Digging Deeper: The Greater Meaning of Matthew 6:9

Sunday, October 18, 2026

> *“You must pray, then, this way: ‘Our Father in the heavens, let your name be sanctified.’” (Matthew 6:9)*

In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught his followers how to pray, and the very first request he put in the model prayer was about Jehovah’s name. The main point is that what matters most is clearing Jehovah’s name of the lies Satan has told about him. As the day’s text says, our love for Jehovah moves us to stand up for him, and every time we tell people the truth about him in our ministry, we help sanctify his name.

1 “Father”: A Close Family Relationship (*πατήρ, pa·ter′*)

The Greek word πατήρ (*pa·ter′*) simply means “father.” Jesus did not teach us to begin with a cold title but with “Our Father.” The word “our” reminds us that we are not alone; we belong to a whole family of worshippers who share that close relationship with God.

A good father is someone we love and want to see respected. Jesus said just one verse earlier: “Your Father knows what you need even before you ask him.” (Matthew 6:8) When we feel how much Jehovah cares for us, defending his reputation stops being a chore and becomes something we want to do.

- We stand up for Jehovah the way a loving child stands up for a father whose good name is being attacked.

2 “Name”: More Than a Word (*ὄνομα, o'no·ma*)

The Greek word ὄνομα (*o'no·ma*) means “name.” Here it points to God’s personal name, Jehovah. But in the Bible, a name also stands for the person himself, his reputation, and everything he declares himself to be.

That reputation has been under attack since Eden. Jesus said of Satan: “He is a liar and the father of the lie.” (John 8:44) Satan has told people that God is harsh, distant, or unfair. The truth is the opposite: “God is love.” (1 John 4:8)

- Every time we explain what Jehovah is really like, we are answering one of Satan’s lies.

3 “Sanctified”: Treated as Holy (ἁγιάζω, *ha·gi·a'zo*)

The word ἁγιάζω (*ha·gi·a'zo*) comes from the Greek word for “holy.” It means to make holy, or to treat something as holy and sacred. When we pray for God’s name to be sanctified, we are asking that everyone in heaven and on earth hold it sacred, and that Jehovah himself act to clear it of all reproach.

Jehovah promised he would do exactly that: “I will certainly sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the nations.” (Ezekiel 36:23) Yet he also gives us a part. He told his people: “‘You are my witnesses,’ declares Jehovah.” (Isaiah 43:10) When we preach, we are living up to that name.

- We don’t just pray for God’s name to be sanctified; our words and our conduct show that we treat it as holy.

Key Spiritual Reflections

- **Love as the Motive:** When I go out in the ministry, is it love for Jehovah that moves me, or has it become mostly routine? What could help me feel that love more deeply? (Matthew 6:8, 9)
- **Answering the Lies:** What is one false idea about God that I hear often in my territory, and how could I gently show people what Jehovah is really like? (John 8:44; 1 John 4:8)
- **Living Up to the Name:** Does my everyday conduct at work, at home, and in my community bring honor to the name Jehovah's Witnesses? (Isaiah 43:10)