

SECTION 1

What Prayer Is

QUESTIONS TO LEARN:

97. **What is prayer?**
Prayer is talking with God.
98. **In whose name should we pray?**
Only in the name of Christ.
99. **What has Christ given to teach us how to pray?**
The Lord's Prayer.
100. **Can you repeat the Lord's Prayer?**
"Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen."
101. **How many petitions are there in the Lord's Prayer?**
Six.

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Jesus taught His disciples how to pray and the Father answered one such prayer by empowering the Jerusalem believers to preach Christ and to perform miracles in His name, even when they were threatened with severe persecution. The great fifth-century missionary, Patrick, who as a teenager was abducted to Ireland and sold into slavery, offered many solitary prayers while he tended his master's sheep. God revealed Himself through Patrick's prayers, and one day called him back to preach to those who had enslaved him.

As Jesus Prayed

The captain of the temple guard escorted Peter and John into the council chamber of the Jewish elders, where the high priest, Annas, and several others sat sternly waiting. The two apostles, who had been arrested for healing a crippled man at the temple gate and then proclaiming the resurrection of Jesus to onlookers, were weary from the night they had spent in a crowded jail cell.

Tired as he was, though, John sensed a high level of frustration among the elders. Just when these Jewish leaders no doubt thought they had gotten rid of Jesus, here were His disciples testifying to His resurrection and continuing His work! Even though most of the disciples were common men, not formally educated in the Scriptures or in the intricacies of the Jewish laws and customs like the Pharisees were, John knew that he and his brethren had benefited from a far greater Teacher – the Christ Himself! And now they had His Holy Spirit, who reminded them of all that Jesus had said and helped them to understand it.

“By what power or what name did you heal this man?” one of the elders disdainfully demanded, pointing to the beggar whom Peter had yesterday

pulled to his feet and encouraged to walk for the first time in more than forty years.

“It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed,” Peter proclaimed.

“He is ‘the stone the builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone,’” Peter continued, quoting a prophecy from the Old Testament Scriptures that these teachers of the Law knew so well. *“Jesus is the only name under heaven given to men by which we can be saved.”*

The high priest and his colleagues stared at Peter in consternation. An unschooled fisherman had dared to quote Scripture to *them* – the most knowledgeable of all Jews!



“Look. We know that you two spent quite a bit of time with Jesus while He was blasphemously inciting the people to turn against our God-given laws and customs. But all that is over with now,” the Jewish elders warned Peter and John. “Jesus is dead and buried. You don’t want to end up the way He did, do you? Now, you are never again to speak about Jesus to the people, or to do anything in His name. Do you understand?”

Undaunted, Peter said, “We must obey God rather than men. We can’t keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard.”

“A good flogging would no doubt help you to keep from it,” one of the elders told Peter and John. “Do not push us, gentlemen. We mean business. Think about it.” And with that threat they were released.



Peter and John hurried back to their brethren and reported all that had occurred during their imprisonment. John soon found that he was not the only one who believed that the Jewish leaders would carry out their threats. But he remembered how Jesus had faced all such unpleasant prospects, as He had done everything – through prayer to the Father. So, with one accord, the Jerusalem believers knelt together that night. And, in the name of their risen Lord, they asked God to bring about His Kingdom by enabling them to preach the gospel, despite the persecution that likely awaited them. “*Sovereign Lord,*” they cried:

You made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. By your Holy Spirit and through your servant David you foretold the persecution of your Anointed One. And indeed, just as you said, the people conspired against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.

Immediately, the place where the believers prayed was shaken, and they were filled so completely with the Holy Spirit that they could not but speak the Word of God boldly, even when they were later persecuted and scattered throughout the Roman Empire. Thus God’s kingdom came – speeding its way throughout the earth.

(Taken from Acts 4:1-31)

FROM THE BIBLE:

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:15-16)

Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory, for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness! (Psalm 115:1)

“Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.” (John 14:13-14)

TALKING IT OVER:

1. *Why should we pray in Jesus' name? (See the above passages for help.)*
2. *What happened when these Jerusalem believers prayed for God's glory in Jesus' name?*
3. *Look over the Lord's Prayer in the answer to catechism question 100. Do you think the petitions listed there include everything we truly need if we desire to live according to God's will, for His glory? Why?*