord a few weeks ago, must have felt daunting. A mission to reach “the end of the earth” must have seemed utterly impossible to many of them—but it wasn’t.

- Surely the creator God could have written the news of Jesus in the clouds or spoken it over an atmospheric loudspeaker. Instead, Jesus said to people pretty much like us, “You will be my witnesses.” What factors made it more powerful for God to use people (us!) as witnesses? Whose witness has shaped your life? In what ways have you been able to live out Jesus’ commission for you to be one of his witnesses?
- Ephesians 3 wasn’t just abstract spiritual talk. Paul described a life-changing, world-changing power at work in real people’s daily lives. It wasn’t the Roman Empire’s brute force. He prayed that the Spirit in their “inner selves” would enable God’s people to “have the power to grasp love’s width and length, height and depth.” Find a quiet time to spend with God this week. Ask God to spark a vision in you of what God’s power might do in and through you that goes far beyond all that you could ask or imagine.

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, you promise me your power—not the power to boss people around, but the winning, persuasive power of self-giving love. Make me powerful as Jesus was. Amen.

## ...and the glory...

### Week #6 Day #5 John 12:23-33; 2 Corinthians 3:18-19

Scholar William Barclay wrote, “To the Jews the ‘Son of Man’ stood for the undefeatable world conqueror sent by God.... Jesus did not mean by *glorified* what they understood. They meant that the subjected kingdoms of the earth would grovel before the conqueror’s feet; by *glorified* he meant *crucified*.” \* Jesus used the word “glorify” to describe the effect of the very instrument of killing that the Romans considered the most humiliating form of death they could invent!

- Our world, like the Roman Empire in Jesus’ day, usually identifies “glory” with power, wealth or great personal achievement like winning an Olympic gold medal or a Nobel Prize. Was Jesus simply delusional in saying that his coming crucifixion was a time that would glorify him? If not, in what ways do you believe his determined, self-sacrificing love showed true “glory”?
- The apostle Paul said, remarkably, that for Christ’s followers, gazing at Christ’s glory is like looking in a mirror. That, he said, is because looking at Christ’s glory changes us. “We are being transformed into that same image from one degree of glory to the next degree of glory.” In what ways is Christ’s glory transforming you? Can you say like Jesus, even at times of struggle, pain or apparent defeat, “Father, glorify your name!”?

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, being human, I sometimes like to imagine you glowing and glorious, all your earthly service and suffering shed like an old coat. But you said that was your glory! Revise my ideas of glory to match yours. Amen.

\* William Barclay, *The Gospel of John—Volume 2 Chapters 8–21. The Daily Study Bible series, Rev. ed.* Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975, pp. 122-123.

## Living out Jesus’ kingdom, power and glory

### Week #6 Day #6 Philippians 2:1-4; Romans 12:9-21

In Philippians 2 the apostle Paul set out a powerful ideal. “Christians are to work for the good of others rather than putting their own good first. The following discussions of Christ, Paul and other Christians provide examples of those who have put the good of others ahead of their own.” \*

Similarly, in Romans 12 he called Christians to live the way Jesus, their true king, did. They were to seek peace, overcome evil with good, and live as citizens of God’s invisible yet supreme kingdom.

- “Be the best at showing honor to each other.... If possible, to the best of your ability, live at peace with all people.” We’d often rather “be the best” at other traits and successes, wouldn’t we? What inner fears and drives make it hard for you to honor and live at peace with people who are different from you? How can the truth that the eternal God loves and values you give you a footing on which you can set aside the need to climb above others?
- Paul told the Roman Christians, “Love should be shown without pretending.” Have you ever been in a setting (maybe even a church) where everyone pretended to love one another, even though whispered conversations were full of criticism and backbiting? What makes honest love (which includes honestly addressing issues as they come up) so vital to our spiritual health and that of others?

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, I want my life to count for good, to make this world a better place. Plant the principles Paul voiced so clearly in my heart, that I may not just talk about them but live them humbly and gratefully every day. Amen.

\* Jerry L. Sumney, study note on Philippians 2:4 in *The CEB Study Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013, p. 376 NT.

...forever

**Week #6 Day #7 John 14:1-3; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18**

Earlier in John's gospel, Jesus said those who trust in him have eternal life—present tense ([John 3:36](#), [5:24](#), [6:47](#) and [54](#)). We don't need to wait until after our earthly life to enter the eternal quality of life Jesus offers us. Jesus also gave his followers a vivid picture of God's house as a spacious place with plenty of room for everyone. The apostle Paul knew firsthand about physical challenges (cf. [2 Corinthians 11:23-28](#); [12:7-10](#)). The physical toll of those hardships likely gave personal meaning to his statement that "Even if our bodies are breaking down on the outside, the person that we are on the inside is being renewed every day."

- In Romans 8:24, Paul wrote, "We were saved in hope. If we see what we hope for, that isn't hope. Who hopes for what they already see?" In 2 Corinthians, he said we focus on things we can't see, which are more durable than what we can see. What do you hope for that remains out of sight? What steps do you take to anchor your hope in God's goodness, and to live with patience and trust? Scholar William Barclay wrote, "From the physical point of view life may be a slow but inevitable slipping down the slope that leads to death. But from the spiritual point of view life is a climbing up the hill that leads to the presence of God." \* How much daily focus do you give to keeping your physical self well? How much to keeping your relationship with God strong? What changes, if any, can you make to ensure that God is renewing the person you are inside every day?

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, I'm so thankful that your kingdom is forever. I love you. I want to be a part of your great forever. Thank you for promising to hold me safely in your love—forever. Amen.

**Family Activity:** How can you share the good news of Jesus and his love? Gather as a family and share how each person experiences the joy and love of Jesus in their life. Ask, "How do you know Jesus loves you? Or "When do you feel the love of Jesus in your heart?" Write these thoughts down, then create a list of people who might need to experience the love of Jesus. Choose one or two ways to share Jesus' love with others. You might share kind and encouraging words or bake cookies. Maybe you want to share a song or a Scripture passage. Celebrate the good news of Jesus and his love and share that good news all year long!

\* William Barclay, *Daily Study Bible Series: The Letters to the Corinthians* (Revised Edition). Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1975, p. 201.