



LESSON 3 // HOW TO LIVE IN GOD'S WILL

Prayer is an important part of our spiritual growth. It's the way we connect and communicate with God. Effective prayer leads us to our spiritual destiny and secures the blessings and help of God.

Jesus prayed regularly during His earthly ministry. One day, after observing Jesus in a time of prayer, some of His disciples came to Him and made this request: "Lord, teach us to pray." In response, Jesus taught what has come to be known as "The Lord's Prayer." Notice the first part of this prayer:

Matthew 6:9, 10 (NIV) *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."*

In verse 10 Jesus instructs us about praying for and living in God's Kingdom and His will "on earth as it is in heaven." Let's look at four biblical keys to this important aspect of prayer.

1. Heaven is a real place with real resources.

Life is a hopeless existence if all we have is what we can see. Hope and faith are ignited when we begin to get a vision of heaven—the reality that is beyond what we can currently see (see Colossians 3:1-4). You can't pray well without this kind of faith!

Prayer is designed to move our focus from earth to heaven—to capture our attention on things above. Heaven is a place of God's plentiful, unending resources. That's why Jesus taught us to pray, "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10).

God's "Kingdom" simply means His "rule" or "reign" where He is recognized and fully submitted to as the Sovereign, the King. God's will is His desires—what He in His infinite, omniscient wisdom knows should be and desires to be because of His holiness and love.

In heaven, God is recognized as the Sovereign. All of heaven freely and willingly submits to His rule and yields to and embraces it. Think of heaven as a place of unlimited power and unlimited resources that has everything you will ever need—and pray with this in mind.

2. God wants heaven to come to your earth.

God deeply desires to bring His will to our world. He has a heart to connect with and bless His creation and to lead, guide and direct us into His will. He wants to release the resources of heaven into our earth. His rule and will are best for us. Here are six reasons why you need to live in God's will. God is able to:

- See the end from the beginning.
- Help you live the way He created you to live.
- Guide you to the fulfillment of your highest purpose and potential.

- Remove the impurities and influences that hinder you.
- Keep you from decisions and situations that diminish your potential.
- Release supernatural resources to you that will enable you to live life at a heavenly level.

The Bible is clear that the benefits of living under God's will include "righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17; see also Mark 3:35; John 4:34). He wants heaven to come to your earth!

3. Experiencing heaven on earth requires personal engagement.

Just as God desires to rule our hearts and lives for our good, other forces seek to rule and destroy us. The world around us, our sinfulness and the devil all work to keep us from opening our lives to the benefits and blessings of God's Kingdom and will (John 10:10; Galatians 5:17; Ephesians 6:11, 12; 1 Peter 5:8; 1 John 2:15-17).

Jesus taught us that we can experience the power of God's Kingdom and the fullness of His will in our "earth," but we have to pray for it. We have to engage in the process and fight for this in prayer!

4. Prayer brings heaven's resources and guides you into God's will.

Jesus' teaching in the Lord's Prayer is about putting prayer into practice. It's practical instruction telling us how to pray. To pray in God's will, you must:

- Want God's Kingdom to come and His will to be done in you.
- Stand against anything that opposes God's rule and will.
- Invite God's Kingdom into your relationships, responsibilities and circumstances.
- Turn away from any known areas of disobedience to God's will.
- Proclaim the release of Kingdom benefits and blessings into your life, relationships, responsibilities and circumstances.

The Apostle Paul understood the power of praying God's Kingdom and will into the situations He encountered. In Acts 16:22-25 we see Paul and Silas thrown into prison where at midnight they were "praying and singing hymns to God" while "the other prisoners were listening." The result was that God shook the prison, freed all the prisoners and gave Paul an amazing opportunity to share the gospel so that the jailer and all his family were saved (Acts 16:26-33).

God wants to release His power in your life as you pray and engage in the process for His Kingdom to come and His will to be done!

Discussion questions

1. Read Matthew 6:9, 10 and Colossians 3:1-4. Based on these verses, why is it important to shift your focus from earth to heaven in prayer?
2. Read Galatians 5:17, Ephesians 6:11, 12 and 1 Peter 5:8. What do you learn from these verses about standing against anything that opposes God's rule and will in your life?
3. In what practical ways can you "invite God's Kingdom into your relationships, responsibilities and circumstances"? What difference can this make in your life?