

Each week of 2019 we will take a brief look at one or more questions from the Westminster Shorter Catechism. To read previous weeks' briefs go to oakhillpca.com/wsc

Q. 100. *What does the preface of the Lord's Prayer teach us?*

A. The preface of the Lord's Prayer, which is, *Our Father which art in heaven*, teaches 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.

Q. 101. *What do we pray for in the first petition?*

A. In the first petition, which is, *Hallowed be thy name*, we pray that God would enable us, and others, to glorify him in all that whereby he makes himself known; and that he would dispose all things to his own glory.

Question 99 stated that all of Scripture should be used to direct and form our prayers to God. In particular, however, we should learn from that which is commonly known as *The Lord's Prayer*, that prayer Jesus taught his disciples in Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:1-4. In order to encourage our use of this means of grace, the Catechism closes with instruction on *The Lord's Prayer*.

The "preface" of the prayer is the opening, "Our Father in heaven" (ESV). This highlights our relationship with God. By calling God "Father," we appeal to the personal and loving relationship we have with the Creator of all things. Paul emphasizes this intimate relationship with God when he writes, "For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father!'" (Rom. 8:15). The word "Abba" is comparable with our English word "Daddy." Jesus wants us to pray to God from this place of warm, intimate relationship.

The Catechism also highlights the word "Our" in the preface as teaching us "that we should pray with and for others." The church should be in view when we pray.

The first petition, "Hallowed be your name" (ESV), focuses on the honor and glory due unto God. To submit our desires in prayer to the will of God, it is good and important to start with attention on God. The heavenly worship gathering around the throne of God celebrates, "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created" (Rev. 4:11). When we train our hearts and minds to seek first God's glory (by following this model of prayer), our humble dependence on and delight in God's will for our lives will grow.