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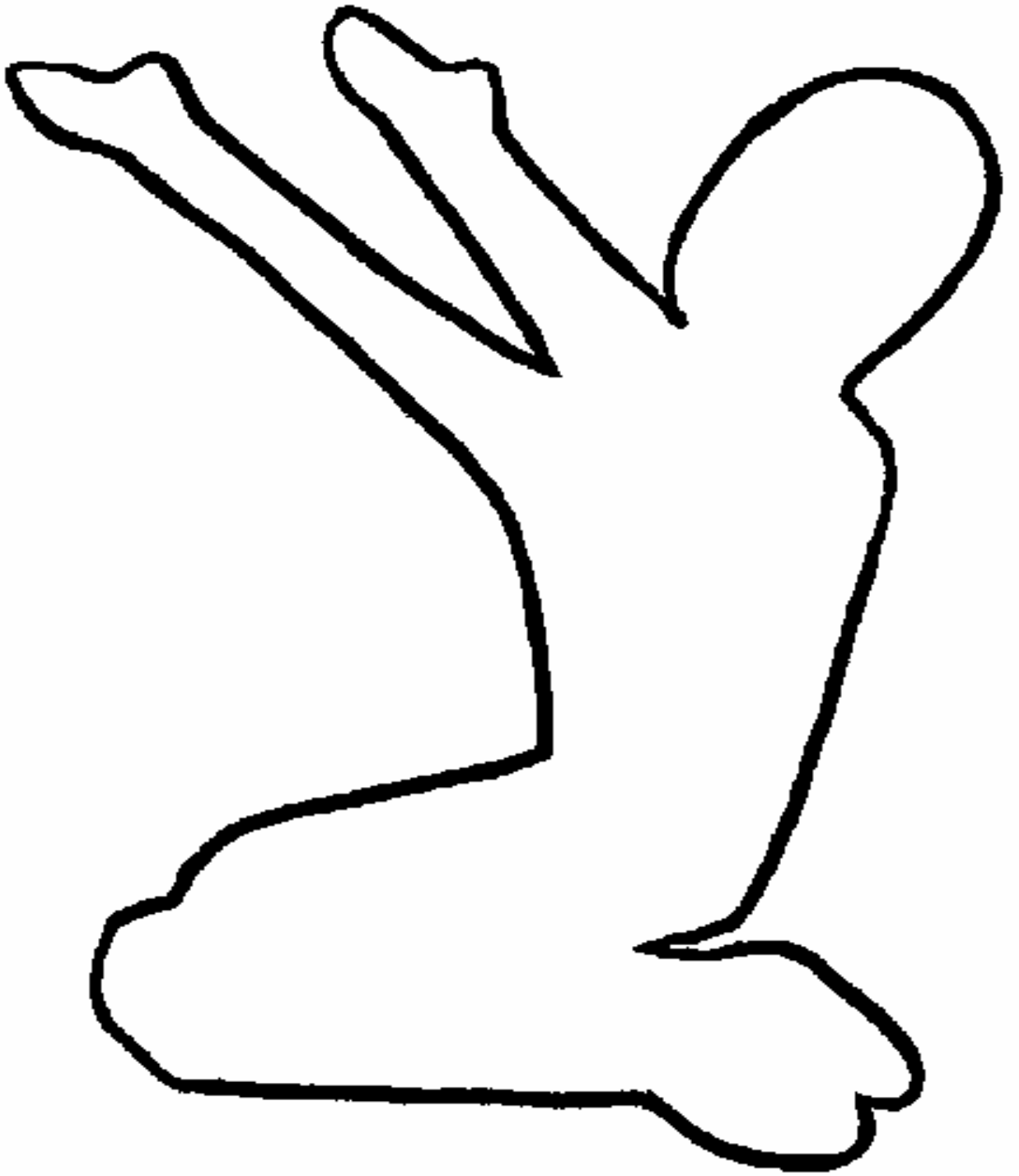
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PATRICK JOSEPH HESSION

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PREFACE

One of the primary difficulties most people have in praying, or learning how to pray, is coming to a child-Father or, better yet, a child-Daddy relationship with their God so that he is not just Someone "out there" who is hard to reach.

The psalmists seem to have bridged this apparent chasm. One is constantly impressed with the intimacy of relationship they had with God. He was close to them, and they could speak their deepest emotions and longings to him comfortably.

In this book, I have used psalms, and parts of psalms, according to the structure of the prayer that Jesus himself taught us, the Our Father, in order to help people learn how to have the intimacy of prayer that he had and that he desires for us to have, the intimacy of a son or daughter with his or her heavenly Father. Each of the sections is introduced by a reflection on what Jesus was trying to teach us.

The book is divided into 5 sections:

- I. Praise and Thanksgiving (Matthew 6:9)
- II. Acceptance of God's Will (Matthew 6:10)
- III. Petition and Intercession (Matthew 6:10)
- IV. Acknowledgment of Sinfulness (Matthew 6:12)
- V. Protection and Deliverance (Matthew 6:13)

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INTRODUCTION

"Lord, teach us to pray." Luke 11:1

Do you still have trouble praying or learning to pray? I still do! You know what? We are in good company. The disciples walked daily with Jesus. Often they had seen him go off by himself to pray, sometimes all night. They saw the results of Jesus' prayer in the authority of his teaching and in the power of his miracles. They could see that there had to be an important connection. So they said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray."

One practice that I learned several years ago, as I set aside time for prayer and study of God's Word, was to write down in a notebook key passages of Scripture that the holy Spirit would impress upon me as meaningful to me. Sometimes, it would be a teaching or an insight into a particular passage. One thing in particular that I wrote down was parts of certain Psalms that voiced what I was feeling or wanting to say to God.

One of the things that caught my attention and really impressed me was the intimacy of relationship between the psalmists and God. They were not just talking to "Someone out there". They were speaking their hearts to Someone who was close to them, Someone to whom they were comfortable saying exactly what was on their minds, often in no uncertain terms! I wanted that intimacy in my prayer life!

In this book, I have used these psalms, and parts of psalms, according to the structure of the Our Father, the prayer that Jesus taught us, in order to help you express yourself to God the Father with the intimacy of a child. For such, indeed, you are, having been begotten by him through baptism and the holy Spirit.

When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray, it was this intimacy of relationship he had with his Father that they desired. Jesus also desired for them to have it. And so the first thing he said was, "When you pray, say: Father!" Luke 11:2

Maybe right here is where your main difficulty in prayer lies. It may be that your understanding of, or experience with, your

own father has not been a good one. Perhaps you never knew your father because he died when you were young, or because he divorced your mother and you haven't seen him since. Perhaps he abused you, or was a substance abuser, or in some other way projected to you a negative image of what a father was supposed to be.

On the other hand, perhaps your relationship with your father has been a good one, or you have been raised by a foster father, or step-father, with whom you enjoy an intimate and loving relationship.

In any case, Jesus wants you to have the same intimacy of relationship with God, your heavenly Father, in your daily prayer life that he had. As you follow Jesus as your brother, he will continue to reveal more of the Father to you because he said that whoever sees him sees the Father also. As you pray to the Father in the words of the psalms and affirm who you truly are, his child, he himself will also begin to reveal more and more to you what being a true Father really means. And the intimacy of your relationship with him will grow and deepen.

Each of the sections of the Our Father is introduced by a reflection on what Jesus was trying to teach us. As I prepared each of these, I was overwhelmed by the power and magnitude of this rather short prayer that he taught us. My prayer is that, as you reflect on each of these aspects of the Our Father, the Father himself will reveal to your heart even greater lessons about the personal, intimate, and loving relationship that he desires to have with you. No matter how good or how poor your relationship with your earthly father, there is a Father who surpasses all earthly fatherhood. You can meet with him daily in INTIMATE PRAYER.

**"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name." Matthew 6:9**

P R A I S E

and

T H A N K S G I V I N G

In the Old Testament understanding, one's name was more than just a means of identification. One's name described the very personality and character of the person named.

Sometimes a person's name was changed to indicate a new position or characteristic of the person. Thus, God is said to have changed Abram to Abraham, Jacob to Israel. In the New Testament, Jesus changed Simon's name to Peter (Rock) when he gave him the leadership position among the Apostles and over the Church. Saul later became known as Paul.

When you pray that the name of the Father be "hallowed" or "made holy", you are acknowledging his position and character as the Source of your natural and spiritual position as his child. You are acknowledging that he has begotten you in Jesus Christ through the holy Spirit and baptism. You are proclaiming the relationship that you are to have with him. All that you are and all that you have come directly from him as a free gift. Finally, you are proclaiming that his name be honored at all times, in all places, and by all people.

Thus, your response naturally should be one of Praise and Thanksgiving. You worship the Father for who he is. You praise

him for all his works in creation and in you. You thank him for all of his goodness in your life, for all of his gifts to you, especially the gift of salvation through which you are restored to your position as a son or daughter of God. You honor his name when you live to please him and to be the best child of God that you can be.

I praise you, Lord.
I sing for joy to you, O God, who protects me.
I come before you with thanksgiving
and sing joyful songs of praise.
For you, O Lord, are a mighty God -
a mighty King over all the gods.
You rule over the sea, which you made;
the land also, which you made;
I bow down and worship you;
I kneel before you, Lord, my Maker!
You are my God;
I am the one you care for, for whom you provide.
I will listen today to what you say.
Psalm 95:1-7

Praise the Lord, my soul!
All my being, praise his holy Name!
Praise the Lord, my soul,
and do not forget how kind God is.
You, O God, forgive all my sins
and heal all my diseases.
You keep me from the grave
and bless me with love and mercy.
You fill my life with good things
so that I stay young and strong like an eagle.
I was on my way to hell, but you restored my life
You have changed my sadness into a joyful dance.
You have taken away my sorrow
and surrounded me with joy
so I will not be silent;

I will sing praise to you.
Lord, you are my God;
I will give you thanks forever.
Psalm 30:1-3, 11-12

I praise you, Lord, because you are good.
I sing praise to your Name because you are kind.
You, my God, are great, greater than all the gods.
You do whatever you wish in heaven and on earth,
in the sea and in the depths below.
You bring storm clouds from the ends of the earth;
you make lightning from the storms;
you bring out the wind from your storeroom.
You, Lord, will defend me.
You will take pity on your servant.
Psalm 135:3, 5-7, 14

I give thanks to you, Lord, because you are good;
your love is eternal.
I give thanks to you, the greatest of all gods;
your love is eternal.
I give thanks to you, the mightiest of all lords;
your love is eternal.
You alone perform great miracles;
your love is eternal.
By your wisdom you made the heavens;
your love is eternal.
You built the earth on the deep waters;
your love is eternal.
You made the sun and the moon;
your love is eternal.
The sun to rule over the day;
your love is eternal.
The moon and the stars to rule over the night;
your love is eternal.
Psalm 136:1-9

I thank you, Lord, with all my heart.
I sing praise to you before the gods.
I bow down and praise your name
because of your constant love and faithfulness,
because you have shown that your name
and your commands are supreme.
You answer me when I call to you.
With all your strength you strengthen me.
Even though you are so high above,
you care for the lowly,
and the proud cannot hide from you.
When I am surrounded by troubles,
you keep me safe.
You oppose my angry enemies
and save me by your power.
You will do everything you have promised.
Lord, your love is eternal.
Complete the work you have begun.
Psalm 138:1-3, 6-8

I thank you, Lord, specifically for

The gift of life
Salvation through Jesus Christ
The infilling of the holy Spirit
My wife/husband (by name)
My son(s)/daughter(s) (by name)
The job(s) you have given me to provide for our needs
(Other)

How good it is to give thanks to you, O Lord,
to sing in your honor, O Most High God,
to proclaim your constant love every morning
and your faithfulness every night.
Your mighty deeds, O Lord, make me glad.
Because of what you have done, I sing for joy.

How great are your actions, Lord!
How deep are your thoughts!
This is something a fool cannot know
and a stupid man cannot understand.
Psalm 92:1 & 2, 4-6

I am like an olive tree
growing in your house, O God;
I trust in your constant
love forever and ever.
I will always thank you, Lord,
for what you have done.
In the presence of your people
I will proclaim that you are good.
Psalm 52:8 & 9

**"Your kingdom come,
You will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven."
Matthew 6:10**

A C C E P T A N C E

of

G O D ' S W I L L

As you pray, "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth", you are affirming your desire to see your Father's kingdom extended. You are also affirming that doing his will is the means by which this will happen. This means that you must be willing to submit your will to his will in all things if his kingdom is to be established in and through you.

Sin, in whatever form, is disobedience to the Father and his will for creation. The kingdom of God is based on obedience to the will of the Father. Jesus said over and over that he came, not to do his own will but to do the will of his Father. His greatest struggle came in the garden of Gethsemane as he faced the ultimate will of his Father to die for our sins. His death and subsequent resurrection were to be the means of the final destruction of Satan's kingdom and the beginning of the restoration of the kingdom of God on the earth. He continues this work on earth through his Body, the Church, of which he is the Head and you are a member, until he comes again in glory.

You, who have been begotten of the Father through faith in Jesus Christ and baptism, have a new King in Jesus. You are

called to come under his Lordship because you are now a citizen of the kingdom of God. In and with the Church, you extend this kingdom and continue to complete the destruction of Satan's kingdom until Jesus returns.

Lord, it is your will

to have mercy on whom you have mercy and to have compassion on whom you have compassion.

Romans 9:15

to destroy the wisdom of the wise and to thwart the discernment of the discerning.

2 Corinthians 1:19

to bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and to disclose the purposes of the heart.

1 Corinthians 4:5

for everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

1 Timothy 2:4

to put your laws in our hearts and to write them on our minds.

Hebrews 10:16

for us to draw near to you, and for you to draw near to us.

James 4:8

to live in us and walk among us, to be our God and for us to be your people.

2 Corinthians 6:16

to gather up all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth.

Ephesians 1:10

to give rest to all that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens if they come to you.

Matthew 11:28

for those who do the will of the Father in heaven to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 7:21

that you give us birth by the word of truth so that we would become a kind of first fruits of your creatures.

James 1:18

to pour out your Spirit on all people.

Acts 2:17

that all may be one as you, Father, are in Jesus, and he is in you so that the world may know that you have sent Jesus and have loved them even as you have loved him.

John 17:21

that not a single one of your little ones should be lost.

Matthew 18:14

to never leave us nor forsake us.

Hebrews 13:5

that we be made holy, that we abstain from immorality, and that we each know how to control our own body in holiness and honor, not with lustful passion, and that no one wrong or exploit a brother or sister.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-6

for us to rejoice always, to pray without ceasing, and to give thanks in all circumstances.

2 Thessalonians 5:16-18

to work wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below.

Acts 2:19

to make clean those with sickness and disease of all kinds.

Mark 1:41

to forgive sins.

Mark 2:10

to expel unclean spirits.

Matthew 10:1

to meet all physical needs.

Luke 12:29; Philippians 4:19

to hear us if we ask anything according to your will.

1 John 5:14

for us to accept the authority of every human institution

that, by doing right, we should silence the ignorance of the foolish and to live as free people, yet to not use our freedom as a pretext for evil

1 Peter 2:13-16

to judge your people.

Hebrews 10:30

that those who suffer in accordance with your will entrust themselves to you, a faithful Creator, while continuing to do good.

1 Peter 4:19

to give the one who conquers a place with you on your throne.

Revelation 3:21

You, O Lord, are King.

You are clothed with majesty and strength.

Your throne, O Lord, has been firm from the beginning,
and you existed before time began.

Psalm 93:1 & 2

Come, your kingdom! Be done, your will!

in the world

in (my country)

in (my state)

in (my county)

in (my city)

in and through the churches and synagogues
of (my county)

in and through my family

in and through me

**"Give us this day our daily bread." Matthew
6:11**

P E T I T I O N

and

I N T E R C E S S I O N

What a tremendous promise is contained in this part of the Our Father: namely that, because he is your Father, you have the right as his child to ask for whatever you need from him that is for your good. There are only two main reasons that you do not receive from your Father. "You do not have because you do not ask", and "you ask and do not receive because you ask wrongly, in order to spend what you get on your own pleasures." James 4:2 & 3

Because God loves you with the love of a true Father, he may not give you everything you ask for because it would not be the best thing for you. If you persist, however, he may give you what you ask for even if it is not good for you so that you can learn something the hard way. On the other hand, he will always give you what you ask for that is according to his will. "This is the boldness we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have obtained the requests made of him." 1 John 5:14 & 15

How do you know that what you are asking for is according to his will? Simply ask and wait. Your answer may be an immediate "yes"; it may be a definite "no"; or, it may be a "not yet". As long as you are willing to accept whatever answer is according to his will, continue to keep on asking until you receive a definite answer.

The Scriptures give you some very clear instruction on how to pray correctly. Jesus said, "I will do whatever you ask *in my name* so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If *in my name* you ask me for anything, I will do it." John 14:13 & 14 "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him *in my name*." John 15:7, 16 "Very truly I tell you, if you ask anything of the Father *in my name*, he will give it to you. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, that your joy may be complete." John 16:23 & 24

To ask in the name of Jesus means to ask in accordance with his personality and character. When this is true, it is just as if Jesus is asking his Father for you. Indeed he is! "It is Christ Jesus who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us." Romans 8:34 "Consequently, he is able for all time to save, heal, and deliver those who approach God through him since he always lives to make intercession for them." Hebrews 7:25

One who intercedes or makes intercession is one who asks on behalf of another. Jesus is already asking the Father on your behalf. When you ask in Jesus' name, you are asking in agreement with his prayer and will for you. That is why the Father will give you "*in my name*." John 15:16

This is also why it is important for you to ask others to pray for and with you. Jesus said, "If two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. Where two or three are gathered *in my name*, I am there among

them." Matthew 18:19 & 20

Jesus is wherever people are gathered according to his will and as his people. Jesus is the Head of his Body, the Church. You, and others who gather in union with him in his name, are the Church at that moment and in that place. You, as members of the Church, are joined with your Head, Jesus Christ, at the right hand of the Father to ask the Father for what you need or someone else needs. This is the power of prayer, corporate or individual! You can ask alone, in union with Christ, or you can ask with other members of Christ's Body, in union with the Head. The most powerful form of prayer, obviously, would be group or corporate prayer even if the group has only two or three people.

Therefore, "Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. Everyone who asks receives, everyone who searches finds, for everyone who knocks the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or, if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake? If you, then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!" Matthew 7:7-11 "I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours." Mark 11:24.

Where and how are you to pray?

"Whenever you pray, go into your room, shut the door, and pray to your Father who is in secret; your Father who sees in secret will reward you" Matthew 6:6. You may also pray where you are. The idea here is that you are not to make a public display or spectacle of prayer so that you draw attention to yourself.

"Pray always and do not lose heart." Luke 18:1 "Devote yourself to prayer, keeping alert in it with thanksgiving." Colossians 4:2 "Pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or argument." 1 Timothy 2:8 "Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints (the Church)." Ephesians

6:18 "The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God." Romans 8:26 & 27

Notice something here! We said above that Jesus Christ is at the right hand of the Father interceding for you. Here we learn that the holy Spirit is also interceding for you. You can't lose when you pray according to the will of the Father for you! Even when you are getting a "not yet" answer, Jesus and the Spirit are interceding for you. Seek to bring your mind and heart to the position of Jesus when he prayed in the garden of Gethsemane, "yet not what I want but what you want." Matthew 26:39

What are we to pray for?

"Pray for those who persecute you so that you may be children of your Father in heaven." Matthew 5:44

"Bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you." Luke 6:28

"Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial." Mark 14:38

"Pray to God that you may not do anything wrong but that you may do what is right." 2 Corinthians 13:7

"If you are lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given you. Ask in faith, never doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind." James 1:5 & 6

"If you see your brother or sister committing what is not a mortal sin, ask, and God will give life to such a one." 1 John 5:16

"Ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." Matthew 9:38

"Supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving should be made for everyone especially for all who are in high positions so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. This is right and acceptable in the sight of

God our Savior, who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." 1 Timothy 2:1-4

Pray for your family members and friends.

Pray for your pastor and all spiritual leaders.

Pray for yourself.

Pray for me that I may remain faithful in ministry for the Lord.

Lord, you are my Lord.

All good things I have come from you.

You, Lord, are all I have,
and you give me all I need.

My future is in your hands.

How wonderful are your gifts to me;
how good they are!

I praise you, Lord, because you guide me,
and in the night my conscience warns me.

I am always aware of your presence.

You are near, and nothing can shake me.

And so I am thankful and glad
and feel completely secure

because you protect me from the power of death.

The one you love you will not abandon
to the world of the dead.

You will show me the path that leads to life.

Your presence fills me with joy
and brings me pleasure forever.

Psalm 16:2, 5-11

Have pity, O Lord, on your servant.

Fill me each morning with your constant love
so that I may sing and be glad all my life.

Give me now as much happiness
as the sadness you allowed me
during all my years of misery.

Let me, your servant, see your mighty deeds.

Let my descendants see your glorious might.
Lord, my God, may your blessings be with me.
Give me success in all I do!

Psalm 90:13-17

If I pay attention to all your commands,
I will not be put to shame.
As I learn your righteous judgments,
I will praise you with a pure heart.
With all my heart, I try to serve you.
Keep me from disobeying your commands.
I praise you, Lord.
Teach me your ways.
I delight in following your commands
more than in having great wealth.
Be good to me, your servant,
so that I may live and obey your teachings.
Open my eyes so that I may see
the wondrous truths of your law.
My heart aches with longing.
I want to know your judgments at all times.
I confess all my sins and all I have done,
and you answer me;
teach me your ways.
I have chosen to be obedient.
I pay attention to your judgments.
I follow your instructions, Lord.
Don't let me be put to shame.
I will eagerly obey your commands
because you will give me more understanding.
Give me the desire to obey your laws
rather than to get rich.
Keep me from paying attention to what is worthless.
Enable me to speak the truth at all times
because my hope is in your judgments.

I am a friend of all who serve you,
of all who obey your laws.
Before you punished me, I used to go wrong,
but now I keep your word.
How good you are - how kind.
My punishment was good for me
because it made me learn your commands.
I know that your judgments are righteous, Lord,
and that you punish me because you are faithful.
Let your constant love comfort me
as you have promised me, your servant.
Have mercy on me, and I will live
because I take pleasure in your law.
I am your servant.
Give me understanding
so that I may know your teachings.
Psalm 119:6 & 7, 10, 12, 17 & 18,
20, 26, 30-31, 36 & 37, 43, 63,
67 & 68, 71, 75-77, 125

**"Forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors." Matthew 6:12**

A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T

of

S I N F U L N E S S

There are two aspects of forgiveness involved in this section of the Our Father that Jesus wants to teach you: acknowledging and seeking forgiveness for your own sins and forgiving the sins and faults of others.

God's love is manifested in many ways in the world and in your life: healing, provision for your needs, peace in your heart, answers to your prayers, and so forth. But there are two primary manifestations of his love that God wants you to experience in your life and then to share with those with whom you come into contact. These are *giving* and *forgiving*.

If God had not given, you would not know true love. Love is expressed in giving. Giving is expressed in service. Jesus said that he did not come to be served but to serve and to *give* his life as atonement for sin. The ultimate goal of God's sending his Son is to make you at-one (at-one-ment) with him through the forgiveness of your sins.

So, *forgiving* is the other manifestation of God's love for you. Forgiving simply means to *give before: fore-give*. God the

Father fore-gave you before you asked for forgiveness through the death of his Son, Jesus Christ.

However, it is important and necessary for you to acknowledge your sins and faults to him and to ask for his forgiveness to be applied to you. "If you say that you have no sin, you deceive yourself, and the truth is not in you. If you confess your sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive you your sins and cleanse you from all unrighteousness. If you say that you have not sinned, you make him a liar, and his word is not in you." 1 John 1:8-10 "But if you do sin, you have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; he is the atoning sacrifice for your sins, and not for yours only but also for the sins of the whole world." 1 John 2:1b-2

The other aspect of this prayer is that the Father wants you to forgive others in the same way and with the same attitude as Jesus forgave you. "Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your transgressions." Mark 11:25

Note: you are to *forgive* others, even before or whether they ever ask you for forgiveness and even if they never admit any offense against you. In this section of the prayer, you pray that the Father forgives your offenses in the same way as you forgive those who offend you. "If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. If you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions." Matthew 6:14 & 15

Are you, then, to do nothing to the person who offends you? Yes, if possible. "If your brother or sister sins, you must rebuke the offender. If there is repentance, you must forgive. If the same person sins against you seven times a day and turns back to you seven times and says, 'I repent', you must forgive." Luke 17:3 & 4 This is exactly the way Jesus and the Father forgive you, no matter how often you sin, as long as you truly turn back (repent) and ask for forgiveness.

What are some clues as to whether you are forgiving

someone or not? Well, the opposite of forgiveness is unforgiveness. Ask the holy Spirit to search your heart for anyone whom you have not yet forgiven. Remember, forgiving means *giving-before*. That person may not even know that he or she has done anything that needs to be forgiven. Or, maybe that person just didn't know what he or she was doing.

By the way, it is extremely important that you forgive yourself when you have done something wrong. If almighty God can forgive your sins and faults, it is the utmost of arrogance to say that you cannot forgive yourself!

What are some other clues that you haven't forgiven - yourself or others? One is *hurt* and *anger*. With whom are you angry? Who has hurt you or is hurting you? Your parents, relatives, friends, children, spouse, boss or co-worker, someone at church, your pastor or other spiritual leader, yourself, God? Yes, it is possible to get mad at God! Go ahead and admit it! After all, he already knows. He made you and knows all your weaknesses. That's why he sent Jesus, you know!

Another indication of un-forgiveness, and probably the most destructive, is *bitterness* and *hatred*. Are you harboring bitterness or hatred against anyone? Even God? Clue: who is the object of your blame?

Love is manifested in *giving* and *forgiving*. If you abide in giving and forgiving, you abide in God, and he abides in you. Your sins will be forgiven. Quietly, forgive each one that the Father brings to mind and give that person or situation over to God.

Lord, I look up to you,
up to heaven where you rule.
As a servant depends on his master,
as a maid depends on her mistress,
so will I keep looking to you,
O Lord, my God,
until you have mercy on me.
Be merciful to me, Lord, be merciful.

Psalm 123:1-3

Lord, you examine me and know me.
You know everything I do.
From far away you understand all my thoughts.
You see me whether I am working or resting;
you know all my actions.
Even before I speak,
you already know what I will say.
You are all around me on every side;
you protect me with your power.
Your knowledge of me is too deep;
it is beyond my understanding.
Where could I go to escape from you?
Where could I go to get away from your presence?
If I went up to heaven, you would be there.
If I lay down in the world of the dead, you would be there.
If I flew away beyond the East
or lived in the farthest place in the West,
you would be there to lead me,
you would be there to help me.
I could ask the darkness to hide me
or the light around me to turn into night,
but even darkness is not dark for you,
and the night is as bright as the day.
Darkness and light are the same to you.
You created every part of me;
you put me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you because you are to be feared;
all you do is strange and wonderful.
I know it with all my heart.
When my bones were being formed,
carefully put together in my mother's womb,
when I was groaning there in secret,
you knew that I was there --

you saw me before I was born.
The days allotted to me
had all been recorded in your book
before any of them ever began.
O God, how difficult I find your thoughts;
how many of them there are!
If I counted them,
they would be more than the grains of sand.
When I awake, I am still with you.
Examine me, O God, and know my mind;
test me and discover my thoughts.
Find out if there is any evil in me
and guide me in the everlasting way.
Psalm 139:1-18, 23 & 24

Be merciful to me, O God,
because of your constant love,
because of your great mercy.
I have been evil from the time I was born;
from the day of my birth, I have been sinful.
Sincerity and truth are what you require;
fill my mind with your wisdom.
Create a pure heart in me, O God,
and put a new and loyal spirit in me.
Give me again the joy
that comes from your salvation
and make me willing to obey you.
Then I will teach sinners your commands,
and they will turn back to you.
My sacrifice is a humble spirit, O God;
you will not reject a humble and repentant heart.
Psalm 51:1, 5 & 6, 10, 12 & 13, 17

You forgive me, Lord,
so that I should reverently obey you.
I wait eagerly for your help,

and in your word I trust.
I wait for you, Lord,
more eagerly than watchmen wait for the dawn --
yes, than watchmen wait for the dawn.
Psalm 130:4-6

**"Do not bring us to the time of trial
but rescue us from the evil one."
Matthew 6:13**

P R O T E C T I O N

and

D E L I V E R A N C E

In Scripture, Jesus tells us that he has come to bring deliverance. Yet, he also warns us to beware and to pray that we may not be put to the test or trial. Did he not teach us to pray, in this part of the Our Father, that we not be subject to testings? Aren't you, as a child of God the Father and as a follower of Christ, to be free from pain, suffering, and even persecution because Jesus already suffered and died for you?

Jesus did not promise freedom from physical sufferings and pain. Rather, he promised that, if you follow him, you *would* be persecuted and, maybe, even tortured and put to death because of your faith in him.

"Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed because the spirit of glory, which is the

Spirit of God, is resting on you." 1 Peter 4:12-14

It is perfectly all right to pray not to be subjected to such a trial. Jesus did in the garden of Gethsemane to the point of sweating blood, but the Father did not deliver him from the physical suffering and death. This was necessary for our salvation. What the Father did was to deliver Jesus from the evil one, Satan, who hoped to achieve his ultimate victory over the world and against God by destroying the Son of God.

It is this higher deliverance that it is important for you to pray for in this petition. The Father wants to protect and deliver you from the works of Satan in your life. His purpose in doing this is so that, through your union with Christ, all things, including Satan and his kingdom, will become subject to you and that you will reign with Christ forever.

So the first thing you should ask God to protect and deliver you from is the fear of death and the power of the devil. Jesus has overcome death and Satan by his resurrection. You share in his resurrection power and victory through your baptism by which you have been given new life in Christ. Once you settle the "death" issue you can begin to live in the freedom of the new life that God has given you in Christ.

"We see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering and death so that, by the grace of God, he might taste death for everyone. It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. The one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason, Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters. Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things so that, through death, he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. Therefore, he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest

in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested." Hebrews 2:9-11, 14 & 15, 17 & 18

A second thing you should ask the Father to protect and deliver you from is your *self*. "You do not understand your own actions. You do not do what you want but the very thing you hate. You know that nothing good dwells within you, that is, in your human nature. You can will what is right, but you cannot do it. You do not do the good you want but the evil you do not want." Romans 7:15, 18 & 19

By baptism, "you have died to the law through the body of Christ so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead in order that you may bear fruit for God. While you were living in the flesh, your sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in your members to bear fruit for death. But now you are discharged from the law, dead to that which held you captive, so that you are a slave not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit." Romans 7:4-6

Finally, you should ask the Father to protect and deliver you from self-condemnation. "What, then, are we to say about these things? If God is for you, who is against you? He, who did not withhold his own Son but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give you everything else? Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for you. Who will separate you from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, 'For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.' No, in all these things you are more than a conqueror through him who loved you.

"I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to

separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus your Lord."
Romans 8:31-39

Lord, hear my prayer!
In your righteousness, listen to my plea;
answer me in your faithfulness!
Don't put me, your servant, on trial;
no one is innocent in your sight.
I lift up my hands to you in prayer;
like dry ground my soul is thirsty for you.
Answer me now, Lord!
Don't hide yourself from me.
Remind me each morning of your constant love
for I put my trust in you.
My prayers go up to you;
show me the way I should go.
I go to you for protection, Lord;
rescue me from my enemies.
You are my God; teach me to do your will.
Be good to me and guide me on a safe path.
Rescue me, Lord, as you have promised;
in your goodness, save me from my troubles!
Because of your love for me, kill my spiritual enemies
and destroy all my oppressors
for I am your servant.
Psalm 143:1 & 3, 6 & 7, 8-12

In my distress, I call to you, O Lord;
you answer me and set me free.
You, O Lord, are with me.
I will not be afraid;
what can anyone do to me?
It is you, O Lord, who help me;
I will see my enemies defeated.
It is better to trust in you, Lord,
than to depend on human leaders.

You, O Lord, make me powerful and strong.
You have saved me.
I will live and proclaim what you have done.

You have punished me severely
but have not let me die.
I praise you, Lord, because you heard me,
because you have given me victory.
You are my God, and I give you thanks.
I will proclaim your greatness.
Psalm 118:5-9, 14, 17 & 18, 21, 28

I love you, Lord, because you hear me;
you listen to my prayers.
You listen to me every time I call to you.
The danger of death was all around me
I was filled with fear and anxiety.
But you, O Lord, are merciful and good;
you, O God, are compassionate.
You protect the helpless;
when I am in danger, you save me.
Be confident, my heart,
because the Lord has been good to me.
You, O Lord, saved me from death;
you stopped my tears and kept me from defeat.
So I walk in the presence of the Lord
in the world of the living.
I am your servant, Lord.
You have saved me from death.
I give you a sacrifice of thanksgiving
and offer my prayer to you.
In the assembly of all your people,
in the sanctuary of your temple,
I give you what I have promised.
Psalm 116:1-3a, 3c, 5-9, 16-19

My help comes from you, Lord,
who made heaven and earth.
You will not let me fall;
you, my protector, are always awake.
You will guard me;
you are by my side to protect me.
The sun will not hurt me during the day,
nor the moon during the night.
You, O Lord, will protect me from all danger;
you will keep me safe.
You will keep me as I come and go,
now, and forever.
Psalm 131:2 & 3, 5-8

How I love you, Lord!
You are my defender.
You are my protection,
and with you I am safe.
I call to you, and you save me from my enemies.
Praise you, Lord!
In my troubles, I call to you, my God, for help.
In your temple, you hear my voice;
you listen to my cry for help.
You reach down from above
and take hold of me;
you pull me out of the deep waters.
You rescue me from Satan
and from those who hate me.
When I am in trouble, they attack me,
but you protect me.
You help me out of danger;
you save me because you are pleased with me.
O Lord, you are faithful to those
who are faithful to you.
You are pure to those who are pure,

but hostile to those who are wicked.
You save those who are humble,
but you humble those who are proud.
O Lord, you give me light,
you dispel my darkness.
You give me strength to attack Satan
and power and authority to overcome his defenses.
O God, how perfect are your deeds!
How dependable your words!
You are like a shield
for all who seek your protection.
You alone are my defense.
You are the God who makes me strong,
who makes my pathways safe.
You make me surefooted as a deer;
you keep me safe on the mountains.
You train me for battle
so that I can use the strongest bow.
You give me strength for the battle
and victory over my enemies.
You make my enemies run from me;
I destroy those who hate me.
I crush them
so that they become like dust
which the wind blows away.
I trample on them
like mud in the streets.
You, Lord, live!
I praise you, my defender!
I proclaim the greatness of my God who saves me.
You give me victory over my enemies.
You subdue the nations under me
and save me from my foes.
Psalm 18:1-3, 6, 16-19, 25-34,
39-40, 42, 46-48

Lord, how happy is the person you instruct,
the one to whom you teach your law!
You give me rest from days of trouble.
You will not abandon me;
you will not desert me
because I belong to you.
I said, "I am falling,"
but your constant love, O Lord, held me up.
Whenever I am anxious or worried,
you comfort me and make me glad.
You, O Lord, defend me;
you, my God, protect me.
Psalm 94:12-15, 18 & 19, 22

What if you, Lord, had not been on my side?
If you had not been on my side
when my enemies attacked me,
then they would have swallowed me alive
in their furious anger against me;
then the flood would have carried me away.
The water would have covered me,
the raging torrent would have drowned me.
I thank you, Lord,
who have not let my enemies destroy me.
I have escaped like a bird
from a hunter's trap;
the trap is broken, and I am free!
My help comes from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.
Psalm 125:1, 2-8