



GOOD NEWS GUIDE

REMEMBER: **GOD LOVES YOU!**

Brother Roland, PO Box 14, Fayetteville PA 17222

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Thy Kingdom Come, Thy Will Be Done

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.



These words of Jesus about prayer, from the King James Bible, are familiar to those of us who have had any Christian influence in our lives. Usually we don't spend much time thinking about what they really mean, and what they should mean to us. But let's do that now.

"Our Father" — yes, God is literally our father, having given us life through an act of his love. But more than that, He wants us to realize that He does everything for us that a Father is meant to do — He loves us; He provides for our needs; He protects us; and He guides us life-long if we will let Him. And yes, He's in Heaven, but His Holy Spirit is right here on earth with us, as Jesus promised. And because He is our loving, giving Father, we are obligated to love, honor, respect, and obey Him.

"Thy kingdom come" — the kingdom of Heaven comes whenever and wherever God is acknowledged as King. His kingdom comes in my life and your life when we make ourselves subject to the King, accepting and embracing His sovereignty, His total lordship, over us. Asking for His kingdom to come, if we really mean it, is life-changing.

"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" — the most difficult thing for each of us to do, in acknowledging God as our Father and accepting Him as our King and Lord, is to pray that prayer and really mean it. Too often what we really mean is, "I hope Your will includes doing what I want."

God's will is holy, and perfectly wise, loving, and good. Our will is often selfish, stubborn, and prideful, and always uninformed — we can't see all that God sees.

Here's a verse that nicely sums up God's will for us: *God our Savior ... desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.* (1 Timothy 2:4) "All people" includes you and me

and every other human being. "To be saved" means to be *justified* before God, no longer destined to be punished for our sins. "Come to the knowledge of the truth" means come to understand and embrace this truth, among others: that God's will is for all people to enter Heaven and be in His wonderful presence forever, experiencing peace and joy we can't even imagine. That is the destiny that He has predestined — planned and prepared — for each human spirit.

But, being sinners, we don't deserve Heaven and we could never earn it — so God offers it to us as a free gift, paid for with Jesus' blood, the awful agony of His suffering and death on the cross of Calvary. As John the Baptist announced when He saw Jesus, "*Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!*" (John 1:29) Jesus' death was the sacrifice that atones for all of our sins.



But — and this is not taught or discussed enough — there are two things that have to happen in order for us to be in Heaven. Jesus accomplished the first of those two things: our *justification*. Even though we are all sinners, guilty of breaking God's Law over and over again, and we absolutely deserve to be punished for our sins, we are now *justified* before God's judgment, because the blood and death of our Savior has saved us — He has atoned for all of our sins. Hallelujah! No thanks could ever be enough for such a gift!

But here's something to think about: what good is a gift if we can't receive it?

A Pharisee named Nicodemus came to Jesus one night with a question. *Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. ... unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."* (John 3:3,5)

Here Jesus is not talking about permission. His finished work of redemption gives everyone a free pass to enter Heaven. No, Jesus is talking about what can or cannot be done. He is saying that without being born again — without a spiritual rebirth — we cannot enter Heaven. The door is wide open, but our old, sinful self will not be able to go through it into the presence of God, because He is holy, and unholy things literally cannot come into His presence.

So in addition to *justification*, which we already have as God's gift, we also need *sanctification*. ... *as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."* (1 Peter 1:15-16) But this is not something we can do for ourselves; it is the work of the Holy Spirit. Our part is to acknowledge our need to be made holy, to ask for it, and then to participate willingly in the (often painful) process.

Paul put it like this: *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.* (Romans 12:1-2)

Here Paul is not telling us to change our ways. Rather, he is telling us to allow ourselves to be transformed — to let God change us and make us holy, make us like Jesus, by renewing our minds. Then we can begin to think like Jesus. And as that happens, we can begin to discern, to understand, what God's will for us actually is, and we will realize that it is good and acceptable and perfect.

The goal of this transformation is our rebirth — to put to death our old, selfish, sin nature, and give us a new, holy nature, one that will be a delight to God as we come into His presence. It's what David was asking for when he wrote this: *Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! ... Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.* (Psalm 51:2, 10)

This transformation is not a one-time event that suddenly cures all of our sinfulness. It takes time — in fact, it takes a lifetime. It's a process that

starts when we begin saying "yes" to God's will for our lives, and ends when we leave this life and go on to the next, to be with Him forever.

It won't be easy, and there will be setbacks. To the Corinthians Paul wrote, *if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.* (2 Corinthians 5:17) But he also wrote to the Romans, *I know that nothing good dwells in me ... I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.* (Romans 7:18-19) To the Philippians, and to us, he wrote: *forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.* And this encouragement: *I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.* (Philippians 3:13b-14 and 1:6)

So what advice can I give you who are seeking God's sanctification?: I've thought of a few things:

1. Ask for, and follow, the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We don't know very much, but He knows everything you will ever need to know.
2. Like Paul, press on toward the goal. If it's hard, ask for strength. If you mess up, ask for forgiveness and another chance.
3. Use the Bible, and especially look for Jesus in every part of it. The goal is to become like Jesus. You can't do it for yourself, but God can do it for you.
4. Pray — and listen more than you speak. Too often we can't hear what God is saying to us because we're too busy telling Him what we want. For a significant amount of your prayer time, don't ask for anything except to know His will for you, for this moment and this day.
5. And then — love God wholeheartedly, and love your neighbor in whatever ways you can. Let your hands and your words be used by God to bless someone.

My prayer for all of us is that we'll be united in faith and growing to maturity in the knowledge of, and with the character of, the Son of God so that, when we show up at Heaven's door, we'll be cleaned up and dressed in our wedding clothes.

Brother Roland

God is Changing Lives

[Once in a while I get a letter from an inmate who wants to share how the Lord Jesus and His love are making a difference in the inmate's life. I asked if I could share this with the readers of the "Good News Guide," and Nick graciously said I may. Thanks, Brother Nick.]

Dear Brother Roland,

I always enjoy the Good News Guide each month, but December's "Attitude" theme really stuck out to me. I wanted to thank you and give God the glory. Lately – and probably always – I have been bombarded with disgruntled utterings to the point that I almost dread coming out of my cell. The complaints about meals, commissary, and everything you could think of are endless. I even had another Christian brother, an intelligent man, mind you, "inform" me that the facility is targeting us and is "notorious" for that – all because he did not receive an email message as quickly as usual. After returning to your [GNG] message, I began to think, "Even if that's true, who cares? Others can only target you if you let them." God is in control, not us, and praise Him for that!

One of the main things I want to work on this next year is maintaining a positive and Christ-centered attitude regardless of what happens and what people say. Please pray for me in this endeavor.

I wanted to let you know that previous prayers have been answered. I have been approved for transfer to the treatment program and am patiently waiting. Praise God! In asking Him to prepare my heart and mind, and putting my trust in Him more and more, I have already begun to feel His transforming power! Hallelujah! I'm noticing myself thinking differently about a lot of things than I did even a few months ago. And I don't feel hurt or loss. I feel freedom starting to ring!

I don't know what the future holds, but I know that God has promised to be with me and guide me. Someday I'll realize consistently that's all I really need. 😊

God bless, and Happy New Year!

In Christ, Nick L.

If you have a Bible question or a question about the Christian life, send it to me at

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I'll do my best to answer it, and your question may be helpful to someone else as well.

God bless you! Please remember your prison chaplain or your pastor(s) in your prayers.

Holiness

These words and phrases relate to the holiness of God, and to the holy character that He wants to develop in each one of us. Enjoy the puzzle.

Puzzle:

D A P F J W A E S D Z O K C X Y T T J Z K T C Z A C M W X Z P V
 G U P X U O G I A P O A Z P M I W H E L T N E G J L B I E I R C
 G M O A S E G N I V I G R O F H T S E N O H E A O F W A G Z A G
 G N M G S S U M L A F R X Q O O U V L Y E V P P C I K U L V Y Q
 V E I B G F A D B J C T I S G N I G N A H C N U P H I Z S C E H
 S U O R E N E G V T R U S T W O R T H Y G V A W N M A H H I R Q
 D E K P O X Z N Y P L W H L F R Z W U R B V T M N W W B X X F A
 V A J N Q T O L O V I N G N E I G H B O R S O O K S R F L X U I
 H S M S V C S J K L L L K U X N L C Y X Z D D Z F B I C T E L J
 J H H H T H K E D I C G E L X G I L R L O I J O Y F U L D T C G
 B E O F R K C A R P U E O P F G S J E T U L G M N K C E J R O L
 D W X G E O T W S C J A K M H O I Z J D Q F F T S K I T R O C O
 M I U V U P J W P J D G F Q H D V K S J I S R U O F I O D P W V
 G I I I E I G U N D E R S T A N D I N G B B P E I L A N R E T E
 E N Q A W W D J T Q L A N G L C Q C Y H X H E T W Z H S D K A H
 H V C O S O E I J O F U R V Q E P Q S M T C C J L O F P Z O E G
 E E M Q R X M L N U S K F H H H J E R D X N V W J C P B L L H X
 A P U K G L O N C G B K V I Y X L A X E A G N I T F I L P U F H
 L K S I G O B B I O U Q Y Z C F Q R E S J J C I A S E I L V A Q
 I R L K W M E L G C M F B V C R G M H L Z H K Z V Y N T H A T T
 N P G D F M D N H N I I X O W K E N L Y B M U X O G J P H F N K
 G T N T N E I T A P I E N F K P F M V L B M X D G P W G A E H P
 O Z I V Y V E A C L M T N G J X Y U C O A H U H E G I I D L F Q
 T G T I I Z N Y U N R P C T P A M J T H S E P H C I T I X L M W
 J I R G P K T V J O G I U U K L I W L Z S L P A M H F R C V Z P
 V M O M G N T H L T R C M I R S J L C I P X V V F N T I F O G X
 L Z F G X R T L Q K E I S Q N T K V W L K O V U O V N J T N R G
 X I M M D U E R T S A F D A E T S K D J D Z L C G U Z V H S C H
 G Q O C D D B G N D P F F D O G G N I V O L G V H F R L O P U J
 B E C L R D K X A F N K V O J T V E I T Q W G C P O F W L D D J

Words:

* Our Holy God

ALL-POWERFUL
 COMFORTING
 ETERNAL
 FAITHFUL
 FORGIVING
 GENEROUS
 GENTLE
 GIVING
 GOOD
 GUIDING

HEALING
 HELPING
 HOLY
 INSTRUCTING
 LOVE
 MERCIFUL
 OMNISCIENT
 PATIENT
 RESTORING
 STEADFAST
 TRUSTWORTHY

UNCHANGING
 UPLIFTING
 WISE
*** Us, sanctified**
 AT PEACE
 CONFIDENT
 HONEST
 HONORING GOD
 HUMBLE
 JOYFUL
 JUSTIFIED

KIND
 LOVING GOD
 LOVING NEIGHBORS
 OBEDIENT
 PRAYERFUL
 SANCTIFIED
 SELF-CONTROLLED
 SPIRIT-FILLED
 TEACHABLE
 UNDERSTANDING
 WELCOMING