



THY KINGDOM COME 6-WEEK STUDY

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THIS SMALL GROUP RESOURCE

Each week of this resource has four sections:

- **Context** (background)
- **Commentary** (Biblical reflection)
- **Conversation** (discussion prompts and questions)
- **Common practice** (shared application)

To get the most out of this resource, it is important for you, the leader, to read both the context and commentary sections for each lesson and familiarize yourself with the group discussion prompts and questions. All four sections are vital to help you facilitate a vibrant and healthy conversation about the Lord's Prayer.

Leaders may print and distribute any part of these handouts.



Resource provided by USA/Canada Nazarene Youth International

Global Ministry Center • 17001 Prairie Star Parkway • Lenexa, Kansas • 66220 • USA
(913) 577-0500 • Fax: (913) 577-0896 • usacanadanyj@nazarene.org

THY KINGDOM COME

INTRODUCTION

It isn't enough for a rabbi (teacher) like Jesus, or any other rabbi for that matter, to merely tell his students that it is important to pray. A rabbi worth being called "rabbi" and, therefore one followed closely by his students, must model for them how to pray. This is what Jesus models for us in what the Christian community commonly calls the Lord's Prayer, found in Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:1-4.

Matthew 6:9-13

9 "This, then, is how you should pray:
'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
10 your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
11 Give us today our daily bread.
12 And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
13 And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.'"

Luke 11:1-4

1 One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."
2 He said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be your name, Your kingdom come.
3 Give us each day our daily bread.
4 Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.'"

Jesus, the master instructor, one who roamed the countryside teaching about faithful Jewish religious life, makes prayer a necessary element of the disciple's life in one of the most famous sermons ever recorded in all of human history—the Sermon on the Mount. Prayer wasn't just something for religious leaders to do, according to Jesus. Prayer was also for the common person. Jesus knew that prayer does not change God, but prayer does change those who pray.

Perhaps more fittingly titled the Disciple's Prayer, since it is a directive for how Jesus' followers should pray rather than an actual prayer of Jesus, this prayer provides great insight into what is imperative to Jesus. Prayer demonstrates our faith in God. We pray to God to show faith, but also to draw power. When we pray the Lord's Prayer—or any other prayer—we are coming before God, recognizing His sovereign reign as King, and declaring that we are God's people. In prayer, we seek to align ourselves with God's intentions for the world.

This 6-week curriculum primarily focuses on the Gospel of Matthew's version of the Lord's Prayer. The prayer is located in the middle of Jesus' teaching about crucial matters, including what it means to live out God's blessings (called the Beatitudes), what it means to follow the law, loving one's enemies, giving generously and secretly, where we get our true reward for doing God's work, and the like. The Lord's Prayer anchors His disciples in understanding one of the most important teachings of Jesus found throughout the gospel—the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is the central theme of the prayer Jesus gave His followers.

The kingdom of God can be elusive to many. We say the phrase "the kingdom of God" confidently, sounding as if we know exactly what it means. We think, "God is the King and God has a Kingdom. The Kingdom is all that God reigns over." We are only partially right in thinking thus. Yes, God is King. Yes, God has a Kingdom. Yes, every place where God reigns is His Kingdom. Yet there is so much more to the

kingdom of God. This curriculum aims to help you engage students in a thoughtful and reflective investigation of the kingdom of God.

In this curriculum, “the kingdom of God” refers to God’s activity as King to deliver humans from sin and death, overcome evil and all injustice, and establish God’s rule of righteousness and peace over all of creation. The kingdom of God is both a present reality and a future event. God has already inaugurated God’s reign in Jesus Christ, yet this reign of God also remains a future experience. We wait for the eventual, full completion of God’s reign. When we pray “Thy Kingdom come,” we are both praying in anticipation that God’s reign will be realized on earth through our lives and also looking forward to the day in which there will be no more sin, suffering, or pain.

The Lord’s Prayer is a pattern for our life; not just something we recite by rote (or even with a deep sense of calling) occasionally in a church service or at a funeral. The Lord’s Prayer is a pattern for the faithful Christian life. The table below is a guide for your faithful model as a teacher and mentor to your students during the six weeks of this curriculum (as well as the rest of your life).

Scripture	Key Idea
9 “This, then, is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,	Adoration: Giving God the worth that is due God and God’s holy name
10 your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.	Submission: Turning ourselves over to God to be used for God’s great mission
11 Give us today our daily bread.	Provision: Trusting in God for all of our daily needs such as food, shelter, love, etc.
12 And forgive us our sins, as we also have forgiven those who sin against us.	Confession & Forgiveness: Telling God the truth about our sin, receiving forgiveness, and living as people of grace who forgive others
13 And lead us not into temptation,	Holiness: Choosing to live a life of worship through holy love
13b ...but deliver us from the evil one.”	Justice: Righting the wrongs of the world

The Lord’s Prayer is more than what we say. It is how we live. O God, may our lives reflect your intentions as we seek to live into God’s kingdom of salvation and justice.

THY KINGDOM COME

Week 1

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be thy name...”

Context:

Scholars have varying perspectives on whether the different versions of the Lord’s Prayer—Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:1-4—represent just a difference in the telling of the story, or if the two versions reflect two separate times when Jesus taught a pattern for prayer. Even a quick glance at the two prayers side-by-side (see Introduction) shows that they are not identical.

Matthew’s version of the prayer comes in a section of the Sermon on the Mount in which Jesus was addressing the hypocrisy He (and many of His hearers) saw in the life of the self-righteous Jewish leaders. In Luke’s version, Jesus is answering the disciples’ request, “Teach us to pray as John also taught his disciples” (Luke 11:1). Jesus answered by teaching them a prayer not only to say but also by which to live. The different settings in these two versions make it likely that Jesus taught these prayers on two separate occasions. This is also consistent with the way Matthew presented the Sermon on the Mount. Greek scholar William Barclay noted that when read in the original Greek, the verb translated “taught” in Matthew 5:2 describes “repeated and habitual action, and the translation should be: ‘This is what he used to teach them.’” Jesus probably taught this prayer on at least these two occasions (and quite likely more), but for one purpose—to model praying for the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth.

Prayer was a vital part of Jewish tradition. The Jewish nation believed that God desired that they approach Him (Ps. 91:15). The prayers were set, and devout Jews knew them by heart. Two of the most common prayers were the *Shema* (Deuteronomy 6:4-9) and the *Shemoneh* (Numbers 15:37-41). Bible historians tell us that many Jews said these prayers each morning, afternoon, and evening.

Some Jews, like many Christians today, became so familiar with the traditional prayers and scheduled prayer times that they said them out of duty instead of an attitude of worship. When Jesus instructed the Jewish leaders in Matthew and the disciples in Luke, His desire was that prayer would become more than a duty. He wanted prayer to express a genuine desire to worship God through adoration, submission, trusting for provisions, confession, and a desire for holy living.

THY KINGDOM COME

Week 1

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be thy name...”

Commentary:

When Jesus gave the disciples a prayer upon which to pattern their prayer practices and their lives, He intentionally began with the word “Our.” We pray the Lord’s Prayer knowing that we are a part of a greater community. It isn’t a prayer for one’s self; it is a collective prayer for us. The Christian community God is forming through the person and work of Jesus Christ is a new society designed to live as one. When we say “Our Father,” we show awareness that the life of following Jesus is not one of individuality but rather a life of living in Biblical community.

Several parts of Scripture help us understand what Christian community looks like. Probably the most powerful picture is the community described in Acts 2:42-47. Because of the unity in which the disciples lived, God was adding people to the Christian community each day. The early church community worshipped together, learned God’s Word and shared it with others, ate meals together, and served one another. This is a great picture of what it means to live into Biblical community. When we pray “Our Father,” we remember we are part of a great community.

When Jesus modeled to pray to our “Father,” He would have confused and concerned many religious people. Pious Jews avoided saying God’s name in order not to risk desecrating it. For Jesus to speak directly to His “Father” (the Aramaic *abba* translates as daddy) went far beyond the ordinary. He was giving His disciples direct access to God, inviting them to live at a level of intimacy few had ever imagined possible. Jesus wanted His disciples to know God personally, like a son or daughter knows their daddy.

The fact that we pray to a God who is in heaven means that we pray to a sovereign God. We pray because God is the King of God’s kingdom, which is all of God’s creation. God is sovereign, which means God is in charge. As we pray “Our Father who art in heaven,” we acknowledge that God rules the universe with ultimate power and authority.

When we speak of God’s name being “hallowed,” that means God is holy and we need to approach Him reverently. God’s name reflects God’s self and therefore is worthy of all of our worship.

The first phrase—“Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name”—sets the tone for the whole prayer. When we pray it, we

- 1) recognize God’s personhood and God’s interest in us as His children;
- 2) recognize and accept that God reigns over all creation; and
- 3) recognize that God is holy, and because His name is holy, we too should aspire to a holy life.

THY KINGDOM COME

Week 1

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be thy name..."

Conversation:

- What does it mean to you that the Lord's Prayer begins with the word "Our"?
- What do you think it means to live in oneness with one another?
- In what ways would Jesus' use of the word "Father" in this prayer have been unsettling to the disciples and spectators He was teaching?
- What does it mean that God is sovereign?
- What do you think it means to hallow God's name?

Community Practice:

Worship is giving God the worth that is due Him and His holy name. Worship is a key part of a Christian's life as it is our faithful response to the experience of God's heart, which is Love.

This week practice worship by finding ways to celebrate God. Take a moment to fill out the table below.

Day	I will celebrate God by...
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	

Examples include: writing a prayer to God, worship through singing, taking a walk in nature and reflecting on His creation, finding someone you can serve, etc.

THY KINGDOM COME

Week 2

"Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven..."

Context:

You could read the Old Testament straight through and not find the phrase, "the kingdom of God," yet nearly every aspect of the recorded journey of God's people revolves around the idea of God's kingdom. From the time that Joshua led the Jewish people into Canaan, completing Moses' work of deliverance, the Jewish people wondered if they should have a king, like all the other nations of the earth.

During the period of the judges (a span of nearly 200 years) before Saul became Israel's first earthly king, the judges repeatedly reminded the Jewish people that God was their true leader. It's been said that the three things that make a nation great are land, laws, and leaders. The Jews had land, they had laws, and they wanted their own visible king, thinking this was necessary to be a great nation like all the other nations.

God provided kings for the Jewish people. Samuel anointed Saul and David to rule over the Jewish people, and David's son Solomon succeeded him. Under their earthly kings, however, the Jewish nation became more and more disobedient and distant from God. God sent prophets to warn the people of their disobedience. The prophets urged them to do two things: worship God alone and be a nation that practiced justice. God sent the Jewish people this message over and over, yet they didn't obey God's desires and commands.

Just before a 400-year period of silence, God promised the Jews a King, the Messiah. Jesus was this Messiah – the Prophet, Priest and King. But the Jewish people did not receive Jesus as King, and as you know, had Jesus killed. Jesus was not the kind of King for whom the Jewish people were looking. During the time of Jesus, Rome ruled the world. Most Jews – Pharisees, Sadducees, Zealots, and Essenes alike—desired a political king who would overthrow Rome and allow the Jewish nation to be the great political and military nation they so desired. But this was not God's idea of a King or of a Kingdom.

THY KINGDOM COME

Week 2

"Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven..."

Commentary:

To pray "Thy Kingdom come" is to pray for the whole world's restoration. To pray "Thy Kingdom come" is to believe that God's work and mission will be complete at some point in the future. It is also to pray and believe that we might experience this work of God's salvation today. When we pray "Thy Kingdom come," we are asking God to use us as agents of restoration, living out the final consummation of the Kingdom each day in our dark and broken world.

When we pray "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," God's will is mighty and exalted. We are relinquishing our hold on our own interests and desires, willing to get out of God's way and allow His kingdom dream to become a reality in the present moment. When we pray as Jesus modeled for us, we let go of the will within ourselves and hand it over to God.

Humans don't have the might and power to ultimately thwart God's plan. If we choose not to turn ourselves over to God, however, we act outside of God's intentions for us. On the other hand, when we choose to live a Kingdom life, we live into the image in which God created us. Our ultimate purpose is to represent God. To live into our true image is to live in a way that participates in partnership with God, in the breaking in of the Kingdom here and now.

To partner with God, participating in His mission to restore the world toward its intended wholeness, is to seek righteousness, salvation, and justice and to give ourselves completely over to God's will.

THY KINGDOM COME

Week 2

"Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven..."

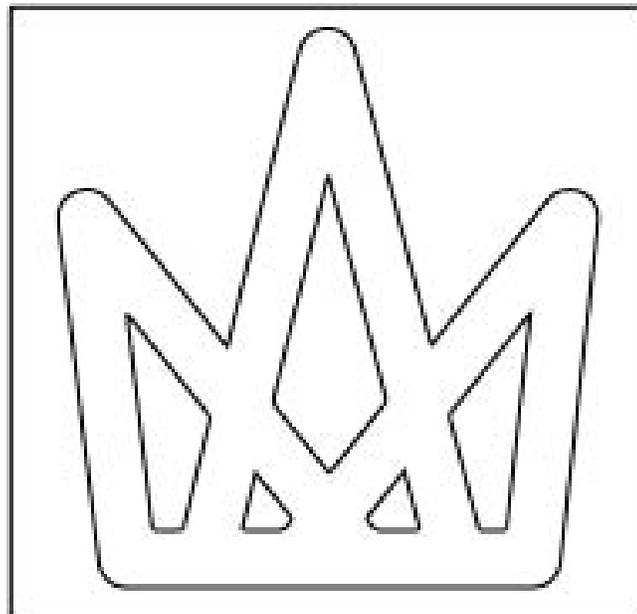
Conversation:

- What do you think it means to pray "Thy Kingdom come?"
- What do you think it means to get out of God's way and turn our will over to God's kingdom vision?
- In what ways do we sometimes live outside of God's intentions for us?
- What do you think it means to participate with God's mission to restore the world toward its intended wholeness?
- How would you describe a world that is whole?

Community Practice:

Submission is turning our self (our will, desires, etc.) over to God to be used for His great mission. Submission is allowing Jesus to be the King of your life—heart, mind, soul, and strength.

This week, use the image below to keep track of the matters in your life that you are intentionally choosing to turn over to God in order for Jesus to become first in your life. Simply write what you are giving up on one of the crown's seven segments.



Examples include matters in our life that may keep us from putting Jesus first, such as a boyfriend or girlfriend, money, sports, hobbies, clothes, etc.

THY KINGDOM COME

Week 3

"Give us this day our daily bread..."

Context:

Jesus was homeless. We don't often think of this reality. When we realize that Jesus was homeless, we aren't quite sure what to do with the notion.

First, we may typically think of homeless people as the men or women who live under the bridge in our city, or the people we see on park benches with all of their belongings held tightly to their chest. Perhaps we think of the men or women who hold a "Homeless—any amount of money helps" sign at the end of the highway exit ramp.

Second, when we think of Jesus, we mostly picture the images movies have created for us—a clean, neat, well-cared for person. He is seldom depicted as someone in need. On the contrary, Jesus is always caring for the needy. How can the needy care for the needy? In our minds, it just doesn't make sense.

Finally, we don't think of Jesus as homeless and in need of God's daily provision because we don't want to admit that our King, the Savior of the world, the Messiah, was likely a hungry, tired, peasant-like person who survived because of the caring of others. He was born in a barn and died in torment stripped of His clothes.

The Jewish people were not strangers to God's provision for existence. Their nation's history included a period of forty years roaming in the wilderness, and for at least for a portion of that time, God miraculously and graciously provided them with manna, an edible substance. While the manna saved the physical lives of the Jews, Jesus saves us from eternal death through spiritual life. The Jews were no strangers to the daily bread that God provided.

THY KINGDOM COME

Week 3

“Give us this day our daily bread...”

Commentary:

To trust God for “our daily bread” is to trust God in all of our circumstances for all of our physical needs. We pray for God to supply all of our needs – everything necessary to sustain life—one day at a time.

We don’t trust God just for our physical needs, though, but also for our spiritual needs. God the Provider gives us the resources to stay plugged into the Spirit’s movement in our lives. He gives us access to Himself through prayer, scripture, art, music, teaching, mentors, small groups, and the like. When we pray for our daily needs, we can rest assured, knowing that we pray to a God who not only hears our prayers, but acts on them—in His timing.

This does not mean, of course, that as humans we do not share in the responsibility of providing for ourselves and for those for whom we are responsible—our family, our congregations, our employees, and all those in need around the world. God provides for those in need through us. We Christians are the agents God is using to restore the world toward its intended wholeness through our intentional efforts to help those in need.

To trust God for our daily provisions can be difficult. We struggle at times to allow our trust in God to override our human tendency to worry. Worry causes anxiety, which can cause us to lose focus as we shift our attention from what we have to what we perceive as lacking.

An important part of choosing to live out the Lord’s Prayer, as opposed to just reciting it out of duty or habit, is to turn yourself over to God’s will. This involves fleeing temptation, reading Scripture, practicing spiritual disciplines such as submission, service and fasting, and being accountable to another Christian who longs to also more deeply trust God.

To pray “give us our daily bread” is to learn to trust God for all of our needs—physical and spiritual.

THY KINGDOM COME

Week 3

"Give us this day our daily bread..."

Conversation:

- What do you think it means to trust God for "our daily bread?"
- In what ways do you think God provides daily for our spiritual lives?
- In what ways can we be a provider to those in our life—friends, family, neighbors, etc.?
- How does our tendency to worry stand in opposition to what it means to trust God for our needs?
- In what ways is God providing for your spiritual and physical needs today?

Community Practice:

Trusting in God for all of daily needs, including such things as food, shelter, love, etc., can be difficult. Spend time each morning this week making a list of the matters that you will trust God for throughout that day.

Day	Today I will trust God for...
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	

Examples might include matters like friends, fun, food, conversation, peace, hope, etc.

THY KINGDOM COME

Week 4

"Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us..."

Context:

In the Old Testament (Leviticus 1-7, in particular), we can see the importance the Jewish nation placed on the covering of their sins, both individually and corporately. The sacrifices were symbolic, an outward expression of the Jews' inward devotion to God. The fundamentals of Israel's sacrificial system were the burnt, grain, peace, sin, and guilt offerings. These basic sacrifices worked together to show God's people the importance of dealing with their sin. They testified that God had established a way to deal with sin.

Sadly, many Jewish people came to use the sacrificial system as a means to earn forgiveness. God intended the offerings to represent the true heart and soul of the worshipper, as a symbol of penitence that grew out of their love for God and others. God wanted to be loved with heart, mind, soul, and strength (Deuteronomy 6:5). Anything less was falling short.

We can also see the sacrificial system in the New Testament. Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the temple as a baby and offered a sacrifice of birds in keeping with the Law. At one point in Jesus' healing ministry, He would instruct the person He had healed to go to the Priest and make a sacrifice (Luke 5). We also know that in the Temple courtyard, space was allotted for the selling of animals and birds for various sacrifices. The Jews employed the sacrificial system until the Temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. By that time, however, Christians changed their view of sacrifice dramatically because of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Physical sacrifices that pointed forward to Jesus' self-giving were no longer needed. God's people became the living temple capable of offering spiritual sacrifices (Romans 12:1, 1 Peter 2:5).

Another aspect of Jewish life in the Old Testament was the Jubilee year. After seven sets of seven years (49 years total) were completed, it was the year of Jubilee. A time of celebration and freedom, people's debts were forgiven and slaves were returned to freedom on the Day of Atonement. Though it's not clear how often or how faithfully it was actually practiced, Jews could understand forgiveness or cancelling out debts of others through the practice of Jubilee (Leviticus 25:8-17, 23-25; 27:16-25, Numbers 36:4).

THY KINGDOM COME

Week 4

"Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us..."

Commentary:

Confession—to declare our sins to God, tell Him the truth, and open our hearts to receive forgiveness—is a key part of the Christian life. Forgiveness, of course, brings freedom, and out of freedom from the guilt and shame that accompanies sin, we find hope, peace, and strength.

Confession is a spiritual discipline that requires the ability to face the truth about who we are, what we have done, and who we are becoming without holding back. Confession reunites us with God, allowing us to experience His grace and forgiveness.

Contrary to the perspective of some, God does not hold a club over us waiting for us to mess up in order that we might feel His wrath. On the contrary, God has showed Himself throughout history to be a God of grace and forgiveness, not a God of grudges and resentment.

When we pray "forgive us our sins," we are admitting that we fall short of God's intentions for our lives. We recognize that the only one with the power to forgive our sins is God. This is another reason why God's name is to be hallowed—held in sacred and holy esteem. For confession to lead to forgiveness, there must be three things at work:

- 1) examination of our inner self (motives, things done, and things left undone);
- 2) authentic regret and sorrow; and
- 3) a determination to avoid sin, which is what we call repentance or turning away from evil and turning toward what is good.

When we experience God's saving grace and the freedom that comes with confession and forgiveness, we are moved to develop the practice of genuinely forgiving others. Every day people offend us, intentionally or unintentionally, and we can either hold it against the offender or offer them forgiveness.

To pardon someone's offense is what God did for us when He sent His one and only Son Jesus to die in our place. God exempted us, the guilty party, from the punishment that was our due. Because of the grace we have received, it should be a growing life reality that we forgive others (Colossians 3:13).

THY KINGDOM COME

Week 4

"Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us..."

Conversation:

- What do you think it means to confess our sins to God?
- When we confess our sins, we experience freedom. What does freedom do for life in God?
- In what ways is God a God of grace and forgiveness as opposed to one of grudges and resentment?
- What must be at work in our lives for us to experience true freedom from sin?
- Is it hard for you to forgive those who offend you? Why or why not?
- What does it mean that Jesus died in our place?

Community Practice:

Confession is telling God the truth about our sin, receiving forgiveness, and living as people of grace who forgive others. God's heart is to give and forgive. When you wake each morning throughout the week ahead, say this prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

This week, choose one thing that you are currently doing in your life that goes against God's intentions for you or for the world, and confess it to a friend, parent, youth pastor, etc. This challenge will be difficult. You will need strength, courage, and the desire to change (repent). For strength and courage, read these verses:

Day 1: 1 John 1:9

Day 2: Isaiah 43:25

Day 3: Acts 3:9

Day 4: Isaiah 1:18

Day 5: Daniel 9:9

Day 6: 2 Corinthians 5:17

Examples of sins you may need to confess this week include stealing, looking at porn, lying, cheating, gossip, over eating, etc.

THY KINGDOM COME

Week 5

“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil...”

Context:

We all know what it is like to face temptation. Humans face temptations of all kinds and these enticements can lead to sins such as materialism, lust, greed, gluttony, envy, pride, anger, or laziness.

We know from Matthew, Mark, and Luke’s accounts in the Bible that even Jesus was tempted to sin. Jesus was led into the desert (or wilderness) for 40 days. After 40 days of fasting, Jesus was weak, hungry and in need of sustenance. The tempter came to Jesus and tempted Him to use His supernatural power as the Son of God for His own purposes – food, avoidance of the cross and the suffering that came with it, and attention, power, and recognition that would attend a public and dramatic spectacle. Jesus did not succumb to the temptations, and as a result, Satan left Him, knowing Jesus could not be defeated (Matthew 4:1-10).

The Old Testament prophets knew that the people of God were tempted. Rather than avoiding these temptations, God’s people too often gave themselves over to two primary sins: paganism and injustice. Many prophets in many time periods warned against these sins. The prophets continually delivered the same underlying message: because of disobedience and unwillingness to faithfully live into the covenant God established, punishment will come to the Jewish people.

The warning of the *nabi* (Hebrew word for prophet, which means “one who is called and announces”) to the Jewish people was to

- 1) put God first in their lives, living in obedience; and
- 2) protect and care for those who cannot protect and care for themselves.

Failing to provide for or completely neglecting those in need is a sin against God.

God gave the prophet Amos (7:8) the image of a plumb line to measure the Jewish nation’s obedience to God. A plumb line is used to check the vertical line of a wall or building, showing if the wall or building is straight or not. As a prophet, Amos sadly declared that Israel’s life was failing the plumb line test.

THY KINGDOM COME

Week 5

“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil...”

Commentary:

When we pray “lead us not into temptation,” we can potentially mean one of two things. On the one hand, we might be asking God to lead us away from the desires that can lure us toward sinful behavior. On the other hand, we might be asking Him to please take away any trials that may come our way.

Scholars disagree on exactly what the original language is and how we are to best interpret this part of Jesus’ teaching on prayer. Regardless, as we pray this petition, we need to realize that it is God—our Father, our daddy—who can help us pursue a righteous life, and if He chooses, shield us from trials or provide a way to escape them.

To live a righteous life is to pursue holiness. Holiness can be defined many ways. One way to define holiness is the pursuit of a life that reflects a total and complete love for God and others. When we are holy, we are actively engaged in loving God and others with all of our heart, mind, soul, and strength.

This does not mean that we are no longer tempted, never make mistakes, are beyond attaining more wisdom, or are completely protected from any and all kinds of evil. To live a holy life is to let love reign above all else in our hearts, and to live with God’s will, as seen in the person, work, and ministry of Jesus, at the center of our lives.

Seeking a holy life also entails that we seek to right the wrongs of the world. That is, we seek justice for all. To pray “deliver us from evil” is to pray that all human beings would be delivered from all of the injustices in the world. It is to commit ourselves to challenge and change the economic and political systems that work to oppress and push down when God’s intention was that people be liberated and lifted up. Evil can be understood as anything that goes against what God desires, and we must pray this petition knowing that God wants to use us to work for the eradication of evil.

Whether we understand this part of the prayer to be about personal freedom from Satan, global freedom from all evil, or both, it is important to know and remember that we do not do the freeing, but God who inspires us to accomplish God’s will.

THY KINGDOM COME

Week 5

“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil...”

Conversation:

- What do you think it means to pray, “Lead us not into temptation?”
- What do you think it means to live a righteous life?
- In what ways would you describe a holy life?
- In what ways can we right the wrongs of this world?
- How would you describe God’s desire for the world to be a place of justice?

Community Practice:

Holiness is to choose to live a life of worship through experiencing and extending God’s holy love. To be holy, then, is to let the total and complete love of God and others reign in your life.

Fasting is what is called a spiritual practice. The practice of fasting (intentionally choosing to go without) reminds us that we are not sustained in life by what we want but by who Jesus is. When we fast, we choose to abstain from something in order to feast on the word of God. This week ahead, choose one thing each day from which you will fast and write your experience in the space provided in the table below.

Day	What I am choosing to fast...	What was the experience like?
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		

Examples of items from which to fast may include food, television, electronics, movies, certain snacks or drinks, etc.

THY KINGDOM COME

Week 6

“For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.”

Context:

A doxology is a short expression of praise to God. The word *doxology* comes from the Greek words *doxa* and *logos*, which essentially means “speaking of glory and splendor.” This particular doxology is not found in any of the oldest New Testament manuscripts. Because of that, most scholars believe it was probably not part of the original text of the Gospel of Matthew, and thus it is not included in most modern Bible translations. Regardless, after centuries of use by God’s people, most faith communities who pray the Lord’s Prayer usually recite this final phrase. This doxology is in accordance with Jesus’ overall message and reinforces our belief that God was King, is King, and will be King.

In 1 Chronicles 29:11, we find a very similar doxology: “Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Yours is the dominion, O LORD, and You exalt Yourself as head over all.” This passage is evidence that the Jewish people were familiar with the doxology and likely had it within their quiver of prayers.

The doxology is, we might say, a summary of the prayer. It condenses the central truth that God is King, He has the power to accomplish His mission and purpose, and that God is indeed the one who should receive all the honor He is worthy of receiving.

The final word of the doxology – “Amen” – should not be taken lightly. We use the word *amen* here just as we would in any other prayer. To say “Amen” is to say “so be it” or “that is truth.” When we finish the Lord’s prayer with “Amen,” we are turning ourselves over to God’s rule, majesty, and dominion, and are agreeing that we should be turning over ourselves to the God who is indeed King as well.

THY KINGDOM COME

Week 6

“For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.”

Commentary:

The closing phrase of the Lord’s Prayer—whether it was in the original manuscripts or not—focuses on the true nature of the prayer. The final words do more than put a nice ending on a really important prayer. These words confirm that

- 1) the Kingdom belongs to God;
- 2) the authority to accomplish the Kingdom purposes belong to God; and
- 3) because of the Kingdom and Power, all of our worship is to be directed to God.

This doxology thrusts us into the world, appointed for a purpose—to fulfill God’s mission. God’s mission is to restore the world toward its intended wholeness until one day the world will be made new or whole again. As we await the final consummation of the Kingdom, we are to eagerly and consistently live out God’s purposes in the world.

To say “Yours is the Kingdom” means we are going to do something about making the world a place that reflects the Kingdom virtues God desires. We have been commissioned to go into the world as God’s agents of restoration and bring heaven to earth.

When we end our prayer with the final phrase, “For yours is the kingdom, power and glory forever. Amen,” we are stating that we align ourselves with the power of the Holy Spirit to build God’s kingdom. As we seek to embody the person and work of Jesus in our world every day, we do so knowing that we have access to the power of God through the ministry and presence of the Holy Spirit.

Finally, we say this final part of the prayer with a deep sense of commitment. We say it in confidence, knowing that if we live out the teachings within this prayer, God’s glory will be seen throughout the world. God’s kingdom will truly come “on earth as it is in heaven,” and, as we await the final consummation of the Kingdom, we can and will experience a foretaste of the kingdom of God here and now.

This doxology of the Lord’s Prayer should never feel like an add-on or trite conclusion. Instead, think about the beauty, hope, and reality of the words as you say them.

THY KINGDOM COME

Week 6

“For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.”

Conversation:

- How would you describe God’s mission?
- What do you think it means that we are waiting for the final consummation of the kingdom of God?
- We are commissioned as God’s agents of love and restoration. What do you think that means?
- In what ways can we align our lives with the work of the Holy Spirit?
- How can we get a foretaste of God’s final Kingdom here and now?

Community Practice:

Justice can be understood as righting the wrongs in the world. To be a person committed to justice, therefore, is to intentionally choose to do something about the wrongs we see in our life. Take a moment and do two practices. First, write a prayer to God crying out for justice in our world. Use the example prayer below as a model. Second, make a list of 5 injustices you see happening every day in your world where you can make difference and effect change.

Prayer of Justice

O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son. Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Personal Prayer of Justice:

List of things you want God to use you to change:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Examples may include people who are picked on or bullied, people in need of food, water, clothing, shelter, love, etc.