

The Lord's Prayer: Praying With Confidence

Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be your name.

This is a request, not a statement. This is a request that we are told to make in prayer. We are to ask God that He would cause His name to be revered. In fact, the force of this statement goes beyond a mere request and is a command. We have permission to command God to do this for Himself.

To be clear: God is not a genie that has emerged from a lantern that you have found. You do not have ultimate authority over God. Our great God is unequalled in His supremacy. But in the phrase, Our Father, you do have *permitted authority*.

You may have noticed that the Psalms often call us to praise God. (Over 130 times.)

Praise his holy name. Ps 30:4

I will extol the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be on my lips. Ps 34:1

I will praise you among the nations. Ps 18:49

Praise be to the Lord, from everlasting to everlasting. Ps 41:13

Let those who love your name rejoice in you. Ps 5:11

Think about this. Why do you praise anything at all? Why do you speak well of anything? Or anyone? We want people or teams or diets or exercise plans or apps to be honored and spoken well of because those people or things are meaningful to us. When you ascribe value to someone or something, you speak well of them...and you also want other people to speak well of them.

You know you love God when you speak well of Him.

It's doubtful that any of us pray for God's name to be honored other than when we are reciting the Lord's Prayer. Here's a simply way to apply this teaching: Pray for a godly response. Whatever situation you find yourself in, pray for a godly response.

The direction of the prayer is not God, make *me* great in this situation.

The direction of the prayer is God, make *your name* great in this situation.

Even if you don't get a chance to say anything about God to anybody. Every time you encounter a situation where Jesus gets a win, your faith is strengthened. You are becoming more of the person that God has called you to be.

You might tend to think of God's name being honored in your life when there's a clear victory. Something went really well and people know you're a Christian...God is good.

That could be it but it could also be that God in His infinite wisdom knows that a watching world needs to see how Christians handle hard times. Most people can handle good times with or without Jesus. A lot of people who don't know Jesus would like to know what difference He can make on a difficult day.

This prayer teaches us that God's highest value is our greatest need. The first request in the model prayer is for us to seek God's glory, honor and respect. I'm inclined to think that this is both personal and global.

Here's a great quote from Tim Keller who wrote a book simply called, Prayer.

"We either love what we ought not to love, or we fail to love what we ought to love, or we love more what we should love less, or love less what we should love more."

Learning to pray this way, changes you.

When you praise God, honor God, revere the name of God, that is when you are most closely aligned to reality. Sin's self-deceptive qualities leads us to misidentify what will make us happy. This prayer from Jesus helps to straighten us out.

To put it simply:

To honor God is to see your world with clarity.

To honor yourself is to see your world with confusion.