

Lord's Prayer

Our Father Matthew 6

I had just pulled a series of practical jokes on my roommate and came back to my room to learn that he had been at his desk praying for 45 minutes. I stood in the doorway as I watched my roommate, Dieter Wolski, continue to pray for another 45 minutes as he was on his knees with his hands folded and his head down. There were tears streaming down his face as he prayed. And after he prayed for an hour and a half in that kind of posture, he hyperventilated. I had to call the school nurse who gave him a brown paper bag. He held it up to his mouth until his breathing returned to normal. After the nurse left, I asked, "Dieter, what were you praying about for an hour and a half with such fervency that tears were streaming on your face, and you hyperventilated?"

He said, "George, when the buckets of water that you put in the closet came down on me and my new suit, I became angry. But quickly God convicted me that my anger was sin. So, I've been praying for the last hour and a half that God would make me more like Jesus Christ."

I don't know if you've ever been in the presence of a true prayer warrior. I certainly was in the presence of one that day. And it reminded me of Luke 11, where we see for the second time in Scripture that Jesus taught

his disciples to pray. In this setting, the disciples of Jesus Christ saw Jesus praying from some distance, much like I was witnessing Dieter at a distance praying. By the way he prayed, they could say, "there is something about the prayer life of the Master we don't match." So, they said, "Jesus, teach us to pray. We want the power and the relationship and the fervency that we see in your prayer life."

Conservative New Testament scholars agree that in Luke 11 Jesus teaches them the Lord's Prayer for the second time. We can look at this and say from the disciples' perspective, "time out, Master, we know the words. You've given us this prayer before." And by implication that Jesus is saying, "you may know the words, but you still don't know the meaning or the significance of prayer."

So, Jesus reinforces his desire for his disciples to pray according to a particular pattern. Furthermore, clearly the Lord knows his followers will struggle in our prayer life. He knows that on occasion we will pray and not get what God is doing.

The Apostle Paul, according to Galatians 4:14, had a protracted illness. That illness apparently marred Paul's appearance so much that Paul worried that even his friends might be repulsed by him. Many New Testament scholars believe that, in fact, was Paul's thorn in the flesh that he mentions in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. On three separate occasions,

he asked God to remove the thorn in the flesh. But God's response to Paul was, "no,

"Jesus, teach us to pray. We want the power and the relationship and the fervency that we see in your prayer life."

Paul, my grace is sufficient for you."

So, whatever we make of those two accounts, we know that Paul had a protracted illness for an extended period of time that he knew would be upsetting to the Galatians. We know that he had a thorn in the flesh, if not this physical illness, that he had something else that he asked God to remove. But despite his prayers, God didn't remove it.

Many of us know that frustration. Perhaps, we prayed about an illness, or a job loss or a relationship problem. All of us have prayed about something only to see that nothing has much changed. So, when we conclude our prayers make no difference,

we say, "why do we even pray?"

Adding to this confusion, in verse eight, it's Jesus himself who says, "the Father knows what you need before you pray."

We can stop right there and say, "if that's the case, why bother to pray? If he knows I don't have a job; if he knows I'm sick, if he knows I'm struggling in some relationship, why do I even need to pray? What am I accomplishing when I pray?"

The answer to our question is that the purpose of prayer is not to make our requests known to God. That's implicit as we look at this prayer that Jesus taught his disciples and us to pray. Prayer for Jesus is about relationships.

I have a Missouri Synod Lutheran background, which means I went to catechism for two years, every Tuesday night and every Saturday morning. Among the things that we learned in Catechism was the Lord's Prayer. We memorized the Lord's Prayer. We learned about the six petitions in the Lord's Prayer and knew that the Lord's Prayer can be equally divided into

two halves. The first half of the Lord's Prayer is where we pray to the Father about the Father. We pray about the person of the Father, "hallowed be thy name." And we pray about the plan of the Father, "Thy Kingdom come." And we pray about the purpose of the Father, "Thy will be done." And then in the second half of the prayer, we pray to the Father about the family. We pray about the provision for the family, "give us this day our daily bread." Then we pray about the pardon for the family, "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." Finally, we pray about the protection of the family, "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." So, as we look at this prayer that Jesus Christ taught us to pray, we can say, it's about relationships. We can pause already and say, "Okay, maybe that's what I'm missing. That when I pray, God's great desire for me is to enter into a deeper, more intimate relationship with Him and develop a greater concern and compassion for His family.

C.S. Lewis, in his outstanding book, *Letters to Malcolm*, makes this observation that

when we pray, our tendency is to pray, "Give me this day my daily bread." But in the Lord's Prayer Jesus says pray "give us this day our daily bread." When we pray, our focus tends to be on our immediate needs, our health needs, our financial needs, our family needs. Jesus, however, seems to be warning us of the danger of having merely that selfish perspective. Until we understand the relationship that we have with our Heavenly Father, we're not even ready to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread."

So, we start our prayers by focusing on the person, plan and purpose of the Father. Then, we don't focus on just my needs, my bread. We become intercessors. We encourage the family and support them emotionally, physically, and spiritually. That's the essence and the heart of prayer.

More precisely Jesus begins with this phrase: "Our Father." In this article, we will focus on that one phrase. What does it really mean to us to pray "our Father?" Why do we pray that?

We pray "Our Father" to Remind Us that the Purpose of Prayer Is to Enter into a Deeper Relationship

The reason why we pray "our Father" is to seek to grasp who God is to us. The words themselves in this prayer denote several relationships that God wants us to consider.

1. The Father/Child relationship, "Our Father who art in heaven."
2. The Deity/Worshiper relationship, "Hallowed be thy name."
3. The King/Subject relationship, "Thy Kingdom come."
4. The Master/Servant relationship, "Thy will be done."
5. The Provider/Benefactor relationship, "Give us this day our daily bread."
6. The Savior/Sinner relationship, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."
7. The Guide/Pilgrim relationship, "Lead us not into temptation (that is that pressure point) but deliver us from the evil one."

Thus, as we pray this prayer and understand its meaning, praying this way should drive us deeper into an understanding of the relationships that our heavenly Father wants us to have. Beyond that, there's a spirit that this prayer denotes as well.

1. "Our" would suggest an unselfish spirit. It's not my daily bread, it's our daily bread.
2. "Father" would suggest a family spirit. It's not just about me, it's about the Church family.
3. "Hallowed be thy name" requires a reverent spirit.
4. "Thy Kingdom come" suggests a loyal spirit.
5. "Thy will be done" suggests a submissive spirit.
6. "Give us our daily bread," a dependent spirit.
7. "Forgive us" a repentant spirit.
8. "Lead us not into temptation" a humble spirit.
9. "Thine is the Kingdom" a triumphant spirit.

10. "And the power" an expectant spirit.

11. "And the glory" an exultant spirit

12. "And forever" an eternal spirit.

The truth of the matter is that as we grow older with Jesus Christ, Jesus continues to desire to teach us how to pray. I had been a pastor for many years when I went on a mission trip to India. The most effective means for years in seeing Hindus come to faith in Jesus Christ is prayer evangelism. What we saw happening in India is that Christians would get to know their Hindu neighbors. When, like the Good Samaritan, they discovered their neighbor was in some ditch they would say, "can I pray for you right now?" Their Hindu friends might have lost a job or be experiencing some sort of health difficulty in their family. Whatever the crisis, Indian Christians would say, "could I just pray for you right now?" Invariably, their Hindu friends said "yes." These modern-day good Samaritans prayed every day expecting that God would touch the lives of those Hindus that didn't know Jesus Christ as their personal savior. Consistently, God would

answer those prayer requests in amazing, miraculous ways. And then, of course, as the Hindu neighbors discovered that these Christians were praying for them daily, and then they got a job, or they were healed or a relationship was mended, the first meeting they attended was not a Bible study, but a prayer meeting because these Hindu friends wanted to go where the power was.

As I witnessed what was happening, I found myself asking where does this fit in the Bible? Is this right? I couldn't object to unbelievers becoming Christians. Obviously, that is great. What bothered me was the idea of praying for miracles for people who don't even know Jesus Christ as their Savior? Shouldn't they become Christians before God answers their prayers? Couldn't we give them the wrong idea about prayer and God if they get whatever they want but know nothing of who Jesus is?

As I was having my theological struggle with the appropriateness of what I was witnessing, there's no question God directed me to John 20:31. The purpose statement for the Gospel

of John is recorded in that verse. "Jesus did many other signs, but these have been recorded that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ and that by believing you might have life through his name." When I considered this verse, I couldn't help but ask the obvious question, "if this is the purpose statement for the gospel of John, for whom did Jesus do all these miracles?" The changing of water into wine, the healing of the man that was by the pool for 38 years, the raising of Lazarus from the dead, for whom did he do these miracles?

According to the verse, the signs were performed for unbelievers! Then it suddenly hit me. "Is that what we're supposed to be doing with the world outside, showing them a Jesus Christ that has creative power today, showing them that as the Church prays, we are in touch with the God of the universe, whose creative power is still alive and well today?" According to that text, it looks like it. That thought forced me to ask myself several penetrating questions. So then, "George, do you pray with a sense of expectation that the Jesus Christ who walked this

Earth, who touched the lives of people who didn't know him, who revealed his power, and who his servant John says the purpose of these miracles is so that those who didn't know him might come to believe in his name?" Am I praying with that kind of expectancy that God is going to touch the hearts and lives of people who don't even know how to pray, with the significance and the power of prayer?

So, we pray our Father!

We Pray "Our Father" to Keep Us from Praying Like Religious Hypocrites or the Pagans

Another reason, it seems to me why we pray "our Father" is so that we don't pray like religious hypocrites or like pagans. Jesus himself warns us of this in the introduction to this prayer in verses five through seven. There we read, when you pray, don't be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogue and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they receive their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door, and pray to your Father who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, don't keep on babbling like the pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words, don't be like them, for your father knows what you need before you ask. So, two problems Jesus identifies for people as they pray. There can be the temptation to be

like the Jewish hypocrite, who wants everybody to know he is praying. By their actions they announced, "I am a prayer warrior, look at me!" The Jewish hypocrites prayed to impress their friends and neighbors. Jesus said, don't be like that.

Furthermore, Jesus urges us to avoid praying like the Greeks. The Greeks, as they prayed hoped to get the attention of the gods. In fact, the Greeks, when they would pray to Zeus or pray to the other gods, suggested that the chief characteristic of the gods was "apatheia." We can hear the word apathetic in it. They believed their gods were apathetic, that they didn't really care about us, because if they did, that would be a sign of weakness. Thus, the Greek gods are dispassionate about you and me. So, our challenge when we pray is to somehow to get these uncaring gods who don't give a rip about us to somehow care. Maybe if we offer a big sacrifice or gift, we can get these gods to somehow show us favor. Jesus said, both attitudes are wrong. When you pray, you shouldn't be trying to impress some audience, some earthly audience somewhere, and you should be convinced that there's a God in heaven who genuinely cares about you. He's your father!

I have learned the hard way that there is a little Jewish hypocrite and Greek worshiper in all of us. The first time I was asked to pray out loud, I was at Doris Leland's home. Doris had invited me over to her house for a spaghetti dinner which she personally cooked. It was wonderful and I pigged out on the meal. As the dirty dishes were collected, her father slipped out of the room for a few seconds and returned lugging a four-inch thick, massive black Bible.

That sure got my attention.

A moment later Doris' dad made an announcement: "We're going to have devotions." He proceeded to read a lengthy passage and then made a number of comments--punctuated by frequent glances in my direction. With a thunk, he snapped the Bible shut. "Okay, now we're going to pray," he said. I felt a faint flutter in my heart as he added, "I'll start and then Mama, Jimmy, and Donna will pray. George, why don't you close us in prayer?"

Me? I'm thinking, Close in prayer? You've got to be kidding me. What's that like? Keep in mind that I came from a liturgical background. I knew exactly two prayers at that time, "Come Lord Jesus, be our Guest, let these gifts to us be blessed," and, "The Lord's Prayer."

Evidently unaware of my discomfort--or, secretly savoring my apparent nervousness--Doris's father began to pray. He prayed for our president, our country, and about all of the problems of the world, the difficulties of life, and the challenges of this and that . . . he went on and on. I'm shifting in my

seat while breaking into a full sweat. I'm thinking, When is this guy going to get done and what in the world am I going to say when it's my turn?

Next, Doris' mama prays. This saint prays for everyone under the sun; the cousins, the nephews, the kids, the aunts and uncles, the loved ones--everybody. A sweet prayer, really. I couldn't help but notice how the words just flowed off their lips as they prayed. Naturally, I was worried that when it was my turn, I wouldn't know what to say. For sure they'd discover I was an idiot.

Then it was Jimmy's turn. Jimmy who, I might add, was about three years younger than me, must have been some kind of a genius--his words were just so well chosen. He prayed for those less fortunate, for the missionaries in the foreign lands, you name it Jimmy covered it. Now my stomach got into the act by starting a rumble with my intestines. With the sweat literally dripping from my face, I was sure that even the angels in heaven were going to laugh when it was my turn to pray . . . especially after they heard what I had to say.

And, as my heart thumped within my chest like a pack of huskies after a long run, Doris prayed. Her voice was tender, warm, and passionate; she was like an angel praying next to me. I marveled at how Doris was so comfortable in the presence of God. Clearly there was no intimidation whatsoever on her part. She talked with God as if she were talking with her best friend.

That put me over the edge. With sweat cascading down my face, it was my turn to pray. My shirt was sopping wet with perspiration as if I had spent the night in a sauna. To this day I have no idea what came out of my mouth. I do know that my stomach was doing these little flip flops as I eked out my words. Somehow, mercifully, I managed to get through my prayer.

I don't know how I ended it, but the people at the table must have known and, in turn, started to go about their business. Doris and her mom headed to the kitchen to clean dishes. Jimmy dashed outside leaving me alone with her father. For my part, I kept my head bowed because I didn't want to look

up and face anyone. Doris' dad said, "George, why not join me in the other room, would you?"

With some effort, I rose from the table and wobbled into the living room. He directed me toward a sofa where I promptly sat down for what I thought was going to be the Grand Inquisition. I was there for about two minutes before I had to excuse myself; I darted out to the front lawn and promptly threw up!

Probably the best prayer I've ever heard was a prayer that Bryce Bewley prayed. Bryce was a shot putter at Kearsley High School in Clio Michigan. I was involved with an organization called Youth for Christ. We had a weekend retreat, and Bryce decided that he was going to go on the retreat. He bunked right above me during the weekend. It was obvious that Bryce didn't understand what it truly was to be a Christ follower. So, I shared the Gospel with him in a variety of different ways. Then one evening, it was obvious to me that Bryce was close to making a commitment to Jesus. So, I told him that night, Bryce, I'm going to pray right now that God deals with you, however long he needs to tonight until you come to Jesus. And then I went to bed. Bryce was up almost all night long. About 3:00 in the morning, he did surrender his life to Jesus Christ. And he couldn't wait for me to wake up the next day to tell me the news. He told me, "George. Yeah, about 3:00 last night, I prayed just like you told me. And I invited Jesus Christ to come into my life and be my Lord and Savior." And I said, "Bryce, that's fantastic. Now Bryce I want to help you can grow in your new relationship with Jesus. The first thing I would suggest that you do is begin reading the Gospel of John. We'll get

together and we'll process your questions so that you can get an understanding of what Jesus is saying in this book.

And Bryce, one of the things sometimes Christians struggle with a bit is feeling comfortable telling people what Jesus has done for them. So, I think it's better that you just jump into this right away. It's easier to just take the leap than to wait around and be afraid. We're going to have a rally tomorrow. There'll be 2000 of your peers there. I'd like to suggest that you share publicly what you just told me."

Bryce didn't know he was supposed to be afraid. So, the next day, he shared in front of 2000 high school kids what had happened the day before. And then the third thing I said is "Bryce, I find that there are several Christians who struggle with prayer. They don't know how to pray out loud, and they find themselves throwing up on a girlfriend's front lawn because of that. So, I think it's important for you to begin to learn about the dynamic of prayer and what it is even to pray out loud, because we say in America, the family that prays together stays together. You can't very well pray together as a family if you don't pray out loud. As you pray remember you're talking to God. Don't worry about what you say. It's not like we're the audience, God's the audience."

After our weekend retreat, Bryce came to the home where I was leading a Bible study. At the end of each Bible study, we'd always have conversational prayer. So, at the end of this study we prayed. Several people prayed. And then Bryce prayed. Picture this big burly shot putter, a junior in high school at the time. He was kind of a no-nonsense guy.

Bryce began thanking God for what he had learned in the last couple of weeks. He thanked God for opportunities to talk to people about Jesus. Then as he continued his prayer, he finally paused, got tongue tied, and he blurted out, "oh, shucks, God, you know what I mean? Amen."

I heard him pray that, and my heart jumped a beat. I thought to myself, "now there is a prayer that has reached the very heart of God, because the truth of the matter is he's our audience, not us." We're not trying to impress one another somehow as we pray, unless we're some Jewish hypocrite. And it's not like we're trying to appease some angry God who doesn't care about us. We're praying to a father who does care. He doesn't care what words we use. He cares about our heart attitude and the conviction that we have about him and who he really is. So, we pray "our father."

We Pray "Our Father" to Remind Us that We Are Coming Before the Creator Who Made Us

Now, a third reason, it seems to me why we pray "our father" is because of what the New Testament and the Old Testament tell us about our relationship with God. In Genesis, we find that in the process of creation, there came a point when God decided to make man in his image. The word that is translated image in Genesis 1:26. is the Hebrew word "tselem." This is a word that in cognate form, appears in a lot of the Semitic world, including the Egyptians. The tselem of God in Egypt was Pharaoh because Pharaoh was the image of God on Earth. And in fact, if you know anything about the Egyptians, they had a tendency of looking at the Pharaoh as God because he was truly God's representative. Other Middle Eastern cultures similarly used this word to designate the person that they viewed as God in their culture. Usually, it would be the King. By contrast, in Jewish literature we uniquely see that all of us are the tselem of God created in the image of God. And you say, what does that mean? What that means is that when God looks at you and he looks at me, he's looking in the mirror. He sees himself because

he created us in his image. So, when He looks at us, He says, "that's my boy!" "That's my girl!" "That little girl looks just like me."

One of the special relationships that I had with my earthly father centered around baseball. I played Little League baseball and baseball in high school. I also played some college ball. My dad played baseball in the Navy, so he was a very good player. When I was in high school, he pitched to me from the midget mound. Those of you who don't know baseball terminology, that's the spot where little leaguers would pitch to little leaguers. When you get to high school, pitchers don't pitch from the midget mound anymore. Obviously, my dad could throw some pretty serious heat pitching from the midget mound. In addition, my dad could throw a screwball, a slider, and a curveball. We spent two or 3 hours regularly, several times a week. He pitched to me for a while and I'd hit all the balls that he threw, or at least the ones I could hit. Then I'd go out into the outfield and my dad hit fly balls to me. By the time I caught a ball, my dad would have his catcher's mitt on his

left hand. He would be standing at home plate to catch the throw that I would throw in from left field. We spent hours and hours doing this. So, by the time I graduated from high school, I had the ability to hit some pretty serious heat. I still struggled with a curveball, but I could hit a fastball without too much difficulty.

Those childhood memories help me appreciate one of the best illustrations I know that gets at what it seems to me is the heart of the Lord's Prayer. Max Lucado has written "imagine that you have a child that is in Little League, and for the sake of the picture, let's say your child is playing T ball. In T ball someone puts a ball on a tee. Each little leaguer just hits the ball off the T and then heads down to first base.

Let's imagine that your boy Johnny comes up to the plate. He hits the ball off the tee. It's a little dribbler down to third base, not much of a hit. Johnny starts running to first base. The third baseman misplays the ball and then throws wildly past first base. Your Johnny sees the errant throw and goes around first base. His little stumpy legs are taking him down to second base. By this point, the right fielder gets the ball, throws it into the second baseman but he throws wildly. So, as Johnny sees that, he rounds second base heading to third. He falls down between second base and third base and has to then get up and brush himself off. By this point, the left fielder gets the ball, Johnny rounds third base, starts heading toward home, and the left fielder throws the ball as hard as he can. Johnny charges toward home plate. He slides one of those two-to-three-inch slides because he hasn't learned how to

do a bent-knee slide yet. The ball and Johnny arrive at home plate about the same time. As the dust settles the umpire roars, "Safe!"

As a parent in the stands, you have several options. You can say, "better luck next time, Johnny. It wasn't much of a hit and there were three errors on the play. Maybe next time you can get a serious hit. Good for you, you tried your best." It wasn't much of a hit. By pure baseball standards, it wasn't a hit at all. The typical T ball parent, however, whose child has just hit the dribbler down third base and runs all around the bases and comes in home, is going to be cheering in the stands, "Atta, boy, you hit a home run!" We all know it wasn't really a home run. It's certainly not the kind of hit that a parent who played ball in high school or college could have hit. But that doesn't matter to the parent because any parent is going to say, "that's my boy;" "that's my girl who hit that home run!" Now, we all know that if God ever stepped up to the plate, he not only would hit the ball out of the park; he'd hit the ball out of the universe. God is not expecting us to hit the ball the way he would hit the ball, because as a heavenly parent, God is concerned about his relationship with us. So, we pray our Father.

We Pray "Our Father" to Remind Us that We Are Coming Before the God Who Adopted Us

Finally, we pray "our Father" to remind us of another very important principle in Scripture.

In the New Testament, we are reminded that the God who created us also went through an adoption process to adopt us back. Consider the implications of that. We're already God's child. He created us in his image. But in the New Testament we see God sent his only begotten son down to Earth, who through his blood sacrifice paid a ransom for us so that we can be adopted into God's family. What we see in the New Testament reflects the Greco-Roman practice of the day. If someone wanted to adopt a child outside of his biological family, he would go to the ward of the child and pay what was called the "ransom" price. Once the ransom price was paid, the ward would return it back. The adoptive parent would then pay the ransom price a second time and the ward would return it back a second time. Finally, the adoptive parent would pay the ransom price a third time and this time the ward would keep the money and the adoption would be complete.

This process shows that adoption was a very serious matter in the Greco-Roman world. Adoptive parents were expected to be careful,

because when a child became an adopted son or daughter, they became full heirs with any naturally born child.

It is shocking that any Christian should ever be considered coheirs with Jesus the Christ. But that's what God did. God loves his son Jesus. His son Jesus was sinless and perfect. He was the child we're never going to be. And if there ever is an opportunity for sibling rivalry or for us to feel inadequate, it's in comparing ourselves to God's other child, Jesus of Nazareth. But the adoption process, if we understand it, communicates to us that when our heavenly Father looks at you and looks at me, He sees children who are equal brothers and sisters of Jesus. So, when we pray, despite our inadequacies and failures, we still pray "our Father who art in heaven," not because we necessarily feel like we have deserved that, we don't. We pray that way because God paid the ransom price so that we can say, "Our Father who art in heaven."

When we begin to pray, we say "Our Father!" If we mean that, we will day by day enter

a deeper relationship with God. Once our relationship deepens, we will be led to say, "Hallowed be Thy name." When we consistently hallow God's name we will say, "Thy Kingdom come." As our relationship with our father grows, we will more easily say, "Thy will be done." When we successfully learn how to pray to the Father about the Father, we will be ready to pray, "Give us, the family, our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespassed against us and lead us not into temptation."

Jesus the Christ says, "you pray that way and you will experience the kind of power and the kind of relationship that you saw me have as I was over there by that rock." So, when you pray, pray this, "Our God and heavenly father, it is our desire to pray powerfully, to pray meaningfully, to pray so that we enter into a deeper relationship with you." I can't imagine that you wouldn't say there have been times when you faced a crisis and didn't know what was going on.

Maybe like Paul, you experienced a physical infirmity that has continued for a

significant period of time. Perhaps, your problem is a personal issue. Maybe you are starting a new job. Even though James tells us that we don't know for sure that when we go to a city and start a job, we will make lots of money, we are somehow hoping that maybe we could.

From this passage, know this! Sometimes it's in the middle of those crises that are still unresolved that we can sense the fatherhood of God. In our crisis, we need to take our eyes off ourselves and see our father and see our family. When we do, we can begin to pray like Jesus taught us.

So then, if we believe that God is our Father how will that change the way we pray?

1. If we pray that way, we will realize the real purpose of prayer is to enter a deeper relationship with Him. Is that true for you? Do you hear His voice as you pray? Do you sense that He is directing you as you pray? Do you ask Him to reveal His will to you? Do you ask Him what you need to confess?

I have often asked God to reveal to me what I need to confess only to be surprised that He has nudged me to confess wrongs I did not know I had done. In one case, God urged me to go to our children's ministry leader to confess that God had convicted me to work on my relationship with her. Again, I didn't know there was anything wrong with my relationship with her. But she thanked me for coming and told me she had sensed a growing distance between us which we were able to correct because God had directed me to approach her.

2. Do you ever sense God redirecting how you pray when you are anxious to pray "give me this day my daily bread?"

3. Do you feel comforted as God reassures you that He is your heavenly Father?

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil for thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory for ever and ever! Amen

