

OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN

Written by David Feddes

Read Galatians 3:26-4:7

"This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father who art in heaven...'" □ Matthew 6:9 (RSV)



Some people treat God as their pal and talk as though they are on a "first-name basis" with him. They pray without any sense that God is "in heaven," splendid and supreme over all. Their phony familiarity often means they don't know God at all; otherwise, they would speak with more respect.

Others, eager to avoid such disrespect, start their prayers with a lofty list of God's titles and attributes: "O thou almighty, all-wise King of the universe, sublime in holiness, adored by angels, we beseech thee..." Such words are true enough, but is that the first thing God wants to hear when his children come to him? No, he wants to hear us say, "Father."

If you are a citizen meeting a ruler for the first time, you don't use his first name. You speak formally, saying "Mr. President" or "Mr. Prime Minister." But what if you are the ruler's child? You still don't call him by his first name, but neither do you call him "Mr. President" or "Mr. Prime Minister"; you call him "Father."

Not respecting God is a bad problem. The solution, however, isn't for Christian prayer to be

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more distant and formal but to be more humble and respectful. By all means let's honor the God of heaven and tell him how awesome he is. But let's do this as adoring children heaping praises on a dear Father, not as citizens offering formal congratulations to a distant Ruler.

PRAYER--Our Father in heaven, how great is the love you have given to us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! (1 John 3:1) We love you, great Father. Amen.