

In Heaven

Jason A. Graham: The Disciples' Prayer Series

Matthew 6:9-13 (NKJV) ⁹In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. ¹⁰Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as *it is* in heaven. ¹¹Give us this day our daily bread. ¹²And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors. ¹³And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

This prayer, taught to the Disciples by Jesus, can lead us into revelation about God and about ourselves.

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In Heaven

- In Heaven
 - Reveals God's Position
 - Reveals God's Exaltation
 - Reveals God's Authority

So, What is Heaven?

Heaven can be studied, explained, and talked about in several different ways. For the purposes of this study, because of the context of the verse, we will simply look at Heaven as God's Throne.

This demonstrates God's Position of Authority and Exaltation. He is in Heaven. He reigns from Heaven.

Isaiah 66:1 (NIV) This is what the Lord says: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be?"

So, what does this mean?

God is King

Our God is King – King of all the earth. He reigns on High. He is the Most High. There is no other God. He is maker of Heaven and maker of Earth. He sits on the Throne of His own Holiness. This is God's Position.

Psalms 47:7 (NIV) For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise.

1 Chronicles 29:11 (NIV) Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O Lord, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all.

God is King – His is the Kingdom.

Our King and Our Father?

Let's not forget who we are talking about. God is King. He is highly exalted. Jesus begins this prayer with OUR FATHER, IN HEAVEN. Yes, we are talking about our Father...the one who has accepted us and drawn near to us...the one who has given us everything that belongs to Him. We have full rights as Sons of God. Our Father is God, and our God is King.

We must still reverence and honor Him. We worship Him. He is the Most High God. He is God and there is no other.

Deuteronomy 4:39 (NIV) Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the Lord is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other.

So, how do we approach Him?

This is where I must introduce a theological idea to you about the dichotomy of God's existence. Theologians refer to God as being both Transcendent and Imminent. Transcendent means He is far above, highly exalted, and even untouchable. This is very true.

Imminent means that He has drawn near. He has made a way for intimacy. He has come to us, and He draws us close to Him.

Therefore, God is the I AM. JEHOVAH — the Self-Existent One...

Exodus 3:14 (NIV) God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

And He is Immanuel — God with us...

Matthew 1:23 (NIV) "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"-- which means, "God with us."

It seems that within the first four words of this prayer Jesus wants us to see God as our Father that we can be close and intimate with – knowing that we cannot earn His acceptance because He has accepted us freely without any

merit on our part. And we are to keep in mind that He is highly exalted and worthy of all honor. He has shown us that God is both Imminent and Transcendent. Or, in the words of Deuteronomy 4:39, He “is God in heaven above and on earth below.”

So, back to our question: How do we approach God? As our Father and our God. Love Him as your Father. Worship Him as your God. Talk to Him as your Father. Learn to be still and know that He is God. He is both; therefore, treat Him as both. Let the Holy Spirit lead you into an awesome, dynamic relationship with your Father God.

Approaching Him as God the King

The Bible does give us some direction on how to approach Him as our God:

Psalms 100:1-5 (NIV) ¹Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. ²Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. ³Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. ⁴Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. ⁵For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

- Come before Him with Thanksgiving, Praise, and Singing
- Know that He is God

Psalms 47:1-9 (NIV) ¹Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy. ²How awesome is the Lord Most High, the great King over all the earth! ³He subdued nations under us, peoples under our feet. ⁴He chose our inheritance for us, the pride of Jacob, whom he loved. Selah ⁵God has ascended amid shouts of joy, the Lord amid the sounding of trumpets. ⁶Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises. ⁷For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise. ⁸God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne. ⁹The nobles of the nations assemble as the people of the God of Abraham, for the kings of the earth belong to God; he is greatly exalted.

- Praise Him
 - Clap
 - Shout
 - Lift up your Voice.
 - Sing Praises
 - Sing Praises with Understanding
 - Knowing that He is God and King of all the earth...even over the heathen.

Isaiah 66:1-2 (NIV) ¹This is what the Lord says: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be? ²Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?" declares the Lord. "This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word.

- Approach God Humbly
 - Recognizing that He is in Heaven and we are on earth
- Be contrite in spirit
 - This means to be smitten or undone before Him
 - Completely overwhelmed and broken before Him

- Tremble at His Word
 - Honor His Word
 - Be filled with fear (reverence) for God

Ecclesiastes 5:1-5 (NIV) ¹ Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know that they do wrong. ² Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few. ³ As a dream comes when there are many cares, so the speech of a fool when there are many words. ⁴ When you make a vow to God, do not delay in fulfilling it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow. ⁵ It is better not to vow than to make a vow and not fulfill it.

- Guard your steps
 - Don't go before God without considering your attitude – be reverent
- Approach God to Listen First and to Listen Mostly – not to speak
- Don't offer the sacrifice of fools
 - Don't be too quick to make foolish commitments before God
 - Don't be too quick to offer suggestions or advice to God
 - Like Peter
 - **Matthew 17:4-5 (NIV)** ⁴ Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters--one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." ⁵ While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"
 - In other words, God interrupted Peter and told him to stop talking and Listen
 - Peter was offering up the sacrifice of fools.
- Let your words be few
 - But don't be afraid to talk to God
 - Just don't think that your end of the conversation is the most important end.
 - In the two verses preceding The Disciples' Prayer, Jesus said the following to His disciples:
 - **Matthew 6:7-8 (NIV)** ⁷ And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

So, we approach God with thankfulness, praise, humbleness, contriteness, reverence, with few words, and with listening ears.

Our Position with Him

Now that you understand that God is in Heaven, that Heaven is His throne, that He is King of everything, that He is to be honored, and that we approach Him with all reverence –I want to remind you what God has done for us through His Son, Jesus Christ. God has made a place for us by His side.

Ephesians 1:17-23, 2:4-9 (NIV)

¹⁷ I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. ¹⁸ I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, ²⁰ which he

exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms,²¹ far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.²² And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church,²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way...

⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.

What is all of that saying? Our Father God raised Jesus up and exalted Him. He seated Jesus at His right hand IN HEAVEN. He seated us with Himself IN HEAVEN, in Jesus. He has given us a place by His side IN HEAVEN. He is still the Only Exalted One, but He is, after all, our Father and we have been made heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ.

Romans 8:16-17 (NIV) ¹⁶ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. ¹⁷ Now if we are children, then we are heirs--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Galatians 3:26-29 (NIV) ²⁶ You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, ²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

So, we are not under control of the enemies of our souls. We have been placed in Christ – the King of Kings, who is above all. Therefore, we are above all of our enemies. Everything that is under Christ's feet is under our feet because we are seated in Him – IN HEAVEN.

Do We Still Worship God from Our Position of Honor?

I've considered that some may think that since we are accepted as sons, that perhaps the exaltation and worship of God may be a lack of understanding of who we are. I say not at all. The opposite is true: the lack of exaltation and worship of God would be a lack of understanding of who He is.

Regardless of how He sees us, His position, His glory, His worthiness to be exalted and worshipped has not been diminished. There is nothing else in existence that is worthy of worship. But God really is, and it is therefore a natural outpouring of those who see Him. Sons or not—honored or not.

Revelation 4:1-2 (NIV) ¹ After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." ² At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it.

Let's bear in mind the picture that we see in Revelation 4-5 of the God in Heaven sitting on the throne, and the Lamb who was slain being surrounded by those that have been greatly honored to sit on thrones surrounding God, and even have crowns placed on their own heads. From there reaction to God we see those who have been greatly

honored by God still understanding that his worthiness to be worshipped does not diminish with the honor he places on us.

Revelation 4:9-11 (NIV) ⁹ Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, ¹⁰ the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: ¹¹ "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

Revelation 5:9-14 (NIV) ⁹ And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. ¹⁰ You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth." ¹¹ Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. ¹² In a loud voice they sang: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!" ¹³ Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!" ¹⁴ The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped.

Never forget

Our Father God is King. He is greatly exalted. He is to be worshipped, honored, revered, heard, obeyed, and loved by us always.

Ecclesiastes 12:13 (NIV) Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole [duty] of man.