

Heidelberg Catechism 119-121 – A Willing And Able Father

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: As a child, if you needed a sandwich, you would probably ask your parent who would usually be willing to do it. **But suppose you asked your parents for a fresh caviar and crackers, would they give it to you, or would they give you a peanut butter and jelly sandwich instead?** You see, even if they were willing to give you fresh caviar and crackers, they might not be able. Your parents have limitations.

But these limitations don't apply to God. God is always willing to help his children and God is always able to help his children. This is what you will hear from God's Words today.

Our headings are: **A Willing Father. An Able Father**

Our goals are: That **knowing you have a willing and able Father who adopted you through Jesus Christ, you will pour out your prayers daily to him.**

A Willing Father

119 Q. WHAT IS THIS PRAYER?

A. **Our Father who art in heaven**, Hallowed be thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; And forgive us our debts, As we also have forgiven our debtors 债务人; And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

120 Q. WHY DID CHRIST COMMAND US TO CALL GOD "OUR FATHER"?

A. At the very beginning of our prayer Christ wants to kindle in us what is basic to our prayer– the childlike awe 敬畏 and trust that God through Christ has become our Father. Our fathers do not refuse us the things of this life; God our Father will even less refuse to give us what we ask in faith.

1. Before we get to the details of direction of prayer, notice how prayer can be done using simple words and clear speaking. No complex sentences are required for prayer. No English required. Good grammar is not required. Even speech is not always required. God speaks Portuguese and Mandarin. **God understands all accents, dialects, and thoughts.**

2. Now, your prayer is directed to the **Father of all believers**. See Hebrews 12:7-9.

Matthew 7: 9 "Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 "Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11 "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will **your Father who is in heaven give good** things to those who ask Him!

A father cares of his children. He is willing to take care of his children. He wants his children to come to him!

Luke 11: 11 "If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? 12 "Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? 13 "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

Now you direct your prayer to God because you consciously realize that through Christ you are an adopted son or daughter of Jehovah God and therefore you talk to him like a son or daughter talks to his or her father: with confidence and expectation, but not with fear. God is now in a clear relationship with you – a covenant relationship – a special relationship.

Romans 8: 10 And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, **but you received the Spirit of adoption 收养 by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."**

There are some who argue for the “Fatherhood of God to all Men.” That is true in a general sense – that all men get their existence from him - but God is not the covenant God of all men. God is the covenant God of whom he redeemed with the blood of his own. If you have no grace through Christ, you have no gate-no access 通路 to heaven.

3. Your prayer is directed to God your Father. This shows the personal relationship that exists between you and God. It is a covenantal relationship but it is also a personal relationship. The Psalmist often said: “My Lord...my God.”

Isaiah 64:8 But now, O LORD, You are our Father; We are the clay粘土, and You our potter制陶器的人; And all we are the work of Your hand.

Jeremiah 3: 17 "At that time Jerusalem shall be called The Throne of the LORD, and all the nations shall be gathered to it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem. No more shall they follow the dictates 指令 of their evil hearts. 18 "In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given as an inheritance to your fathers. 19 "But I said: 'How can I put you among the children And give you a pleasant land, A beautiful heritage of the hosts of nations?' "And I said: 'You shall call Me, "My Father," And not turn away from Me.'

4. While you have a personal relationship with your Father and could say “my Father,” Jesus taught you to say: “Our” Father. Jesus specifically chose the word “our” Father in heaven to guard against self-righteousness or arrogance in your thinking. He does not want you to think that you are so special to the exclusion of others. You have and share and pray to the same heavenly Father with millions of other Christians throughout all the ages. You have many siblings. And that relationship you have with each other means you are to pray for each other. And who doesn't have some struggle with his siblings from time to time? But you are to always include your spiritual siblings as part of your prayer to your Father in heaven.

5. Since God is your Father, you trust him. You tell him everything that has happened to you – even

the most intimate 隐私的 and embarrassing details that you might not tell a husband or a wife. You will not be ashamed to ask God for things you need. He never laughs at you. And you know that he will be understanding – even when you ask for foolish things. He will never abandon you or put you out of the house. You are his child forever.

6. Since your prayer is to be directed to your heavenly Father, do not view prayer superstitiously, or in a daydreaming way. You have to concentrate on what you say. Show holy respect. Don't think of the deliciousness of the food while you pray.

7. And since prayer is directed to your Father in heaven, do not direct your prayers to anyone else. You are not to direct your prayers to dead saints, or living saints, as Roman Catholics argue.

An Able Father

121 Q. WHY THE WORDS, "WHO ART IN HEAVEN"?

A. These words teach us not to think of God's heavenly majesty as something earthly, and to expect everything for body and soul from his almighty power.

1. You would not have too much hope if the relative from whom you were hoping to get an inheritance were living on the streets in cardboard boxes. On the other hand, if someone were waiting for an inheritance from you, you still have limitations of what you can do, like President Obama not being able to give his illegal uncle the right to live in the USA. Or the government could steal some of your inheritance. **But that is not how it is with your Father in heaven.**

2. Since your Father is in heaven, the true and living God – you know he has the ability to do for you everything you need and give you everything you need. You can expect his full answer to your request for an inheritance. You can ask him for help to do his will, whatever his will is. (Prayer is not ultimately about your need, but what you need to do the work of God!) He has promised to provide everything that is needful for your body and soul to do his will.

3. Look at the power, love, and wisdom of your heavenly Father.

Matthew 6:25 "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? 26 "Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 "Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? 28 "So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; 29 "and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 "Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 "For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

God's promise is declared graphically for you. If you ask your father for a fish, he will not give you a snake. If you ask your father for an egg, he will not give you a scorpion 蝎子. If you ask your father for bread, he will not give you a stone. Dumb, poor, sinful fathers know what to give their children, imagine how much more your heavenly Father will know what to give his children.

Romans 8: 31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, **how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?**

3. Since your Father is in heaven, this means you must treat him with great respect, not with “pedestrian familiarity” -as an ordinary man.

Acts 17: 24 "God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. 25 "Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. 26 "And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, 27 "so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope探索 for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; 28 "for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.'

In the market place the Apostle Paul pointed out that temples could not contain God – the God who made every living thing in the earth...who determined when and how everything would live and be limited. The temple could not contain God and heaven could not contain him.

Jeremiah 23: 23 "Am I a God near at hand," says the LORD, "And not a God afar off? 24 Can anyone hide himself in secret places, So I shall not see him?" says the LORD; "Do I not fill heaven and earth?" says the LORD.

God is powerful and able, filling heaven and earth. This means nothing is out of his Divine sight or control. So always honor him. Maybe you heard of the young lady who sued her parents to provide for her private high school education and personal lifestyle after she moved out of their home and oversight. She lost. She thought that parents existed for her benefit and was not interested in going what her parents wanted.

Conclusion:

First, God is your Father because you were adopted in Christ Jesus and given an eternal inheritance than none can take away. People who claim to worship the same God as you but reject the work of Christ are lying – they don't worship the same God as you. They can't. Only Christians are able to pray. Second, your God and Father is not some weak God made of washable stone who lives in a temple and to whom you must make a pilgrimage 朝拜, light candles, or pay some dues. No, he is the one true God who reigns in heaven and on earth. All other gods are figments of men's imaginations and devilish decoys. He is able to do all his holy will.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: First, do you pray to your heavenly Father as you ought? You have right of access any time of the day with boldness 大胆 and confidence. Pour out your needs to him. Second, because your Father is in heaven, you have no ground for worry. (Worry is for people with no – or no good- fathers and no inheritance.) Knowing these two things, you should know how to direct your prayer and you should

learn to pray more. No saint of God has ever regretted praying too much. Saints always regret praying too little. Keep in mind that one of the main reasons you don't receive the blessings of God more is because you don't ask for them as often as you should.

Finally, to those who don't believe in Jesus Christ: 1John 3:1 says: "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God..." The writer is expressing an astounding 使大吃一惊 love-God's love in sending Christ to die for our sins-that then gives full access to God. Do you want to receive this love from God? Why not ask him to show you his love. You need it.