

The Way of Perfection

Part 5: Our Father: Need No Other Book

Chapter 37 (summary)

Saint Teresa of Avila

Chapter 37 Speaks of the excellence of this prayer, the Our Father, and of how we shall in many ways find consolation in it.

We ought to give great praise to the Lord for the **sublime perfection** of this evangelical prayer. Each of us, daughters, can apply the prayer to her own needs since it was composed by such a good Master.

I marvel to see that in so few words everything about **contemplation** and **perfection** is included; it seems we **need to study no other book** than this one.

Up to now, the Lord has taught us the whole **way of prayer** and **high contemplation** from the **beginning stages to mental prayer**, to the **prayer of quiet** and to that of **union** ...

From here on, the Lord begins to teach us about the **effects** of His favors.

2. ... It seems that since this prayer was intended for **general use** so that each one could **petition** according to his own intention, be **consoled**, and think that he has a good **understanding** of the prayer, the Lord left it in this **obscure form**.

Contemplatives and persons very much **committed to God**, who no longer **desire earthly things**, ask for **heavenly favors** that can be given on earth.

Those who still live on **earth**, and it is good that they live in conformity with their state in life, may ask also for **bread**. They must be sustained and sustain their households.

Such a **petition** is **just** and **holy**, as is their petition for other things according to their needs.

3. But both should consider that **two** of the things mentioned **pertain to all; giving Him our will** and **forgiving others**.

True, there is a more and a less in the degree to which this is done ...The **perfect** will give their **will** in the way perfect souls do and **forgive** with the perfection as was mentioned. ... The Lord receives everything. It is like He makes a **pact** with the Eternal Father, like one

who says: "**You do this, Lord, and my brothers will do that.**"

He doesn't fail to do His part and He pays without measure!

4. We can say this prayer only once in a way that the Lord will **enrich** us since He sees our **sincerity** and **determination** to do what we say.

If we **speak plainly** and **clearly** so that we don't say one thing and do another, He always gives more than we ask of Him.

Those who ask with **perfection** will be filled with such **favors** from His Father that they will reach a **high state**.

In fact, those who are perfect or approaching this state, **fear nothing** as they have **trampled** all underfoot. They have the greatest hope of this in the **effects** of the favors He grants them. Absorbed as they are in these **delights**, they do not want to remember there is a **world** or that they have **enemies**.

5. ... This is the entire good that a spiritual soul can desire here below because it provides **great security**. The **importance** of this cannot be stressed enough.

Our Lord sees it is necessary to **awaken** and **remind** us we have **enemies**, and it is **dangerous** to be negligent towards them.

We need much more help from the Eternal Father because our fall will be from a higher place.

To avoid us going about **mistaken** and **lacking self-knowledge**, He makes the following petitions so necessary as long as we live in this exile: "**And lead us not, Lord into temptation; but deliver us from evil.**"

Amen