

Name: _____



The Canadian *Lord's Day* Association

Advanced Bible Correspondence Course Lesson 52: The Lord's Prayer

LORD'S DAY 52

Q. 127. WHICH IS THE SIXTH PETITION?

ANSWER: "AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL"; THAT IS, SINCE WE ARE SO WEAK IN OURSELVES THAT WE CANNOT STAND A MOMENT (A); AND BESIDES THIS, SINCE OUR MORTAL ENEMIES, THE DEVIL (B), THE WORLD (C), AND OUR OWN FLESH (D), CEASE NOT TO ASSAULT US, DO THOU THEREFORE PRESERVE AND STRENGTHEN US BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, THAT WE MAY NOT BE OVERCOME IN THIS SPIRITUAL WARFARE (E), BUT CONSTANTLY AND STRENUOUSLY MAY RESIST OUR FOES TILL AT LAST WE MAY OBTAIN A COMPLETE VICTORY (F).

(A) JOHN 5:15, PSALM 103:14; (B) I PETER 5:8, EPHESIANS 6:12;
(C) JOHN 15:19; (D) ROMANS 7:23, GALATIANS 5:17; (E) MATTHEW 26:41, MARK 13:33; (F) I THESSALONIANS 3:13, 5:23

A declaration of war

The first gospel promise was given in the form of a declaration of war: "*And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel.*" (Genesis 3:15) The world history is a history of this warfare. However, this warfare is also present in the personal life of each of God's children. A child of God does not go to heaven sleeping, but waging war. That is a life and death struggle against three deadly enemies: the devil, the world, and our own flesh. This "our own flesh" is called "the old man" in Lord's Day 33. Even a regenerated person still has so much of that "old man" in himself that he is too weak to fight against sin in his own strength. We can think of a person who through illness has become so weak that he can hardly stand on his legs. He has to defend himself against three giants who are out to destroy him. What an uneven fight!

Very weak in himself

Of himself, a child of God is very weak. As soon as new life is present, three enemies fall upon him and seek to kill him. A child of God will never be able to fight this warfare in his own strength. What does he then do? He does just as king

Jehoshaphat did, who with his army was not equal to the great army which came to invade the land. He took refuge with God: *"We have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we not what to do: but our eyes are upon Thee"*. (II Chronicles 20:12)

In the perfect prayer, the Lord Jesus teaches us to pray likewise. He teaches us to invoke God's omnipotence against these three deadly enemies. In a war, it is important to know the enemy. Here this knowledge counts even more, because often they pose themselves as friends.

The devil and the world

The devil is mentioned first. An unconverted person is troubled very little by him, because he belongs to that kingdom of the devil. The devil believes that this should remain as it is and does everything in his power to keep such a person unconcerned. And man enjoys living without cares. This changes when the devil fears that he will lose a subject. He tries to lure him back. If he does not succeed, then he will show his true colours: a roaring lion! He is filled with an unabating hatred against God and everything that belongs to Him. He goes about to destroy. Originally he was an angel, thus he is extraordinarily gifted, and moreover, he has 6000 years of experience. He knows that he will not be able to snatch out of Christ's hands even a single soul for whom Christ died. Christ Himself said: *"Neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand."* (John 10:28)

Yet the devil will make it as difficult as possible for them. There is not a single person who is capable of dealing with his tricks and forcefulness. Therefore God's child ought to take refuge in his most powerful weapon, which is prayer.

The devil also mobilizes his helpers. One of his helpers is the world. This does not mean creation as such, but everything on this earth that opposes the Lord: people and organizations. This world tempts and tries to bring to sin. It does so in a friendly way, by alluring in the direction of evil. This can be done, when necessary, by threats and persecution. Also then prayer cannot be overlooked.

Our flesh

However, the worst enemy is the old man within, here called "flesh." That old man will always choose the side of the devil and world. This makes God's child still weaker. The old man can sometimes be so strong that he overrules the new man. Also here prayer is necessary against the power of evil in our heart. "Lord, keep me standing in this struggle, for I am so soon brought down; send Thy Spirit in order that He may lead me through and out of this world to the heavenly mansions." This Spirit puts grace in the heart and gives faith to call upon the omnipotence of God to help us. Otherwise we will be brought down, we will suffer defeat, and the devil will laugh. But when God's omnipotence is at our side, we will ultimately gain the victory. The risen Christ told John to write to the congregation at Smyrna: *"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."* (Revelation 2:10)

Q. 128. HOW DOST THOU CONCLUDE THY PRAYER?

ANSWER: “FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, AND THE POWER, AND THE GLORY, FOREVER”; THAT IS, ALL THESE WE ASK OF THEE, BECAUSE THOU, BEING OUR KING AND ALMIGHTY, ART WILLING AND ABLE TO GIVE US ALL GOOD; AND ALL THIS WE PRAY FOR (A), THAT THEREBY NOT WE, BUT THY HOLY NAME, MAY BE GLORIFIED FOREVER (B).

(A) ROMANS 10:12, II PETER 2:9; (B) JOHN 14:13, JEREMIAH 33:8&9, PSALM 115:1

How is man entitled to this?

Much has been asked for in this prayer. How is man entitled to ask for all this? Is it also not very arrogant to ask for so much? From where do we get this liberty? It is not from ourselves, for we do not have any rights. We have not merited anything, but have forfeited all blessings. It is also not on the basis of our prayers, because the best prayer of a child of God needs to be washed in the blood of Christ. God's child has two Intercessors: *One* in the heart, the Holy Spirit; and *One* in heaven, Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit leads in prayer in the heart. It is that prayer that will be offered by him who prays. Christ receives it, purifies it, and brings it with His intercessory prayer to the Father. The liberty lies in God, in His kingship, His power, and His glory. That is a mighty, threefold pleading ground.

The Lord knows what is best for us

The King seeks the best for His subjects. His heart goes out to His people. He is always ready to extend His help. He is not only willing to do it, but also is able to do so. There is nothing that we can ask of Him that is beyond His power.

He also knows what is good for us. Thus, when it is said that He is willing and able to give His people all good, then this “good” will not always be that what we call “good”. Adversity can also be good, namely, to make a person more dependent on Him and to live closer to Him. He alone knows what is good for us.

The first petition, “Hallowed be Thy Name”, is directed to the honour of God. The prayer also ends with this. It is not our interests and salvation which takes precedence in this perfect prayer, but it is God's honour. This is where everything will end. Read what John wrote about this in Revelation 5:13&14.

Q. 129. WHAT DOTH THE WORD “AMEN” SIGNIFY?

ANSWER: “AMEN” SIGNIFIES IT SHALL TRULY AND CERTAINLY BE, FOR MY PRAYER IS MORE ASSUREDLY HEARD OF GOD THAN I FEEL IN MY HEART THAT I DESIRE THESE THINGS OF HIM (A).

(A) II CORINTHIANS 1:20, II TIMOTHY 2:13

Amen

By the word “Amen” we hear that a prayer has ended. At the beginning of a meal we then know that we can begin to eat. At the end of the meal, we know that we can leave the table. Also when a child in a Christian family cannot yet say a prayer, “Amen” is the first word he learns.

But the word “Amen” has a much deeper meaning. The Hebrew word occurs often in the Bible. In many languages it remained this way. It means “confidence” or “trust”.

At the end of the prayer, the word “Amen” does not signify a respectable closing, but it is a confession of faith. In the first place, he who prays acknowledges that he is convinced that he in his heart truly longs for what he asked of God. In the second place, he also expresses his trust that God hears his prayer. To the true petitioner, the Lord says, “*Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it*”. (*Psalm 81:10*) With the word “Amen”, the person praying says, as it were, “Lord, I put the hand of faith on Thy promise: it shall truly and certainly be. My prayer has been heard by Thee, also if Thou hearest me in a different way than I can imagine.” Blessed are those people who may pray in this way. Let us therefore frequently ask: “Lord, teach me to pray. Amen.”

Questions:

1. *Which three deadly enemies do God’s children have?*

2. *What do we need so that we are not overcome by Satan?*

3. *Why may we freely ask for everything that is in this prayer?*

4. *What does “Amen” mean?*

5. *What does the true petitioner mean when he says “Amen” at the end of his prayer?*

Evaluator: _____

Meditation: Prayer

Expect answers while you are speaking in prayer. Sometimes the vapors that ascend in the morning come down in copious showers in the evening. So may it be with your prayers.

Taken from: “Gems of Robert Murray McChesney”