

—Westminster Shorter Catechism—

Lesson 63—*What does the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer teach us? Q. 107*

The *conclusion* of the Lord's Prayer teaches us that we're to plead our prayers to God with arguments or reasons *why* we pray to none but Him *and why* we hope that He'll hear us when we pray. And whatever reasons we find fit to use are all to be summed up in one thing, namely, *for His own sake*. We pray and petition God with boldness because we plead *nothing* for a motive but that He hear and answer us *for His own sake*.

We pray to be heard for God's own sake

- I. In teaching us to conclude our prayers in this way, Christ teaches us that all the arguments to support all our petitions are *in God Himself*.
 - A. If we're to be answered in the honoring of His name, it must be by the free exercise of His glory, Isa 37.35; 48.11; Ezk 36.19-27.
 - B. If we're to be answered in the furtherance of His Kingdom, it must be by the free exercise of His sovereignty, Gen 17.7; Ezk 16.62.
 - C. If we're to be answered in the accomplishment of His will, it must be by the free exercise of His purpose, Isa 46.10.
 - D. If we're to be answered with provision, it must be by the free exercise of His power, Mt 6.33; 1Pet 5.7.
 - E. If we're to be answered with pardon, it must be by the free exercise of His grace, Ps 130.4; Jer 31.34.
 - F. If we're to be answered with protection, it must be by the free exercise of His care, 1Pet 5.10; 2Cor 12.9.
- II. There's no reason at all we can give as to why God should answer us for our own sake, Gen 32.10; Ps 8.4; Rom 3.10, 23; Eph 2.1-3. The cause of all God's hearing and the cause of all our entreating is *in Himself alone*, Ex 32.11-14; Josh 7.7-9. And therefore we take our encouragement in prayer *from God alone*, who hears us for His own sake. "*What will you not do for your great name?*" is a standing plea for faith in every petition of the Lord's Prayer which can never be rejected.
 - A. Leighton, "Lord, I am most unworthy of all those things which I request of thee. But whatsoever I am, thou art a liberal and mighty King, and it is thy glory to do good freely. Therefore it is that I come unto thee. My necessities drive me to thee, and thy goodness draws me, and the more poor and wretched I am, the greater will be thy glory in helping me."
 - B. Hooker, "The knowledge of our own unworthiness is not without belief in the merits of Christ. With that true fear which the one causes, there is coupled true boldness and encouragement drawn from the other. The very silence that our unworthiness puts us into does itself make request for us, and that in the confidence of His grace. Looking *inward* we are stricken dumb; but *looking upward* we speak and prevail."
- III. Therefore we seal all our petitions with the *praise* and *acknowledgment* that we pray to Him alone for all we need *because* the Kingdom of sovereignty over all creation *is His*, *because* the power to do all we ask and more *is His*, and *because* what we seek in all our petitions whatsoever is that *He* be glorified in the answers to them, and *because He alone is God* forever and ever, Dan 9.17-19.
 - A. Leighton, "Other kings and kingdoms there be, but they are as nothing, they deserve not the naming in comparison of thine. They are but kings of little mole-hills to the bounds of thy Kingdom."
 - B. "It is a thing of very great importance for us to have our hearts established in the belief of these things... to know that the Kingdom is the Lord's, that He sovereignly rules the world and all things in it, and particularly the great affairs of the church; that He is the mighty God and therefore that there is no power or wisdom or counsel of men able to prevail against Him; and that in these things wherein glory seems to suffer for the present, it shall gain and be advanced in the closure."

- C. Always remember to praise God in your prayers. Boston, “Never bow a knee unto God for supplicating a mercy from Him, without praising Him for what mercies you already enjoy. This is a very promising way of obtaining the requests you make at the throne of grace in the confidence of faith.”

IV. *Amen.*

- A. In this one word, all the requests made in prayer to our God concenter. It means *so be it*, and we add it to our prayers because we’re sure and confident that the requests we’ve asked shall be granted.
1. Being confident that the promises of God which guide our prayers are true, the promise of God to hear and answer us is true, and the Name by which we approach Him is our entrance to His heart and decree, we pray in the faith that we have been heard and in the sure hope that we shall be answered.
 2. The same faith which lends its ear to the Word of God in silence to hear is the faith which verbally lends its consent to it in an “Amen” to consent. Let us therefore beware of using “Amen” superficially at the end of our prayers.
- B. Leighton, “This is the advantage of faith, that it quiets and establishes the heart in God. Whatsoever be its estate and desire, when once he has put his petition into God’s hand, he rests content in holy security and assurance concerning the answer, refers it to the wisdom and love of God, how and when He will answer, not doubting that whatsoever it be, and whensoever, it shall both be gracious and seasonable. But the reason why so few of us find that sweetness and comfort that be in prayer is because the true nature and use of [faith] is so little known.”

Inferences

- I. Hodge, “This concludes the Catechism. Having completed the whole circle of theology, it brings us back to the point from which we started, as we pray that in us may be accomplished man’s chief end, which is *to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.*”
- II. Leighton, “This conclusion is the line under which all our prayers ought to move. All our requests are to be conformed to it and are certainly out of their way when they decline and wander from it. And if we observe it, we may clearly perceive it as a circular line... It begins and ends in the same point, the glory of that God to whom we pray and who is the God who hears prayer. In that point the prayer begins, and here ends in it, so that our requests that concern ourselves are cast in the middle, that all our desires may move within this circle. Though the things we pray for concern ourselves, yet they are not to terminate in ourselves, but in Him who is Alpha and Omega, so that we desire not only the blessings of this life, but the blessedness of the life to come, more for His glory than for our own good.”