

On Matt. 6.1-18

God of truth,
may our religion be sincere and honest,
 a true love of you,
 really devoted to your glory and care for other people,
 and not contaminated by pride and a desire to impress.
This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord,
 who, in devotion to you,
 humbled himself even to death,
 and so lives and reigns in your glory,
 now and for ever.

Amen.

On Matt. 6.1
(or 1-6;16-18)

God our Father,
our religion is so often at least partly a pretence,
consciously or unconsciously a way of winning admiration and approval from others.
We can think of so many reasons to back our actions,
 - the need to set a good example,
 to uphold the social fabric,
 to encourage or shame others into good acts,
 even to witness to you.
But you who see all secrets know the mixture of our motives,
 and all our drives for self aggrandisement.
Yet you love us.
You sent your Son to die for us,
 the Son who is one with your own being.
You come to live in us through your Holy Spirit.
Let that love win our love in return,
 that our motives may gradually be purified,
 and we be set free to act from love for you,
 and so to love our neighbours too,
 through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

On Matt. 6.1-4

God our Father,
give us a genuine love of you and our fellow human beings,
so that we help those in need, not to show off our virtue,
 but for their good,
 and as sharers of your love
 for Jesus' sake.

Amen.

On Matt. 6.1-4

God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
you created all human beings to be your family:
 you care for our dignity and worth,
 and call us to mutual support and help.
Preserve us, then, from perverting our help for others into self aggrandisement,
 which by blatant public display,
 or by subtle private emphasis to those we claim to be helping,
 humiliates the receivers,
 breeding anger or crushing their spirit,
 and puffs up the givers with selfish, blinding vanity.
May we realise that you created the earth for the benefit of all,
 and us to be members of one another in the "Son of Man",
 true humanity revealed and restored in Jesus Christ.
So enable us to care quietly, modestly, truly and respectfully for each other,
 to know that we are only paying a due when we provide assistance to those in need,
 and to be aware that our help is but a return for what we receive,
 for we ourselves depend on other people and on you.
Thus may we truly offer service to you in serving others,
 and reap the reward you give,
 a growth by loving into the true life which is love:
 for that is your likeness, Most Holy Trinity,
 you who live in the eternal and glorious mutuality of love.
 Amen.

On Matt. 6.5-6

God our Father,
make our prayer be sincere, not a showing off to others or ourselves.
May we pray as part of our relationship with you,
• in joy in you and in that relationship,
• in sorrow at our shortcomings in relating to you,
• to grow in that relationship
• and to ask your help for others
 for Jesus' sake.
 Amen.

God of love,
you call us to the closest, most intimate possible relationship with you.

You are the parent closer than any earthly parent:
 you continue for our whole lives
 to be the source, the origin, of all that is good in us, of our true life.

You are the friend closer than any friend:
 you know our secrets, our hopes and fears, before we tell them to you.

You are the spouse closer than any spouse:
 for we become one flesh with our human partner,
 but we are called and given to be one Spirit with you.

Your Spirit wills to enter every part of our lives,
 and to surround our whole being with your love.
You will to be the heart of our hearts,
 the mind of our minds,
 the action of our hands,
 so that you act through us, and we through you.

Do not let our prayers be an empty show,
 to impress others or to condemn them:
 may our prayer be sincere.

May we pray to you with all intimacy:
 help us to make time for you alone and in private,
 so that we may concentrate on you and your will alone.

May we welcome you too to the secret places of our hearts,
 the aspects of ourselves that only we know,
 and accept you into those secret parts of our personalities
 that are unknown even to us, of which only you are aware,
 so that you may heal and enable us.

So help us to realise our true potential selves,
and may we know that such intimacy with you is its own reward,
 for it is the way and nature of true humanity,
 in Jesus Christ, the Son of Man, our Lord and Friend.

Amen.

God, all knowing, all loving :

by your eternal Word you create and know us;

in your eternal Word you died for us;

through the eternal Spirit of your Word you come to live in us.

You will for us to be your children,

the eternal heirs of your life and glory.

Yet we fail to trust your knowledge or your love.

We talk on and on to you, as if we need to make you understand.

We babble on and on,

and perhaps even shout out as if we need to force your attention.

We keep up words as if we need to impress you,

to make you love us.

We are sorry.

Teach us that, because you take us seriously,

we do not need all this straining.

May our prayers spend more time enjoying you,

resting in you,

seeking your will,

and accepting your love and forgiveness,

that we may be able to live as your children,

hallow your name,

do your will,

and forgive and care for others,

as you care for and forgive us,

in the power of your glorious kingdom of love,

revealed to us in Jesus Christ,

Amen.

On Matt. 6.9-10
Luke 11.2

Our Father in heaven,
help us to know and trust you as our loving Parent.

You are our source and origin.

You are our authority and teacher.

You are our provider and enabler.

Our true goal and maturity is to share your character of love:

to be ourselves creative,

generous and helpful,

self giving and loving,

to find ourselves in empowering others,

and enabling them to find the abundant life you want for us.

All this you reveal to us in Jesus Christ, your Son,

the perfect expression of you,

our mediator, who unites us to you.

May we accept fully His Spirit, your Spirit,

that we too may reflect you as your images,

your created and adopted children,

made like you by the Holy Spirit of love,

in the same Jesus Christ, our brother and head.

So may your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven

Amen.

On Matt. 6.11
(and 2.25-33)
Luke 11.3

Father,
give us this day our daily bread,
the supply of our material needs.
Give us the strength, skill and wisdom
to obtain that bread for all our brothers and sisters,
but not the false cleverness and greed that keeps up wealth and luxury
at the expense of other people's basic needs, and of our environment.
For we and all the planet grow sick and choke on human greed.
Let us seek first your kingdom
- justice, mutual support, caring relationships with each other, -
in response to you as our caring parent and friend.
Let us consider the birds and the flowers, the animals and the trees,
which you care for and create in beauty and in bounty,
that we may not just consume and exploit,
but appreciate and wonder at our surroundings.
So may all humankind and our fellow creatures flourish in all that gives life value.
And so may we receive the bread of the spirit,
the bread of tomorrow,
of eternal life in the glory of your kingdom,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord,
Amen.

On Matt. 6.12-15
Luke 11.4

God of holiness, righteousness and love,
we need to confess our sins to you,
to be sorry and repent.
But we need your guidance even to show us how to be sorry.
You are our judge - but the judge who delivers and rescues,
not just the judge who only punishes or acquits.
And, still more, you are our parent, and we your children.
You discipline us to enable us to grow to maturity in goodness.

Teach us when to confess our sins with horror,
where our deepest evil lies.
But let us not fall into a festering self hatred,
an undying anger and bitterness at ourselves,
- that does not consider your love,
and may spill over to a condemning harshness and bitterness to others.

Teach us when to confess with tears of sadness,
where our sins make us pitiable.
But save us from self pity
that debilitates us and turns us on ourselves
that leaves us with no time for others
or unable to help them if they need any challenge.

Teach us too when to confess our sins with a smile or even a laugh
at our weakness and silliness.
But deliver us from the frivolity
that thinks sin is unimportant
and does not care about reaching maturity in you.

So enable us to receive your forgiveness
and the new and transformed life of your kingdom,
and help us to share forgiveness and new life with others.
We pray all this through Jesus Christ, our Lord,
who could tell amusing stories to illustrate the need of repentance,
but could also sternly denounce evil,
and weep in sorrow at the sins of his people,
and who came, above all, to bring your forgiveness and love,
and so establish the foundation your kingdom.

Amen.

On Matt. 6.14-15
Luke 11.4

God of mercy and love,
you forgive us and save us

that we may share your life, as your family, in Christ.

Make us see that this means that we, like you, must be forgiving and loving people,
or we exclude ourselves from that life, the goal of salvation.

For the life you share is your character,

your own action,

the eternal expression of your being,

your Word, Jesus Christ, our Saviour,

who forgave his enemies even as they killed him,

and is exalted as our Head and life,

for ever and ever.

Amen.

(see also Matt. 18.21-35)

On Matt. 6.16-18

God our Father,
when we fast , or make some other sacrifice for you,
let it be for you,
and not to minister to our own vanity or self pity,
or to win admiration or sympathy from other people.
We ask for Jesus' sake.
Amen.

On Matt. 6.16-18

God, our Father,
whose Son, Jesus Christ, gave up all to suffer and die
for love of your will and our good,
you recommend to us fasting and other forms of spiritual discipline,
to bring us nearer to you,
and to teach us to deny ourselves,
and so become more available for you and for others.
Save us from perverting these disciplines to make them serve our own vanity
or reputation,
for such a misuse of them not only empties them of their value,
but actually makes them destroyers of the unselfishness they are meant to promote.
Give us, we pray, the joyful sense of your glory and love in our inmost hearts,
that we may be delivered from the folly and misery of self concern,
and receive the freedom and self control of your self giving love,
through the same Jesus Christ, our Saviour, Lord and Pattern.
Amen.

On Matt. 6.19-21
Luke 12.33-34a

Immortal, invisible God,
it is so easy and tempting for us to regard the visible material things of life,
that we can grasp, hold and possess,
as the most certain and sure,
and so to value them above all.
Yet in reality our material wealth, and our life on earth itself,
are fragile and unreliable as a mist that may be blown away by any wind.
They may disappear at any time,
stolen by crime or war,
or destroyed in natural disasters or economic crises and collapses,
and in any case we must quit them at last, as time and death claim us.
Reveal yourself more clearly to us, we pray.
Awaken our faith and make it active and powerful,
that we may commit ourselves to you and to what you will:-
to mutual care and justice,
to helping all people, especially the weak,
to building a better society
and caring for the beauty and flourishing of all creation
with generosity and self control, even self denial,
for the common good,
to living by trust and hope that love, life and goodness
will have the final word on earth and for eternity,
that your kingdom will come and triumph.
So, investing ourselves in these things,
may we indeed grow and become rich in them,
that we may share now and in eternity in the growth and glory of that kingdom,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord,
in whom all these glories and treasures of your kingdom
are displayed and given to us.
Amen.

On Matt. 6.19-34

Loving God,
teach us to place our treasure with you,
and to store it up with you, not with this world.
Teach us to put you first in our lives,
by making time for you
and seeking to do your will
of mercy and forgiveness, justice and love.
Teach us to put
truth above reputation,
generosity above wealth,
care for the good above selfish pleasure,
and the love that is your will and nature above all.
So place our hearts with you and your kingdom,
that we may find true joy and true life,
now and in eternity. **Amen.**

God our Creator, Upholder, Rescuer, and Renewer,
our Father and our Friend, Life of our life:
you create and sustain the universe,
but it is all too marked by suffering, mortality, and sin.
If we place our hopes in it, then our hopes too must die at last.
Yet if we despise your creation, we fail to honour you, the creator.
Even the skies and the galaxies are not immortal,
and neither our guides nor a home for us.
Heaven is you, your presence, wherever you are,
and your goal for all creation,
new skies and earth remade in your glory, goodness and love
Teach us how to put you first, and how to store our treasures with you,
and so teach us too how to care for our fellow creatures,
both human and other creatures.
So may we come at last to your full presence
and your goal for creation and us,
everlasting life with you,
through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Saviour and Lord. **Amen.**

On Matt. 6.24
Luke 16.13

God, Holy Trinity,
you are the sole source of all that is,
 the one and only true God.
 You live and reign in the perfect unity of love.
 In you alone we find our true life and goal.
Enable us to realise this,
 not only in our minds,
 but in our wills,
 in our thoughts and actions,
 so that we may serve you alone, as our only ruler.
Deliver us from all false Gods,
 all powers and influences other than yourself, which may claim our final allegiance.
Preserve us from service of a devotion to wealth and money,
 the selfish and greedy search for gain,
 and the false security of material riches.
Set us free to serve you, and your love,
 for in your service alone we find real freedom, real human life,
 in the love of your Son, Jesus Christ,
 who restored that true human life by living it out for us,
 and sending your Spirit of love to reign in those who accept him.
We ask this in the same Spirit,
 for the sake of the same Lord Jesus Christ.
 Amen.

On Matt. 6.24-end

God our Father,
give us a true sense of what is important,
 that we may put your will of love first in our lives,
 and live for you in all things,
 for Jesus' sake.
 Amen.

On Matt. 6.24-end

Heavenly Father,
teach us, through Jesus, that you are indeed our all loving parent.
 So may we trust and rely on you in all things,
 and be set free to make your rule of love all important in our lives,
 for Jesus' sake.
 Amen.

On Matt. 6.26-34

Luke 12.22-34

God, our Creator and loving parent,
may we so consider the birds and flowers, the grass and trees,
 all the glories of earth and of life,
as to rejoice in them in gratitude for them,
to see through them your free and bountiful care, beauty and greatness,
and to learn to share that self-giving care for our fellow creatures
 which is at the centre of your Kingdom.
This we ask through your creative and sustaining Word, Jesus Christ,
 and through your life-giving Spirit.
Amen.

On Matt. 6.25-34

esp. 32-34

Luke 12.22-34

Eternal and All loving God,
teach us to trust in your care for the future,
 that we may be freed from worry,
 and be able to live and be available for others in the present.
May we not live selfishly or recklessly for the moment,
 but seek your kingdom and your righteousness,
 your rule which Jesus illustrated through your care for birds and flowers,
 proclaimed as good news to the poor and despised,
 and called us to live out by love.
So, in living and loving in the present,
 we will also do the best for the future,
 know you as our loving Parent,
 and receive your salvation,
 through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord and Brother.
Amen.