

If God Should Speak

"Our Father who art in heaven..."

---Yes?

Don't interrupt me; I'm praying.

---But you called me.

Called you? I didn't call you. I'm praying. "Our Father who art in heaven..."

---There. You did it again.

Did what?

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

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

---All right. Go on.

"Hallowed be thy name..."

---Hold it. What do you mean by that?

By what?

---By "hallowed be thy name"?

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?

---It means honored, holy, wonderful.

Hey, that makes sense. I never thought about what "hallowed" meant before. "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

---Do you really mean that?

Sure! Why not?

---What are you doing about it?

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

---Have I got control of you?

Well, I go to church.

---That isn't what I asked you. What about your 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 lies you tell?

Stop picking on me! I'm just as good as some of the rest of those people at church!

---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; like you, for example.

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

---So could I.

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!

---Good! Now we're getting somewhere. We'll work together, you and I. Some victories can truly be won. I'm proud of you.

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."

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

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!

---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. It's too late to stop now. Keep praying. I'm interested in the next part of your prayer...(pause). Well, go on..

I'm scared to.

---Scared? Of what?

I know what you'll say!

---Try Me and see.

"Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us."

---What about John?

See?! I knew it! I knew you would bring him up! Why, Lord, he's told lies about me, spread stories about my family, he never paid back the debt he owes me. I've sworn to get even with him!

---But your prayer. What about your prayer?

I didn't mean it!

---Well, at least you are honest. But it's not much fun carrying that load of bitterness around inside, is it?

No. But I'll feel better as soon as I get even! Boy, have I got some plans for that neighbor! He'll wish he had never moved into this neighborhood!

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

You can? How?

---Forgive John. Then I'll forgive you. Then the hate and sin will be John's problem; not yours. You will have settled your heart.

Oh, You're right. You always are! And more than I want revenge on John, I want to be right with You...(pause)...(sigh). 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 about 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.

---There, now. Wonderful! How do you feel?

Hmmm. 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 uptight tonight 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.

---You're not through with your prayer. Go on.

Oh, all right. "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

---Good! Good! I'll do that! Just don't put yourself in a place where you can be tempted.

What do You mean by that?

---Don't turn on the TV when you know that work needs done around the house. And the time you spend drinking with your friends, if you can't influence the conversation to positive things, perhaps you should re-think the value of those friendships. Another thing, your neighbors and friends shouldn't be your standard for "keeping up". And please don't use Me for an escape hatch!

I don't understand the last part...

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

Yes, Lord. And I'm ashamed. I really am!

---Which bargain are you remembering?

Well, there was the night that when I was out and I got into that car accident. I remember praying, "Oh God, if you spare me, I'll never miss Mass again."

---I protected you, but you didn't keep your promise, did you?

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

---Go ahead, finish your prayer...

"For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen."

---Do you know what would bring Me glory? What would really make Me happy?

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 great it would be to REALLY be one of your followers!

---You just answered the question!

I did?!

---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!

Lord, let's see what we can make of me, okay?

---Yes, Let's see!