

LESSON 15

The Lord's Prayer

MATTHEW 6:1-18



BIBLE TRUTH

WE LIVE FOR THE PRAISE OF GOD, NOT THE PRAISE OF MAN

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Matthew 6:1–18 from the Scriptures or read story 93, “The Lord’s Prayer,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

3. OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN

The Cost of Forgiveness

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ five-dollar bill

4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION

Select one of the object lessons to use to cover the teaching points.

5. OBJECT LESSON 2 20 MIN

Be a Hypocrite

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ pencils and paper
- ✓ Bibles for the class

6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

7. ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Fasting Hypocrite

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper
- ✓ colored pencils, markers, crayons

LESSON SNAPSHOT

8. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN
9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON 15 MIN

Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ sweet bread or sweet rolls—enough for the entire class (consider food allergies)
- ✓ at least one Bible and one concordance for each team
- ✓ printout of the following twelve verses: Genesis 18:5; Exodus 16:4; 34:28; Deuteronomy 8:3; 1 Kings 17:11; Proverbs 31:27; Luke 22:19; John 6:32; 6:35; 6:51; 21:13; Acts 2:46. Make two copies: one with the verse references (the answer key) and one without the references (to be cut apart into individual verses for the game).

TOTAL 80 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

Give in secret—This passage seems to contradict the one that came a chapter before. In Matthew 5:16, Jesus taught we should not keep our light hidden under a basket. Now we are instructed to keep our acts of righteousness secret. This isn't really a contradiction. In this passage, Jesus is speaking against the way the hypocrites lived (Matthew 6:5), parading their good works for all to see. They wanted to look good in front of others. Outwardly they displayed their good works, but inwardly they were full of sin. The real difference is about what is going on inside your heart. It is fine to tell others about Jesus and all that he is doing in your life to reach them with the gospel message, but it is not good to boast about your faith for the sake of looking good before men.

Pray in secret—Jesus continues to warn against hypocrisy using the illustration of prayer. He is not prohibiting public prayer. Rather, he is speaking against those who, when praying, draw attention to themselves. Their focus is on themselves, not God. Their concern, rather than being communion with God, is the praise of their fellow man.

Jesus goes on to teach his disciples how to pray. The first half of the Lord's Prayer is all about giving God the glory due his name. This stands in stark contrast to the self-glorifying prayer of the hypocrite. Jesus then introduces his hearers to the amazing truth that God is our Father in heaven. God is personal—he is our Father. He has a name, a kingdom, and a will. After celebrating the glory of God and his person, the prayer continues by requesting help from God for daily living. What an amazing truth! Jesus encourages us to ask God for help.

Fast in secret—Jesus continues his warning against hypocrisy by using a third illustration of fasting. Good works, prayer, and fasting, each brings a reward. Even though all we do is by God's grace, God promises to reward us for the good works he enables us to do! But if we do our good works to receive praise from men, that praise will be our only reward.

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Hypocrite

The word “hypocrite” originated as a Greek term for an actor in a drama who pretended to be someone other than himself. In the Bible a hypocrite is someone who pretends to love God on the outside, but has sinful motives in his heart.

Where Is the Gospel?

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

When Jesus prayed for God's kingdom to come and God's will to be done, he was praying for his own sacrificial death to be accomplished because that was how the Father planned to save sinful man. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed for the cup of suffering to pass, but only if it was the will of his Father. Jesus came as a servant, lived a sinless life, and then gave up his life so that we could be delivered from temptation and evil. Apart from the work of Christ, the Lord's Prayer would be meaningless.

Forgiveness would not be possible if it were not for Jesus' death on the cross. God can forgive us only because Jesus took the penalty we deserved for our sin. Hebrews 9:22 tells us that without the shedding of blood, there can be no forgiveness. The Lord's Prayer would be meaningless if Jesus had not died on the cross to make forgiveness possible.

Forgiveness marks our lives as Christians. The Lord's Prayer assumes those who seek God's forgiveness have already forgiven those who have sinned against them. Jesus concludes the Lord's Prayer by explaining that forgiving others is a requirement to receiving forgiveness. This does not mean that we can earn God's forgiveness by forgiving others; rather, this is one of many indicators of true conversion. If we understand our sinfulness and the tremendous suffering Jesus endured to make a way for our forgiveness, we will gladly forgive others.

Our sin against God is worse than any crime committed against us. If, however, we do not understand the priceless gift of God's forgiveness, we won't have a basis to forgive the debt of others against us. There is always a cost to forgiveness. Jesus endured the Father's wrath for our sin. He bore the cost of our sin in a justifying, redeeming way. Of course, we cannot do that. For us, the cost of forgiveness has to do with choosing not to seek, demand, or subtly exact some kind of payment for the sin committed against us. The cost of forgiveness for us is in releasing the debt we are owed by others. Genuine forgiveness costs us the "right" to seek repayment for sin, or somehow to try to "get even." Such forgiveness is only possible as we understand how great a debt of sin we have been forgiven in the gospel. It is simply unthinkable for ones who have been forgiven so great a debt of sin against a holy God to exact payment from others for their sins.

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW **5 MIN**

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY **10 MIN**

Read Matthew 5:1–26 from the Scriptures or read story 91, “The Sermon on the Mount—The Beatitudes,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 **10 MIN****The Cost of Forgiveness****SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ five-dollar bill

The Lord's Prayer calls us to forgive others as God has forgiven us. When describing forgiveness, Jesus used the language we normally use for a financial transaction, saying, “forgive us our debts” (Matthew 6:12). Thinking about forgiveness in terms of a financial loan can help us understand what happens when we forgive someone. Use the following object lesson to help the class understand forgiveness.

Hold up the five-dollar bill and ask if anyone would like to borrow it? You should get several volunteers. Call a student forward and explain that when you lend someone money you give it to them temporarily to use; later, they have to repay the debt. (Give the bill to a child to show the loan, and then take it back to show the repayment.)

Explain that if you lend the five (give it to the student) and they spend it (have them put it in their pocket) and can't afford to pay you back, they now have a debt they cannot repay. That is what the Bible tells us our sin is like—a debt that we cannot repay. Further explain that your student could try to earn the money to repay the debt, but let's suppose that the debt is enormous—much too big for them ever to earn enough money to repay. The only way they can be released from the burden of that debt is if I forgive them their debt.

Now ask the class these questions:

- **If I lend the student five dollars, who is in debt?**
(The student is the one in debt.)

- **What can I do if the student can't afford to pay me back?**
(I have two choices: demand payment or forgive them.)

- **If I forgive them, who is the one that bears the loss?**
(In the end you, the owner of the money, bear the loss because the debt is forgiven.)

- **What is the cost of forgiveness?**
(The cost of forgiveness in this case is the loss of five dollars and your right to demand repayment.)

- **What does God do when it comes to the debt of our sin? Does he demand payment from us or does he forgive?**
(God forgives us.)

- **Who paid the debt for our sin?**
(Jesus paid the debt for our sin when he gave up his life to take our punishment.)

- **Is there a cost when we forgive others?**
(Yes, there is a cost and it is always paid by the person who forgives. If another student says something mean to you and you forgive them, you bear the cost of that forgiveness. When you forgive, you agree to give up any right to demand compensation for their sin against you. You give up any right to seek revenge or judgment against them.)

TEACHING/DISCUSSION

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

OBJECT LESSON 2 20 MIN

Be a Hypocrite

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ pencils and paper
- ✓ Bibles for the class

Divide the class into groups of five. Have them review Matthew 6:16–18 and create a short skit to illustrate hypocrisy—hypocrisy in good deeds, or prayer, or fasting. Tell them to modernize their presentations to make them believable for today. Talk about ways hypocrisy finds its way into our lives today and how genuine Christianity stands in contrast.

Ask, How does the way we live when no one is watching give us a real picture into our lives of faith? (Hypocrisy rarely keeps up its act in private, but usually only parades when others are looking. If a person acts one way in front of Christians and another way in private when Christians aren't watching, they should examine their lives closely for hypocrisy.)

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Fasting Hypocrite

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper
- ✓ colored pencils, markers, crayons

Draw a picture of what a fasting hypocrite might look like. See Matthew 6:16-18.

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day's Scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON 15 MIN

Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ sweet bread or sweet rolls—enough for the entire class (consider food allergies)
- ✓ at least one Bible and one concordance for each team
- ✓ printout of the following twelve verses: Genesis 18:5; Exodus 16:4; 34:28; Deuteronomy 8:3; 1 Kings 17:11; Proverbs 31:27; Luke 22:19; John

6:32; 6:35; 6:51; 21:13; Acts 2:46. Make two copies: one with the verse references (the answer key) and one without the references (to be cut apart into individual verses for the game).

The object of this game is to illustrate the connection between our daily bread and the Word of God.

Divide the class into teams of five to seven students and distribute Bibles and concordances. (Note: Take a minute and demonstrate how to find a verse in a concordance.) Each team can earn a portion of sweet bread or rolls for each reference they find. (Divide the bread up into appropriate-sized portions so that for every winning answer each member of a team receives a small portion of sweet bread. The team that gets the most verses correct will get the most bread.)

Place the cut-out verses without references facedown on a table, and when you say Go, have the teams send a representative to select a verse. Each team must then locate the verse in the Bible and tell you if it is in the Old Testament or the New Testament. Once they make their guess, they should show it to you and then, if correct, take their portion of bread along with a new verse back to their team. This should continue until all the verses are gone. If they get it wrong, they don't get any bread.

Talk about Deuteronomy 8:3, which Jesus quotes in Matthew 4:4 and Luke 4:4. Have the class answer the question, "How is the Word of God like bread to us?"