

The Name You Bear

As mentioned in the previous section, if you are a Christian you are wearing God's name on you everywhere you go. But how did you come to possess God's name? This is the all-important question on this specific petition. To answer it is to understand this petition in its fullest sense.

In order to answer the question, notice that we said above "IF YOU ARE A CHRISTIAN you are wearing God's name..." It is the fact that you are a Christian that gives you God's name. You are one of His children so you carry His name. When did you become a Christian? The answer to this question will vary greatly, since people come to faith in Jesus at different times in life.

However, there is one point in time in our lives that we can all definitely point to and say, "That's when I was given the name of my God." Do you know when that point in time was? It was when you were baptized. Whether it was a pastor, priest, parent, or anyone else who baptized you, these words were spoken over you: *I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.* Through Holy Baptism, God called you and adopted you into His family and that's when you took on His name.

It is for this reason that one's baptism used to be, and still is by some, referred to as a christening – the giving of one's Christian name. It was at the Baptism that the individual's name became official and along with it, his place in God's house by faith in Jesus, the Savior. The Apostle Paul in Ephesians 3:14-15 writes:

For this reason I bow my knees
before the Father,
from whom every family in
heaven and on earth is named.



Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church

6170 Center Hill Church Rd.
Loganville, GA 30052

Phone: 470-214-3401
Email: zionlutheran@zelcloganville.com

www.zelcloganville.com

#13 – GOD'S NAME



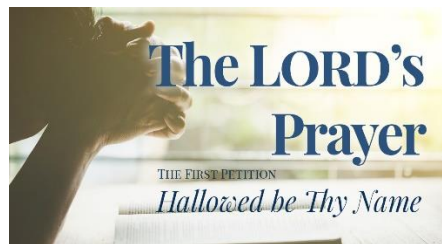
Out of Zion,
*the perfection
of beauty,*
God shines forth.



Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church

What is the First Petition of the Lord's Prayer?

In the Lord's Prayer, the very first petition, or request, we make of God is: *hallowed be Thy name*. Since it is not a word we use in our normal speech, we have to ask, "What does it mean for something to be *hallowed*?" Believe it or not, it's closely related to our annual holiday known as Halloween. Halloween, shortened from Hallow Evening, is the day before All Saints' Day, which was a significant holiday for Christians hundreds of years ago. Since a saint is literally a holy person, the day before All Saints Day was called the Hallow Eve, or the evening before the holy day. To call something hallow or hallowed is to say that it is holy. The First Petition of the Lord's Prayer, then, is that God would make His name holy.



How does God make His name holy? Isn't it already holy? Well, yes, in the sense that God is

Himself holy. He is without any sin, and it is by His own nature that sin is defined. When we pray that God would make His name holy, we are acknowledging, first of all, that when we sin, we are sinning against the holy God who created us. In that sense, the prayer is a kind of confession of our unworthiness to speak His name because of our sin.

At the same time, we are praying for something specific from God when we pray this petition. We are asking Him to overcome the sin in us so that we might treat His name in a holy way. Martin Luther, in explaining this petition, wrote:

God's name is hallowed when the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we, as the children of God, also lead a holy life according to it.

What Is God's Name?

This is an extremely important question. We Christians don't always think enough about God's name in our lives and how important it is. It is the source of blessings, the name by which we're saved, and the name by which we are even known, since we are the children of God. So God's name should be on our minds often and even in the words we speak.

But God's name is not *God*. God is what He is, a divine being with unlimited power, knowledge, and presence. He is the source of love, for He is love. When we use that word, we are simply referring to these qualities about God. But He does have a name, also.

So what is that name? Actually, there are many names for God mentioned in the Bible: the Lord, Father, The Lord Our Righteousness, Jehovah, and, of course, Jesus, the human name of the eternal God who became a man to redeem us. All of these names are names of God, and as such, they should be regarded as holy by us.

Yet, when you think about it, a person's name isn't just the letters that form the name by which we get that person's attention. When you say your best friend's name, for example, you aren't thinking about the phonetic sounds coming from your vocal chords and through your mouth out into the air. You are thinking about things like hair color, age, demeanor, and the relationship you have with him/her. In other words, a person's name is what you know about that person.

So it is with God. It's not just the letters that formulate the sounds in J-E-S-U-S. It's His demeanor toward us, His teachings, His love and concern for us, and even His very nature as revealed to us throughout the Bible. In that sense, the Bible is very much the name of God since it is through the Bible we get to know our God. So while we call Him God or Lord or Father or Jesus, etc. we're actually thinking, hopefully about the things He has done for us and promises to continue to do for us because of not on what He is but also who He is.

How Is God's Name Hallowed?

We touched on this already, but now it's time for a more detailed answer.

Think, for a moment, about the name that goes on the back of an athletic jersey. When an athlete steps out onto a court or field it isn't just his name that is on the back of that jersey because it's the name he was born into. Therefore, how he behaves during the game says something – not just about him but also about his family, and perhaps especially his parents. If he plays with good sportsmanship, he is bringing honor to his parents. If he plays dirty and complains about the referees, well, that brings dishonor to them.

Now think about the name on your back being Jehovah or Jesus. Doesn't the same thing apply? Doesn't how you behave, how you talk, and even how you think say something to other people about your heavenly Father and about your Savior. If you are kind and helpful and generous toward people and humble in your attitude, it will demonstrate to others that your relationship with your God is important to you belong to a generous, kind, and loving Father. That's the part about living a holy life according to God's Word.

Yet, before you can live according to God's Word, you first must believe God's Word to be true and worthy of patterning your life on it. That's the part about God's Word being taught in its truth and purity. We honor God's name by treasuring every word He has given us in the Bible. We show that we treasure His word by not changing when we don't like what it says or by not adding to it so that it says something we think God should have said but didn't. It is true in all that it says and what it says is to be taught and believed.

