

### Part III: Gratitude: The Lord's Prayer: LORD'S DAY 45

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#### Q & A 116: Why do Christians need to pray?

Because prayer is the most important part  
of the thankfulness God requires of us.<sup>1</sup>  
And also because God gives his grace and Holy Spirit  
only to those who pray continually and groan inwardly,  
asking God for these gifts  
and thanking him for them.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ps. 50:14-15; 116:12-19; 1 Thess. 5:16-18

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 7:7-8; Luke 11:9-13

#### Q & A 117: How does God want us to pray so that he will listen to us?

First, we must pray from the heart  
to no other than the one true God,  
who has revealed himself in his Word,  
asking for everything he has commanded us to ask for.<sup>1</sup>

Second, we must acknowledge our need and misery,  
hiding nothing,  
and humble ourselves in his majestic presence.<sup>2</sup>

Third, we must rest on this unshakable foundation:  
even though we do not deserve it,  
God will surely listen to our prayer  
because of Christ our Lord.  
That is what he promised us in his Word.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ps. 145:18-20; John 4:22-24; Rom. 8:26-27; James 1:5; 1 John 5:14-15

<sup>2</sup> 2 Chron. 7:14; Ps. 2:11; 34:18; 62:8; Isa. 66:2; Rev. 4

<sup>3</sup> Dan. 9:17-19; Matt. 7:8; John 14:13-14; 16:23; Rom. 10:13; James 1:6

#### Q & A 118: What did God command us to pray for?

Everything we need, spiritually and physically,<sup>1</sup>  
as embraced in the prayer  
Christ our Lord himself taught us.

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<sup>1</sup> James 1:17; Matt. 6:33

# The Heidelberg Catechism

## Q & A 116-129



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### **Q & A 119: What is this prayer?**

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done  
    on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our debts,  
    as we also have forgiven our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
    but deliver us from the evil one.  
For yours is the kingdom  
    and the power  
    and the glory forever.  
Amen.<sup>1\*</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4

\* Earlier and better manuscripts of Matthew 6 omit the words "For yours is . . . Amen."

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#### Q & A 120: Why did Christ command us to call God "our Father"?

At the very beginning of our prayer  
Christ wants to kindle in us  
what is basic to our prayer –  
the childlike awe and trust  
that God through Christ has become  
our Father.

Our fathers do not refuse us  
the things of this life;  
God our Father will even less refuse to give us  
what we ask in faith.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. 7:9-11; Luke 11:11-13

#### Q & A 121: Why the words "in heaven"?

These words teach us  
not to think of God's heavenly majesty  
as something earthly,<sup>1</sup>  
and to expect everything  
for body and soul  
from his almighty power.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jer. 23:23-24; Acts 17:24-25

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 6:25-34; Rom. 8:31-32

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#### Q & A 122: What does the first request mean?

*"Hallowed be your name"* means,

Help us to really know you,<sup>1</sup>  
to bless, worship, and praise you  
for all your works  
and for all that shines forth from them:  
your almighty power, wisdom, kindness,  
justice, mercy, and truth.<sup>2</sup>

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 praised.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jer. 9:23-24; 31:33-34; Matt. 16:17; John 17:3

<sup>2</sup> Ex. 34:5-8; Ps. 145; Jer. 32:16-20; Luke 1:46-55, 68-75; Rom. 11:33-36

<sup>3</sup> Ps. 115:1; Matt. 5:16

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#### Q & A 123: What does the second request mean?

"*Your kingdom come*" means,  
Rule us by your Word and Spirit in such a way  
that more and more we submit to you.<sup>1</sup>

Keep your church strong, and add to it.<sup>2</sup>

Destroy the devil's work;  
destroy every force which revolts against you  
and every conspiracy against your Word.<sup>3</sup>

Do this until your kingdom is so complete and perfect  
that in it you are  
all in all.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ps. 119:5, 105; 143:10; Matt. 6:33

<sup>2</sup> Ps. 122:6-9; Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:42-47

<sup>3</sup> Rom. 16:20; 1 John 3:8

<sup>4</sup> Rom. 8:22-23; 1 Cor. 15:28; Rev. 22:17, 20

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### Part III: Gratitude: The Lord's Prayer: LORD'S DAY 49

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#### Q & A 124: What does the third request mean?

*"Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven"* means,

Help us and all people  
to reject our own wills  
and to obey your will without any back talk.  
Your will alone is good.<sup>1</sup>

Help us one and all to carry out the work we are called to,<sup>2</sup>  
as willingly and faithfully as the angels in heaven.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. 7:21; 16:24-26; Luke 22:42; Rom. 12:1-2; Tit. 2:11-12

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. 7:17-24; Eph. 6:5-9

<sup>3</sup> Ps. 103:20-21

# The Heidelberg Catechism

## Q & A 116-129



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### Part III: Gratitude: The Lord's Prayer: LORD'S DAY 50

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#### Q & A 125: What does the fourth request mean?

"Give us today our daily bread" means,

Do take care of all our physical needs<sup>1</sup>  
so that we come to know  
that you are the only source of everything good,<sup>2</sup>  
and that neither our work and worry  
nor your gifts  
can do us any good without your blessing.<sup>3</sup>

And so help us to give up our trust in creatures  
and to put trust in you alone.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ps. 104:27-30; 145:15-16; Matt. 6:25-34

<sup>2</sup> Acts 14:17; 17:25; James 1:17

<sup>3</sup> Deut. 8:3; Ps. 37:16; 127:1-2; 1 Cor. 15:58

<sup>4</sup> Ps. 55:22; 62; 146; Jer. 17:5-8; Heb. 13:5-6

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## Q & A 116-129



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### Part III: Gratitude: The Lord's Prayer: LORD'S DAY 51

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#### Q & A 126: What does the fifth request mean?

*"Forgive us our debts,  
as we also have forgiven our debtors"* means,

Because of Christ's blood,  
do not hold against us, poor sinners that we are,  
any of the sins we do  
or the evil that constantly clings to us.<sup>1</sup>

Forgive us just as we are fully determined,  
as evidence of your grace in us,  
to forgive our neighbors.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ps. 51:1-7; 143:2; Rom. 8:1; 1 John 2:1-2

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 6:14-15; 18:21-35

### Part III: Gratitude: The Lord's Prayer: LORD'S DAY 52

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#### Q & A 127: What does the sixth request mean?

*"And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from the evil one"* means,

By ourselves we are too weak  
to hold our own even for a moment.<sup>1</sup>

And our sworn enemies –  
the devil,<sup>2</sup> the world,<sup>3</sup> and our own flesh –<sup>4</sup>  
never stop attacking us.

And so, Lord,  
uphold us and make us strong  
with the strength of your Holy Spirit,  
so that we may not go down to defeat  
in this spiritual struggle,<sup>5</sup>  
but may firmly resist our enemies  
until we finally win the complete victory.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ps. 103:14-16; John 15:1-5

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. 11:14; Eph. 6:10-13; 1 Pet. 5:8

<sup>3</sup> John 15:18-21

<sup>4</sup> Rom. 7:23; Gal. 5:17

<sup>5</sup> Matt. 10:19-20; 26:41; Mark 13:33; Rom. 5:3-5

<sup>6</sup> 1 Cor. 10:13; 1 Thess. 3:13; 5:23

#### Q & A 128: What does your conclusion to this prayer mean?

*"For yours is the kingdom  
and the power  
and the glory forever"* means,

We have made all these requests of you  
because, as our all-powerful king,  
you not only want to,  
but are able to give us all that is good;<sup>1</sup>  
and because your holy name,  
and not we ourselves,  
should receive all the praise, forever.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Rom. 10:11-13; 2 Pet. 2:9

<sup>2</sup> 2 Ps. 115:1; John 14:13

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### **Q & A 129: What does that little word "Amen" express?**

"*Amen*" means,

This is sure to be!

It is even more sure  
that God listens to my prayer,  
than that I really desire  
what I pray for.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Isa. 65:24; 2 Cor. 1:20; 2 Tim. 2:13