

Four Meditations

Guard Us – Cleanse Us – Fill Us – Lead Us

The Ten Commandments – The Beatitudes – The Fruit of the Spirit – The Six Callings

I have prayed this prayer (meditation) on a daily basis for quite some time now. It has become a center of gravity for me. And I also try to pray the *Lord's Prayer* multiple times a day as well. The Jewish custom (stretching all the way back to antiquity) is to pray three times a day—morning, mid-day, and evening. When I rush into my day without prayer, I notice an *unsettledness within my soul* throughout the day. Over time, I have come to recognize this unsettledness more quickly than I used to—an so I can address it sooner. Another observation that I noticed is that it's harder to concentrate on my prayer when I'm already off-and-running through my day. I'm still working on incorporating more times of prayer, but at this point in my journey, the morning prayer is the one most firmly established in my daily rhythm.

Someone has said, "The battles we lose at the end of the day were likely lost at the beginning." I think many times that's accurate. And I've certainly become an advocate of *starting the day with prayer*. And if you're not a morning person (which I am certainly not!), then a repetitive prayer might be just what the doctor ordered. I am including a prayer that I also use for meditation. And it's centered around four passages of Scripture: Exodus 20, Matthew 5, Galatians 5, and Psalm 101. I hope it's helpful to you.

[Beginning]

Father, we call out to you in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ. Hear the prayers of your servants; we are here to do Your will.

[Guard Me – Exodus 20 – The Ten Commandments]

Father, only Your law will guard our souls from evil and keep our feet from the paths of destruction.

- *No other gods.*
- *No idols.*
- *No blasphemy.*
- *Keep the Sabbath holy.*
- *Honor your father and mother.*
- *No killing.*
- *No adultery.*
- *No stealing.*
- *No false testimony.*
- *No jealousy.*

[Cleanse Me – Matthew 5 – The Beatitudes]

Father, only your cleansing will wash away our sins.

- *Cleanse us, Father, so that we are poor in spirit.*
- *...so that we weep over brokenness.*
- *...so that we are gentle and meek.*
- *...so that we hunger and thirst for righteousness.*
- *...so that mercy triumphs over judgment and evil is overcome with good.*
- *Cleanse us, Father, so that our hearts are pure.*

[Fill Me – Galatians 5 – The Fruit of the Spirit]

Father, only your Spirit will fill our souls with righteousness.

- *Fill us, Father, with a love that draws near to others.*
- *...with a joy that spills over in praise.*
- *...with a peace that overwhelms our understanding.*
- *...with a patience that waits for your deliverance.*
- *...with a kindness that honors our neighbor.*
- *...with a goodness that satisfies many souls.*
- *...with a faithfulness that does not waver.*
- *...with a gentleness that calms anxious hearts.*
- *Fill us, Father, with a spirit of self-control.*

[Lead Me – Psalm 101 – The Six Callings]

Father, only your calling will lead us to life everlasting.

- *Lead us, Father, to sound your praise at the break of dawn & seek your presence above all else.*
- *Lead us, Father, to examine our hearts constantly & confess our hidden sins.*
- *Lead us, Father, to hate all manner of faithlessness & hold firmly to your commands.*
- *Lead us, Father, to silence all slander and arrogance & cut off every form of perversity.*
- *Lead us, Father, to care for the faithful and place their needs ahead of our own.*
- *Lead us, Father, to honor the righteous and multiply the blessing of their inheritance.*

[Conclusion]

Father, hear the prayers of your servants; we are here to do your will. In Jesus' name, and through his blood, amen... amen... amen.

Summary & Preview of the Sabbath Reading

This prayer may seem like a lot to memorize, but you'll be surprised at how quickly it can be done. And this is why I include memory cards at the end. Not only can this formulation be helpful for prayer and/or meditation, but it can also serve as a rubric for teaching biblical truth. I put an asterisk next to the Beatitudes because there are eight that Jesus lists in Matthew 5. But in this formulation, I have chosen to reflect on the Beatitudes that concentrate on our *inner disposition*. The other two Beatitudes (peacemaking and persecution) concentrate on the *results* of our inner disposition. You may also notice that the *Ten Commandments* have been greatly simplified and the *Six Callings* are thematically stated and not quoted exactly. I want to encourage you to *use your creative capacities* when formulating prayers and meditations. So long as we are faithful to meaning of each text, there is nothing wrong with wordsmithing the text to produce a memorable prayer, or song, or meditation. Give it a try!

The next resource is called the *Sabbath Reading*. And I use this once a week on either Saturday or Sunday evening for family worship. We don't always read every passage, but we always hit the three major sections. This weekly Sabbath reading has had a profound impact on the culture of our home. I typically do the bulk of the reading, but we often take turns reading at various points because I think it's important for everyone in the family to contribute in some way. And I always ask another family member to light one of the candles at the beginning of each section. My boys are both young, and this has been an excellent training ground for them. And here are two quick suggestions: First, have light snack food available. Second, allow young children to use coloring books during the reading. It may take a little training, but the rewards of establishing this practice will *far outweigh the difficulties!*