

# Talk to Me

LEARNING TO PRAY LIKE JESUS



**vGROUP STUDY**



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Talk to Me: vGroup Study

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# "OUR FATHER"

About a year ago, a video went viral of Paige and Daniel Zezulka. The couple had been fostering a young girl, Ivey, and her two siblings for some time, and on Ivey's birthday, they tell her that she has one more present to open. Carefully, Ivey opens the box, and pulls something out. Stunned, Ivey looks at the couple and asks, "I'm going to be adopted?" Instantly tears flow from her eyes as she realizes that she will no longer be bounced from home to home. No longer will she address the man and woman beside her as Mrs. Paige and Mr. Daniel. Their relationship has changed. Now, Ivey calls them Mom and Dad. And that means so much more.<sup>1</sup>

Though the Zezulka's story is a beautiful testimony, we as Christians live an even greater one. God himself has adopted us as his children, and we are held secure forever in his love. In Matthew 6:9, Jesus shows us how this privilege impacts how we pray. We address God as our Father, which prepares our hearts by reflecting on who it is we actually pray to.

- Do you reflect on God being your Father when you pray? Why or why not?
- How do you feel about the Bible calling God a Father?
- How does knowing that God is our Father impact our prayers?

This week we heard the beginning of what we commonly refer to as the Lord's Prayer. Although just one short verse, there is much that we can learn from this introduction that Jesus gave to his disciples to teach them to pray.

<sup>9</sup>Pray then like this:

*"Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name.*

Matthew 6:9

- What is the command that Jesus gives to us here?
- What significance does even just those four words hold for us?

We see here that prayer is not just an option for the Christian life; but rather, it is something we must do. Not only so, but there is an example to be followed. Jesus did not leave us aimless to figure out prayer. He instructed us to help us.

*<sup>14</sup>For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. <sup>15</sup>For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" <sup>16</sup>The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, <sup>17</sup>and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.*

Romans 8:14–17

- What does this passage teach us about the sons of God?

- What does it say about God?

On Sunday, we saw that God has been referred to as a Father throughout the Bible. Here we see that God has adopted all who are led by the Spirit of God. Not only are we children of God, but we are also heirs. In Matthew 6:9, Jesus tells us to address God as Father. When we pray, we should take time to reflect on this unique relationship that God has brought us into with himself. God relates to us as his children, and he is a perfect father. This is an incredible privilege that we should never forget. Our adoption is secure and an act of incredible love.

- We also are told to address God as our Father. What is the significance of the word "our"?

As we learned on Sunday, prayer is a collective act. While it's true that we often pray alone, we are also a part of the Church, which means that when we pray, we pray along with other believers. It is important to remember that God is our collective Father and also to pray often with others.

- Next, Jesus begins the prayer itself with "hallowed be your name." What does this mean?

God's name is holy, not because of us making it so, but it is his unchangeable character. When we say, "hallowed be your name", we are not asking God to make himself holy; he already is. What we are doing is imploring him to empower us to be holy as he is holy and to glorify himself among the nations. In the words of Timothy Keller, "to 'hallow' God's name is not merely to live righteous lives but to have a heart of grateful joy toward God—and even more, a wondrous sense of his beauty."<sup>2</sup>

As Christians, we have a unique privilege in prayer. We get to take the time to reflect on the God we serve and who he is. Although the Lord's Prayer is one of the most well known and recited prayers in the world, we cannot allow it to become just a meaningless recitation. Even in the first verse of it, it is so rich. We address the God of the universe who is our Father, who ransomed us and adopted us as children even when we were still sinners. We ask him to be honored in our lives and across the globe because we have seen his worthiness and greatness that he has shown us in the magnificent love of the gospel.

- When you pray, how can you reflect more on who God is?
- How does knowing that God is your Father influence how you come to him in prayer?
- How does the way you live reflect (or not reflect) a desire for God to be honored?

We will close this vGroup study in the most appropriate way—by praying to our Father. Ask God to help us realize the gravity of the fact that he would become a Father to us and to glorify his name in all that we do, and then pray the Lord's Prayer together as well as for the prayer challenge for today.

## REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup>"Girl's reaction to finding out she's going to be adopted is the most beautiful thing," Good Morning America Retrieved, <https://www.goodmorningamerica.com/family/story/girls-reaction-finding-shes-adopted-beautiful-thing-internet-57430288>, accessed on January 14, 2020.

<sup>2</sup>Timothy J. Keller, *Prayer* (New York, New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 2014).