

Dust Off Your Catechism

A Review of the Six Chief Parts of the Christian Faith



**The Third Chief Part:
The Lord's Prayer**

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Opening Hymn: 766

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be Thy Name.
Thy kingdom come.
They will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our trespasses
 as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory
 forever and ever. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer is found in the Bible in **Matthew 6:7-13**
and **Luke 11:1-4**.

The Conclusion

For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.

What does this mean? This means that I should be certain that these petitions are pleasing to our Father in heaven, and are heard by Him; for He Himself has commanded us to pray in this way and has promised to hear us. Amen, amen, means, "yes, yes, it shall be so."

According to the Small Catechism above, what are the two reasons we should pray?

We pray because of God's command and His promise. It's not a choice to pray: the Lord tells us to do it! But He also promises that He hears our prayers and will answer according to His good and gracious will.

How do we know what we should pray for?

If a parent says, “Just tell me if you are hungry and I'll fix you some food” and then we come and say, “Can I have a new car?” what would the answer be? We know what to ask because the Lord tells us what to ask. In fact, in the Lord's Prayer, everything we ask for is a promise from Christ since He is the one telling us to pray for those things!

What would you say to someone who says, “I would never use a prayer that is recited or written down. Prayers should come from your heart in your own words?”

If you read the Matthew passage closely, you'll notice that Jesus' answer to the “empty phrases” is the Lord's Prayer! Rather than ramble uselessly, He Himself gives us the specific words and petitions to use in our prayer.

Can you pray in your own words?

Of course! There are many examples of people who cry out in trouble to the Lord. The Psalms give vent to many emotions in prayer. Yet sometimes when we pray in our own words, we might wonder what to say or begin to wander or ramble. Then it is good to have words written for us to make our prayers not “empty phrases” but genuine requests raised to God. The Lord's Prayer is the best of all prayers for exactly that reason!

1] We have now heard what we must do and believe, in which things the best and happiest life consists. Now follows the third part, how we ought to pray. 2] For since we are so situated that no man can perfectly keep the Ten Commandments, even though he have begun to believe, and since the devil with all his power, together with the world and our own flesh, resists our endeavors,

nothing is so necessary as that we should continually resort to the ear of God, call upon Him, and pray to Him, that He would give, preserve, and increase in us faith and the fulfilment of the Ten Commandments, and that He would remove everything that is in our way and opposes us therein. 3] But that we might know what and how to pray, our Lord Christ has Himself taught us both the mode and the words, as we shall see. (*The Large Catechism, The Lord's Prayer*)

What reasons are given above for us to pray?

We should pray because the devil, the world and our sinful nature are against us, teaching us not to trust in God and trying to drag us away from faith in Him. Prayer teaches us to entrust ourselves to His care. It is the exercise (like a workout!) of faith as we take Christ's promises upon our lips and learn by the Spirit to trust in Him.

Does praying come naturally?

It does not! Our sinful nature doesn't know that it should pray or ask anything from the Lord. As new creatures in Christ Jesus, prayer is taught by the Spirit through Christ's Word so that we might ask from the Lord what He has promised to give us and learn to live in the confidence that He will hear and answer our prayers.

How do we learn to pray?

First and foremost we learn from Jesus. Not only the words of the Lord's prayer but the sorts of things we should ask from God: how to pray and what to pray for. We learn prayer also as we hear the examples of the saints in the Holy Scriptures and as we are brought up in the liturgy, worship and prayer of the church both in the congregation and in our

homes and families.

27] But the distress which ought to concern us most, both as regards ourselves and every one, you will find abundantly set forth in the Lord's Prayer. Therefore it is to serve also to remind us of the same, that we contemplate it and lay it to heart, lest we become remiss in prayer. For we all have enough that we lack, but the great want is that we do not feel nor see it. Therefore God also requires that you lament and plead such necessities and wants, not because He does not know them, but that you may kindle your heart to stronger and greater desires, and make wide and open your cloak to receive much. (*The Large Catechism, The Lord's Prayer*)

Some people think we should pray because we have to convince God of what we need. What does the Large Catechism say to that?

The Lord already knows what we need! We don't pray to manipulate the Lord into giving us what we want. Rather, prayer teaches us to seek from the Lord the things He has promised and to live in the faith which clings to those promises of God.

Philippians 4:6-7

6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

According to St. Paul, what is the opposite of our being anxious?

Rather than worrying and getting worked up over things, we should pray. We come before the Lord to make known our requests and live in faithful trust that He will care for us.

Is the exact answer to what WE ask for the thing which brings us peace?

The peace comes not from always getting what we think we need or want. True peace comes from the Lord's promise to always grant us the peace of sins forgiven and the comfort and strength of the Holy Spirit by His Word.

2 Corinthians 12:7-9

7 And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. **8** Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. **9** And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Does the Lord always give us what we ask for?

He does not. Paul learns to trust in the Lord even when the answer is not what he wants. Instead, through constant prayer and "wrestling" with the Lord, Paul learns what the Lord's will is and what God's power is for Him.

What can we always be certain He will give us when we ask for it?

We can always be certain that the Lord will give us the Holy Spirit. (Luke 11:13). That means the forgiveness of sins, faith in Christ and the true peace of being God's child and

knowing that Father cares for us.

How does the Lord answer our prayers?

*All of God's promises and our prayers are fulfilled and answered in Christ. (2 **Corinthians 1:20**). From daily bread to our eternal salvation, God's promises are given in and through Jesus. When we pray, we are living by faith in Christ's Word and promises against all the lies, troubles, and temptations our enemies throw at us!*

Resources for Prayers

Lutheran Service Book p.305ff.

The Lutheran Book of Prayer

The Treasury of Daily Prayer

Consider closing the Study with one or more prayers from the above resources.