

Advanced Bible Correspondence Course Lesson 47 – The Lord's Prayer

Q. 122. WHAT IS THE FIRST PETITION?

ANSWER: "HALLOWED BE THY NAME"; THAT IS, GRANT US, FIRST, RIGHTLY TO KNOW THEE (A), AND TO SANCTIFY, GLORIFY, AND PRAISE THEE, IN ALL THY WORKS, IN WHICH THY POWER, WISDOM, GOODNESS, JUSTICE, MERCY, AND TRUTH, ARE CLEARLY DISPLAYED (B); AND FURTHER ALSO, THAT WE MAY SO ORDER AND DIRECT OUR WHOLE LIVES, OUR THOUGHTS, WORDS, AND ACTIONS, THAT THY NAME MAY NEVER BE BLASPHEMED, BUT RATHER HONOURED AND PRAISED ON OUR ACCOUNT (C).

(A) JOHN 17:3, JEREMIAH 9:24, 31: 33-34, MATTHEW 16:17, JAMES 1:5, PSALM 119:105; (B) PSALM 119:137, LUKE 1:46-47, 68-69, ROMANS 11:33; (C) PSALM 71:8, 115:1.

God's Name

Each one of us has a name. This serves to distinguish us from others who are like us. Without names, a form of society would be impossible.

The Lord also has names. These are not to distinguish Him from other beings like Him, because there are none. The poet Ethan says: "*Who can be likened unto the LORD?*" (Psalm 89:6). God revealed His Name to us in order to reveal something of Himself to us. His Name tells something of His Being, who and how he is. We can call upon Him.

For man, a name is also important for another reason. When we know somebody's name, then we can make him known, be it positively or negatively. Solomon said "*A good name is better than precious ointment*" (Ecclesiastes 7:1). A friend will watch over the good name of his friend. He will uphold him highly.

This certainly applies to somebody who may love the Lord. He will be happy when his God is highly spoken of. It will hurt him when he hears that Name being dishonoured, by blasphemy or swearing. He is also conscious of the fact that nobody can take better care of God's good Name than God Himself. Therefore this

first petition is “Hallowed by Thy Name.” But who is able to hallow that Name? This is why we ask the lord Himself, “Grant...”

Hallowing God’s name

To hallow God’s Name means to see to it that God receives the greatest honour and that His Name is thought of and spoken of in no other way than with highest reverence. That is the sincere desire of a praying child of God. How can someone have an interest in another’s high esteem if he does not know him? Therefore the first petition is that may know God well, not superficially, but intimately, in a very familiar manner. He who knows God in this way can do nothing but love Him, have the greatest reverence for Him, and have communion with Him in a very tender way, the more someone knows God, the more he or she will seek to honour Him. That person also sees and acknowledges that God has created and preserves everything. He sees God’s hand in all things.

God’s attributes

The believer sees God’s omnipotence and wisdom in His creation and in the course of the history of God’s Church, and in his own life. He notices this in a blade of grass and in a severe thunderstorm. A non-Christian may perhaps say, “This is very normal.” But this is not so. These are wonders of God’s creative powers. Read Genesis 1 and 3 and Psalm 104.

The Christian sees God’s wisdom in devising the way by which sinners can be saved. He sees God’s goodness in His care for body and soul. He sees God’s justice in punishing sinners and in regarding those who live according to His law. The psalmist said: “The LORD reigneth” (Psalm 93:1). The Christian sees God’s mercy in saving sinners who are in a miserable condition. David said: “*The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy*” (Psalm 103:8). He sees God’s faithfulness in the fact that God keeps His word, when He promises *and* when He threatens. That fills him with the greatest reverence for God. He desires that other people will also see in this way and also think about God this way.

He realizes that the world observes him and other church people. When the deeds of a religious person do not match his words, the world blasphemes God. That does not make people jealous of those people who serve God. If a Christian lives in such a way that his life commands respect, then it can make people jealous. They see that it is worthwhile to know God and to serve Him. Then God’s Name will be honoured and hallowed. God’s child wishes for nothing better than that.

Questions:

1. What does it mean: hallowing God's Name?

2. What is the first thing asked for in the first petition?

Evaluator: _____

The Great God

O FOUNTAIN OF ALL GOOD,
Destroy in me every lofty thought,
Break pride to pieces and scatter it to the winds,
Annihilate each clinging shred of self-righteousness,
Implant in me true lowliness of spirit,
Abase me to self-loathing and self-abhorrence,
Open in me a fount of penitential tears,
Break me, then bind me up;
Thus will my heart be a prepared dwelling for my God;
 Then can the Father take up his abode in me,
 Then can the blessed Jesus come with healing in his touch,
 Then can the Holy Spirit descend in sanctifying grace;
O holy Trinity three Persons and one God,
 inhabit me, a temple consecrated to the glory.
When thou are present, evil cannot abide;
In thy fellowship is fullness of joy,
Beneath thy smile is peace of conscience,
By thy side no fears disturb,
 no apprehensions banish rest of mind.
With thee my heart shall bloom with fragrance;
Make me meet, through repentance, for thine indwelling.
Nothing exceeds thy power,
Nothing is too great for thee to do,
Nothing too good for thee to give.
 Infinite is thy might, boundless thy love,
 limitless thy grace, glorious thy saving name.
Let angels sing for sinners repenting, prodigals restored,
 backsliders reclaimed, Satan's captives released,
 blind eyes opened, broken hearts bound up,
 the despondent cheered, the self-righteous stripped,
 the formalist driving from a refuge of lies,
 the ignorant enlightened,
 and saints built up in their holy faith.
I ask great things of a great God.

Taken from: "The Valley of Vision", a collection of Puritan Prayers & Devotions