

IF GOD SHOULD SPEAK

"Our Father which art in heaven..."

Yes?

Don't interrupt me. I'm praying ... "Our Father which art in heaven ..."

There! You did it again.

Did what?

You called me. You said, "Our Father which are 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 prayer 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 by thy name."

Hold it! What do you mean by that?

By what?

Hallowed be thy name

It means ... it means ... good grief! I don't know what it means. How should I know? It's just 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 that habit of selfishness you have? And your bad temper? You really have a problem there, you know. And there's the way you spend your money; all on yourself.

Stop picking on me! I'm just as good as some of the rest of the phonies at 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 that 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 of those faults.

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

Look, Lord, I need to finish; this is taking a lot longer than it usually does. "Give us this daily bread."

You need to cut out the bread. You're putting on weight 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 am trying to get across to you. You know. You called me, and here I am. It's too late to stop now. Keep on praying. I'm interested in the next part of your prayer..

I'm scared too.

Scared of what?

I know what you'll say.

Try me and see..

"Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."

What about Bill.

See! I knew it! I knew you would bring him up. Why, Lord, he's told lies about me, cheated me out of some money. He never paid back that debt he owes me. I've sworn to get even with him.

But your prayer? What about your prayer?

I didn't mean it.

Well, at least you are honest. 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 plans for old Bill. He'll wish he never gyped me.

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 Bill, then I'll forgive you. Then the hate and sin will be Bill's problems and not yours. You may lose the money, but you will have settled your heart.

But, Lord, I can't forgive Bill.

The I can't forgive you

Oh, you're right. You always are, and more than I want revenge on Bill, I want to be right with you. (...pause and sigh ...) All right, all right, I forgive him. Help him to find the right road in life, Lord. He's bound to be awfully miserable now that I think about it. Anybody who goes around doing the things he does to others has to be out of it. Some way, somehow, show him the right way.

There now! Wonderful. How do you feel?

Hummm. Well, not too 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 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 prayers. 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?

Change some of your friendships. Some of your so-called friends are beginning to get to you. They'll have you completely involved in wrong things before long. Don't be fooled. They advertise they are having fun, but for you, it would be ruin. Don't use me for an escape hatch.

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

Which bargain are you remembering.

Well, when the lady next door saw me at the mall when I was supposed to be at school. I remember telling you, "Oh, God, don't let her tell my mother where I've been. Let me get out of this one and I won't do it again.

She didn't tell your mother, but you didn't keep your promise, 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.

Go ahead and finish your prayer.

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

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

No. But I'd like to know. I want to please you. I can see what a mess I've been making of my life. And I can see how good it would be to really be one of your followers.

You just answered my question.

I did?

Yes, the thing that would bring me glory is to have people like you respond to my love. And I see that happening between us. Now that some of these old sins are excused and out of the way, well, there's no telling what we can do together.

Lord, let's see what we can make of me, OK?

Yes, let's see.

Staff Development
EC-CS-14
May, 1987

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June 12, 1991