

Day Three

"Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. 'Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. 'Give us this day our daily bread. 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen'
-Matthew 6:9-13

Our Father

Our prayers are directed to God the Father. It is worthy of note that the term "Our" is used and not 'my' here. For He is not the God you alone, but The God of all who dwell on earth, above and below.

Matthew Henry, in his commentary relates this prayer as if one would address a letter heaven sent. With salutations beginning and end, and even the date, "*This day*".

We are not to think that our prayers would be addressed to angels or to the saints. For nowhere in scripture is this authorized. In fact, we are warned against such elevations of angels or men. Our prayers rise to God alone.

It is at this point that we must approach the subject on the most elementary of levels as to who are the children of God. It is not a haughty attitude that includes or excludes who may be a child of God. In all things we must yield to God's Word, The Bible for clarification and enlightenment.

It was a common belief of the Jews that God did not hear the prayers of sinners. "*We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears him.* -John 9:31. We may even believe this ourselves. If it is so, then we have a problem with Cornelius the Roman Centurion. But, does the Bible bear this out? *And fixing his gaze on him and being much alarmed, he said, "What is it, Lord?" And he said to him, "Your prayers and alms have ascended as a memorial before God.* -Acts 10:4.

I would not pretend to tell God whom He may or may not hear. Yet, we must make a distinction in the prayers of men that rise to God and for what purpose they are heaven sent. If we

address God as our Father, then in this is implied a relationship as a child. Paul tells us about the adoption that we have received through Christ. *He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.* -Ephesians 1:5-6. Other verses refer to the adoption we now have in Christ, as many who have obeyed Him by faith. *John 1:12, John 11:52, Romans 8:14-17, Romans 8:23, 2 Corinthians 6:18, Galatians 4:5-6, Hebrews 12:5-9, I John 3:1, Revelation 21:7.*

Just as believing in God involves more than just the mere mental assertion that a 'higher power' exists, (*And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.* -Hebrews 11:6) So, it may very well be applied to our word "hear". God "hears" everything. But, we must make a distinction now of that which God accepts. For if our prayers are not given in obedience, then we must recognize that God will not "hear" those prayers.

For, it was Jesus Himself who told us, "*I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.* -John 14:6 We use this in reference to salvation. The path to the Father must lead through Christ. Our prayers also must come through Christ.

- *always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;* -Ephesians 5:20
- *Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.* - Colossians 3:17
- *Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.* - Hebrews 13:15
- *you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.* -1 Peter 2:5

Prayerful Thoughts: We come to Thee, our Father through Thy Son.....