

Heidelberg Catechism
Lord's Day 47

122. What is the first petition?

“Hallowed be Your name;” that is, grant us, first, rightly to know You,¹ and to sanctify, magnify, and praise You in all Your works, in which Your power, goodness, justice, mercy, and truth shine forth;² and further, that we so order our whole life, our thoughts, words, and deeds, that Your Name may not be blasphemed, but honored and praised on our account.³

[1] Jn. 17:3; Matt. 16:17; Jas. 1:5; Ps. 119:105. [2] Ps. 119:137; Rom. 11:33–36. [3] Ps. 71:8; *Ps. 100:3–4; *Ps. 92:1–2; *Eph. 1:16–17; *Ps. 71:16.

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In praying, “**Hallowed be your name**” we are asking God to grant us:

1. To acknowledge Him first, before all other things
2. To know Him rightly
3. And therefore to praise Him
4. So that we may obey Him
5. To the end that His name is honored and praised

I. To acknowledge God first

The petition, Hallowed be thy name, is placed first in order, because it comprehends the goal and design of all the rest; that is, the glory of God should be the goal of all our affairs, actions and prayers.

This goal, too, is the first thing in the thoughts and intention of any one, and the last in execution.

Therefore the goal of the other petitions should be sought in the first place, if we would seek them aright, according to the command of Christ, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto you." (Matt. 6:33.)

Zacharias Ursinus, Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism

Q: What is the chief end of man? **A:** *Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.*

Westminster Shorter Catechism, Q&A 1

II. To know God rightly

... this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

John 17. 3

Our wisdom, in so far as it ought to be deemed true and solid Wisdom, consists almost entirely of two parts: first, the knowledge of God, and then the knowledge of ourselves.

John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion

Once you become aware that the main business that you are here for is to know God, most of life's problems fall into place of their own accord ... There is nothing more irreligious than self-absorbed religion.

Jl Packer, Knowing God

In the Bible the "name" of God most often consists of two things:

a) **His person** (see Deut. 28. 58-59; Prov. 18.10; Jeremiah 10.6)

*"If you are not careful to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear **this glorious and awesome name**, the LORD your God, then the LORD will bring on you and your offspring extraordinary afflictions, afflictions severe and lasting, and sicknesses grievous and lasting.*

Deuteronomy 28. 58-59

b) **His works** (see Exodus 34. 5-7; John 17.6)

- His works of creation
- His works of redemption
- His works of judgment
- His works of faithfulness (that is, His covenant)

I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world.

John 17.6

*"Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God: **It is not for your sake**, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, **but for the sake of my holy name**, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. ²³ **And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name**, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. **And the nations will know that I am the Lord**, declares the Lord God, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes. ²⁴ **I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land.** ²⁵ **I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you.** ²⁶ **And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.** ²⁷ **And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.** ²⁸ **You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.** ²⁹ **And I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses. And I will summon the grain and make it abundant and lay no famine upon you.** ³⁰ **I will make the fruit of the tree and the increase of the field abundant, that you may never again suffer the disgrace of famine among the nations.** ³¹ **Then you will remember your evil ways, and your deeds that were not good, and you will loathe yourselves for your iniquities and your abominations.** ³² **It is not for your sake that I will act**, declares the Lord God; **let that be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel.***

Ezekiel 36. 22-32

III. And therefore to praise Him

*... you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, **that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.***

¹⁰ *Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

1 Peter 2. 9-10

IV. So that we may obey Him

- In our thoughts
- In our words
- In our deeds

V. To the end that His name is honored and praised

*In the same way, let your light shine before others,
so that they may see your good works **and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.***

Matthew 5.16

¹¹ *Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. ¹² Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, **they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.***

1 Peter 2. 9-12

The design of the universe ... is very magnificent and shouldn't be taken for granted. In fact, I believe that is why Einstein had so little use for organized religion, although he strikes me as a basically very religious man. He must have looked at what the preachers said about God and felt that they were blaspheming. He had seen much more majesty than they had ever imagined, and they were just not talking about the real thing. My guess is that he simply felt that religions he'd run across did not have proper respect ... for the author of the universe.

Charles Misner, *First Things* (12/91)