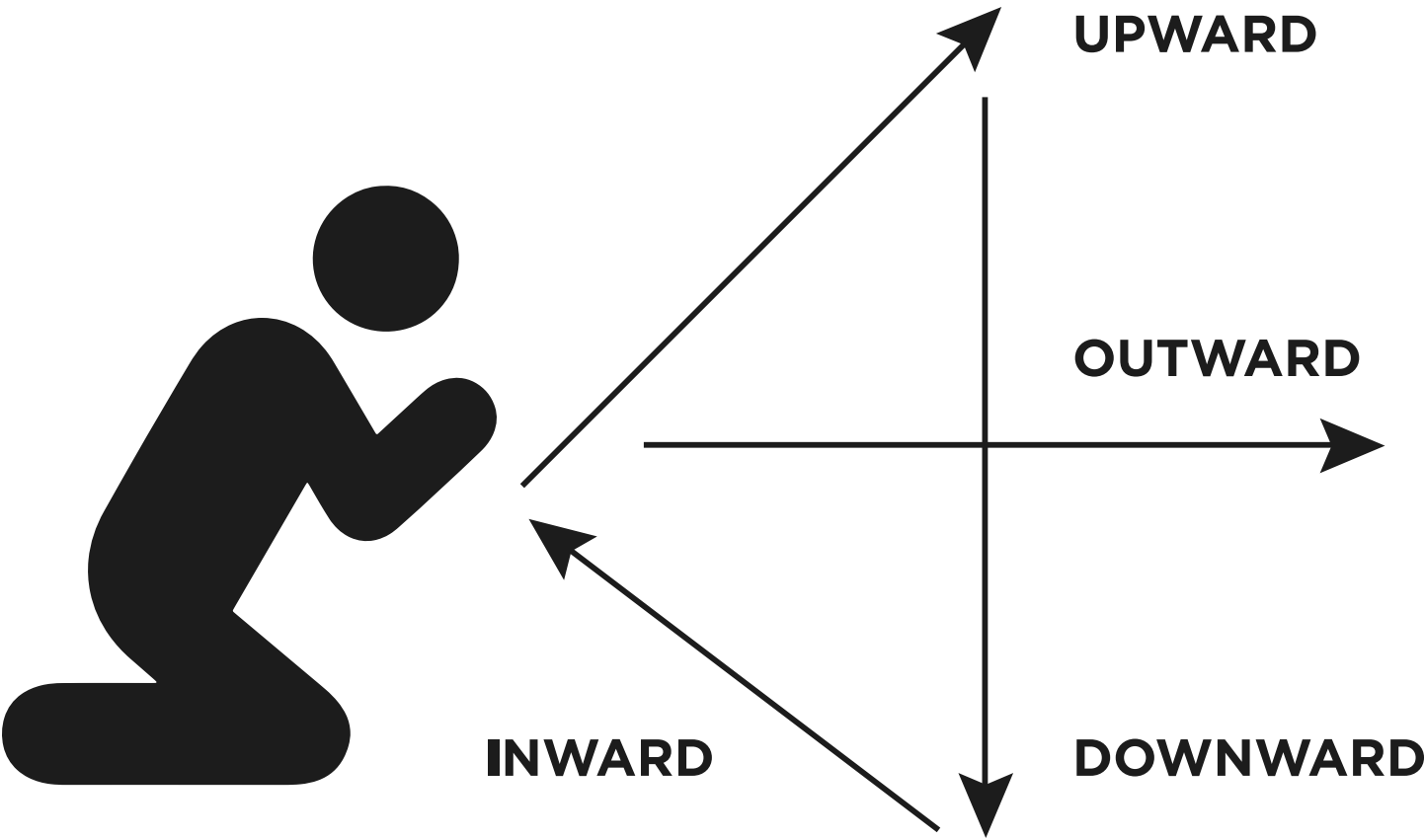


THE PRAYER TOOL



THE PRAYER TOOL

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. -Matt. 6:9-13

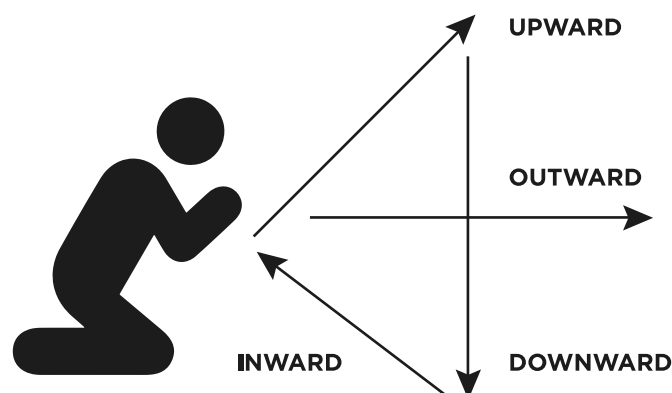
PRAYER IS ABOUT RELATIONSHIP REALIGNMENT

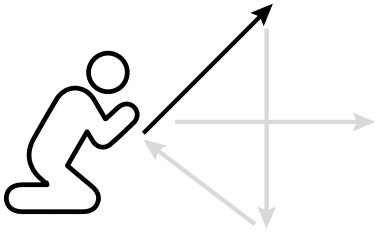
Praying at its simplest definition is, “talking to God.” But the effect it has extends beyond a simple conversation: it’s a daily realignment for my heart regarding the relationship between us. Prayer forces me to confront the reality of who God is, who I am, and my desperate need.

One of the amazing things about Jesus and getting to learn from Him is that he actually taught his disciples in very practical ways. Jesus not only taught his disciples to pray, but he taught them to pray just like he did. The Prayer Tool is a simple way to understand the different kinds of prayer Jesus illustrates in “The Lord’s Prayer” through four movements: **Upward, Downward, Inward, and Outward.**

To be clear, Jesus was not implying, and neither are we, that every prayer must consist of these four movements every time and in this order. Nor are we saying someone is praying wrong when talking with God to the best of their ability about the things on their heart. Sometimes the most poignant and appropriate prayer a person can pray is simply, “God, help me!”

But by highlighting the various parts of Jesus’ prayer through these four directional movements, we more readily see that there is perhaps an opportunity to explore new aspects of prayer with my Father that I haven’t experienced before or as regularly. The Prayer Tool simply stands to serve as a guide and an encouragement as I consider how Jesus taught His disciples to pray.





UPWARD **PRAYERS OF THANKFULNESS (V.9)**

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

Upward prayers focus on the nature and character of God. They say simply, “You are God, and I am not.” Starting with Upward prayers means starting by acknowledging and thanking

God for who He is and the relationship you have with Him through Jesus. So often we want to go straight to our needs when we pray to the Lord. And the Lord wants to hear us express our needs to Him.

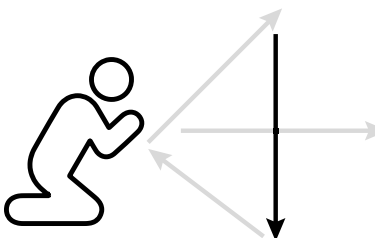
But if praying is an essential part of our relationship with the Lord then we should approach Him with an attitude of gratitude, not entitlement. We should start out praising Him for who He is and what He has already done in our lives. When we start out praying in this way, it reminds us how BIG the Lord is, which results in us viewing our problems, needs, or anxious thoughts in light of who the Lord is, what He can do and how He has already showed Himself faithful in our lives.

Starting out with an “upward” focus of thank in our prayers enables us to be in the right frame of mind with the right attitude when we talk to the Lord through prayer.

Examples

- ▶ “God you are...”
- ▶ “Father I thank you for being my...”
- ▶ “God we praise you for what you have done for us...”

“If our prayers are not focused on God, we are guilty of idolatry, as we are putting someone (or something) else in God’s place.” - Daniel Henderson



DOWNWARD **PRAYERS OF SUBMISSION (V.10)**

“Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

After I have reflected on God’s nature and His position in my upward prayers, I am ready to reflect on my own position before Him. Because He is God, I must arrive at the right conclusion: that I am not God.

Downward prayers are about aligning my will to God's so that He receives glory and so His kingdom purposes are accomplished through my life today. It is taking time to proclaim to God that I desire to be satisfied with His will and His outcomes in this day.

Don't we often fall into the trap of coming to the Lord as a "genie in the bottle"? We would never actually pray like this literally, but we might as well be saying, "Lord you are here to do my bidding and if you don't do what I want at the time I want and the way I want then I am not asking anything of you again."

Allowing this prayer tool to be a guide to inform how we pray guards us from our natural instinct to approach Him as if we are God ourselves. When we pray with that mentality our prayer life will be short-lived, disappointing and sinful in motivation.

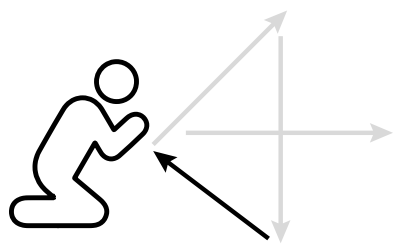
Downward prayers invite me to find satisfaction in being under His authority and in His provision.

Examples

- ▶ "God, show me where my will needs to align with your Word..."
- ▶ "God I want to be satisfied with your will to be done in this area..."
- ▶ "God be glorified in our church as we seek to represent the gospel to people in our city..."

"Prayer is a mighty instrument, not for getting man's will done in heaven, but for getting God's will done on earth." - Robert Law

"Outside the will of God, there is nothing that I want. Inside the will of God there is nothing that I fear." - A.W. Tozer



INWARD

PRAYERS OF NEED (V.11,12)

"Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our Debtors."

Requests for God's Provision

Jesus, in His divine wisdom, knew our journey and our struggles. Praying about "daily bread" represents "all that we need to sustain life as we serve the Lord. This is an expression of conscious trust in our Heavenly Father as the perfect definer and provider of our physical and material needs. It is literally us taking

our needs to the Lord knowing He intricately cares for each of them. Earlier in the same chapter in Matthew, vs. 8, Jesus tells us our Father knows what we need before we ask Him, yet He implores us to ask Him anyway. Why? Because, like a loving Father, He delights in me coming to Him to ask because it demonstrates that I am looking to Him to provide for me as His child.

Scripture implores us in Luke 18 through the example of the widow before the judge to make our requests and continue to bring those before the Lord. Scripture also says in James 4 that *“you have not because you do not ask.”*

Examples

- “God I desperately need you to provide...”
- “Father, please heal me of this...”
- “God, please intervene in our time of need...”

Requests for God’s Forgiveness

Relationships matter to God. We come to a place of relational alignment in this moment of prayer. (Acts 24:16). When we think of bringing our requests to the Lord we often only think only about our physical needs, but what about our relational and emotional needs? Often those needs are tied to what we are experiencing in our relationships with others and could be a result of conflict we have experienced in those relationships.

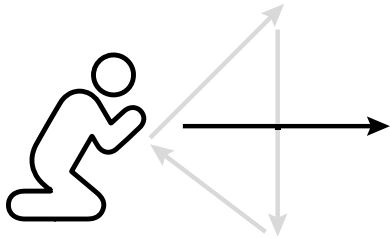
There are no enduring relationships without forgiveness. Part of us bringing our requests to our Father is examining our hearts to see where we need to ask forgiveness from the Lord for where we have sinned. When we confess known sin in our lives and ask the Lord to forgive those sins, we are reminded of the amazing love and mercy of the Lord to forgive us of that sin no matter how small or consequential. (1 John 1:9) And in doing so, we are also providing an opportunity for us to think about who we may need to extend that same type of forgiveness.

Christians are a forgiven and forgiving people. This requires our confession of any sin that is revealed by the Word of God, leading to restoration – both vertically (with the Lord) and horizontally (with others). This element of the prayer addresses the inward realities of our heart to align us with the heart of the One who is the God of self-sacrificing, gracious, merciful, and forgiving love. The parable of the unforgiving servant is an example of being forgiven and the importance of forgiving others as a response. (Matthew 18:21-35).

If we looked at the average prayer list, virtually every request would ultimately be a resource concern or a relationship concern. Jesus, in His divine wisdom, knew our journey and our struggles. This segment of trusting Him with a variety of inward matters allows us to lay it all out before Him.

Examples

- “Father you have forgiven me of so much, give me the strength to forgive...”
- “God, against you and you alone have I sinned...”
- “Forgive us Father for choosing our priorities over yours...”



OUTWARD PRAYERS OF PROTECTION (V.10)

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

We know the time comes when we must get off our knees and reenter the warfare zone. We must be battle ready. When we pray, “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,” we recognize our own inability to overcome the temptations and snares of daily life.

DIRECT US

When we pray Downward prayers, we are imploring God to lead us where we should go and keep us from being tempted to stray away from Him. We ask Him to guide us to the places, individuals, and opportunities to represent the Gospel in this day. We are imploring Him to reveal our next step of obedience as we take our first step beyond this moment.

PROTECT US

We also acknowledge there is an enemy who stands against us in this very moment. By praying outward prayers, we are entrusting our welfare or the warfare to the One who is our victor. I go into this day praying for wisdom and strength for the battle that I will face. In Ephesians 6:10-20 Paul uses the metaphor of a soldier’s armor to illustrate that we are in a spiritual battle as a Christ Follower. The Enemy’s plan is to steal, kill and destroy what the Lord desires to do in our lives. (John 10:10) Therefore we need to be prepared and prayed up as we face each day so that we can experience the victory that is ours in Jesus Christ in all areas of temptation and trials that we may face. (Romans 8:37-39).

Examples

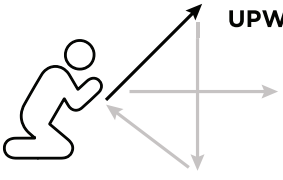
- “Father I need your strength to fight temptation in my life today...”
- “Father protect me from the attacks of the enemy as I obey your Word today...”
- “God keep us focused on your mission as we face certain attack...”

“Prayer is not an escape from the battles of life but a great equipping to fight them in supernatural power.” - Daniel Henderson

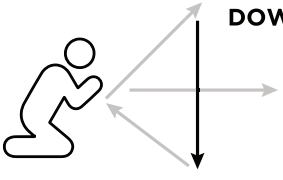
Try it Out

Before you get together with your trainer, use the sample worksheet on the next page to write out a short prayer in each of the four movements of prayer.

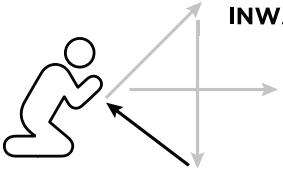
When you’ve finished writing, pray through each movement.



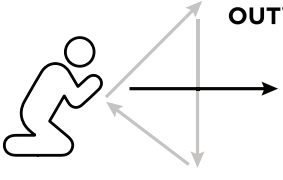
UPWARD-PRAYERS OF THANKFULNESS



DOWNWARD-PRAYERS OF SUBMISSION



INWARD-PRAYERS OF NEED



OUTWARD-PRAYERS OF PROTECTION



SALEM CHAPEL