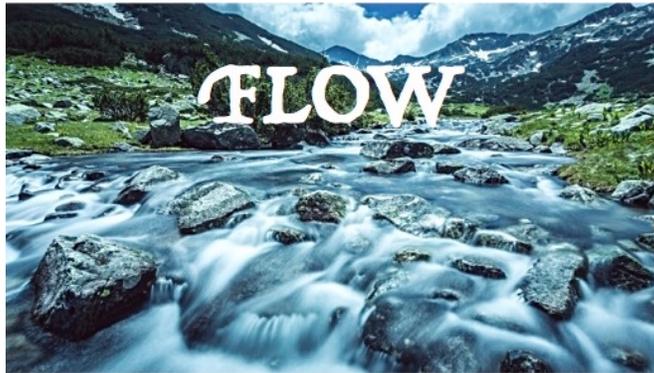


#6 March 8, 2017



Pray like this:

*Our Father in heaven,
may your name be kept holy.
May your Kingdom come soon.
May your will be done on earth,
as it is in heaven.
Give us today the food we need,
and forgive us our sins,
as we have forgiven those who sin against us.
And don't let us yield to temptation,
but rescue us from the evil one.*

Matthew 6:9-13



Our Father Who art In Heaven...

by Ken Vanden Hoek

I grew up in a strict Dutch family and worshiped in the Dutch Reform Church. Every night when the family sat down to dinner my father would read a chapter of scripture and then say, "let's pray." He then would lead us in a lengthy prayer for the meal. After dinner he prayed again and this time the prayer always ended with all the family, and often guest, verbally praying the Lord's Prayer together. Every night for my first 20 years it was the same. Today I see value in what I experienced as a child and teen but it is fair to say that as a teenage boy it became monotonous and somewhat over bearing. What my father was doing was sincere and earnest and set a godly example for his children but when I moved out of my parents' home I soon found that it was my responsibility (at which I often failed) to actually pray on my own. I had to form a relationship with God through prayer. In time the Lord's Prayer took on a whole new meaning. It is much less poetic to me now and much more a reflection of my heart. "Our Father who art in heaven," is now personal. It is how I call out to my Heavenly Father and prepare my heart to commune with Him.

"Our Father in heaven"

Often in life we are operating on "auto pilot". We get up in the morning and begin our "morning routine". There are things we do without even thinking. We go to the bathroom and brush our teeth and head to the kitchen to make coffee. Every morning pretty much looks the same and it is not all that exciting and doesn't really require much thought. That is how we start our day but it is not how we start our prayers. "Our Father" is not to be thought of as a routine hello or introduction. "Our Father" is meant to remind us just who we are talking to. We are talking to our heavenly Father, our creator, our God who sent His one and only Son to die for us so that we might have eternal life. That is who we are praying to! That is worth taking a moment to meditate on.

-- We need to always acknowledge first and foremost who we are talking to. He (God) is our heavenly Father. We address Him with respect just as we should address our earthly father with respect. He is the only true God who created all things in this universe, including ourselves. He loves us and we need to show our love for Him. (AllAboutPrayer.org,)

Remembering the greatness of our Heavenly Father is the key to being able to pray in complete faith believing that our prayers are heard by our Heavenly Father who loves and cares for us.

Matthew 7:9-11 (NLT):

You parents—if your children ask for a loaf of bread, do you give them a stone instead? Or if they ask for a fish, do you give them a snake? Of course not! So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him.

When you remember who you are praying to, you remember how much he loves you and that no conversation or request is too big or too small.

1 John 3:1(NIV)

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!

From Westminster Statements & Heidelberg Catechism on the Lords' Prayer:

Q. 190. What do we pray for in the first petition?

A. In the first petition (which is, Hallowed be thy name), acknowledging the utter inability and indisposition that is in ourselves and all men to honor God aright, we pray, that God would by his grace enable and incline us and others to know, to acknowledge, and highly to esteem him, his titles, attributes, ordinances, word, works, and whatsoever he is pleased to make himself known by; and to glorify him in thought, word, and deed: that he would prevent and remove atheism, ignorance, idolatry, profaneness, and whatsoever is dishonorable to him; and, by his overruling providence, direct and dispose of all things to his own glory.

Q. What does the first petition mean?

A. "Hallowed be your name" means: Help us to truly know you, to honor, glorify, and praise you for all your works and for all that shines forth from them: your almighty power, wisdom, kindness, justice, mercy, and truth.

And it means, Help us to direct all our living— what we think, say, and do— so that your name will never be blasphemed because of us but always honored and praise

Q. 189. What doth the preface of the Lord's Prayer teach us?

A. The preface of the Lord's Prayer (contained in these words, "*Our Father which art in heaven*")¹ teaches us, when we pray, to draw near to God with confidence of his fatherly goodness, and our interest therein;² with reverence, and all other childlike dispositions,³ heavenly affections,⁴ and due apprehensions of his sovereign power, majesty, and gracious condescension:⁵ as also to pray with and for others.

Questions:

How do you start your prayers?

Does what you call God have special meaning to you? Why?

How would you respond if you heard God's audible voice?

Watch this: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kLVzV9n69UY>

Has your prayer life become one of routine or are you able to set aside the mundane and spend time with your Father?

Why should the opening phrase of the Lord's Prayer encourage us to pray more?

Go to the Lord in prayer, take a moment to remember who God is and why you are coming before Him in prayer.