

Sabbath School

Topic: How to Argue with God

Date: 3/21/21

WLC 196

Q. 196. What doth the conclusion of the Lord's prayer teach us?

A. The conclusion of the Lord's prayer (which is, For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.),[1] teaches us to enforce our petitions with arguments,[2] which are to be taken, not from any worthiness in ourselves, or in any other creature, but from God;[3] and with our prayers to join praises,[4] ascribing to God alone eternal sovereignty, omnipotency, and glorious excellency;[5] in regard whereof, as he is able and willing to help us,[6] so we by faith are emboldened to plead with him that he would,[7] and quietly to rely upon him, that he will fulfil our requests.[8] And, to testify this our desire and assurance, we say, Amen.[9]

[1]: **Mat. 6.13** For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

[2]: **Rom. 15.30** Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that *ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.*

[3]: **Dan. 9.4** And *I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments.*

Dan. 9.7-9 *7 O LORD, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee. 8 O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee. 9 To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him.*

Dan. 9.16-19 *16 O LORD, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us. 17 Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake. 18 O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies. 19 O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.*

“Even to day is my complaint bitter: my stroke is heavier than my groaning. Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments.” (Job 23.2-4)

Charles Spurgeon, from a sermon on Job 23.4:

The ancient saints were given with Job, to ordering their cause before God. As a petitioner coming into court does not come there without thought to state his case on the spur of the moment, but enters into the audience chamber with his suit well prepared, having also learned how he ought to behave himself in the presence of the great one to whom he is appealing, so it is well to approach the seat of the King of Kings as much as possible with premeditation and preparation, knowing what we are about, where we are standing, and what it is which we desire to obtain.

[...]

The best prayers I have ever heard in our prayer meetings have been those which have been fullest of argument. Sometimes my soul has been fairly melted down where I have listened to the brethren who have come before God feeling the mercy to be really needed, and that they must have it, for they first pleaded with God to give it for this reason, and then for a second, and then for a third and then for a fourth and a fifth until they have awakened the fervency of the entire assembly.

Other Biblical examples of argumentative prayer and striving with God: Jer. 12.1, Ps. 89.49, Hab. 1.12-13