

Title: WSC Question 100: What Doth the Preface of the Lord's Prayer Teach Us?

- I. The doctrine stated:
  - A. WSC Answer 100: The Preface of the Lord's Prayer (Which is, Our Father Which Art in Heaven) teacheth us to draw near to God with all holy reverence and confidence, as children to a father, able and ready to help us; and that we should pray with and for others.
  - B. WLC Answer 189: The preface of the Lord's prayer (contained in these words, Our Father which art in heaven,) teacheth us, when we pray, to draw near to God with confidence of his fatherly goodness, and our interest therein; with reverence, and all other child-like dispositions, heavenly affections, and due apprehensions of his sovereign power, majesty, and gracious condescension: as also, to pray with and for others.
- II. The doctrine proved and explained.
  - A. The Preface of the Lord's Prayer is, "Our Father Which Art in Heaven"
    1. MT 6:9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven...
    2. LK 11:2 And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven...
    3. Henry: "If he be our Father, he will pity us under our weaknesses and infirmities (Ps 103:13), will spare us (Mal 3:17), will make the best of our performances, though very defective, will deny us nothing that is good for us, Lu 11:11-13."
    4. Calvin: "Our Father who art in heaven. Whenever we engage in prayer, there are two things to be considered, both that we may have access to God, and that we may rely on Him with full and unshaken confidence: his fatherly love toward us, and his boundless power. Let us therefore entertain no doubt, that God is willing to receive us graciously, that he is ready to listen to our prayers,—in a word, that of Himself he is disposed to aid us. Father is the appellation given to him; and under this title Christ supplies us with sufficiently copious materials for confidence. But as it is only the half of our reliance that is founded on the goodness of God, in the next clause, who art in heaven, he gives us a lofty idea of the power of God. When the Scripture says, that God is in heaven, the meaning is, that all things are subject to his dominions,—that the world, and everything in it, is held by his hand,—that his power is everywhere diffused,—that all things are arranged by his providence."
  - B. The Preface of the Lord's Prayer teaches us to draw near to God with all holy reverence and confidence, as children to a father, able and ready to help us;
    1. Since God is our Father we can draw near to Him in prayer with confidence knowing that He is ready to help us as His adopted children.
    2. Since God is our Father in heaven we must draw near to Him in prayer with holy reverence.
    3. Since God is our Father in heaven we can draw near to Him in prayer knowing that He is able to help us.

- C. The Preface of the Lord's Prayer teaches us that we should pray with and for others.
- II. The doctrine applied.
- A. Since only the children of God can truly pray "our Father," you must come to God in repentance and faith before you are lawfully permitted to come to Him as "Father" in prayer.
  - B. Since God, as your Father, is both willing to hear your prayers and able to answer them you should be encouraged to bring your requests to God regularly.
  - C. Since, God is your heavenly Father you must come to Him in prayer with reverence not flippantly.
  - D. Since corporate prayer is part of your Christian duty you must make it a point to pray with others.
    - 1. Family prayer.
    - 2. Congregational prayer.
  - E. Since prayer for others is part of your Christian duty you must be diligent in intercessory prayer.