

LIFE GROUP STUDY

Your Kingdom come...

It has rightly been said that this petition ought to have come with a warning label. In an oft-quoted passage, Annie Dillard reminds us of how flippantly we often treat such prayer:

Does anyone have the foggiest idea what sort of power we so blithely invoke?

This second petition of the Lord's Prayer began to explode in me during the first of the four years my family lived in the Philippines. During Fall of 1985 and the Winter of 1986 you could feel the tension everywhere. Ferdinand Marcos, the corrupt dictator, was tightening his grip on the country. People who spoke out against his unjust ways were "disappearing," some were discovered murdered. All over the city of Manila believers were praying, "Your kingdom come!" with a great sense of urgency. Then, in February of 1986, we witnessed the so-called "People-Power Revolution." I say so-called because it should have been called "Praying-People-Power Revolution." We witnessed a "regime change" take place without anyone needing to resort to military intervention. I learned that year that to pray the second petition of the Lord's Prayer, "Your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven," is one of, if not the most radical things a human being can do, for it turns out that in this petition we are asking God to bring about the most massive revolution imaginable.

Darrell Johnson "Fifty-Seven words that changed the world"

Question : Why does Darrell Johnson believe that praying the line "your kingdom come" is an explosive thing to pray? Have you ever thought of it in that way?

Your Kingdom come...

"Father, your reign of light and joy and power and justice and wholeness is now veiled. O God, unveil your kingdom here on earth just as it is in heaven! King of Kings, break through the veil of hiddenness and manifest your royal splendor and might and healing and goodness."

We mere human beings . . . we can ask for the unveiling of the kingdom of God? Yes! If the Church of Jesus has been given this privilege then why haven't we exercised it more intentionally? Perhaps it is because we have not understood the privilege. Perhaps it is that we have not wanted to submit our lives to the King. We may have wanted the benefits and blessings of the kingdom but we have not been willing to align our lives with his rule. Or perhaps it is that we know the coming of God's rule means the end of our rule. Perhaps the church has not fervently prayed for the kingdom because we know it is dangerous to do so; the King just might answer and start turning everything up-side-down!

Darrell Johnson "Fifty-Seven words that changed the world"

Question : Why do you think we don't invoke this line "your kingdom come" more often? Is it ignorance, is it fear of what God might actually do, or is it that we haven't yet reached a place where we can trust God enough to allow him to explode in on our lives?

Your will be done...

The older I get the more I want to pray this third petition of the Lord's Prayer. There are two reasons for this.

First, the older I get the more I realize I do not know how to make life work. There was a time when I thought I did know. But the world is becoming increasingly complex. I am becoming more aware of the complex interplay between the mind and the heart and the body and the feelings and fears. I look back on a number of turning points in my life, and now rejoice that "my will" was not done. As good as it might have been, "my will" was not as well informed as I thought.

I like how Helmut Thielicke put it, *In the last analysis we know very little about our real needs, about what we lack and what we need. So we often pray for foolish things, when what we need is something totally different. We are naked, and instead of praying for clothing we pray for a fancy hat. We are imprisoned by certain passions . . . and instead of praying for freedom we pray for a Persian rug for our cell.*

So often we pray for senseless things that have no relation to our needs. And the reason is that we do not know the deepest wants and necessities of our life at all. "O Father, you do know. Your will be done!"

Darrell Johnson "Fifty-Seven words that changed the world"

Question : Is it true? Are we pretty ignorant when it comes to what we really "need" in life? Have you found over time that some of our prayer requests were way less important than we thought?

Question : How does praying "*bring about your will LORD*" release us from trying to know our will or even Gods will? How might it affect the number or type of requests we make to God?

Your will be done...

Second, I am more and more wanting to pray the third petition of the Lord's Prayer because I am discovering how good the will of God is.

The apostle Paul exhorts the disciples in Rome: "*Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will*" (Rom 12:2). The more I understand what the Father of Jesus is on about in the world, the more I realize that I am foolish not to want the Father's will done "on earth as it is in heaven."

Darrell Johnson "Fifty-Seven words that changed the world"

Question : What is behind our inability to trust that if we ask God to do his will in our lives, without restraint or conditions, that it will be better and more perfect than our plans and desires?

Question : What is the difference between acquiescing to God's will and actively, aggressively, seeking God to bring about His will in our lives? Which one is the correct tone of this prayer? What do you think will be the difference in the results between the two?