

Fil-Am Community Church
Pastor Rolly Estabillo
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Connect Part 7
What the Lord's Prayer Means

“THE PRAYER OF FULFILLMENT”

Today we continue and actually end the series we've been in for seven weeks that I've been calling “Connect! – What the Lord's Prayer Means.” For the past 6 weeks we've gone through the Lord's Prayer line by line. This weekend we come to the final phrase. The final phrase of this prayer that Jesus prayed is this: “*For thine [he's talking about God] is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever.*”

Kingdom, power, glory. I can't think of three more important words you need to understand. Listen very closely to this introduction because I'm going to explain to you right now the reason for everything in the universe. These three words - kingdom, power and glory – are so essential. You will never understand history and eternity until you understand kingdom, power and glory.

You see, history is *his story*. It's God's story. He is in control. He is sovereign. You will never understand life until you understand kingdom, power and glory. You will never understand your particular purpose on this planet until you understand God's kingdom, God's power and God's glory. Because it all exists for that reason.

You've heard me say many times you were made by God and you were made for God. Until you understand that, life's not going to make sense.

Let me say it again in a little bit clearer way. You were not only created by God. You were not only designed by God. You were not only made by God. You were created, designed and made *for* God. That's why you're alive.

The Bible tells us that God is love. And God made you to love you. You were created as an object of God's love.

So God didn't just create you, he made you *for him*. For himself. He made you to live in his kingdom and to fulfill his kingdom. He made you to show his power. And he made you to bring him glory.

Let me explain it in a different way.

First, the kingdom of God is his plan for all of eternity. And nothing's gonna change his plan. The Bible says this in the book of Daniel, "*God's plans are unshakable.*"

Let's say you are going to California from Virginia on an Amtrak Train. Since it is long-distance and will take a few days, you could sleep all day. You could walk along the corridors of the train. You could eat your meals three or four times a day. You could play on your iPad or do some work on your laptop. You could read. You would have an amount of freedom. But it is limited freedom. That train's going to California whether you like it or not.

History is moving the way God wants it to move whether you like it or not. On that train you've got a lot of freedom to do different things. But you're not turning the train around. Does that make sense?

So the kingdom of God is his plan for eternity. It marches on whether you like it or not.

The power of God is his program. What do I mean by that? It is how God accomplishes his plan. God does not accomplish his plan through marketing, through merchandising, through manufacturing, through advertising. He does not accomplish his plan through all these human tools. He does it with his power.

The Bible says this in Isaiah 45 *“I [God] am the one who made the earth, and created human beings to live there. By my power I stretched out the heavens. I control the sun, the moon and the stars. I myself have stirred Cyrus to action to fulfill my purpose and put things right... No one has hired him, or bribed him to do this. The Lord almighty has spoken.”*

Who was Cyrus? Cyrus was a Persian king. He was an Iranian. He lived in Babylon. God chose Cyrus as a king to discipline Israel and to put things right. He says I have chosen this man to do my will. And I have a program and I have a plan and I’m in control.

God’s kingdom is his plan. God’s power is his program. God’s glory is his purpose. Everything God does he does to reveal what he’s like. That’s his glory. He wants us to understand what he’s like. It is the manifestation of the awesome majesty of God. It tells us who and what God really is. And everything in the world, in the universe, every plant, every rock, every animal, everything brings glory to God. God made it to reveal what he’s like. Just looking at the world there’s a lot of things we can learn about God. Even if we didn’t have the scriptures there are a lot of things we can know about God.

Romans 11:36 *“Everything comes from God alone. Everything lives by his power, and everything is for his glory.”*

The question is: How do I live *in* God’s kingdom? How do I live *by* God’s power? How do I live *for* God’s glory? The answers to these questions will help you to live a fulfilled life.

Jesus says in John 10:10 *“I have come that you might have life [Notice he didn’t say religion. He said life.] and have it more abundantly.”* Why did Jesus say I’ve come to give you life? Because most people aren’t living. They’re just existing. Why are most people not really living? Because they’re living for themselves. You need something bigger than yourself to give your life meaning.

And there is a cause. There is a reason for living. It's called the Kingdom of God. So let's look at the three keys to living a fulfilled life. To live a fulfilled life I must

1. **Live in God's kingdom.**

I must live in God's kingdom. The Bible says this in 1 Thessalonians. *"You should live in a way that proves that you belong to the God who calls you into his kingdom and glory."*

What does it mean to live in God's kingdom? It means you make God's agenda your agenda. You make God's will your will.

Usually we care about everything else except what God cares about. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus spends a major section talking about worry. He says there are six reasons you don't need to worry. And he goes through all of the different things that we typically worry about. Like our health, our security our future, our, elationships, our jobs, our families. Then he concludes this section on worry with a major statement. Jesus says, *"He will give you all you need from day to day if you live for him and you make the kingdom of God your primary concern."*

He says if you make God's Kingdom your primary concern you don't need to worry about anything in life. He says I will cover you one hundred percent. And I'll take care of all of the needs in your life if you will put me first in your life.

Let me give you a little secret that I've learned. Whatever you want God to bless, put him first in that area. If you want God to bless your marriage, put him first in your marriage. If you want God to bless your education, put him first in your education. If you want God to bless your career, put him first in your career. If you want God to bless your money, put him first in your money.

God blesses whatever we put him first in. The Bible says, “*Seek ye first the kingdom of God,*” that means above everything else. Anything that takes first place in your life that’s not God, that becomes an idol.

What does it mean to put God first in my life? I made up a little acrostic to give you five examples. FIRST. Here are five things you need to put God first in.

The F in FIRST stands for finances. You need to put God first in your finances. If you want God to bless your finances even when there’s not enough of it, you must give back a portion of your income to him. That’s called the tithe. Sorry! He commands it. The tithe means the first ten-percent goes back to God. Your commitment to God must come first before others. That means you may be in debt to other people, but God gets paid first. Somebody else may not get paid yet but God gets paid first because we owe him everything. So the first ten percent of your income goes back to God. If I made a dollar, ten cents go back to God. If I made a hundred dollars, ten dollars go back to God. 1000, 100 goes back to God.

There was this businessman who spoke to his pastor and told him about his problem. “Pastor, I’ve been faithful to God in my giving. I’ve always given 10 percent since I became a Christian. And I found out he has increased my income ever since. So, when my business was making only \$50,000 a year, I gave back \$5000. Then, my income increased to \$100,000 and I gave back \$10,000. When my business increased to \$500,000 I gave back \$50,000. And now God has blessed me in my business that I’m now making \$1,000,000.”

“So, what’s the problem?” the pastor asked.

“The problem is, 10% of that is \$100,000 and I think it’s too much. I’m having a hard time. Can you please pray for me?”

“Sure. Let us pray.” And the pastor asked him to bow his head and he prayed, “Lord, let not this big tithe be a burden to my brother. I pray that you give him an

income equal to the one he started with which is \$50,000 so that it wouldn't be a problem for him to give.”

God loves a cheerful giver!

I read that Rick Warren, the popular pastor of Saddleback Church even raised his tithe as years went by.

He started with 10%, of course, then the second year, he and his wife started giving eleven percent then the third year twelve percent then thirteen percent. He said he started playing this little game with God where God says, “OK, Rick, let's play this little game. You give to me and I'll give to you and we'll see who wins.” Now he and his wife Kay tithe ninety percent of their income and live on ten. Yet God has blessed them in amazing ways.

He wrote the book The Purpose Driven Life and it sold tens of millions of copies. Why did it make tens of millions of dollars? Because God knew he could trust him with the money. That's why. He gave it away and he gave it away and he gave it away. So put God first in your finances. God gets paid first.

I – Interests. Put him first in your interests. That means in your hobbies, in your friendships, your career, your recreation. You give God first consideration in every decision.

R – Relationships. Put him first in your relationships. In your family, in your marriage, in your friendships, in your partnerships and God will bless that area.

S – Schedule. Put him first in your schedule. That means you give him the first part of every day. When you wake up and before you listen to the news or you check your emails or your texts, come to the Lord in prayer and thank him for giving you another day, just praise him, worship him, and read his Word and ask him to reveal more of him to you.

T – Troubles. This is an area you may not even have thought of. But you need to turn to God first when you have a problem. What we typically do is he's the last

that we turn to. We treat him like a fire extinguisher. Use only in case of emergency. Prayer should never be your last resort. It should be your first choice. If God is first in your life, every time you have a problem or trouble, the first thing you do is pray about it. So, if you put God FIRST, you will be blessed.

Jesus says, *“Just as my Father has given me a kingdom I also give you a kingdom.”* We are to live in the kingdom of God.

So I live in God’s kingdom.

The Bible says the second way to live a fulfilled life is to ...

2. Live by God’s power.

I live *in* his kingdom. I live *by* his power. The Bible tells us this *“For the kingdom of God is not just fancy talk. It is living by God’s power.”*

Did you know God does not bless self-reliant people? He blesses people who are dependent upon him. People who are surrendered to him. God blesses people who expect God to help them. Jesus says, *“According to your faith it will be done unto you.”* The Bible says that God uses us when we live according to faith. So God says I want to use you but you must live by my power.

Let me give you another little secret. The more you depend on God instead of yourself, the more God’s going to bless you. If you depend on God a little bit, you get a little bit of blessing. But if you depend on God a whole lot, you get a whole lot of blessing. It is all dependent on living by God’s power.

Scripture tells us this in Ephesians 3 *“By his mighty power at work within us he is able to accomplish infinitely more than we would ever dare to ask or hope.”* God says I’m able to do more than you can ever imagine. God can do more in your life in one week than you can do in your life in an entire lifetime. That’s why it is never too late to surrender to God. *“I’m too old... I’ve had too many problems! ... I’ve done too many things wrong...”* No. It’s never too late

because God can do in one week what you've been unable to accomplish in your entire life. It's never too late.

How do I get God's power in my life? Two ways. Two ways I get the kingdom, the power and the glory. One of these is

1. By praying.

Prayer is the connection to God's power. Much prayer, much power. Little prayer, little power. No prayer, no power. Tell me about your prayer life and I'll tell you how much power you've got in your life. I get power in my life by praying.

In the Scriptures, in the book of James, it tells us this *"The earnest, heartfelt, continued prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available."*

Someone said, "Seven days without prayer makes one weak". Do you feel weak? Don't you feel any power in your life? Try prayer. Because prayer and power go together.

There's one other way you live by God's power.

2. By persevering

We get God's power when we pray. And we get God's power when we hold on. When we don't give up when we're discouraged. That's why he said to Joshua, *"This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."* (Joshua 1:9) Just keep on going. God will give you the power to succeed.

You see, in order for God to grow your faith he's got to test it. When you're going through difficulties and delays and dead ends and despair and discouragement, God is saying, this is a test. I'm going to teach you how to trust in me so I can pour my power in you. If you hang on, God will bless you.

How do I live for God's kingdom? FIRST. How do I live by God's power? I pray and I persevere.

How about the third one? *“Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.”*

How do I live for God’s glory? That’s the third thing you’ve got to do if you’re going to live a fulfilled life.

3. I must live for God’s glory.

In his kingdom, by his power, for his glory.

How do you do that? Let’s talk about that.

First I must live for his glory. The Bible says this *“Jesus died to defeat sin and now he lives for the glory of God so you should consider yourselves dead to sin and able to live for the glory of God through Christ Jesus.”*

What happens today, the reason why people aren’t fulfilled is they give first-class allegiance to second class causes. Then those causes betray them. I read about a guy who said, “I climbed the ladder of success. I did it. When I got to the top I discovered that the ladder was leaning against the wrong wall.” He wasted his life living for the wrong thing. Living for making money, living for being popular. Living for pleasure, living for yourself. Only God is worthy of your first-class allegiance because he made you, he loves you, he has a plan for your life. He’s the one worthy.

How do I do this? How do I live for the glory of God? I could give you a hundred ways to live for the glory of God. Let me just give you three real quick.

1. The first way to live for the glory of God is show love to everybody.

Did you know that every time you show love it gives glory to God? Because God is love. And when you love, people take notice and come to know what God is really like. Loving others means acting it out. Not just feeling it because you don’t feel it all the time. It means doing good to others all the time. Then, God gets the glory. Jesus says, *“Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”* (Matthew 5:16)

Certainly, it's hard to love the unloveable. But one of the ways you do that is just by accepting people. A lot of people say, "But I don't like all the things that they do." Just because you don't like what they do doesn't mean you can't accept them. Do you understand the difference between acceptance and approval?

You can accept someone, you can love someone without approving of everything they do. Big difference. You are to accept everybody. It does not mean that you approve of what they do. Just like those in the LGBT community. We accept them. We should love them. But that doesn't mean we approve of homosexual practices like same-sex marriage. You see, God loves you but it doesn't mean he approves of everything you do. Love is not saying I approve of everything you do. Love is saying I accept you in spite of what you do.

Scripture tells us this. *"Warmly welcome each other [that means accept each other] into the church just as Christ has warmly welcomed you. Then God will be glorified."*

Here's a second way you could bring glory to God.

2. Use your abilities to serve everybody.

The Bible says in 1 Peter 4:10-11 *"God has given each of you some special abilities; be sure to use them to help each other."* When you use your abilities to help each other what happens? God is glorified.

God wired you to make a contribution. He has given you talents and gifts but he didn't give them to you for your benefit. Your talents are for the benefit of other people. Their talents are for the benefit of you.

I am so grateful for people who are talented in areas that I'm not good at. For instance, I'm grateful for accountants. Because I'm bad at accounting! I'm grateful for people who have mechanical ability. I couldn't change my car's brakes if I had to. I wouldn't even know where it is. So I'm grateful for people who have that gift. Like Kuya Randy who changed my car's breaks one time. But

if you have a problem with your computer, come to me, and I'll point you to Kevin who is more gifted than me in this field.

So, God has given us gifts to share with one another, to bless one another. Amen? God gave me my wife so she can bless me with her cooking. And he gave me to her to bless her with three beautiful children. Oops.

Has God blessed you? Then the question is who are you blessing?

3. The third way you can show God's glory: share the good news with everyone.

The Bible says "*As God's grace brings more and more people to Christ, God will receive more and more glory.*" We're not talking about bringing people to a religion. We're talking about bringing people to a person. As God's grace brings more and more people to Christ, God will receive more and more glory.

Every time you share your faith you bring glory to God. How do you share your faith? Of course, by opening your mouth. But I understand sometimes we can't do that because of circumstances, like maybe, we just met someone and time was not enough. Like the other day, somebody came knocking at our door and I found out there was a young lad who was just entering college. It turned out he was delivering a set of children books which my wife ordered at a school event. So, we got to talking and as he left, I remembered this gospel tract I have in my bag so I excused myself, took it out and gave it to him. I'm praying that he opens that booklet and reads it and that God will touch him. It may be just what he needed at the time.

I remember the story of one guy, and this is a true story. He was just released from prison after serving several years due to theft and burglary when he was a teenager. As he stepped outside to his freedom, he felt that he was still in prison. He felt afraid and was wondering if anyone could ever accept him. He felt rejected

and guilty because of what he had done. And at that moment, he called on God and asked for a sign that God still cares for him.

After a few minutes, while he was standing on the road waiting for the bus, a young guy approached him and gave him a leaflet. He read it and as soon as he read the words “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life” tears welled up in his eyes and he realized that he is accepted by God and right there and then received Jesus as his Lord and Savior.

That’s why I always keep some gospel tracts in my bag. It is a small literature that can make a big difference in one’s life. I give it to anyone who I might encounter.

You also share God’s Word by inviting people to come to church or to your home group. Again, you just don’t know that the message or the study is just what they need at the moment.

So, do you want God’s blessing on your life? Do you want to live a fulfilled life? Just remember to live in his kingdom; to live by his power; and to live for his glory.