

# A Way to Pray the Lord's Prayer



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**Co-missioners,**

Today we send you a coda to Marcus Felde's marvelous essay on reading the Lord's Prayer through the lenses of Law and Gospel. We got this from Matt Metevelis who quite by coincidence posted it on his personal Facebook page the day after we sent you the first part of Marcus's essay. It seemed to us that it captured, in a very down-to-earth pastoral form, the very thing that Marcus was driving at. Marcus agreed when we ran it by him. We

commend it to you for your own down-to-earth praying this week.

A reminder that God delivers Matt a good chunk of his daily bread via his service as a hospice chaplain in Las Vegas.

**Peace and Joy,**

***The Crossings Community***

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# **A Way to Pray the Lord's Prayer**

by Matthew Metevelis

I've devised a short exercise to pray through anxiety by praying the Lord's Prayer backwards. Some of my patients have appreciated this and I thought I would share it more widely.

**Deliver us from evil.** Name the thing you are afraid of. What is

it that keeps you up, or robs you of your joy in the moment? What is the fear that is paralyzing you right now? Name it. Pray it.



**Lead us not into temptation.** What are the false paths that temptation is taking you down? What mistakes are you afraid of making? How is the thing you're afraid of impacting how you're living and what you're thinking? Tell God what you don't want to do or what you want to stop doing.

**As we forgive those who trespass against us.** What people and situations have hurt or pained you? What interactions are you still hurting from? What people are you dreading? Name them to God even if you can't forgive them or release them yet.



**Forgive us our sins.** Take all the mistakes you've made already. Or maybe take all the hurt you're feeling. Name both of them and pray about them as if you're handing them to Jesus while he's on the cross. Even if you don't want to let them go just let Jesus put a crucified hand on it. Leave them there and move on with the prayer.

**Give us Today Our Daily Bread.** Name all the ways that your needs have been provided for. Don't be afraid to name the mundane ones too. Lift these up and thank God for them. Dwell on them. It

might be only one thing. And that's okay.

**Thy Will Be Done.** Realize your own will is powerless over the future. Pray for the grace to let go of control. Your needs were not met because of your will but God's. Reflect on other things in your life that were resolved better than your expectations.

**Thy Kingdom Come.** Reflect on your calling, your values, the concrete things in your life that God has given you to do. This means your family, your relationships, the people you serve in any capacity. Even the neighbor you have a friendly conversation with. Remember to reflect and pray about the world you live in now.



**Hallowed be Thy Name.** You began with something you fear. You end by directing your fear at reverencing the holy name of God. That name seeks to replace whatever it is that has occupied your heart. Where your fear was you've prayed "backward" into the name that has been given to you in the midst of every anxiety and struggle. That name was grafted onto you in baptism and even your sins and doubts and anxieties can't erase it. You've been moved "backwards" from the object of your fear to the object of your faith. Call on it and end the prayer—



## —Our Father Who Art in Heaven

If you're still struggling, say the prayer front-ways and do the same series of meditations.

The point of this is not to pray anxiety away, or to feel ashamed or guilty because of it. You recognize that your fear is real, and so you work through the prayer to see the ways that God is real too. It's a way of acknowledging that both fear and faith will be in your heart at the same time and learning to live in the tension. Luther would have called this kind of struggle *tentatio*—the temptation and struggle where faith is deepened and refined and God's promises become clear.

Try it out. For the record, this is the only thing that's been keeping me sane since I cut back on a lot of bad habits this month.

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**Thursday Theology: that the benefits of Christ be put to use**  
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