

OUR FATHER

The love God has for us is the unconditional, intimate, all-encompassing love of a father. In naming who He is, God shows who we are. If God is our Father, then we are His sons and daughters. We are then invited to come to God with child-like trust and to love as He loves. Jesus taught us to use the word “our.” The Good News is for us, for everyone. In the rest of the prayer, we use the word “us.” This prayer excludes no one. God’s love and Fatherhood are for us all.

WHO ART IN HEAVEN

God is not distant and “Our Father” is not ‘elsewhere.’ We are all moving towards our final home in our Father’s house — not a place in the way we often imagine, but a state of grace, joy, and true peace. It is there that God resides and where He invites us to be with Him both now and for eternity.

HALLOWED BY THY NAME

Throughout Scripture, there is an ongoing emphasis on God being close to us, invested in us, and deeply personal. The word *hallow* means to revere, honor, respect, to make holy. We have the privilege to know God’s name and to call on Him. When we pray the Lord’s Prayer, we acknowledge the holiness of God’s name. And we also pray that we might hallow His name through our lives.

THY KINGDOM COME, THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN

We learn to be open to the will of God and build His kingdom on earth through prayer. Each time we pray the Lord’s Prayer, we ask God to guide the surrender of our will and place our trust completely in Him. In desiring God’s will above our own, we let go of our control. It is only after our surrender that we become more ourselves than ever. Only then can we love as God does and allow His kingdom to flourish.

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD

Now we enter into the second half of the Our Father, in which we petition God for His help. Jesus calls us to find peace in trusting him to provide for us every single day, just as he did the Israelites. God desires us to be fully present, not looking backward in regret or forward in anxiety, but to love and serve where we are here and now. In John chapter 6, Jesus declares, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never thirst.”

AND FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES, AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US

The first part of this petition is conditional on the second: to be forgiven, we must forgive. When we fail to recognize and pass on the forgiveness God has given us, we move ourselves and others away from God. We are only able to forgive because we ourselves have been forgiven. Jesus shows us how and gives us strength to do as he did by forgiving us first. By including this petition in the Lord’s prayer, Jesus reminds us that we cannot give our heart fully to God if there is any animosity towards others in it.

AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPATION BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL

The wording of this petition is confusing due to the difficulty of translating the original Greek into English. It can sound like we are asking God not to lead us into temptation, but God can't tempt us against Himself. On the contrary, God wants to set us free from evil. So, in this petition, we ask God not to let us take the path that leads to sin. We turn to God and ask him to help us distinguish between His voice and the voices that try to lead us away from him.

AMEN

Meaning, "so be it," when we declare "amen," we are saying that we believe and mean everything we just prayed for.