

The LPG

His Kingdom Comes First

January 3, 2021

Welcome **you** to where we're learning to pray the **LPG** way. That's the **Lord's Prayer Guide**. And today we're focusing on *Thy* Kingdom over *my* kingdom.

So, **which kingdom tends to come first in your prayers?**



The Lord himself has given us a simple way to pray. **Not a formula, but a format**. A blueprint to radically personalize for a profoundly relational daily conversation with an omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent ... Dad ... who reigns *in* heaven, *on* earth, and hopefully over our heart.



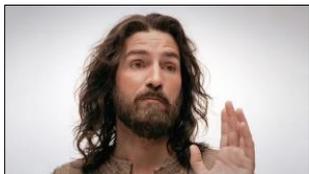
So we begin each day the LPG way by loving on our affectionate Abba. Then balancing this familiarity by practicing (and foreshadowing) the fearful reverence we'll experience in heaven. And then cherishing, honoring, and hallowing Him by discussing our trust and obedience.



And even though Jesus says, "*This, then, is how you should pray,*" (Mat 6:9) **we're too often too quick to jump right to what we want**, what we really-really (anxiously) want; because **we're in a hurry to get to what we're in a hurry to get**.



So, we're encouraged to slow our roll, relax, recalibrate, and give our hallowed heavenly Dad a proper morning greeting. Because, **the way we speak tells what we seek**. As in *my* Kingdom versus *Thy* kingdom.



Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For ... your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, – Matthew 6:31-33 ESV



Prayer isn't a means of letting the Lord in on my plans, like we're doing Him a favor because He's not sure what's going on. This is our daily privilege and honor to further identify our role, and our created purpose, in *His* kingdom.



So, before we rattle off a laundry list of needs for *our* temporary, little, fleeting kingdom, **we bow to realign our allegiance to His eternal, immeasurable, undying kingdom**. You should try actually bowing. That'll get you in the right head space!

And we tend to emphasize the wrong word: "Your kingdom COME!"

Put it on **“YOUR kingdom come,” as opposed to mine.** The LPG greeting helps us to put our Father in His rightful place. And this puts us in ours. And, combine that with bowing and, *wow*.

And so, we **PRAY**: “YOUR kingdom come,” (Mt 6:9) and then **PAUSE** to ask ourselves how we can best help that to happen, *today*, as loyal subjects of our royal King. And once we’ve worked that out, we **PERSONALIZE** it **by asking for guidance and timing and well-seasoned words.**

Now, don’t fret, *yet*, if you’re wondering what His Kingdom *is* and how on earth it *comes*, or if it already came. We’re all a little “King” dumb, and we’re not alone, and we’re fortunate, because:

Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, “The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, ‘Here it is,’ or ‘There it is,’ because the kingdom of God is within you.” – Luke 17:20-21 NIV

And we’re even *more* fortunate that Scripture doesn’t stop there. Not even close. I’ll read you ten Scriptures out of over 300 I found this week concerning the coming of His kingdom.

Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world.” – John 18:36 NKJ

For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you. – Luke 17:21 NKJ

For the kingdom of God is ... righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. – Romans 14:17 NKJ

For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves, – Colossians 1:13 NIV

Jesus Christ, the Faithful Witness ... who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood ... has made us to be a kingdom, – Revelation 1:5-6 NAS

Salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, – Revelation 12:10 NKJ

And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony – Matthew 24:14 ESV

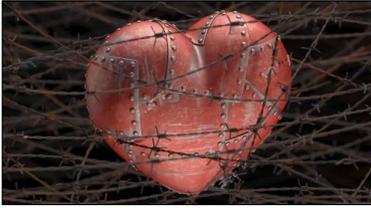
Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. – Matthew 13:43 NIV

And righteousness will be the scepter of [His Son’s] kingdom. – Hebrews 1:8 NIV

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power. – 1 Corinthians 4:20 NIV

You see, **our Father’s kingdom extends over those who enthrone Him in their heart.** That’s why Jesus said, “The *kingdom* of God is near. *Repent* and *believe* the good news!” (Mark 1:15) **We enter His kingdom the moment He enters our heart.** Jesus died to prepare a place *for* us that’s deep *within* us. And not *just* for us, but for *Himself* and our *Father* as well.

“I go to prepare a place for you ... that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know” ... [Thomas said] “How can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” – John 14:2-6 NKJ



Because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” – Galatians 4:6 NRS

“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock [Buh-bum, buh-bum, buh-bum]. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with Me. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with Me on My *throne*, just as I was victorious and sat down with My Father on His throne.” – Revelation 3:20-21 NIV



“On that day you will realize that I am in My Father, and you are in Me, and I am in you.” – John 14:20 NIV

“For indeed, the kingdom of God is within” – Luke 17:21 NKJ

As long as we open before He stops knocking! Buh-bum, buh-bum ... beeeeeeeeeeep. And **the moment we enter** God’s kingdom that’s within us, **we’re handed our God-given assignment.** The Apostle Paul was not exaggerating when he said:

My life is worth nothing unless I use it for doing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus—the work of telling others the Good News about God’s wonderful kindness and love. – Acts 20:24 NLT

Because it’s not so much found in a *book*, by those around you, as it is in *you*. Paul also said:

You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all – 2 Corinthians 3:2 NKJ



[Why? Well] [God] has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself ... and has committed to us the Word of reconciliation [that He wants to reconcile every lost and broken soul]. Now then, [ready-or-not] we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God [our Father in heaven] were pleading through us [on earth] – 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 NKJ

Know why? **He’s expanding His kingdom heart by heart.** So to pray “**YOUR** kingdom come,” and sincerely, genuinely, authentically mean it – which is the only way He wants to hear it – is to **pray for all those who are outside the kingdom that comes into our heart**, whether family, friends, classmates, coworkers, or anyone dying for the life you have in yours.

The LPG really knocks the “selfish” out of our daily discussion with Dad, by focusing our first requests on the ultimate welfare of those around us. But, **WARNING: this is what you call a prayer of intercession, which means we got’a translate it into action ...** or we’re just phoneying it in. So, we got’a plan and pray over *our* way to help them open up to *the* Way. *Because ...*

When a person's ways are pleasing ... the mind of a person plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps. – Proverbs 16:7-9 NAS



And so, to **PRAY** “YOUR kingdom come,” without **PAUSING** to consider how you can help that happen, and then **PERSONALIZING** it by asking for direction, diplomacy, and opportunity, is like looking at an overgrown yard and saying, “Thy lawn be **MOWED!**”



We don't command His kingdom, we commit to it. Otherwise it's like, “let me help you out a little here, Lord: *Your kingdom COME!* There; hope that helps. Not sure how it does, but I guess you want me to say those words.” Sometimes we kind of forget that ...



Our citizenship is in heaven. – Philippians 3:20 NIV

So, a couple things about ambassadors: 1) **They're expected to use diplomacy.** At all times. 2) **They're never off the clock.** They know they're always representing. And, like life itself, 3) **the assignment is temporary.** Scripture describes our brief stay down here as a mist, a breath, and a wisp of smoke. And when they die, 4) **they don't leave home, they're brought home.**



So, what kind of kingdom-come ambassador *are* you?

Are you the anonymous kind? Hiding in the embassy? Uncomfortable around those who don't share or maybe even care about your beliefs and values? Well, your silence will hinder your message of reconciliation because, **the kingdom doesn't come by cowardice.** Plus, **there's not even such a thing as an undercover ambassador!** It's an oxymoron, like apathetic devotion.



Are you the obnoxious kind? Insensitive to those around you. Barging into conversations uninvited. And inconsiderate of the ways of this culture? Well, your rudeness will hinder your message of reconciliation because, **the kingdom doesn't come by pushiness.**

I hope you're the kind kind: respectfully, joyfully, coexisting without compromising our Father's kingdom. Your compassion will greatly help facilitate your message of reconciliation because, duh. Just hold onto that kingdom perspective wherever you go, so you can ...

Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside **[the kingdom that comes within]**, redeeming the time. **[What little we have]** Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, **[like the diplomatic though-provoker you're called to be]** that you may know how you ought to answer each one. – Colossians 4:5-6 NKJ

Which will likely require some serious “Kingdom come” discussions with Dad.

[For God] made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. – 2 Corinthians 4:6 NIV

Of all the things Christ accomplished, among the most crucial was putting a face to our Father.

He is the image of the invisible God, – Colossians 1:15 NIV

Now we bear the image of God's visible Son. Jesus said: "Anyone who has seen *me* has seen the Father." (John 14:9) But, **can you say: "Anyone who has seen *me* has seen Jesus."**

In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. – Matthew 5:16 NIV

[But] Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. – Matthew 6:1 NIV

See the subtle difference? **We're to live out our faith in a visible way** that encourages others to *praise* our Father in Heaven; **not to be seen so as to receive their praise for ourselves**. So:

Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles **[non-believers]**, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation **[in their heart]**. – 1 Peter 2:12 NAS



This world has a fatal heart condition: it's filled with darkness. And **God sends His lumens through us flawed humans**. Go figure. But, we're Ambassadors of light in an outpost of darkness, bestowed with **the honor of the ministry of the message of the truce of the Truth**. And they're done for unless they get that Peace-Maker implanted before the clock runs out!

So, which kingdom do you focus on *first* in your prayers? **Is your attention being given to what you want to get, or to what Dad wants to give?** There's a subtle but very stark difference.

In prayer, as in life, His kingdom must come first!

And then His kingdom must come one heart at a time.

And, since "the kingdom ... is within," it's all got'a start with our heart.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. – Mat 6:9-13