



NAC-USA
DEVELOPMENT
INSTITUTE

Our Father

Your will be
done

MIDWEEK GUIDE

And do not
lead us into
temptation

2016

April

In 2016, there will be no distinction between the facilitator and participant guides - there will only be one monthly guide for the Midweek Experience Curriculum small group sessions. The guides will continue to provide discussion questions, Bible references, thoughts for further discussion, and notes for the facilitator if they are necessary. The scripts for each session of the month will be in a separate document.

Also keep in mind that your small group does not need to answer every question provided in the Midweek guides. There are a range of questions so that each group can answer questions that are applicable to them and that they are comfortable with. Also, take your time with discussing the questions and don't feel the need to rush through them in order to answer every one.

2016 April MIDWEEK GUIDE

Session 1: Our Father

Bible References

Matthew 6:5-13, 26, 31-33
Luke 11:1-4
2 Corinthians 6:18
1 John 3
Psalm 139
Ephesians 4:6
John 8:28, 14:9

Going Deeper

Matthew Henry Commentary

It is our Lord's prayer, it is of his composing, of his appointing; it is very compendious, yet very comprehensive, in compassion to our infirmities in praying. The matter is choice and necessary, the method instructive, and the expression very concise. It has much in a little, and it is requisite that we acquaint ourselves with the sense and meaning of it, for it is used acceptably no further than it is used with understanding and without vain repetition.

Henry, M. (1994). *Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume* (p. 1637). Peabody: Hendrickson.

1. How can you make the Lord's Prayer new every time you pray it?

2. What is "bold and risky" about calling God our Father?

3. How did Jesus offer a new relationship with God when He came to earth?

4. In your prayers, what names do you use to address God? What's the importance of each one?

NAC Catechism

12.1.7.2.1 “Our Father in heaven”

The form of address “Our Father” identifies this prayer as a communal prayer in which those praying profess to be children of God. In this fellowship, Jesus Christ is the “firstborn among many brethren” (Romans 8: 29). Whenever He prayed, He addressed God as Father (Luke 22: 42; 23: 46; John 11: 41; 17: 1).

The relationship between Jesus and His heavenly Father is unique. Since Christ taught human beings to pray to God as the “Father in heaven” He incorporated them into His relationship with the Father.

When human beings address God as their “Father”, this alludes to the reality that God has created them, that He is their Lord, and that He provides for them. God is the source and sustainer of that which He has created. In love and trust, and without fear, human beings can address Him as “Father”.

The words “in heaven” emphasise that God is exalted above all earthly existence. He—God, the Father—is greater and higher than everything, and yet, in His omnipresence, He is close to us human beings (Psalm 139; Acts 17: 27).

5. What do we learn about the character of the Father through Jesus?

6. What phrases of the Lord’s Prayer unify the congregation? How?

7. Read Mark 14:36 and John 17:1-26. What can we learn from these examples of Jesus praying? How can following Jesus’ lead help us to grow in our relationship with God?

Session 2: Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven

1. What boundaries do you think are necessary in order to keep yourself on the narrow way?

2. We have been given our own free will and we can choose to do whatever we want. Why choose to submit to God’s will?

Bible References

Matthew 7:13-14
Acts 10

NAC Catechism

12.1.7.2.4 “Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”

God is omnipotent. His will stands above everything. In heaven, the domain where God rules, His will reigns supreme.

God wishes to deliver fallen mankind from the consequences of sin and grant them salvation (1 Timothy 2: 4). To make this possible, He sent His Son. Jesus Christ came and sacrificed Himself, wherein the will of the Father was revealed (Hebrews 10: 9–10).

The wish that God may also govern everything on earth in accordance with His will comes to expression in the plea: “Your will be done.” Due to their sinfulness and the power of Satan—which, although broken, is still active—human beings cannot live up to this standard. However, this plea of the believers also implies the desire that, already today in their earthly lives, they may succeed in acting in accordance with God’s will.

This plea of the Lord’s Prayer furthermore brings to expression that God may soon complete His work of redemption.

3. As we mature, how do we grow in our understanding of the will of God? How often do you need to adjust your life to demonstrate that you truly mean the words “Your will be done”?

4. Many would agree that it is easier to walk the broad way instead of choosing to walk the narrow way. Yet that is what we are called to do as Christians. How can we encourage others to choose to walk the narrow way in light of how comfortable the broad way can be?

5. Choosing to live according to God’s will requires us to sacrifice our own ideas, inclinations, and nature. Discuss a time when you knowingly overcame your own nature to live out the will of God.

6. Disagreement: It is safe to say that generally, where two or more people are in contact with one another, disagreements are very likely to arise. Can we imagine that there is room on the narrow way for disagreements?

7. Selfishness: We live in a time where the prevailing sentiment seems to be, “I must take care of myself first, even if that means that I step on someone else to do it and ignore the effect of my actions on others.” How does Jesus address this in the great commandment, to love our neighbor as ourselves? Discuss circumstances in which we fail to consider the negative effect of our actions on others and thereby fail in loving our neighbor.

8. Discrimination: Is there any basis for discrimination in the will of God?

9. Gossip: Why do people gossip? Is it possible to gossip about someone and look at them the way God looks at them at the same time?

10. Convenience: The narrow way is, by definition, a way that is not always comfortable. If your relationship with God is growing, does the narrow way become more or less comfortable? Under what circumstances does convenience cease to be important?

Session 3: And do not lead us into temptation

NAC Catechism

12.1.7.2.8 “But deliver us from the evil one”

The plea “But deliver us from the evil one” expresses the wish that God may deliver us from tribulations that lead to sin. Furthermore, the evil from which we ask God to deliver us consists of everything that emanates from Satan. Ultimately this is a plea for final liberation from the evil one himself. Through His sacrifice, Christ made redemption possible. In the Son of God we have “redemption..., the forgiveness of sins” (Colossians 1: 14). Redemption is an ongoing process, which ultimately leads to perfect liberty from all of Satan’s claims. Only then will our redemption be complete.

1. Describe a time when you were battling through temptation and God provided a way of escape for you. How did it change your relationship with God? If you feel comfortable, share with the group.

2. How can temptation become a proof of faithfulness or a lure to evil?

3. Do you find it strange that the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted? What does this say about God?

Bible References

John 8:44, 14:26
2 Corinthians 1:13
Matthew 4:1
Ephesians 6:14-18

James 1:2-4

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

James 1:13

Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.

Romans 12:9-12

Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.

1 Peter 4:12-13

Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.

4. Temptations are a continual challenge in our lives, which makes "do not lead us into temptation" a vital part of our prayer life. How do we keep this part of the Lord's Prayer from just being bland repetition? Have you thought about praying about temptation more?

5. When Jesus was being tempted in the wilderness, He battled against the devil by reciting verses from the Old Testament. Have you ever sought support from the Bible during moments of challenge? How can memorizing Scripture (or being very familiar with Scripture) help us overcome temptation?

6. What does Ephesians 6:14-18 mean to you? How can you find encouragement during temptation in this verse?
