

Title: Hallowed Be Your Name
Date: August 1, 2021
Subject: Christians should pray to hallow the name of God
Scripture: Matthew 6:9; Luke 11:2

What do you think is the longest time before a child was given his/her name?.....

How many letters in the longest name? The honor goes to a girl born to James and CoSandra Williams of Beaumont, Texas Sept. 12, 1984. The mother and father had an agreement – he'd name the boys and she'd name the girls. CoSandra had actually started working on baby names back in tenth grade. She wanted a unique name. She settled on Jamie or Jameshauwnnel as the girl is known. You're thinking: that's not very long. Mrs. Williams had another goal – to set a Guinness World Record. The full name combines over 100 first names, including those of many relatives, names of countries and cities... and weighs in at 1,023 letters and two apostrophes. (Source archive.seattletimes.com/archive/?date=19910122&slug=1262030).

Parents choose names for their children for various reasons. It might be the name of a relative. It could be the name of a famous person. Sometimes parents like the sound of a name. Some choose because of how it fits with the last name. In the last few months before our son Nathan was born, we received all sorts of suggestions: Tim—Timber, or Lum – Lumber. It could be because parents want the initials of the name to send a message, like William Ivan Nixon – WIN. Or it could be because the parents have a twisted sense of humor... or weren't thinking clearly. For instance, the parents in Iowa, last name Hogg, who chose to give their little girl the name Ima. Yep. Ima Hogg. And some choose names because of the meaning.

In ancient times names were chosen because a relative had that name, to signify a connection to their god or to convey personality traits they hoped their children would embody. The practice continues in some cultures today including in our American heritage. The Puritans had names like Patience, Charity and Silence – the last one may have been given by parents who already had 8 loud and rambunctious kids. Some still popular: Grace (19 on baby names popularity charts), Hope (98). Silence wasn't ranked. (source: babynames.com).

The names by which God is known convey messages about his character (attributes, nature and personality) and actions and how we're able to relate to him. And his name is unique.

READ Matthew 6:9

Hallowed be your name. The name of God really refers to the totality of the name of God, the all-encompassing aspect of his name. I have a book that gives over 350 names for God in the Bible (The Wonderful Names of our Wonderful Lord by Hurlburt and Horton).

Last week we saw an intimate name for God – abba which means father, daddy. We also noted there's some tension in the way we view God, a tension between closeness and reverence. Though we're in a loving and intimate relationship with God as our Father, it isn't one in which we treat him simply as a lovable, cuddly stuffed animal and ignore his other attributes. The One who is loving is also holy and righteous and just.

The most frequent name of God is Yahweh or Jehovah which refers to God's eternity. He is self-existent. He needs no one. We came about because of our parents, but God simply is. He has no beginning and no end. He is completely independent. He is the great I AM.

Jehovah is paired with other terms which broaden out his personhood and activity. Jehovah-jireh – The Lord Will Provide; Jehovah-nissi – The Lord My Banner; Jehovah-shalom – the Lord is Peace; Jehovah-Sabaoth – The Lord of Hosts; Jehovah-raah – The Lord My Shepherd; Jehovah-tsidkenu – The Lord Our Righteousness; Jehovah-shammah – The Lord is There.

Elohim is the second most used name of God in the Old Testament. It's a general name for God. The first part, "El." comes from a root that means strong or power. It has the implication of "Strong One" or "Mighty Leader." It is used to show God is the Creator God in Genesis 1:1. Elohim is a plural noun which always uses a singular verb. It points to the Trinity – three persons in one – plurality and oneness. This is stressed in the credal statement: "The Lord our God, the Lord is one" (Deuteronomy 6:4).

Other names include: El Elyon – The Most High God expressing his Sovereignty and supremacy. El Roi – The God Who Sees. El Shaddai – The All-Sufficient One. Adonai -- Lord, Master.

These names reveal the kind of God he is. They're a major way through which we can know the Lord God. No wonder the Psalmist exclaims "Who is like the LORD our God, the One who sits enthroned on high?" (Psalm 113:5). No wonder we who are none of what these names reveal hallow his name.

Hallowing God was the heart and soul of Jesus' High Priestly Prayer. There he prays, "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent" (John 17:3). It's all about knowing God. Eternal life is knowing the one true God and His Son Jesus Christ who came to give his life for our sins and take our punishment of death so we could live forever with God.

We've used the word "hallow" a lot, but what does it mean? It has nothing to do with a similar sounding word – hollow. There are plenty of false religions and people who want to hollow God, to make him an empty shell. They either have a false understanding or don't want to have to pay attention to God.

"Hallow" means to set apart as sacred or holy, to sanctify. The associated words are honor, glorify, reverence, make special, hold in highest regard, treat differently than all others.

Pick out a few of those words. Reverence. William Barclay, "For reverence there is necessary *a constant awareness of God*. To reverence God means to live in a God-filled world, to live a life in which we never forget God" (The Gospel of Matthew, p. 208). We always keep God in mind, that he is over and far above us, that he is unique and deserves to be treated in a way no other is treated.

Glorify. We can think of the light bulbs that help us see. We're grateful for them. But they are merely an expression of a force – electricity. If there were no electricity, the light bulb would be a curiosity piece. People would wonder why it was made, what purpose it would have. We look beyond the bulb to the electricity and give it the credit. We honor it.

Opposites of hallow would include belittle, profane, disgrace, dishonor, treat the same as others.

How do we hallow the name of God? We hallow God through prayer. This is second in the notes. Should have had it first. We'd expect prayer to be a way to hallow considering the source – in a Scripture focused on prayer. We express our praise to God, our appreciation for who he is and what he does. It isn't a matter of trying to flatter God in hopes of getting what we want. That would be like the pagans and their prayers.

Haddon Robinson, "When we say hallowed be your name, we are praying that God may be God to us, that he will be set apart in our prayers in such a way that it will be clear that we reverence God."

We talk to him with respect. It is a declaration that we set him apart as sacred or holy, honor, glorify, reverence, make special, hold in highest regard, treat differently than all others.....

Many Christians think of responding to God through worship as hallowing or praising. True. We worship - celebrate the name of God, his person, character and works - through music, music, music... and a whole lot more. Worship is responding with all we are to all who God is. That means with our words that aren't set to a tune, our actions, our thoughts. Worship now and in the future. Now is an option. Then it will be forced upon some.

Hallowing God is done through evangelism. Hallowing isn't limited to declaring that God is holy to ourselves or with other believers. It's a request that we would hallow God, give him the highest respect, reverence, and worship before others.

Steven J. Cole, "Our prayers should be that the living and true God would be treated as holy and exalted by people everywhere. We should want God to have the honor and glory He alone deserves as the Sovereign of the universe. It is a prayer that all sin and irreverence be judged so that all men bow in worship before God's holy throne" (bible.org/seriespage/lesson-53-lord-teach-us-pray-luke-111-4).

Hallowing is to be a guide for how we live our lives. We find the supreme example in the life of our Lord. Near the end of his time on earth, Jesus proclaimed his mission had been and was to glorify God the Father (John 17:1, 4, 6), to hallow God in the day and hour he was living. In the moment. He said he did this by seeking to and accomplishing the work he had been given.

It's easy to see in a retrospective of his life. When he was twelve years old, he made it his business to go to the Temple where he listened to the teachers and asked them questions. Everyone, from the curious on-lookers watching the scene of a young boy interacting with the learned and well-versed scholars to the scholars themselves, was amazed at his understanding and answers. His parents had lost track of him on the way home from worshipping at the festival. When they found him and asked what he had been doing, he responded, "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" (Luke 2:49).

He continued to honor and hallow the Father. When the temple area was filled with merchants selling items for their worship practices at exorbitant prices, he cleared out the place out of concern that his Father's house should be a place of prayer (John 2:13 – 17). He echoed the Father as he spoke with love and compassion,

and acted with tenderness to the hurting, the lonely, the physically injured and the spiritually damaged. His message was proclaiming the good news of God (Mark 1:14).

The ultimate way of bringing glory to the Father was through his death on the cross. In the moments leading up to it, he prayed, “Not my will, but yours be done.” He hallowed and honored God the Father by going through with the plan of salvation.

The apostles followed in the footsteps of Jesus in their desire to bring glory to the Father. One of the best examples is the book of Ephesians. Here’s a taste of what we can find: after citing the Father’s works of choosing, loving, and predestinating us to be adopted as his sons, it says it all transpires “to the praise of his glorious grace” (1:6). Those who hope in Christ are to be for the praise of his glory (1:12). The future redeeming of God’s possession (all those who trust in Christ) is to the praise of his glory (1:14). Prayer is addressed to the glorious Father (1:17). The Father, the one who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, is to be glorified in the church (3:20, 21). We are reminded of the Father’s position – “one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all” (4:6).

Haddon Robinson about the nature of this request, “We often pray for God to increase our devotion and depth of spiritual life, but none of the petitions found in this prayer are for personal holiness. The first step in spiritual growth is not to pray for inner feeling or inner change but that God will indeed be God in our lives. The focus of the spiritual life is not experience but God. We have the command to be holy as He is holy because the spiritual life begins when we determine to allow God to be God in all aspects of life—personal, family, business, recreation—and to allow God to set us apart.”

That God will be God in our lives. This can be done by thinking through a situation that’s coming up. For instance, August is often a time for family reunions. Some people love them. Others loathe them. There’s a certain person who rubs them the wrong way.... Pray that God’s name would be hallowed as think through the possible conversation, the “trigger” points, the responses, our attitude, our actions – that each would be honoring to the Lord.

The question that has to be answered – for whom do we have more awe? Show more fear and reverence? Some have it toward a famous person (athlete, politician) or their employer or spouse. Many people seek to glorify themselves, to elevate themselves. All these are hallowing someone other than God the Father.

Some versions add at the end of v. 13: “for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.” It’s not found in the best manuscript evidence but is often heard when the prayer is recited. Some feel it’s based on the prayer of David when he made preparations for building the temple: “Praise be to you, O Lord, God of our father Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. 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” (1 Chronicles 29:10, 11).

There is a connection of thoughts. God is over all. His name is to be honored and hallowed because of who he is and what he does. The Lord’s name is hallowed by striving to know Him, his character and his

work. The Lord's name is hallowed through prayer that focuses on him. The Lord's name is hallowed when he is worshipped as the One who is above all. The Lord's name is hallowed when people are told about Christ and how he can forgive their sins and bring them into a right relationship with God. Hallowing leads to obedience and submission. More on those next week.

A man was deer hunting in the Oregon wilderness. He was walking along an old logging road and was thinking about returning to camp when a noise exploded in the brush. It happened so fast he didn't have a chance to raise his rifle or think. A brown and white blur shot down the road straight at him and stopped at his feet, crowding in between his boots. It was a trembling cottontail. It nestled in and wouldn't budge. The man was puzzling over the odd situation of a wild rabbit acting in such a manner when 20 yards down the road a second player emerged from the woods. It was a weasel. The predator froze in its tracks, mouth panting, eyes glowing red, when it saw the hunter and its intended prey at the man's feet. The hunter understood he'd stepped into a little life and death forest drama. The rabbit was moments away from being supper. The hunter was its last refuge. The animal crowded in for protection from the sharp teeth of its relentless enemy. The hunter didn't disappoint. He raised his rifle and deliberately shot close to the weasel which leaped straight up a couple of feet and then turned tail back into the forest as fast as it could. The rabbit lingered while the man spoke to it, "Where did he go, little one? I don't think he'll be bothering you for a while. Looks like you're off the hook tonight." (adapted from Kay Arthur, *To Know Him by Name*, pp. 5 – 9).

This story is part of an introduction to Kay Arthur's book about getting to know God through his names. She asks a series of thought-provoking questions: "Where do you run when the predators of trouble, worry, and fear pursue you? Where do you hide when your past pursues you like a relentless wolf, seeking your destruction? Where do you seek protection when the weasels of temptation, corruption and evil threaten to overtake you? Where do you turn when your energy is spent...when weakness saps you and you feel you cannot run away any longer? Do you turn to your protector, the One who stands with arms open wide, waiting for you to come and huddle in the security of all He is?...Why don't we turn to Him? Why do we hesitate to run to the arms of our all-sufficient God? Why is it that many collapse in the day of trouble and testing? Why are they immobilized rather than taking an aggressive stand in the face of fear?"

Then Arthur draws some conclusions: "I think it's because most of us don't really *know* our God... we know so little of this wonderful God who loves us!... We don't understand His great power and might. We don't comprehend His fierce love and unspeakable tenderness. And because we don't know Him as we should, we can't boast in the name of our God...To know His name is to know Him...To boast in His name is to have a settled confidence in everything that He is!"

May we seek to know the Father better through his names, his Word, his character, his actions so we can in turn live our lives to hallow him.