

God's Prayer Request

Have you ever noticed how much our prayer requests center on the physical? I looked back over the last 100 requests that were on our church prayer chain and 96 of them were for illnesses.

Now don't misunderstand, I believe that God wants us to bring requests for all things to Him. We live in physical bodies in a physical world, it's only natural that we'd pray for people we love who are hospitalized or seriously ill.

But I wonder if sometimes our prayer life gets a little out of focus. To see if we can shapen our focus a bit I'd like us to look at the prayer request of someone that we don't often think of as having any requests. That's God.

That's kind of strange, isn't it? We direct our prayers to God. He's the almighty, all knowing, sustainer of the universe. Why would God have a prayer request?

What does God need? God can do what He wants. He can have what He wants. There's even a Psalm in the Old Testament that clearly expresses the fact that God doesn't really need the help of people like us.

Psalm 50 says: *Hear, O My people, and I will speak, O Israel, and I will testify against you; I am God, your God! For every beast of the forest is Mine, And the cattle on a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the mountains, And the wild beasts of the field are Mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell you; For the world is Mine, and all its fullness.* Psalm 50:7, 10-12

That's the God of the Bible speaking , *the world is Mine, and all its fullness.* But It's that God that asks us to pray for Him.

Now, maybe you didn't know that God asks us to pray for Him. I want you to see it in the Bible.

Turn to Matthew 6 page 853

Jesus was God incarnate. That means that He was God who took on humanity. As God He was the second person of the trinity. As Jesus of Nazareth He was a human being like you and me.

In the Gospels Jesus is called "The Son of Man" eighty four times. It was His favorite title to describe Himself.

Jesus walked this earth as a human being. He had a nature like ours except for one difference. He was sinless. He came to die as the perfect sacrifice for our sins, but He came for something else too. He came to show us what it would be like for a human being to be totally dependent on the Father in heaven. Because of that Jesus prayed to the Father.

In Luke 11, which is the parallel passage to Matthew 6, Luke tells us the disciples actually asked for a lesson on prayer. *One of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."* Luke 11:1

Now remember these guys knew how to pray. They knew the basics. Jewish boys learned their prayers at home and in the synagogue. They had special formalized prayers they would say. But Jesus prayed so often and so meaningfully that I believe that their question was for more than just a description of a prayer--an outline. They wanted to know how to make the connection with God. How do you make prayer meaningful?

Notice, they didn't say, "Teach us to preach" or "Teach us to do more miracles." They said teach us to pray. Even though they have travelled with Jesus for over two years. Even though they knew their Jewish memorized prayers, they saw how their prayer life was still lacking. They saw how vitally important prayer is.

So they said, "Lord, teach us to pray... Teach us to really communicate with the Father. Teach us to reproduce what we see in Your life."

Look how Jesus starts . **Read verse 9**

Stop right there. Look at the very first thing Jesus mentions. Jesus taught us to pray that God's name will be hallowed. We're to pray to our Father in heaven and the first thing we're to ask Him for is that His name will be hallowed.

We don't start off asking for ourselves. We're to ask for something for God: "Hallowed be Your name." Jesus who is God incarnate instructs us to pray first of all for Him, for His name.

Isn't it kind of strange that God asks us to pray for Him?
I. God Asks Us To Pray That His Name Would Be Honored

The NKJV translators have stuck with the old term, hallowed, probably because it's what people are so used to when they pray the Lord's Prayer.

The only other time we use the word “hallowed” these days is in halloween, and its meaning there has changed to be exactly the opposite of what it originally meant.

Halloween is short for Hallowed Eve. It used to be an important date in the church calendar. It was the night before the feast of all saints, when all Christian believers who had died and gone to heaven were remembered.

The Lord's Prayer is the model prayer, the example prayer, and it's supposed to make our lives different, and our prayers different. So we need to know what we are saying when we say it. We need to know what hallowed means.

One of the few other times we ever run across the word “hallowed” is in Abraham Lincoln's “Gettysburg Address.”

He said, “We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate - we cannot consecrate - we cannot hallow - this ground.”

What Lincoln was saying was that the battlefield on which they were meeting had been dedicated, consecrated, made sacred, by the brave men who had spilled their blood on that field.

So it was a field to be set apart. It was worthy of the serious, almost reverent attention of anyone who visited it. The field of Gettysburg was hallowed ground.

So when we pray that the name of God will be hallowed, we're praying that the name of God will receive the glory and the praise, the holy, reverent attention of all people everywhere. We're praying that God's name would be honored above all.

This is prayer for the glory of God - that God would be glorified by all people.

Now think about that. Why is the glory of God the subject of the first request of the prayer that Jesus taught us to pray? It's because the glory of God has to be our primary concern, the glory of God has to be our central interest.

What are here for? Why did God create us in the first place?

For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Romans 11:36

For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and

for Him. Colossians 1:6

Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. I Corinthians 10:31

I. God Asks Us To Pray That His Name Would Be Honored

II. God's Name Should Be Honored By Every Aspect Of Our Life

We're here by God and for God. The reason life can seem so empty at times is because we try to live it for us. So many times we make life about us instead of about God and the result is we're not fulfilling our created purpose.

We're here to honor the name of God. That's the reason we were created in the first place.

The point of view of the Lord's Prayer is totally different from the ordinary point of view that prevails in our world. Many people believe in God, but for them God's like an afterthought. They pay attention to Him when they're sick in trouble. That's not all bad. God wants us to call on Him in the day of trouble.

But the Biblical view of man is that human beings are supposed to be thinking about God all the time, and they are supposed to be doing everything in order to bring honor and praise and worship to God.

Just think how our lives would be changed and the quality of our society would be improved if people were thinking about God first of all, and dedicating themselves to praising Him with their lives.

You can't cheat on income tax, or goof off at work, or hate your neighbor, or sleep with your secretary to the glory of God.

When Jesus tells us to pray that the name of God will be hallowed, He is telling us to pray that the great revelation of God needs to be proclaimed and published everywhere.

The idea of God's name as it appears in the Bible is directly related to God's great revelation of Himself. All through the Old Testament, God revealed Himself to His chosen people, the children of Israel, by using special names that expressed certain elements of His character.

The most profound name of God found in the Bible is Jehovah which God used when He revealed His willingness to enter into a loving, saving, covenant arrangement with His people. Exodus 6 shows how the revelation of God expressed in the names He used finally came to fullest power when He told Moses His servant that His name was Jehovah. Exodus

6:2, 3 *And God spoke to Moses and said to him: "I am the LORD. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name LORD I was not known to them."*

Most of our English translations let us know what Hebrew words were being used for God by the way they capitalize them. When you see the word LORD in all caps you know that the Hebrew word is Jehovah or YAWEH.

YAWEH comes from the Hebrew verb *hayah* which means "to be." Jehovah God is the eternal, self-sufficient one who is.

Ultimately the name of God is revealed fully in the name that was given to the person who taught us the words of the Lord's prayer. His name is Jesus Christ. The name Jesus Christ is revelation of the gracious character of the God whose name we pray will be hallowed.

When Jesus was about to be born, an angel appeared to Joseph His adoptive father and said, *And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.* (Matthew 1:21).

The name Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew *Yehoshua*. *Yehoshua* literally means "Jehovah is Savior."

The name Christ that Jesus carried was simply the Greek form of the Hebrew word Messiah which meant "the anointed one." Jesus had been anointed by the Holy Spirit to perform a work of redemption that's the revelation, the completion of this salvation.

Isn't it absolutely astonishing that God asks us to pray for Him? God wants us to pray that His gospel might be heard throughout the world and that all people everywhere will turn to Him in faith and will live each day honoring His name. That's the request that should start all of our prayers.

That's the agenda that should eclipse everything else in our lives. ,That's the agenda that should set the tone for all of the rest of our prayers.

I. God Asks Us To Pray That His Name Would Be Honored

II. God's Name Should Be Honored By Every Aspect Of Our Life

III. As God's Name Is Honored Our Lives Become Meaningful And Significant

If you pray this prayer, and you really mean it and really understand it, it'll revolutionize your life. Understanding this prayer, "Hallowed be Your name" can turn your life right side up. It can give you new freedom.

It can give you new purpose. It can give you new happiness. How?

First of all, anyone who prays “Hallowed be Your name” and who really understands what they’re asking for, is someone who has a living relationship with the God who asks them to pray for Him this way.

If you pray sincerely that God may be glorified and praised and hallowed and honored, then you must be a person who has already made God the center of your life. If I pray this prayer it means that I want God to be the center of my life and I want to live in such a way that I serve Him.

Are you the kind of person who can pray this prayer? This means that you believe in Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. The name of God is hallowed by those who have seen the fullness of His grace and love in Jesus Christ who reveals God perfectly.

He, as the only begotten Son of God who was in the bosom of the Father and who now rules with Him at God's right hand, is the person who must become the center of our attention and our worship. Without Jesus Christ, the word of God becomes empty and meaningless.

Ideas about God that aren't centered in Jesus Christ are worthless. Jesus is the one who has proclaimed the name of God to the people that He invites to address God as their Father in heaven.

I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You.
(Hebrews 2:12)

Nothing is more life changing than to know that we've been given eternal life through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Before we can pray “Hallowed be Your name” meaningfully, we have to glorify God by keeping His greatest commandment. I John 3:23 *And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.*

It's impossible to honor God's name unless we honor His Son by faith. Listen to Jesus' own words: *For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.* John 5:23

You really can't pray “Hallowed be Your name” unless you've confessed your sin and asked God to forgive you for Jesus' sake.

Have you ever done that? Have you ever confessed that you are a sinner? Do you know that what Jesus did on the cross is sufficient to pay for all your sins? Have you believed that Jesus Christ died and rose again for you?

You honor the Father by believing in His Son. When you do that you will be hallowing the name of God in your own life, and then you can pray that His name will be hallowed in the lives of other people too. Praying "Hallowed be Your name" can revolutionize your life. It can lead you to salvation.

Here's another way it can revolutionize your life.

When a person begins to realize that God actually teaches them to pray for God's cause - that God asks us to pray for God - they begin to see how important a person they are as a human being.

Christianity is a faith totally different from all the other religions of the world. It not only tells us how great God is, it tells us how great we are.

Follow this now, God who is so great that He's the creator of all things, that He's Jehovah, the great I Am, the self sufficient one, the God who said *If I were hungry, I would not tell you; For the world is Mine, and all its fullness.*, that God asks us to pray for Him. Why?

The answer to that questions is this: God created man in His own image and God wants man to be a part of His greatest work. God wants nothing more than to receive the glory and the praise that He deserves from His creation, but He wants to receive that glory and praise as a result of the prayers of His people.

God doesn't need us as if He was somehow incomplete and couldn't get along without us. God doesn't need us but He's chosen to include us in what He's doing. God commands us to pray for, and to be a part of, the hallowing of His name.

Wow. That just blows me away. It's absolutely astounding. But here it is in the Bible. It's a glorious thing to be a human being. It's a glorious thing to know that unlike all the other living things on the planet, we're made in God's image. It's a glorious thing to realize that God invites common, ordinary people like you and me to make our lives expressions of praise to Him.

The Bible tells us there's no honest human activity so small that it can't be rendered to God as a sacrifice of praise. The book of Colossians in the New Testament says this: *And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.* (Colossians 3:23, 24)

Listen. When we see that God is inviting us to be a part of God's own great work in our

world, our life becomes glorious and every day becomes sacred. School, work, raising kids, it's all part of how we serve God.

When you pray and work for the glory of God you discover that your own life is exalted in the process.

Praying "Hallowed be Your name" with understanding and faith can revolutionize your life - it can bring salvation, and it can provide you with exalted interests and concerns, and thirdly it can lift us out of ourselves.

When we come to God in prayer, we generally come with a bag full of concerns and worries and needs and they are all legitimate and understandable. But now think about how Matthew 6:9 turns this all upside down. God tells us that the first thing we're to pray for is that God may be glorified. The first thing on the list isn't us, it's God.

We read that and we're astounded. We think, wait a minute, doesn't God understand? He doesn't need our prayers. We don't have to learn how to pray like that. We need this thing and we need that to happen and we need this person we love to get better. That's what we're all caught up in.

And then suddenly we see that when the glory of God becomes our first concern everything else falls into place.

Look down the page at Matthew 6:33 Read

The reason that so many of us are frightened and concerned and nervous and tense is that we usually put the glory of God last in our thinking. When we don't prioritize God we turn our focus in on themselves. We become dissatisfied and unhappy and unfulfilled. Some of us may succeed in getting all kinds of possessions for ourselves. But in the end life is like a sack of sawdust.

Once we begin to pray and work for the hallowing of God's name, we begin to see everything in a radically different light. We become free. We're freed from the hardest taskmaster there is, and that's ourselves.

It is so simple. Jesus said, when you pray, begin by asking God. "Hallowed be Your name." Start by asking that you and your family and your brothers and sisters in Christ will learn to know Him and honor Him.

Guess who's asking for prayer. God is. And if you learn to pray for Him first, your prayers

will be effective and your life will be meaningful.