**The Lord’s Prayer: Introduction and Background**

*“Lord, teach us to pray”* (Luke 11:1)

*“We are taught by faith to know that all goodness which we need and which we ourselves lack is in God and in his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom the Father has placed all bounty of his blessing and grace, so that we may draw from him as from a most plentiful spring. It therefore remains for us to seek from him what we know to be in him, and to ask him for it in prayer and supplication.”* (Calvin, Institutes, 517)

1. **General comments on prayer:**

**Packer:** "Prayer is (not the easiest, but) the most natural activity in which we ever engage, and prayer is the measure of all of us in God's sight."

**McCheyne:** "What a man is alone on his knees before God, that he is - and no more."

**Luther:** "Prayer is the real calling of all Christians"

**Andrew Murray:** "Prayer is the highest part of the work entrusted to us, the root and strength of all other work."

**Ryken:** "We pray, believing that no soul ever comes to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ apart from prayer. We pray, knowing that there can be no effective preaching, no persuasive evangelism, no committed discipleship, no authentic mercy, and no cultural transformation without fervent prayer."

**Caveat: Is prayer a two-way conversation?**

1. **How Not to Pray: prayers of hypocrites and orphans (Matthew 6:5-8)**
   1. **How to pray like a hypocrite (Matt 6:5-6)**
      1. **The hypocrites reward:** **6:5**
      2. **Contrast with 6:6**

Murray: "The Father is in secret: in these words Jesus teaches us where He is waiting for us, where He is always to be found. Christians often complain that private prayer is not what it should be. They feel weak and sinful, the heart is cold and dark; it is as if they have so little to pray, and in that little no faith or joy. They are discouraged and kept from prayer by the thought that they cannot come to the Father as they ought or as the wish. Child of God! Listen to your Teacher. He tells you that when you go to private prayer your first thought must be: The Father is in secret, the father waits me there. Just because your heart is cold and prayerless, get you into the presence of the loving Father."

* 1. **How to pray like an orphan (Matt 6:7-8)**
     1. **Children at prayer:**

1. **Overview of the Lord’s Prayer**

**WSC Q. 99 “How does God direct us to pray?” A.** “The whole word of God, but especially the Lord’s prayer, which Christ taught his disciples, directs our prayers.”

Anonymous Poem:

*You cannot pray the Lord’s Prayer*

*And even once say “I.”*

*You cannot say the Lord’s Prayer*

*And even once say “My.”*

*Nor can you pray the Lord’s Prayer*

*And not pray for another,*

*For when you ask for daily bread*

*You must include your brother.*

*For others are included*

*In each and every plea –*

*From the beginning to the end of it,*

*It never once says “Me!”*

**Spiros Zodhiates**: "in prayer I am not alone. I am one with the members of God's family, which is also my family. My weak prayer is caught up into the great stream of prayer that goes up forever from God's family. The strength of my prayer is that it is not simply mine; that the moment I fall on my knees I am no longer individual man or woman talking to God, but a member of the family of God, a sharer in that human nature which Christ has carried to the right hand of God."

**Two ways to look at the structure:**

* 1. We can find at least 7 distinct activities in this prayer as general directives to prayer:
     1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ God in adoration and trust
     2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ his work and worth, in praise and worship
     3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ sin and seeking pardon
     4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that needs be met, for ourselves and others
     5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with God for blessings (like Jacob wrestling with God)
     6. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ from God one's own situation as he has shaped it
     7. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to God's faithfulness through thick and thin
  2. *"Pray then like this"* (Matt 6:9-13). The LP is to be a pattern for our thoughts in prayer.
     1. “Our Father"
     2. "In heaven"
     3. Then comes three God-centered petitions:
     4. Then man’s needs: