Lesson 45: Questions 108 and 109

108–109

Our preceding lessons considered the nature of prayer and the reverence, confidence, and dependence with which we approach God. But knowing ***that*** we should pray leaves open the question of ***what*** should govern our requests. We readily bring God our needs, fears, and hopes. The Lord's Prayer teaches us to bring them within a larger purpose.

Jesus begins with our Father's name and kingdom. In this, He orders our desires. Before asking how our circumstances might improve, we learn to ask how God might be honored.

Question 108: What does the first petition mean?

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

A. In the first petition, which is, Hallowed be your name, we pray that God would enable us and others to glorify him in all that whereby he makes himself known, and that he would dispose all things to his own glory.

Jesus places this petition immediately after our address to the Father.

Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name." (Matthew 6:9, ESV)

FIRST, we ask that God's holiness be recognized and honored. To hallow is to regard and treat as holy. We do not ask God to become holier. He is eternally perfect, independent of everything He has made. No creature can add to His excellence or diminish it.

God's name means more than the words by which we address Him. It represents God as He makes Himself known: His attributes, words, works, and reputation. His holiness, wisdom, justice, goodness, and truth belong together. Above all, He reveals Himself in Jesus Christ, through Whom we know the Father and receive salvation.

We therefore distinguish God's ***intrinsic glory*** from His ***manifested/ascribed glory***.

His ***intrinsic glory*** is the excellence He eternally possesses.

His ***manifested glory*** is that excellence displayed in His works.

His ***ascribed glory*** is the honor creatures give Him in response.

When we look through a telescope, the moon and stars do not change, but our perception of them is sharpened. Likewise, God does not become more glorious when sinners recognize His greatness. Yet their recognition is a genuine and necessary response to His revelation.

SECOND, we ask God to enable us and others to glorify Him. The catechism begins with dependence, not self-confidence. Sin makes us suppress God's truth, misuse His gifts, and prefer our own reputation. We need grace to receive His revelation rightly and answer it with faith, worship, and obedience.

May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations. Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! (Psalm 67:1-3, ESV)

The psalm connects the knowledge of God's saving ways with the praise of the nations. God's blessing is not a private possession to be hoarded. His people desire that His salvation become known throughout the earth, so that people who do not yet worship Him will join in His praise.

This gives our prayers an outward direction. We should ask not merely that our children behave well, but that they know and honor the God Who made and redeems His people. When praying for unbelievers, we seek more than ***just*** someone's relief from distress. We desire their salvation so that they may worship the true God. And when we pray for ourselves, we cannot sincerely ask that God's name be honored while cherishing behavior like dishonesty at work or harshness at home. We ask Him for grace to make our ***actions*** agree with our ***petitions***.

THIRD, we ask God to order all things for His glory. The catechism's word "dispose" means to arrange or govern. We ask that His providence display His excellence throughout history, including circumstances we cannot understand.

> *For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen. (Romans 11:36, ESV)*

Paul's doxology follows his consideration of God's wisdom and mercy in His saving purposes for Jews and Gentiles. Everything originates from God, depends upon His sustaining power, and is directed toward His glory. He is not merely the One Who helps us reach our chosen goals. He is the source, sustainer, and ultimate end of all things.

This anchors the first petition. God's glory is not an uncertain possibility awaiting our permission. His sovereign purpose is sure, and He appoints prayer as one means through which He accomplishes it. We ask Him to fulfill His will and to bring our desires into willing agreement with it.

Nor is His glory displayed only through pleasant circumstances. God reveals mercy in salvation, righteousness in judgment, and wisdom in providences that presently bewilder us. His government of sinful acts does not make those acts morally good. He forbids evil and holds sinners accountable, even while sovereignly directing history toward His holy ends.

Psalm 83 brings this into sharp focus. The psalm describes hostile nations conspiring against God's people. Their attack is opposition to God Himself, and the psalmist appeals to His past victories as grounds for present deliverance. Its severe requests concern divine judgment, not permission for personal revenge.

> *Fill their faces with shame, that they may seek your name, O LORD. Let them be put to shame and dismayed forever; let them perish in disgrace, that they may know that you alone, whose name is the LORD, are the Most High over all the earth. (Psalm 83:16-18, ESV)*

The conclusion seeks the vindication of God's name: enemies must recognize that He alone is supreme. Shame may lead some to seek Him; those who persist in hostility face destruction. We must not flatten the psalm into either a promise of universal conversion or an expression of private bitterness.

We pray for enemies to repent. We refuse personal vengeance. We entrust judgment to God. Whether He grants mercy or executes justice, His name must be honored. In suffering, the first petition teaches us to ask not only, "Father, deliver me", but also, "Father, enable me to honor You here."

Question 109: What does the second petition mean?

Q. What do we pray for in the second petition?

A. In the second petition, which is, Your kingdom come, we pray that Satan's kingdom may be destroyed, and that the kingdom of grace may be advanced, ourselves and others brought into it and kept in it, and that the kingdom of glory may be hastened.

> *Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. (Matthew 6:10, ESV)*

FIRST, we pray that Satan's kingdom may be destroyed.

God already rules over every creature. We are not asking Him to acquire sovereignty He lacks. His kingdom of ***grace*** concerns His saving rule over His redeemed people, not merely His government of creation. These are not competing sovereignties: the Lord Who governs all things also brings sinners under Christ's gracious rule. We ask for that saving reign to advance and reach its final consummation. When we pray for God's kingdom to come, we are praying for the Kingdom of God to destroy Satan's kingdom, which is the story of redemptive history between the Garden of Eden (**Genesis**), the Cross of Christ (**Matthew/Mark/Luke/John**), and the New Jerusalem (**Revelation**).

Psalm 68:1 celebrates God arising to scatter His enemies and deliver His people.

God shall arise, his enemies shall be scattered; and those who hate him shall flee before him! (ESV)

The wider psalm recalls God's victorious presence with Israel, His care for the vulnerable, and His dwelling among His people. His victory establishes blessing, not merely the removal of opposition.

You ascended on high, leading a host of captives in your train and receiving gifts among men, even among the rebellious, that the LORD God may dwell there. (Psalm 68:18, ESV)

The victorious ascent and reception of gifts anticipate their fullest realization in Christ. Paul applies this passage to the ascended Christ and His provision for the church in **Ephesians 4:8**. The King Who conquers also supplies His people for faithful service.

Revelation 12:10-11 shows the decisive foundation of this victory.

And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death." (ESV)

Satan's accusations cannot overturn the saving work of the Lamb. Believers conquer through Christ's blood and their faithful testimony, even when faithfulness costs their lives. Their victory is not self-generated courage or immunity from suffering. It rests upon their crucified and risen Savior.

Satan remains active, but his activity cannot reverse Christ's accomplishment. We therefore resist deception, confess sin, and bear witness without panic or fascination with speculative spiritual warfare. When we ask God to rescue someone from unbelief, or to free us from a cherished sin, we are praying against Satan's dominion.

SECOND, we pray for the advancement of the kingdom of grace. Christ presently reigns as the exalted King. He gathers and governs His people through His Word and Spirit, bringing sinners to faith and preserving believers in holiness.

Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you, and that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men. For not all have faith.
(2 Thessalonians 3:1-2, ESV)

Paul asks for prayer that the Lord's Word will spread rapidly and be honored. Gospel advance is not merely wider distribution of religious information. The message is honored when people receive it as God's truth and submit to Christ.

This gives specificity to congregational prayer. Pray that our elders explain Scripture faithfully, that hearers receive it with repentance and faith, and that the Gospel finds open doors and attentive listeners. The kingdom advances through God's appointed means, especially gospel proclamation, prayer, and the church's ministry, not primarily through political conquest or cultural dominance.

Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. (Romans 10:1, ESV)

Paul's desire for Israel becomes earnest prayer for salvation. Confidence in God's sovereign grace does not make intercession unnecessary. It gives us reason to ask Him to accomplish what human persuasion cannot: bring sinners to saving faith. Name unbelieving relatives and neighbors before God, and seek opportunities to speak to them about Christ.

The catechism also teaches us to pray that we and others be kept within Christ's kingdom.

And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth. "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me." (John 17:19-21, ESV)

Jesus consecrates Himself to His saving mission for His people's sanctification. He is not becoming morally pure; He is already sinless. His concern extends to those who will believe through the apostles' word. Their salvation and holiness depend upon His work and continuing care.

Conversion and perseverance are gifts of grace, not autonomous achievements. God preserves His people through means that include the Word, prayer, fellowship, and pastoral care. We should therefore pray for struggling believers and help them remain engaged in the life of the church.

Visible congregations serve Christ's kingdom, but attendance and membership figures do not reveal infallibly who has been regenerated. We seek genuine conversion and growing faithfulness, not impressive numbers alone.

THIRD, we pray that the kingdom of glory may be hastened. The present kingdom of grace is real, but it is not the final state. Christians still battle sin, bury loved ones, and suffer opposition. Christ's present reign assures us that these sorrows will end.

> *He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!*
> *(Revelation 22:20, ESV)*

The church answers Christ's promise with longing for His return. We await the resurrection, final judgment, the complete removal of sin and death, and everlasting fellowship with God in the new creation. Our hope is not that the church must first construct an earthly golden age. Our hope is Christ Himself coming to complete His work.

Asking Him to come does not revise God's eternal decree. We pray for the fulfillment of His promise, knowing that He appoints prayer among His means. This hope encourages present faithfulness rather than speculation about dates.

We may rightly desire relief from suffering, but our deepest longing reaches further: that Christ be openly honored, His people perfected, and every enemy finally subdued. The second petition thus serves the first. The kingdom comes ***so that*** God's name is glorified.

Conclusion

The opening petitions reorder Christian prayer around God's honor. His holiness does not depend upon our recognition, yet we ask that His revealed excellence be acknowledged everywhere. His kingdom is already advancing through Christ's victorious reign, yet we await its consummation. Our needs belong ***within*** these greater purposes, not ***outside*** them.

108. ***What is the 1st petition?*** We ask God to enable us and others to glorify Him and to order all things for His glory. His eternal excellence is the supreme end of worship, conduct, and providence.
109. ***What is the 2nd petition?*** We ask for Satan's kingdom to be destroyed, Christ's kingdom of grace to advance, and His kingdom of glory to come. The victorious Savior gathers, preserves, and finally perfects His people, defeating and judging those who reject Him.

Take This Lesson With You

1. Before presenting a pressing need this week, name one way you desire God to be honored through it. Ask for ***obedience*** as well as ***relief***.
2. In personal or family prayer, name an unbeliever, a struggling Christian, and a gospel ministry. Ask specifically for conversion, perseverance, and faithful proclamation.
3. When grief or opposition weighs heavily, ask Christ to return and complete His victory. Then identify the next faithful duty His Word places before you, either to pray for or to do.

The King Who shed His blood now reigns and will return.
Pray for His kingdom to come, so that His name is honored throughout His creation.