

The Disciples' Prayer 02 – Hallowed Be Your Name

09/27/2026

Scripture 1: (Matt. 6:9-13 ESV)

Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Westminster Shorter Catechism:

Q. 100. What doth the preface of the Lord's Prayer teach us?

A. The preface of the Lord's Prayer, which is, *Our Father which art in heaven*, teacheth us to draw near to God with all holy reverence and confidence, as children to a father, able and ready to help us; and that we should pray with and for others.

Q. 101. What do we pray for in the first petition?

A. In the first petition, which is, *Hallowed be thy name*, we pray that God would enable us, and others, to glorify him in all that whereby he maketh himself known; and that he would dispose all things to *his own glory*.

Sermon:

Apart from “Help!”, the Lord's Prayer is almost certainly the most commonly prayed prayer among Christians or Christian-adjacent persons {by Christian-adjacent I refer to both heretical deviants like the Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormons and, “cultural Christians” (for example, when I played football in High School, before and after every game, we as a team prayed the Lord's Prayer, even though many of the players would not have actually identified themselves as a “Christian”)}. It is popularly called “the Lord's Prayer” by Protestant Christians and is generally referred to by the Latin name of *Pater Nostra* or, the “Our Father”, by Roman Catholics.

The prayer's text is divided into a series of petitions according to each particular phrase. Reformed Protestants divide it into six petitions¹ while Roman Catholics divide it into seven². The doxological conclusion that we are most familiar with, “...for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever.”, is not found in the oldest recovered examples of the biblical text, suggesting that it is unlikely to be original to Scripture (a difference reflected between the King James and the ESV). Nevertheless, the doxology remains appropriate and suitable for use as part of this prayer, despite the fact that the Roman recitation, historically, has not included it except as a form of ecumenical prayer³.

Similar to how the Ten Commandments are sub-divided into two “tables” with a preface (Exodus 20:1-2, 3-11, 12-17), the Lord's Prayer is likewise divided into two halves with a preface. Just as the first four Commandments are focused on a person's relationship to the LORD and the last six Commandments focus on a person's relationship with other people, so too, the first three petitions of the Lord's Prayer are focused on our heavenly Father and His glory while the last three petitions focus on our need for His divine provision⁴.

- The preface to the Lord's Prayer is, “*Our Father in heaven...*”.
- The first petition is, “*...hallowed be your name.*”.
- The second petition is, “*Your kingdom come...*”.
- The third petition is, “*...your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*”.
- The fourth petition is, “*Give us this day our daily bread...*”.
- The fifth petition is, “*...and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*”.
- And, the sixth petition is, “*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*”.

These petitions, as they relate to the prayer's structure, demonstrate how intentional and purposeful this model for prayer, taught by Jesus, is. They help show that, just as important as the words themselves are, the form of our prayers and the emphases of our content: what we ask for and how we ask for it; are just as important. Calvin helps explain this, writing, “As the law of God is divided into two tables, of which the former contains the duties of piety, and the latter the duties of charity, so in prayer Christ enjoins us to consider and seek the glory of God, and, at the same time, permits us to consult our own interests.”⁵

1WSC #98-107; John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* III.XX.35

2Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church #2759

3Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church #2760

4WSC #98-107; John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* III.XX.35

5John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries*, Volume XVI, pg. 316

Now, we shall begin by considering the preface or, the opening of the prayer. Catechism question 100 asks, “What doth the preface of the Lord’s Prayer teach us?” and answers, “The preface of the Lord’s Prayer, which is, *Our Father which art in heaven*, teacheth us to draw near to God with all holy reverence and confidence, as children to a father, able and ready to help us; and that we should pray with and for others.”

First, it teaches us to “draw near to God”. This prayer's example commands that we approach God through prayer. The example does not permit us to avoid communication with God. We are not to neglect our regular practice of prayer, just as we should not neglect a regular practice of reading Scripture.

- We get to hear God speak to us, personally, through the reading, hearing, and preaching of His Word; a speaking that is made effectual for our salvation (WSC #89) by the operation of the Holy Spirit.
- Meanwhile, through prayer, we get to speak to God. We get to tell Him all about of our needs, wants, cares, and concerns with the reasonable expectation that in faith: in our submissive trust and absolute reliance upon Him; He will answer our prayer.

While the preface reminds us that prayer is our half of the divine conversation⁶, it also functions like an addressed envelope, since it defines our To:, From:, and the recipient's address. “*Our Father*” contains both an implied “From” of us and the express “To” of God “*Our Father*”, whereas “*who is in heaven...*” describes the prayer's intended destination. This spiritual “address label” reminds us again that our prayers are fundamentally a matter of relationship; even before we reach the matter of our needs and wants.

- It reminds us that our relationship to God is as between a Father and His child; as between those under authority and Authority; as between the weak and the strong.
- It especially reminds us that in this relationship we are the humble “lesser” party, because the rich, strong, and powerful do not pray to or petition the weak and needy poor.
- It also reminds us that we pray from out of our own need and desire to do so; out of our own desperate willingness to ask.

Therefore, the preface teaches us that the act of prayer should be understood as being utterly opposed to a person's sinful pridefulness because one cannot truthfully or earnestly pray, when they believe that are “in charge” or “in control”. If they believe that they “have the power” or “ability” or “means”, then they believe that they have no real reason to pray. Earnest, godly prayer is a sign of Christ-like humility because it is a knowing admission of our need and, of our character as sinners in need of grace and mercy⁷.

Second, when we draw near to God in prayer, we do so in “holy reverence”. This requirement is both logically and biblically necessary.

- Logically, whenever somebody (humbly) asks another for something: whether it is for help with something or, for a loan or, for a favor; they do so with some degree of deference, at least. Whenever we ask somebody for something, anything, we generally work to convince them of our appreciation in advance. We show them respect; a sense of respect that demonstrates and proves why we are asking them.
- Biblically, the psalmist directs us to petition the LORD with a reverent posture simply because of who God is and who we are, “*Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker! For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.*” (Ps. 95:6-7 ESV). He reminds us that because we are creatures (God's creation) and naturally subordinate to our

⁶Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Volume 3, 3.20

⁷Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Volume 3, 3.20

Creator, we are obligated to honor, fear, respect, and revere Him as our Maker. This same principle is expressed in the the core of the 5th Commandment, to “Honor your father and mother.” (Exodus 20:12). This means that reverence in prayer is our moral (and eternal) obligation to God.

- This naturally prohibits and condemns inappropriately casual, flippant, or intentionally disrespectful prayer. One such example is the popular, contemporary practice of referring to the object of our prayer as “Daddy God”⁸. While Scripture does record both Jesus (Mark 14:36) and Paul (Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6) using the Hebraism of “*Abba*” to refer to our heavenly Father: a term that is generally understood as being exceedingly familiar, close, or even childish and is often suggested to correlate with our English expression of “Daddy”; using the vernacular of “Daddy” in our prayers feels simply disrespectful, even though we may not intend it to be. While “Daddy” may be a technical translation for *Abba*, if we consider all of the irreverent or corrupted uses of the term across contemporary lingo, then we must conclude that it is not an appropriate address for God, our Father, for reasons similar to why we generally consider a certain alternative term for a donkey (an “ass”) to be inappropriate, despite still technically being correct.

Third, when we reverently draw near to God in prayer we may, and must, do so with confidence: with the confidence that He shall answer our prayer and, with the confidence that He shall answer it to our satisfaction. Beyond John's record of Jesus telling the disciples about our confidence when praying in His name (John 14:13-4, 15:16), the Apostle Paul further explains that we have such confidence because of our *pisteuo* faith (our trust) in Christ, “...in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.” (Eph. 3:12 ESV). When we pray, we believe that the confidence and trust which we place in God, our father, is the greater reality that the trust we hold in our earthly parents echoes. Similarly, especially when we were young and small, we know that our parents should have been willing, wanting, able, and ready to help us as we grew, so too is our heavenly Father and, so much more!

- We trust that God, our Father and the Creator of all things is certainly “...*able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think...*” (Eph. 3:20 ESV) through the power of His Spirit dwelling within us.
- We trust that He can and that He shall “...*do far more abundantly...*”; not merely for our own sake and good benefit, but also for His glory and for the glory of Jesus Christ.
- We show our trust and *pisteuo* faith in Him by addressing Him as our Father; trusting that He is ready to listen and attend to our prayers and, that His gracious love for us will guide His answer.
- We trust that, through naming Him as our Father and presenting ourselves to Him as His child, we are standing united in “Son-ship” with Christ, and therefore, we ask our prayer in Jesus's name.

Fourth, when we pray to “*Our Father...*”, we are implicitly reminding ourselves that, as we pray, we also “...should pray with and for others.”. We are reminding ourselves that God is not “our Father”, alone. He is “our Father”, together.

- He is not just only my Father or, your Father or, Jesus' Father.
- He is the adopted Father of all the Elect, all of God's chosen people.
- He is Father to each and every one of His beloved, and particularly chosen, children.

⁸<https://www.christianitytoday.com/1984/09/speaking-out-hello-daddy-god-goodbye-dignity/>
<https://www.amazon.com/dp/1591852382?lv=shuf&channelId=500&plpRedirect=mhFallback>
<https://providencebf.blogspot.com/2026/07/daddy-god.html>
<https://www.facebook.com/RealTaylorRansom/reels/>

Thus when we pray to “*Our Father...*”, not knowing who all is, who may or, who may not be our brother or sister in Christ Jesus we know that we should pray broadly and expansively for them as well as for ourselves. Paul tells us that whenever we pray we should make “...*supplication for all the saints...*” (Eph. 6:18 ESV), but not just them alone. He also urges us to remember that “...*supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*” (1 Tim. 2:1-4 ESV). Therefore, when we pray for all of these, we are praying for ourselves and for our own benefit because society's good is our good as well (Jeremiah 29:7).

Yet also, when we pray for all of these as we pray to “*Our Father...*”, we must remain mindful that, while He is the Creator of all He is not everyone's “Father”. There is no “universal brotherhood of man”. We are not all “children of God”. But we, who are His adopted children of faith and promise (Galatians 3:29), enjoy the great privilege of having a relationship with God that is different from the rest of the world. Therefore, when we pray for the world and we pray for its good; praying for society's good benefit; we graciously pray for God to give them a grace that they neither deserve nor may naturally expect or hope for.

Next, we move onto the first petition, the first true “ask” of the Lord's Prayer. Question 101 of the Catechism asks, “*What do we pray for in the first petition?*” and answers, “In the first petition, which is, *Hallowed be thy name*, we pray that God would enable us, and others, to glorify him in all that whereby he maketh himself known; and that he would dispose all things to *his own glory*.” This petition reminds us about just how important the glory of God is. It reminds us especially about how important God's glory is to God.

- Scripture tells us that the angels do not approach the throne of God without showing Him the holy reverence that He deserves. The prophet Isaiah described our Father's heavenly throne room with our God upon His throne, “*Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!"*” (Isa. 6:2-3 ESV).
- If the angels fear God enough (if they revere Him enough) to cover their eyes so that they cannot directly look upon Him, and cover their feet as a remembrance of their created nature, then we must do likewise and even more.
- If the angels fear God enough (if they revere Him enough) that they cry out, “*Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!*”, hallowing His name, then we must do likewise and even more.
 - Jesus claimed to share in that same divine glory (Matthew 16:27; John 1:14, 8:54, 17:5, 22-25) and He glorified our Father (John 11:4) since everything He did after the Incarnation, was plainly done for the Father's glory. Thus, God the Son glorified God the Father and so, increased the glory of both.
 - Therefore, since we have been grafted into and are united with Christ, we similarly share in God's glory (John 17:22-23). So, everything we do, which really should be being done for His glory (WSC #1), glorifies God, glorifies Jesus Christ, and brings us an increase in glory through our relationship to the Father.

So, what the first petition really asks God for is the continuation of His glory, honor, and authority.

First, by praying this, we are asking for:

- the personal desire or the want and will to honor, praise, and glorify God, rightly;

- the personal ability and power to honor, praise, and glorify God; and,
- that personally, we would each do so gladly and with thanksgiving in our heart.

Second, by praying this, we are asking:

- that all other people would similarly be given the desire to glorify the only true God, rightly;
- that all other people would similarly be enabled to glorify the only true God;
- that all other people would give God all of the glory, honor, and praise that He rightly deserves on account of who He is and because of all that He has done, is doing, and has promised to do.

Third, when we pray, “*Hallowed be thy name...*”, we also are asking:

- that we may each, ourselves and all others, become more aware of the LORD's activity in the world;
- that we may witness and identify the assorted effects of His decreed will working out through history, in the world around us, and in our own lives so that we may rightly respond with praise.
- that He shall be made known, both revealing Himself and the works of His hands so that the disbelieving world may see and be justly considered without excuse when they sinfully choose to not give the LORD His rightful due (Psalm 67:1-3, 99:3).

But not only that, fourth, when we pray, “*Hallowed be thy name...*”, we ask God to continue doing all things, all that He already does and everything that He ever shall do, for the perpetual increase of His eternal glory (Romans 11:33-36).

But, why did Jesus instruct us to continually pray for the increase of God's glory?

First, because that is our created purpose. Scripture teaches us that our purpose is to worship God, to glorify Him, and to enjoy Him forever. Thus, most simply put, we pray for the increase of God's glory because that is our “job”. Glorifying God and increasing His glory is our moral obligation because, as His creations and as His image in the world, everything we do ought to be for the increase of His glory.

Secondly, Jesus instructed us to pray this because of the combination of who we are in relation to God: as creation and Creator; and, our core problem of sin. The LORD is God alone and we are not but, because of the corruption of sin, we too easily and quickly forget that distinction. Remember the serpent's argument to Eve in the Garden, “...*you will be like God...*” (Gen. 3:5 ESV). She ate it and she gave the fruit to Adam to eat because of a desire to transcend themselves; because of their sinful desire to become what they are not and can never become. This is what I have repeatedly called our “idolatry of self” although, it may also be called the sin of pride or pridefulness.

- However, logically, it is difficult (impossible) to be prideful, which is really being filled with “self-glory”, while you are praying for the increase of someone else's glory.
- It is humbling to pray for someone else's increase while understanding that by doing so, you are necessarily praying for your own decrease (John 3:30).

Thirdly, by praying “*Hallowed be thy name...*”, we are reminding ourselves:

- that the LORD is God and we are not;
- that the LORD God is perfectly holy and set apart, that He is transcendent and thus above us;
- that the LORD is the Sovereign King and that we are not;

- that God is greater than we are because although the superior blesses the lesser (Hebrews 7:7), the lesser pays tithes or gives offerings, honor, reverence, and glory to their superior in response;
- that, by hallowing His name, we are restoring something that we sinfully stole from Him;
- that, by hallowing His name, we are returning the glory that we stole by our selfish idolatry.

Therefore, when we pray and we ask God our Father for the continuation and increase of His glory, honor, and authority as our moral obligation to Him and, by asking Him to help us do so, we truly are asking Him to be the ultimate (original and absolute) cause of it. Understood most simply, by praying “*Hallowed be thy name...*”, we are asking God to do or, to give us whatever is needfully necessary to ensure and accomplish the increased hallowing of His name.

So, bearing all of these elements in mind, how might we improve our own prayers and prayer lives by meditating on the preface of “*Our Father, which art in heaven...*” and this first petition of, “*Hallowed be thy name...*”?

First, through praying “*Our Father...*”, we may rest and fully rely on the status of our relationship with God. He is our loving Father: my Father and your Father; and we are His beloved children.

- Being assured of our relationship, we may become more confident and certain that our prayers are heard and answered, even when/if the answer is not the one we hoped for.
- Being assured of our relationship, when we do not get our desired answer (which feels more often than any of us like) it becomes easier for us to accept. We all naturally find it easier to accept a “No” answer from our earthly father (or other parent) than we do from certain other authority figures, such as our employer or other “bosses”. Whenever we ask either, possessing an element of implied entitlement in our approach (since we would not ask for something if we did not believe that we should receive it), the character of our relationship colors our response and reaction.
 - If we ask our boss for a day off and they answer us “No”, then we often respond by immediately assuming the reason is because they hate us or, because they are mean or, because somebody else is their favorite. What we do not do naturally, is assume the best from our boss.
 - When our boss tells us “No”, we do not consider anything from their perspective, but naturally assume that their negative answer stems from some (unknown) animosity towards us.
 - We do not consider whether someone else might already have that day off and so, the boss does not have adequate coverage.
 - We do not consider that we might not have enough PTO (Paid Time Off) accrued and so, we are not eligible for having a certain day off.
 - But, when we ask our father for something, whether it is: candy before dinner, a new toy, a piece of jewelry or even a new car; and he answers us with “No”, we give him the benefit of doubt, naturally. We trust in his love and the assumed understanding that, generally, “Father knows best”. We trust that his “No” stems from his love for us and perhaps certain knowledge that he has but we do not.
 - Our father knows that eating candy early will ruin our appetite for dinner.
 - Our father knows and remembers that we already have countless toys at home which we are already not playing with regularly. He knows that we do not need a new toy or a new piece of jewelry, even though we want it.

- Our father might know that our driving record is perhaps not that great. Maybe we are accident magnets or are prone to speeding. Maybe he knows that the gas mileage or maintenance costs of the desired newer car will be much higher than our current vehicle.
- Thus, when our heavenly Father tells us “No”, we are better able to accept it and trust that His answer really is for our benefit (because of His superior knowledge), even when we do not presently know or understand why.
- Yet when our heavenly Father answers with “Yes”, we are also more likely to immediately respond with a greater expression of gratitude and thankfulness, than we are when our boss lets us take the day off. We are more naturally thankful to our Father for His kindness and provision, but less so towards our boss because we believed that we really deserve that day off.

Second, by praying, “*Hallowed be thy name...*” and being humbly reminded of who we are requesting from, our minds should consider all of the many varied reasons and proofs why we should be hallowing God's name.

Primarily, this should cause us to pause and consider all of the many reasons that we personally have to revere God, to be thankful and give Him our praise.

- God woke us up this morning. He preserved and sustained our life through the night while we slept. That is a good reason to praise and worship God.
- We were able to eat breakfast (lunch or dinner) because God provided the ability for the food to be grown, harvested, shipped, and purchased. God gave someone the wisdom, understanding, and even the talent and ability to cook well. That is a good reason to praise and worship God.
- God has given you the means to have a home in which to live (or, at least, some other safe form of shelter). That is a good reason to praise and worship God.
- God has given you family and friends that love you and whom you love. That is a good reason to praise and worship God.
- You have (or had, if retired) a job to go to every day, a divinely provided means whereby you may support yourself and your family. That is a good reason to praise and worship God.
- God has caused the earth to spin at both the proper angle and rate and, He has caused it to orbit the Sun at the perfect distance, all to maintain and preserve the perfect atmosphere and climate for us to live in. Those are good reasons to praise and worship God.
- God cause the stars to shine in the night sky. He causes birds to sing prettily and flowers to bloom colorfully. God gives us countless examples of beauty, things which only serve to provide us with pleasure and enjoyment. Those are good reasons to praise and worship God.

Such a list is never ending and, while I am confident that there would be some overlap between each of us here, it should also be a very personal list.

Therefore, when you pray, I encourage you and I hope that we all shall bear these things in mind. Do not pray as if the act of prayer is merely ordinary or vulgar. Instead remember this and pray because it is such an extraordinary privilege for us to pray to our heavenly Father, whose name we desire to be more greatly hallowed.

Let us pray...

AMEN