

Best That When Praying, We Mind What We're Saying

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(Excerpted from the 1987 Issue No. 1 *Worldwide Family Spirit* magazine)

ME: OUR FATHER, WHO ART IN HEAVEN -

GOD: Yes?

ME: Don't interrupt me. I'm Praying.

GOD: But you called me.

ME: Called you? I didn't call You. I'm praying Our Father, who art in Heaven -

GOD: There, you did it again.

ME: Did what?

GOD: Called me. You said, "Our Father, who art in Heaven". Here I am. What's on your mind?

ME: But I didn't mean anything by it. I was, you know, just saying my daily prayers. I always say the Lord's Prayer. It makes me feel good; kind of like getting a duty done.

GOD: All right. Go on!

ME: HALLOWED BE THY NAME ---

GOD: Hold it. What do you mean by that?

ME: By what?

GOD: "Hallowed be thy name"

ME: It means - it means - Good grief, I don't know what it means. How should I know? It's just part of the prayer. By the way, what does it mean?

GOD: It means honored, holy, wonderful.

ME: Hey, that makes sense. I never thought what "hallowed" meant before.

THY KINGDOM COME, THY WILL BE DONE, ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

GOD: Do you really mean that?

ME: Sure, why not?

GOD: What are you doing about it?

ME: Doing? Nothing, I guess. I just think it would be kinda neat if you got control of everything down here, like you do up there

GOD: Have I got control of you?

ME: Well, I go to church.

GOD: That isn't what I asked you. What about that habit of lust you have? And that bad temper? You've really got a problem there, you know. And then there's the way you spend your money - all on yourself. And what about the kind of books you read?

ME: Stop picking on me. I'm just as good as some of the rest of those phonies down at the church.

GOD: Excuse me. I thought you were praying for My will to be done. If that is to happen, it will have to start with the ones who are praying for it .

ME: Oh, all right. I guess I do have some hang-ups. Now that you mention it, I could probably name some others.

GOD: So could I.

ME: I haven't thought about it very much until now, but I really would like to cut out some of those things. I would like to, you know, be really free.

GOD: Good. Now we're getting somewhere. We'll work together, you and I.

ME: Look Lord, I need to finish up here. This is taking a lot longer than it usually does.
GIVE US THIS DAY, OUR DAILY BREAD.

GOD: You need to cut out the bread. You're overweight as it is.

ME: Hey, wait a minute! What is this? "Criticize me day?" Here I was doing my religious duty, and all of a sudden, you break in and remind me of all my hang-ups.

GOD: Praying is a dangerous thing. You could wind up changed, you know. That's what I'm trying to get across to you. You called me, and here I am. Keep on praying. I'm interested in the next part of your prayer - (pause) Well, go on...

ME: I'm scared to.

GOD: Scared of what?

ME: I know what you'll say.

GOD: Try me and see.

ME: **FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE HAVE FORGIVEN OUR DEBTORS.**

GOD: What about Bill?

ME: See? I knew it! I knew you would bring him up. Why, Lord, he's told lies about me, cheated me out of some money. He never paid back that debt he owes me. I've reason to get even with him.

GOD: But your prayer. What about your prayer?

ME: I didn't mean it.

GOD: Well, at least you're honest. But it's not fun carrying that load of bitterness around inside, is it?

ME: No, but I'll feel better as soon as I get even. Boy, have I got some plans for ole Bill. He'll wish he never did me any harm.

GOD: You won't feel any better. You'll feel worse. Revenge isn't sweet. Think of how unhappy you already are. But I can change all that.

ME: You can. How?

GOD: Forgive Bill. Then I'll forgive you. Then the hate and sin will be Bill's problem and not yours. You may lose the money, but you will have settled your heart.

ME: But Lord, I can't forgive Bill.

GOD: Then I can't forgive you.

ME: Oh, you're right. You always are. And more than I want revenge on Bill, I want to be right with you. (pause) (Sigh) All right. All right. I forgive him. Help him to find the right road in life, Lord. He's bound to be awfully miserable, now that I think of it.

Anybody who goes around doing the things he does to others has to be out of it.

Someway, somehow, show him the right way.

GOD: There, now. Wonderful. How do you feel?

ME: Hmmmm. Well, not bad. Not bad at all. In fact, I feel pretty great. You know, I don't think I'll have to go to bed tonight uptight for the first time since I can remember. Maybe I won't be so tired from now on because I'm not getting enough rest.

GOD: You're not through with your prayer, Go on.

ME: Oh, all right. **LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL.**

GOD: Good, Good. I'll do just that. Just don't put yourself in a place where you can be tempted.

ME: What do you mean by that?

GOD: Quit hanging around the magazine stands where Playboy is sold. Change some of your friendships. Some of your so-called friends are beginning to get to you. They'll have you completely involved in wrong things. Don't be fooled. They advertise they're having fun, but for you, it would be ruin. Don't use me for an escape hatch.

ME: I don't understand.

GOD: Sure you do. You've done it a lot of times. You get caught in a bad situation. You get in trouble and then you come running to me. "Lord, help me out of this mess and I'll promise you I'll never do it again." You remember some of those bargains you tried to make with me?

ME: Yes, and I'm ashamed, Lord, really I am.

GOD: Which bargain are you remembering?

ME: Well, when the woman next door saw me backing away from the neighborhood bar. I'd told my mother I was going to the store. I remember telling you, "Oh, God, don't let her tell my mother where I've been. I promise, I'll be in church every Sunday."

GOD: She didn't tell your mother, but you didn't keep your promise, did you?

Me: I'm sorry, Lord, I really am. Up until now I thought if I just prayed the Lord's Prayer every day, then I could do what I liked. I didn't expect anything to happen like it did.

GOD: Go ahead and finish your prayer.

Me: FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM AND THE POWER AND THE GLORY,
FOREVER, AMEN,

GOD: Do you know what would bring me glory? What would really make me happy?

Me: No, but I'd like to know. I want now to please you. I can see what a mess I've made of my life. And I can see how cool it would be to really be one of your followers.

GOD: You just answered the question.

Me: I did?

GOD: Yes. The thing that would bring me glory is to have people like you truly love me. And I see that happening between us. Now that some of these old sins are exposed and out of the way, well, there is no telling what we can do together.

Me: Lord, let's see what we can make of me, O.K.?

GOD: Yes, let's see.