

SCRIPTURE | *Journaling The Bible*

You might be familiar with The Lord's Prayer, it's one of the most frequently quoted passages of the Bible. When I was a kid, even though I didn't go to church at all, I still knew the Lord's prayer off by heart. Because back in the day (please don't do the math) we actually recited The Lord's Prayer every morning in school, along with singing the national anthem.

You could say that's a good thing, that even though I had no actual faith experience, I had memorized part of the Bible, right? But what good is memorizing the Bible, if it doesn't mean anything to you? Even though I knew it, it wasn't anything real, or moving, to me. And that can be a bit of the downside of becoming SO familiar with something even as good and beautiful as the Bible; that it stops being real and instead becomes dull, empty, and so automatic to you that it stops capturing your imagination, and therefore ends up affecting your heart less.

Today we're going to do a spiritual practice – one we first experimented with back in May (and heard from lots of you that you found it a good one) – that attempts to interrupt that over-familiarity, by taking a passage of the Bible and journaling it into our own words, in the hopes we can encounter God in a fresh way through it.

And this time we're going to practice with The Lord's Prayer.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.
– Matthew 6:9-13

Now you'll need a pen and paper for this (or use a Notes App in your phone) and we're going to go through the prayer a little at a time.

Jesus gave this as a blueprint for how to pray for all the things that our hearts need to pray. But what do these sentence really mean, and what do they look like for you, in a practical, every day, boots on the ground kind of life?

That's what this practice is – finding your own personal experience and language for what the scripture is saying. You can be fun and lighthearted, be deep and thoughtful, be poetic, be literal. Maybe you don't even want to use words but you're going to sketch it out as we go along. The point is to pull it apart and try to hear it – and then express it – in a fresh, new way, for you.

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

Now just by way of example, my scribing here would be something like: God who's close and tender. Everything about who you are is good, and pure, and true. That's my version. What's yours?

2. **Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

- What does the kingdom mean? And where do you want it to come?

- Are there some situations in your life right now where God's good will is clearly not playing out? What do you want to say to God about that? Pray it with your pen now!

3. Give us today our daily bread.

- What do this phrase really mean? What's your daily bread?

4. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

- This one can get a little uncomfortable. Who have you wronged? Are there some things you need to get off of your chest here? Are there specific names you need to forgive?

5. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one.

What does this one mean to you?

Now when we learned it in school, the prayer didn't actually end there, there was one more phrase tacked onto the end, that isn't actually in the Bible. So if you're like me, right now your brain might be resisting ending here, and wants to add that traditional burst-of-praise doxology "For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever, amen!"

If so... I have good news for you – we're going to get to use that phrase right now, as Shane Ritzema leads us in worship with his own personalized (musical) version of The Lord's Prayer.