

# Prayer in the Shorter Catechism (12)

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[ 0 : 00 ] So I've often been transfixed at the beginning of a sermon, but by the end I'm almost nodding off, even when it's me that's preaching.

Likewise, there are times when I've struggled to get into a sermon as such, but by the end I'm transfixed. Usually it's when someone else is preaching. Well, the wonderful thing about the Lord's Prayer is that it never stops giving.

It starts well, keeps going well, and ends well. What more can you say about it? It's the best sermon I've ever heard, even if it isn't a sermon, but a prayer.

Having begun, our Father who is in heaven, it now ends with the memorable words, for yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Now, our fathers in Westminster back in the mid-17th century asked the question, what does the conclusion to the Lord's Prayer teach us, this last clause?

[ 1 : 12 ] And they answered, the conclusion to the Lord's Prayer, for yours is the kingdom, power and glory forever and ever. Amen. Now, we who are, Westminster Fathers, are great debt in helping us to get the most out of the Lord's Prayer.

This prayer the Lord modeled for us and taught us how to pray. And in this last answer, they open up for us the conclusion to the Lord's Prayer under three headings.

First, prayer and power. Second, prayer and praise. And third, prayer and persuasion. Now, let me say it again before we get into the meat.

The Lord's Prayer never stops giving. Our Heavenly Father and His supreme love for us is beginning, middle and end, front and centre of it all.

So the first thing the conclusion teaches us is about prayer and power. Prayer and power. You know, Christmas time when you've got children is really the most magical time of the year.

[ 2 : 43 ] And there are so many reasons why this should be so. But for me, one of the most obvious is the way in which it reminds me of my daily dependence upon God. Let me explain.

Every Christmas time, children approach their parents and ask them for money so they can buy their parents' presents. They've only got their pocket money.

So where do they get the money they need to buy presents for their parents? Well, the answer is they get it from their parents. Technically speaking, therefore, when parents open their presents from their children on Christmas morning, they're only getting from their children what they have already given to their children.

Now, we may not have thought of it this way before, but that's what our prayer life is exactly like. What do we give to God that we first did not receive from Him?

And that's the point our fathers are making in this last catechism answer. The conclusion to the Lord's Prayer teaches us to take our encouragement in prayer from God only.

[ 4 : 02 ] God gives us the grace we need to go in prayer to Him seeking more grace. God gives us the courage we need that we may go to Him in prayer seeking more courage.

God gives us the strength we need that we may go to Him in prayer seeking more strength. God gives us the grace we need to go to Him in prayer seeking more grace. As our loving heavenly Father, He gives us what we need in order that we may give Him the presence of our prayers. When we pray, yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory. De facto, we're admitting that we don't even have the ability to approach Him in prayer.

That He is divine. We are the branches. That without Him, we can do nothing. It's as His power and as His kingdom and as His glory course through our spiritual veins that we learn to and develop in prayer.

Now, I think we all know what's meant when we say there is power in prayer. The truth is there's no power in prayer at all because even the prayers we make to God for Him to show forth His power are prayers we make out of a sense of our own weakness and His power.

[ 5 : 31 ] In other words, we need His power to pray for His power. From the very beginning of our series of studies in prayer, we've been saying that we need God's help to pray.

To begin our prayers, not with ourselves, but with God. The Our Father who is in heaven, whose heavenly Father who supplies all our needs.

Yes, even our needs in prayer. This is the gospel. This is the complete gospel. That God gives us the faith we need to believe in Him and God gives us the prayers to pray to Him.

The complete package, the gospel. That's marvelous. Prayer and power. Secondly, this conclusion to the Lord's Prayer teaches us about prayer and praise.

Prayer and praise. For most of my Christian life, I've followed a pattern of prayer called ACTS, A-C-T-S. Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication.

[ 6 : 48 ] But that pattern isn't always good. It can be restrictive. And so, for example, here in the Lord's Prayer, we do not merely begin the prayer with praise, but we end it with praise also.

We end it by adoring our Father who is in heaven. Sorry, we begin by adoring our Father who is in heaven. We conclude by praising our heavenly Father for His everlasting kingdom, power, and glory.

It's good to begin our prayers by focusing our attention on the greatness of our Father. It sets the tone for our prayers.

But it's good to end our prayers by focusing our attention on the greatness of our Father because it sets the tone for the rest of our lives. When we were younger, probably not allowed to do this these days, we used to play something called the broomstick game.

It was rather dangerous looking back in reflection. The idea was that you held a broomstick on your chin and you held it upright and you looked at the head of the broom and you turned around quickly 10 or 20 times.

[ 8 : 06 ] And then you dropped the broom and try and run in a straight line to the finish. Now, of course, looking up and turning around would mean that you had lost all sense of orientation.

You didn't have a clue where you were. You lost all sense of direction and you ended up flat in your face when you were running. I suspect many of us play the broomstick game in prayer and in life. When we pray, we're dizzy. The world's turned us around and we don't know where we're headed. We need our Father's hand on our shoulders to calm us, to steady us, and to point us in the right direction.

And then we're ready to say amen at the end of our prayer. Again, sometimes we feel dizzy.

Because we know that when we rise from our knees, the world's going to turn us on our heads again.

And we're going to get confused once more. Again, we need our Father's hand on our shoulders to calm us, to steady us, and to keep us going in the right direction.

[ 9 : 13 ] And that is what praise in prayer achieves. We begin our prayers with praise because it focuses on what God can do through our prayers.

We conclude our prayers with praise because it helps us. It helps to focus us on what God can do in our lives. How God is able to help us overcome all the temptations we're going to face.

To meet all the challenges of that day and to live in a way that pleases Him. It's good to begin our prayers with praise. But perhaps it's even better to end our prayers with praise.

So, for what do we praise Him? His kingdom, His power, and His glory. His glory. The three great pillars of the majesty of God.

His kingdom, proclaimed and ushered in by His Son, Jesus Christ. His power, announced and enacted by His Son, Jesus Christ.

[ 10 : 23 ] His glory, revealed and exemplified by His Son, Jesus Christ. His glory, revealed and His glory, revealed and the glory, and the glory.

His glory, revealed and the glory. His glory, revealed and the glory. Everything is to Him, for Him, and from Him. Yes, for our prayers for His kingdom to come.

To our prayers for Him to deliver us from evil. For our prayers for Him to hallow His name. To our prayers for Him to forgive our debts.

We might come in prayer with a frown and heavy hearts. But keeping this focus on praise at the beginning and the end of our prayers may help us to leave our prayers with joyful hearts. And a smile on our faces even. Because there is nothing we can face in the day which our Heavenly Father's loving power cannot help us overcome.

[ 11 : 31 ] Nothing. He'll walk with us. He'll hold our hands through the day. We're going to experience that supporting hand of the unseen Father on our shoulders.

And His presence in our hearts. This is prayer. And this is praise. And once again, I say, it is absolutely marvellous.

Third and lastly, prayer and persuasion. Prayer and persuasion. Little words in the Bible are very important.

None more so than this little word at the end of the Lord's Prayer. Amen. Now, amen is actually an Aramaic word. Jesus would have used that word.

Which means true or faithful. Let it be so. So, when we use the word amen, what we're really saying is, I mean what I just said.

[ 12 : 36 ] I haven't just mouthed the words. I really want the things I prayed for to happen. The Father summarized it in this way.

We say amen in testimony of our desire and assurance to be heard. Amen is not a full stop at the end of our prayers.

A hundred years ago, and more, yes, messages sent by telegraph were divided into sentences, each concluding with the Morse code, stop.

Amen is not the first century equivalent of the word stop in Morse code. It is our desire and assurance of our prayers to be heard by our loving Heavenly Father.

It's our assurance that when we pray to our Father who is in Heaven, He will lovingly hear and powerfully answer us. It's our statement that when we pray for God's name to be hallowed, His kingdom to come, and His will to be done, it's God's name, not ours.

[ 13 : 48 ] God's kingdom, not ours. God's will, not ours. It's our persuasion that God really will give us our daily bread, and He will forgive our sins.

It's our determination to resist the devil in the grace of the gospel God gives. They say that words are cheap, and they may be right, but Amen isn't as much a word as it is an action.

It's our statement. It's our persuasion. It is our determination, our assurance to put into practice all we prayed for. You know, one of the things that I've often felt is lacking in our public prayer meetings is an audible Amen from us all at the end of prayers.

It's as we audibly say Amen that we are adding our consent and our approval to what has been prayed. Another person may have prayed the prayer, but by us saying Amen, we are saying, yes, I agree with that prayer.

That's what I want also. We're adding our desires to that person's desires and our persuasions to his. So he prayed for the mission of the gospel in Southeast Asia through our dear sister Katrina to prosper.

[ 15 : 16 ] By adding our audible Amen, we are publicly saying, yes, I agree. That's what my heart wants also. I want you, Lord, to bless Katrina's ministry also.

Or perhaps she's praying for a grieving someone in our congregation who has lost a loved one. By adding our audible Amen, we are publicly saying, that's what I also want for that person.

I want you, O Lord, to comfort her. But if we should say Amen, we better mean it.

It's not a superstitious hocus-pocus or abracadabra word. It doesn't work like that. So then, what better place to end our studies in the Lord's Prayer than here with the final Amen where we add our tiny voices to the bigger voice of the church universal, both on earth and in heaven, and the greatest voice of all, the voice of Jesus, as he not only taught us to pray in these ways, but he prayed in these ways himself.

Prayer and power, prayer and praise, prayer and persuasion, the three great pillars of the majesty of our Heavenly Father. What more can we end with than together, where you are, sitting on your couch, sitting on your chair, wherever you are, than together we say the words of this last verse together.

[ 16 : 59 ] For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen. Amen.