



Condensed Milk (Matthew 6:9-13 Series)

Matthew 6:9, How to Pray “In heaven”

SUMMARY: *When we pray “in heaven” we are acknowledging to God his sovereignty and perfections and what we think and feel about them.*

With the words “in heaven” Jesus teaches us that worship has a priority in prayer greater than our necessary food. It comes before any request for “bread”. If the Lord’s Prayer is taken seriously Christians will spend as much time adoring God as they do praying about needs and wishes. All petitions should come out of a mindset of worship. Because Jesus teaches us to do so, we will, again, need to restrain our impulse to rush past adoration in our anxiety to focus on our needs. The best thing to do with the problems and fears that crowd our minds is to use them as an aid to focusing on God. What perfection in God is adequate and comforting to me in my need? Confess *that* reality to God.

As J. I. Packer puts it (Growing in Christ, p. 167), “The vitality of prayer lies largely in the vision of God that prompts it. Drab thoughts of God make prayer dull.” Nobody has to be told to feel inspired and pleased when they look at Niagara Falls or a beautiful sunset. In the same way if we take time to consider God and who he is we will experience feelings of joy, awe, fear, reverence, peace, and so on. And these things stimulate faith. Try it and you will soon see.

So when we pray we are to acknowledge to God the things that are great about him – things like his limitless knowledge, absolute

¹ Bible verses on the perfections of God:

Isaiah 40: 15, 17-18. Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales; he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust. **17**Before him all the nations are as nothing; they are regarded by him as worthless and less than nothing. **18**With whom, then, will you compare God? To what image will you liken him?

Psalms 2: 2, 4. The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the LORD and against his anointed.... **4**The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them.

Daniel 4:35. All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the

sovereignty, immeasurable love, perfect wisdom and so on. Again, God only promises to answer the prayer of faith. We can only pray in faith when we are filled with a sense of his greatness. If we think he can be unloving or neglectful of his own children, or that he can’t do what he wants to do, or that he is capable of bad decisions than we cannot pray in faith. As our sense of his greatness grows our needs, problems and fears will seem that much smaller.

My wife and I went to the local shopping mall one day, taking our small children with us. I carried three-year-old Dustin in my arms and once through the doors I set him down. In a flash he took off at a run to see what he could see, completely forgetting about us. Instead of calling him back I decided to follow him, keeping out of his sight, to see how long it would take him to realize he was lost. He ran around the clothing racks for a little while and then, all of a sudden, he stopped, looked around and burst into tears. His mom and I were his security, his care and protection, and now he could not see us. Suddenly the world was a scary place for him. I quickly showed myself to him and picked him up. He calmed down immediately. In a similar way we need to keep God in sight. Our world can be a threatening and hurtful place. We can feel vulnerable when we lose sight of God. When we acknowledge to God his perfections, he shows himself to us and we begin to feel security and assurance from seeing the greatness of who he is.

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 them¹

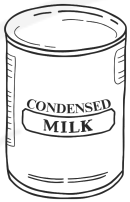
earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: “What have you done?”

Psalms 27:1. The LORD is my light and my salvation — whom shall I fear?

The LORD is the stronghold of my life — of whom shall I be afraid?

Romans 8:35, 37-39. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? **37** ... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. **38**For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, **39** neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.



Condensed Milk: Questions for... **...Matthew 6:9: How to Pray, "in heaven"**

Content Questions:

1. What stands out to you in this article and why?
2. What are we doing when we pray the theme, "in heaven"?
3. When our problems and fears want to draw us away from praying "in heaven" how can we use those same anxieties to help us focus on God's in-he
4. How does this worship of God enable us to pray in faith?
5. How does this part of prayer help us as we face the challenges of life?

Discussion Questions:

6. What kinds of perfections are found in God and which one stands out? Why does it stand out to you?
7. How does Bible reading help us pray this phrase?
8. How might this phrase aid us in avoiding sin and doing what is right?

Take-Home Practice:

In the prayer journals you've been given try to journal a prayer that begins with the theme, "Our Father" each day this next week.

