

DEVOTIONAL AID FOR 30 AUGUST 2021 – 5 SEPTEMBER 2021



**UPPER
HUNTER**
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Dear church family,

So, we have come to the last questions of the Heidelberg Catechism. This week, we consider the last two phrases in the Lord's Prayer, including that little word, "amen".

The sixth request is about acknowledging our frailty before God. We are saying to God that we cannot withstand temptations and evils that we face each day and every moment. We are saying that we are weak. We are saying that we are not God who is all holy, good, and powerful to subdue evil. And we are saying that we need His help constantly. And this goes to the heart of prayer: dependence on God through Christ. Based on who Jesus is and what He has done, we are throwing ourselves to God trusting that He will catch us and protect us from all true harms. Not that God promised to protect us from diseases and accidents necessarily, but God has promised to protect us from true and everlasting harms for all who trust Jesus. We will be protected from Satan's schemes to make us fall under God's final judgment. We may come to bodily harms, but we will not be thrown into hell. Jesus said "I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do. 5 But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him! 6 Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. 7 Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows." (Luke 14:4–7) In prayer, in faith, we throw our lot with our gracious God.

The last concluding phrase, "For your is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever" is probably not something Jesus said to the disciples, although it is hard to know for sure. The ancient manuscripts of the Bible often do not have that phrase, and hence most modern translations of the Bible do not include them either. Nevertheless, we can pray this phrase with confidence that it agrees with the Bible's overall teaching about what we should pray (eg., 1 Chronicles 29:11).

And we conclude with the word, "amen", which means "Indeed!", "Truly!", or, as the Catechism puts it, "This is sure to be!" We can and should end our prayers this way as an expression of our faith in God who hears our prayers even better and more willingly than we say our prayers. What an encouragement! God is good and loves us. He hears our prayers. And we need God's help in everything, every moment, everywhere. May we be a people who pray constantly.

Yours in Christ,

Timothy Lee

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THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM¹

Lord's Day 52

Q127) What does the sixth request mean?

A) "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one" means, By ourselves we are too weak to hold our own even for a moment. And our sworn enemies—the devil, the world, and our own flesh—never stop attacking us. And so, Lord, uphold us and make us strong with the strength of Your Holy Spirit, so that we may not go down to defeat in this spiritual struggle, but may firmly resist our enemies until we finally win with the complete victory.

Q128) What does your conclusion to the prayer mean?

A) "For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever" means, We have made all these requests of You because, as our all-powerful King, You not only want to, but are able to give us all that is good; and because Your holy name, and not we ourselves, should receive all the praise, forever.

Q129) What does that little word "Amen" express?

A) "Amen" means, This is sure to be! It is even more sure that God listens to my prayer, than that I really desire what I pray for.

PSALM 103:14-15

- 14 For he knows our frame;
 he remembers that we are dust.
- 15 As for man, his days are like grass;
 he flourishes like a flower of the field;
- 16 for the wind passes over it, and it is gone,
 and its place knows it no more.

The idea that we are strong enough on our own may be encouraging for a moment, but when we are faced with the true enormity of the task of living faithfully unto God, it quickly crumbles. How many times have we given into temptations? How many times have we walked down the destructive path knowing full well it was not what God wanted? We should know that we cannot even take our next breath without God's enabling. And so we must learn to trust and depend on God for everything. And that is the heart of prayer. Trusting our Creator and Redeemer God.

Prayer

Heavenly Father,

You are the Maker, and I am your creature in need of your help. I need you to feed me with food and drink, I need you to give me air to breathe, for my lungs to function, for my brain to work so I can think and speak. You are the Saviour and I am a sinner in need of your grace. I need your gracious work in me by your Spirit so I may stand in awe of your holiness, goodness, and love. I need you to speak mercifully to me, so I may have courage to grab hold of your promises of forgiveness and salvation. Teach me to trust you with everything including my life and death. In Jesus's name I pray, Amen.

¹ The text of the Catechism is usually from <https://threeforms.org/heidelberg-catechism/>, but time to time, for the sake of clarity, I have also adopted the translation used in *The Good News We Almost Forgot* by Kevin DeYoung.