



Condensed Milk (Matthew 6:9-13 Series)

How to Pray, 'Your will be done...' (6:10).

SUMMARY: When we pray “your will be done” we are accepting all of God’s providence and praying that all his commands be kept.

When we pray this petition, we do so knowing that God’s will is always right and best even when it is against our own will or makes no sense to us. Yet nothing is so ignored, resisted, and even hated as much as God’s will. Because God’s will often seems less than our own we can only pray this in faith when we believe the first parts of the Lord’s Prayer – that he is our Father (so his will is loving), that he is in heaven (so he is right and good in all he wills), and that his honor is more important than our desires.

The first part of this petition is to pray what Thomas Watson termed “the prayer of passive obedience”. We tell God that we accept whatever his providence allows into our lives whether good or evil. If we are sick or in a hard circumstance, we are right to ask God for relief but ultimately, we pray “Your will be done”.

The greatest model of passive obedience was Jesus, on the day of his arrest for execution. This was the cruelest, most evil violation of God’s commanded will ever perpetrated. Yet Jesus knew that the perpetrators were doing what God’s power and will had decided beforehand should happen (Acts 4:27-28). Though he wrestled against his own desires (and we will struggle too) and though he expressed to God what he wanted (“let this cup pass from me”) he concluded emphatically, “yet not my will but yours be done” (Luke 22:42).

This petition is highly relevant because so much that comes our way is not what we want. We don’t want to be sick or hurt; we may not want to be single, alone or many other things. We need to name those things when we

¹ Bible verses about God’s will being done:

Romans 5: 3-5. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; **4** perseverance, character; and character, hope. **5** And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

Romans 8:28. And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

pray. And if we can pray your will be done in faith, as Jesus did, we will have the kind of peace he displayed once he had prayed this through.

The second part of this petition is to pray what Thomas Watson called “the prayer of active obedience,” or praying that God’s commands and principles be followed. To what degree? To the same degree his will is followed in heaven. We are praying that we and others whole-heartedly, joyfully, embrace and do God’s will, whatever it is. This is how Jesus lived (John 4:34, 6:38) and we are called to become just like him. This is what it means to be a disciple and it is disciples, not merely converts, that we are called to be and to make. “Go and make disciples... teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:19-20). A disciple is a person who thoughtfully and progressively rearranges every aspect of their lives to becoming like Jesus, always doing God’s will.

This petition assumes that we know what his commands and principles are. We know what they are as much as we know our Bibles. As we become aware of what the Bible commands, we pray that we and others would keep those commands. As we become aware of what the Bible forbids, we ask that we and others would refrain from those things. In everything then we need to search to understand what the Bible has to say about things in order that we can pray for ourselves and others to live accordingly.

Practice Exercise: Write at least one sentence of prayer that expresses this theme. The verses in the footnotes can help you with this as you reflect on them.¹

James 1: 2-4. Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, **3** because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. **4** Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

Matthew 5:17, 19

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. **19** Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.



Condensed Milk Questions For...

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Content Questions:

1. What are we praying when we pray, "...your will be done"?
2. Why do the previous themes in the Lord's Prayer help us to feel safe when we pray that God's will supersede our own desires?
3. What two forms of obedience are we praying when we pray "your will be done?"
4. What resource do we have as a guide for praying about God's will intelligently?

Discussion Questions:

5. What stands out to you in this article and why?
6. What areas of life are affected when we live by this petition? For example, how we treat others would be one part of our lives. How we face suffering is another example, and so on.
7. How do you feel about praying the prayer of passive obedience?
8. How do you feel about praying the prayer of active obedience?
9. Please share one thing in the Bible that has led you to live in God's will.

Take-Home Practice:

In the prayer journals you've been given try to journal a prayer that begins with the first five phrases of the Lord's Prayer, each day this next week.

