

—Westminster Shorter Catechism—  
*Lesson 57—What do we pray for in the first petition? Q. 101*

As we mentioned last week in our study of the preface to this prayer, *to manifest His own glory* is the one purpose of God in all His works and revelations, *and to glorify Him* is the chief end of man.

So it's not surprising to find that *the first petition* and therefore *priority in all our prayers to God* is to be the prayer that the *name* of the Father would be hallowed or glorified, both *by Himself and His providence* as God, *by us* as His children, *and by all men and events* as His creatures in the world.

Boston, "This is the first of all put into our mouths, because of all things it should be nearest our hearts. God's glory is his own end in all his works, and it ought to be ours."

- I. Not our names, but God's alone is to be praised, adored, hallowed, and glorified, Ps 155.1; Ps 103; Jer 48.14-26, 40-44.
- II. God's name includes all that declares or reveals who and what He is, cf. WLC 111-114; WSC 53-56. Calvin, "God's name is not made up of letters and syllables." No word or name is sufficient to fully express who or what He is.
  - A. His names, Ps 29.2; Dt 10.20.
  - B. His titles, Mt 6.9; Gen 22.14.
  - C. His attributes, Lev 10.3; 1Chr 29.10-13; Rev 15.3-4.
  - D. His ordinances, Acts 2.42; 1Cor 11.27-28; 2Tim 3.16; Isa 58.13-14; Ex 20.7-11.
  - E. His Word, Ps 138.2; 2Tim 3.16; Rev 22.18-19.
  - F. His works, Ps 107.21-22; 50.15; Rev 4.11.
- III. What does it mean to *hallow*?
  - A. Things are hallowed by setting them apart for a holy purpose, like the things in the temple, the bread and wine in the sacrament, the Sabbath, or Christ Himself, Ex 20.8-11; Jn 10.36. Only God can do that.
  - B. Things are hallowed by changing them from unholy to holy, like an unbeliever being sanctified or set apart to God as holy, 1Cor 6.11; Ps 4.3; Rom 1.1. Only God can do that.
  - C. Things are hallowed by acknowledging, praising, and reflecting the holiness that it possesses—and this is what we pray for, Ezk 38.23; 2Sam 7.26; Ps 34.3; 66.2; 138.5; Lk 1.46; 1Pet 3.15.
- IV. What, then, are we praying for?
  - A. First of all, we're asking that God, by His overruling providence and omnipresent Spirit, hallow His own name and glory Himself in the church and in the world, Jn 12.28; Ps 83.17-18.
    1. His name is blasphemed among men. The devil and his fallen angels oppose good and right and truth at every turn. His creation is defiled with sin. His church is polluted with weakness and imperfection. His providence is denied. His plan of salvation is ridiculed. His Son and His everlasting gospel are rejected. And His church is persecuted.
    2. In this prayer we're asking that He might arise and vindicate His glorious, holy, and majestic name.
  - B. Furthermore, we're asking that God might grant us the grace to know Him rightly in His Word and works so that we may be enabled to acknowledge, praise, and declare all His virtues in our thoughts, words, and deeds.
    1. We're asking that the grace of reverence and godly fear and awe might be implanted in all men's hearts, and especially in our own, Phil 4.13; Gal 2.20.
    2. We're asking to be protected from a profane and irreverent mind. A profane mind is a mind without reverence, without the fear of God, without humility, without a sense of sin and guilt and shame, and consequently, without any sense of God's existence or nearness either in grace or judgment. A profane mind is a hard, secular, undevout, irreligious mind.

3. When we pray this prayer, we're asking to be saved from the dominion of such an unholy and unblessed state of mind. Because a profane mind, which sees God in nothing, leads to profane speech, which speaks of God as little to nothing, and finally to a profane life, which lives as if God were not God and did not see or take into account what we think, feel, say, and do, Ps 1.
- C. When we pray for the grace to glorify God, we're implicitly confessing our utter inability and impotence to glorify God without His gracious help. Left to ourselves, we'll seek our own glory, seek to rob God of His glory, promote our own name, word, and works.
  1. We're simply not able to glorify God—in either thought, affection, word, or deed, without His help, Jn 15.5; Rom 3.18; 2Tim 3.1-5; Phil 3.18-19.
  2. When we pray this prayer, we're acknowledging our duty (1Cor 10.31) and asking for the grace to do it, 2Cor 3.5. Let us rejoice that whatever the Lord seeks from us, He's also pleased to give us, Phil 2.12-13.

### **Inferences**

- I. If we're to hallow God's name, then we must know and meditate upon the revelation of Himself in His Word, works, and ordinances. We should fervently pray Ps 25.4; 119.27.
- II. If we dishonor God with a life of sin, then we pray in vain—and to His great displeasure—that His name be hallowed.
  - A. Therefore, as those who pray this prayer and long to see it answered, let us bewail and grieve over our sins against God and His name and for all the glory that He's lost because of us.
- III. The chief request of this prayer is that we might be enabled to glorify God in our life. When we understand that, it directly affects all the petitions which follow. If we sincerely desire to hallow God's name, then it'll directly affect all else that we pray for and all else that we do after prayer.
  - A. Therefore let us give ourselves to the practice of this duty, mindful that it is the chief end and purpose of our creation. Indeed all men will glorify God—one way or another. If we don't glorify Him as an act of worship, then He will get His glory from us under acts of judgment. So let us make it our chief business of our lives to glorify God, that we may come to enjoy Him forever.
- IV. Let us not forget that *worship* has been instituted by God to create, develop, cultivate, and discipline this grace of glorifying God's name among God's people.
  - A. *Worship* is designed to discipline us to stand in awe of God, to reverence Him, to silence our hearts and pride before Him and humbly and thankfully acknowledge Him alone as God, our God. When *worship* (private worship and especially weekly Sabbath worship) has its due effect on us, we'll enjoy the grace of being able to go forth in all our duties in the world living always in the fear of God and before the face of God (*coram Deo*).