

July 28, 2013

The Doxology

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

What does this mean?

We can be sure that these petitions are acceptable to our Father in heaven and are heard by him, for he himself has commanded us to pray in this way and has promised to hear us. Therefore we say, "Amen. Yes, it shall be so."

1. The Doxology, most likely, was not part of the original Greek text of the New Testament but was added to the Lord's Prayer by the Christian church. Although not part of the original text, how do the words of this song of praise, nonetheless, serve as a fitting conclusion to this prayer?

2. According to the following passages, how can we know that the Lord's Prayer is acceptable to our Father in heaven?

"This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven'" (Matthew 6:9).

"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us" (1 John 5:14).

3. According to the following passages, how can we be certain that our Father in heaven will hear and answer the petitions of the Lord's Prayer?

"I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it" (John 14:13,14).

"[God] is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine" (Ephesians 3:20).

4. In Greek, the word amen means "truth." In other words, we are closing the Lord's Prayer with an expression of certainty: "Yes, it shall be so." Why is it appropriate for us to close the Lord's Prayer with this word?

5. God promises to answer our prayers and, in his love, does so in one of three ways. What are the three ways in which God answers our prayers? Give possible reasons why God answers our prayers in each of these three ways.

6. Saint James shares some additional thoughts about prayer. What does he tell us in each of the following passages?

"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does" (1:5-8).

“You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures” (4:2,3).

7. Agree or disagree:

Even though many adults received instructions as children, it is important that they continue to study Luther’s Small Catechism throughout their lives.

We give glory to God every time we pray to him.

Luther said:

“Once Luther asked his son Hans how much he knew. Hans answered rather proudly, ‘The whole catechism,’ Papa, ‘because I know that by heart.’ ‘Is that so!’ Luther said. ‘If you really understand that much, you are wiser than I am. I still have to study it every day.’” (“Martin Luther, the Author of the Small Catechism,” Luther’s Catechism, translated and edited by David P. Kuske, Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1982, p. 25.)

Closing Prayer

We know, Lord, that through Christ this prayer is acceptable to you. We thank you, precious Lord, for this opportunity to study your Word. Strengthen our faith daily through this means of grace. Renew us. Continue to change our hearts and lives and to fill us, more and more, with the joy of knowing that we are saved through Jesus. In his name we offer this prayer. Amen. At home

- Memorize the Doxology of the Lord’s Prayer and its meaning.
- Begin a daily habit of reviewing a portion of Luther’s Small Catechism.

See answers below:

Helps

(1) It is always fitting to praise God. The words of the Doxology glorify God by ascribing to him alone the power and willingness to hear and answer all of our prayers.

(2) We know that the Lord's Prayer is acceptable because Jesus himself commanded us to pray it and because in it we are praying that God's will be done.

(3) We can be certain that God will hear and answer this prayer because he has the power to do so and because he promises to give us what we ask of him in our Savior's name.

(4) We close this prayer with the word amen because we do not doubt, but firmly believe, that God will hear and answer this prayer.

(5) God always answers our prayers and does so by either giving us what we ask, saying no to our prayer, or having us wait for our prayer to be answered. He does this out of his love for us and because he wants what is best for us.

(6) James tells us that in prayer we must trust God. A "double-minded" person cannot decide whether or not to trust God and his promises. James also reminds us that at times we go without because we simply do not take the time to approach God in prayer or because when we do, we pray with improper and selfish motives.

(7) It is God's will that we continue to grow throughout our lives in the knowledge of his Word and in our faith. Often we forget what we have learned and must relearn it. Whenever we go to God in prayer, we are honoring him as the God who alone is willing and able to answer our prayers.