**Matthew 6:9-13 In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. 10Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as *it is* in heaven. 11Give us this day our daily bread. 12And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors. 13And 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.**

It’s my hope that these messages on prayer over the last several weeks have caused a pause in what sometimes simply becomes a habit for all of us – the habit of prayer - and that an examination of our prayer lives has taken place. How we perceive God will inform how we relate to God. How we relate to God will impact every other relationship we have. Prayer is the way we relate to God and is truly the Chief Exercise of our Faith.

The Lord’s prayer is a pattern of prayer straight from Jesus mouth. As I said last week, I could spend a long while in these verses and continually pull new wisdom from them. In this prayer is lesson after lesson from the Old Testament. As the disciples listened, they’d have grasped this prayer from a Jewish perspective and listened in the light of the teachings they’ve heard in the Temple. Today, most of us don’t have that Jewish education and yet the Lord’s Prayer speaks just as loudly – when we allow it.

Verse 9 begins *In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven.* This is **Privilege.** It’s our privilege to come to God, the Father. Never think it’s your right to talk with God or that He has to hear you. It is a knee knocking, hands shaking, breath taking privilege to approach the God that made it all and have relationship with Him; yet, He puts us at ease as Father.

Verse 9 continues *Hallowed be Your name.* This is **Position.** Hallowed, lifted up, exalted be Your name – literally Make Holy Your Name. John 12:28 Jesus, suffering in the Garden, prays – *Father glorify Your Name*. Positioning God right in relation to our life along with realizing the **privilege** of meeting with Him tips our face upward and sets the tone for prayer. In a study done a few years back, only 38% of Christian’s said Intimacy with God was the most important reason for prayer. Proper positioning gives prayer proper alignment.

Verse 10 *Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.* This is **Providence.** Providence simply means God’s Divine guidance and governance. God’s will above mine. God’s Kingdom above my desires. He moves in His time and His way. His plans are best. Heaven focus – High and exalted focus – Kingdom focus. In prayer, we seek His divine plan. Do you see how we are moving from High to low here?

Verse 11 *Give us this day our daily bread.* This is **Provision.** We ask our daily needs be met. We walk with God daily – choose to be by His side daily. When the manna fell from heaven, it would rot if not used that day, except for the sabbath. Privilege, Position, and Providence lead to God providing daily. Provision is earth bound, world based… yet, in the survey I talked about earlier, 56% say praying for God to provide something is most important.

Verse 12 - *And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors.* This is **Pardon.** God forgive me, as I have forgiven. Do you feel that we are climbing back to Heavenward places? In provision, we prayed for earthly needs. Now, forgiveness takes us back – Loose my sins in Heaven Father as I have loosed the sins of those who sinned against me. If I cannot forgive, I have no right to ask forgiveness. This is a scary one! It’s praying – God, if I don’t forgive, don’t forgive me! We have one foot in the world and one foot on the staircase to Heaven.

Verse 13 begins - *And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one.* This is **Protection.** We’re climbing back towards Heaven. God is never the tempter. That’s Satan. The Greek behind lead us not has the idea of carry inward. Teach us to avoid temptation, strengthen us when it comes by way of Satan, helps us to flee as Joseph did when we must! Protect us Oh God by Your might and wisdom.

Verse 13 ends where we began - *For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.* This is **Preeminence!** God exalted and lifted up. We started in Heaven, dipped to earth and came back to focus in Heaven. This is the pattern of prayer our Savior gives us. Remember who you belong to, remember where you’re going, remember this world is just a flicker on the timeline. Don’t make it the center of focus. God above all, beyond all, ruling all – Preeminent!

Prayer – we are **privileged** to meet God in His **position** of supreme **providence**, **providing** our earthly needs, **pardoning** our sin against Spirit, **protecting** our eternal soul, from His place of **preeminence**. When we pray, start at the top of the spiritual staircase, travel down until we stand on the earthly floor, then climb back up until we stand in awe of our Father again. Remember, prayer is the chief exercise of our Faith. No judgement and no shame – how in shape is your faith today? Are you a spiritual athlete running a Kingdom decathlon – an iron man, iron woman of God – running to win? If not, start training today using the pattern Jesus left for us. It’s never too late to get our Faith back in shape by letting prayer be our chief exercise.