A Dialog with Our Father - Version 1

'Our Father Who art in heaven ...'

Yes?

Don't interrupt me. I'm praying.

But you called Me.

Called you? I didn't call You. I'm praying. "Our Father who art in heaven..."

There you did it again.

Did what?

Called Me. You said, "Our Father who art in heaven. " Here I am... What's on your mind?

But I didn't mean anything by it. I was, you know, just saying my prayers for the day. I always say the Lord's Prayer. It makes me feel good, kind of like getting a duty done.

All right. Go on.

"Hallowed be Thy name..."

Hold it. What do you mean by that?

By what?

By "hallowed be thy name"?

It means... it means... Good grief, I don't know what it means. How should I know? It's just a part of the prayer. By the way, what does it mean?

It means honored, holy, wonderful.

Hey, that makes sense. I never thought about what "hallowed" meant before. "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

Do you really mean that?

Sure, why not?

What are you doing about it?
Doing? Nothing, I guess. I just think it would be kind of neat if you got control of everything down here like you have up there.

**Have I got control of you?**

Well, I go to church.

**That isn't what I asked you. What about your bad temper? You've really got a problem there, you know. And then there's the way you spend your money – all on yourself. And what about the kind of books you read?**

Stop picking on me! I'm just as good as some of the rest of those people at the church.

**Excuse me. I thought you were praying for My will to be done. If that is to happen, it will have to start with the ones who are praying for it. Like you, for example.**

Oh, all right. I guess I do have some hang-ups. Now that you mention it, I could probably name some others.

**So could I.**

I haven't thought about it very much until now, but I really would like to cut out some of those things. I would like to, you know, be really free.

**Good. Now we're getting somewhere. We'll work together, you and I. Some victories can truly be won. I'm proud of you.**

Look, Lord, I need to finish up here. This is taking a lot longer than it usually does. "Give us this day, our daily bread."

**You need to cut out the bread. You're overweight as it is.**

Hey, wait a minute! What is this, "Criticize me day"? Here I was doing my religious duty, and all of a sudden you break in and remind me of all my hang-ups.

**Praying is a dangerous thing. You could wind up changed, you know. That's what I'm trying to get across to you. You called me, and here I am. It's too late to stop now. Keep praying, I'm interested in the next part of your prayer...(pause). Well, go on.**

I'm scared to.

**Scared? Of what?**

I know what you'll say.

**Try Me and see.**
"Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us."

**What about Ann?**

See? I knew it! I knew you would bring her up! Why, Lord, she's told lies about me, spread stories about my family. She never paid back the debt she owes me. I've sworn to get even with her!

**But your prayer? What about your prayer?**

I didn't mean it.

**Well, at least you're admitting it. But it's not much fun carrying that load of bitterness around inside, is it?**

No. But I'll feel better as soon as I get even. Boy, have I got some plans for that neighbor. She'll wish she had never moved into this neighborhood.

**You won't feel any better. You'll feel worse. Revenge isn't sweet. Think of how unhappy you already are. But I can change all that.**

You can? How?

**Forgive Ann. Then I'll forgive you. Then the hate and sin will be Ann's problem and not yours. You will have settled your heart.**

Oh, You're right. You always are. And more than I want to get revenge on Ann, I want to be right with You...(pause)...(sigh). All right. All right. I forgive her. Help her to find the right road in life, Lord. She's bound to be awfully miserable now that I think about it. Anybody who goes around doing the things she does to others has to be out of it. Some way, some how, show her the right way.

**There now! Wonderful! How do you feel?**

Hmmm. Well, not bad. Not bad at all. In fact, I feel pretty great! You know, I don't think I'll have to go to bed uptight tonight for the first time since I can remember. Maybe I won't be so tired from now on because I'm not getting enough rest.

**You're not through with your prayer. Go on.**

Oh, all right. "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

**Good! Good! I'll do that. Just don't put yourself in a place where you can be tempted.**

What do you mean by that?
Don't turn on the TV when you know the laundry needs to be done and the house needs to be picked up. Also, about the time you spend coffeeing with your friends, if you can't influence the conversation to positive things, perhaps you should rethink the value of those friendships. Another thing, your neighbors and friends shouldn't be your standard for "keeping up." And please don't use me for an escape hatch.

I don't understand the last part.

Sure you do. You've done it a lot of times. You get caught in a bad situation. You get into trouble and then you come running to Me, "Lord, help me out of this mess and I promise you I'll never do it again." You remember some of those bargains you tried to make with me?

Yes, and I'm ashamed, Lord. I really am.

Which bargain are you remembering?

Well, there was the night that Bill was gone and the children and I were home alone. The wind was blowing so hard I thought the roof would go any minute and tornado warnings were out. I remember praying, "Oh, God, if You spare us, I'll never skip my devotions again."

Did you?

I'm sorry, Lord, I really am. Up until now I thought that if I just prayed the Lord's Prayer every day, then I could do what I liked. I didn't expect anything to happen like it did.

Go ahead and finish your prayer.

"For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen."

Do you know what would bring me glory? What would really make me happy?

No, but I'd like to know. I want now to please You. I can see what a mess I've made of my life. And I can see how great it would be to really be one of Your followers.

You just answered the question.

I did?

Yes. The thing that would bring me glory is to have people like you truly love Me. And I see that happening between us. Now that some of these old sins are exposed and out of the way, well, there is no telling what we can do together.
Version 2

Our Father who art in heaven.

Yes.

Did I hear a voice?

You did.

As soon as I begin to pray somebody interrupts me, I’ll start again. Our Father who art in heaven.

Yes.

You’ve interrupted me again.

But you called Me. You said ‘Our Father who art in heaven’ So here I am.

Oh my God!

You sound surprised.

I didn’t expect You would answer.

But when you pray to Me don’t you expect Me to listen?

Yes, but I don’t expect You to talk to me.

Now that I am talking to you what did you want to say?

I wanted to say the prayer that Your Son Jesus taught us to say.

Good. Let’s start it say that prayer.

Our Father…

What a lovely way to begin praying. I am indeed your Father. Fathers like to be close to their children but sometimes you pray to Me as if I am not interested, or you pray to Me just in case all those things you heard about Me really are true, in case you really will have to meet Me when you die. Can you start believing today that I really am your Father, and that I really do love and care about you?

Yes Father, I believe that You love and care about us.

Jesus called me Abba. Do you know what Abba meant in Jesus’ language at that time?
I’ve heard that it means ‘Daddy.’

Yes, I wish you would look on Me as your Daddy.

Yes I know you are a Daddy to all of us.

I’m glad you said ‘us’ because I am the Father of everyone.

That’s why Jesus said to call you ‘Our Father.’

That’s it.

Our Father who art in heaven
Hallowed by thy name.

What does ‘hallowed’ mean to you? You don’t know what you say when you’re praying!
‘Hallowed be Thy name’ means may My name be held holy, may My name be respected.

So I am praying that I respect Your name?

Thank you for the respect you have for My name. What a pity that people abuse the name
of my son Jesus Christ so much. That hurts, after all He did for humanity.

I am sorry, Father, Hallowed be Thy name, and hallowed be the name of Jesus.
Thy kingdom come.

When you pray that My kingdom may come, what are you praying for?

I’m not exactly sure how to describe it but what I want to say is that I wish the world were a
better place.

Indeed. When people love others and forgive, and allow Me into their lives, then My
kingdom will come.

We badly need Your kingdom to come, Father. Look at the trouble in the Middle East. Look at
all the disagreements between people down here in our country, too, with murders every day
now.

Yes, My kingdom has partly come, but has not fully come. Peace treaties are not the
answer to all problems, only the coming of the My kingdom. What will bring about My
kingdom?

When your will is done on earth as it is in heaven.

Precisely. And what is My will?
It would be easier if You told me. It makes me angry when someone is killed tragically or dies painfully and people talk about the will of God.

It makes Me angry too. It is not My will that people suffer like this. Why do people talk about Me as if I’m a monster and want people to suffer and die? I do not will bad things for you. I will only the best for you. I am your Father and I want only the best for you.

What should we mean then when we pray that Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven?

Really it is the same as the previous prayer ‘Thy kingdom come.’ Once again it is praying for love and forgiveness to take over on earth. How much longer must I wait before My will be done in the world?

Why isn’t Your kingdom coming and Your will being done?

Because people are only partly obeying My will. People are stubborn and have not converted their minds to My way of thinking. You must bend your mind, convert your mind to My way of thinking, convert your mind to My will. Only then will everyone have peace, happiness and contentment.

How do we bend our minds to Your will and convert our minds to Your way of thinking?

Convert your mind to my way of thinking by learning more about how I think. I do not think as humans think. Where do you learn about My way of thinking?

In the Bible, in the Scripture readings we hear at church, in preaching, in the teaching of the Church.

Yes, allow My word which you hear in all of these different ways to become part of you so that you will think like Me, and not think as the world thinks. Then My will will be done in your life and My kingdom will come in your life. If you do not know the Bible you do not know what My will is, and then My kingdom will not come.

Yes, Father. I will make an effort to get to know Your will for us which is revealed to us in the Bible.

Give us this day our daily bread

Judging by the look of you, you seem to get enough bread every day.

Now, Father, we are praying as Jesus told us to.

Yes. You are praying that you will have enough to eat and enough of everything else you really need, a roof over your head.

If it means a roof over our head, we certainly need to pray for our daily bread when we consider all the people in our world who live in poverty, and the many homeless.
And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Yes I certainly want to forgive you your trespasses and sins. The false prophets and prophetesses of these times have forgotten that I am a God of forgiveness. If they read the Bible they would see.
I was interested that you said ‘as you forgive those who trespass against you.’ Have you forgiven your neighbor?

I was afraid you’d bring her up. I am still hoping that she will emigrate to the North Pole.

What’s the point in saying the prayer if you don’t mean it?

Sometimes, Father, I think ‘as we forgive those who trespass against us’ is the most difficult part of the prayer.

Perhaps your problem is that you are waiting for a feeling that you have forgiven. Instead of waiting for a feeling, make a decision to forgive. Forgiveness is a decision. Decide today to forgive her.

(Look at watch) This prayer is going on for longer than I expected.

Yes, usually you don’t pray for long enough.

Okay, Father, I will decide today to forgive her.

Good.

And lead us not into temptation.

It’s funny asking Me not to lead you into temptation. When did you ever need Me or anyone else to take you by the hand and lead you into temptation? If you take extra drinks, you bring the temptation on yourself.

Stop, Father, that’s enough.

Pray to avoid the temptations you can avoid, and to resist the temptations you cannot avoid. When the temptation comes to you, the important thing is what you do with the temptation, how you react.

Yes, Father.

Deliver us from evil.

Yes, there is a lot of evil around. But entrust your life to Me and no matter what happens that is against My will, you need not worry. Sometimes you can do a lot yourself to prevent evil having its way. All you need for evil to triumph is for good people to do nothing.
When you look for justice for yourself and others, you are delivering the world from evil yourself.

We’ve had quite a chat today.

We certainly had. Let’s finish together.

(Both together) Amen.