

If you were teaching the Lord's Prayer to someone for the first time — a child, a neighbor, a co-worker, or friend — which line would you feel the most need to explain?

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,

and forgive us our debts,

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil. (Matthew 6:9–13)

As you rehearse those familiar lines, which one begs for more explanation? Maybe it's the first, Why do we call the God of the universe "Father"? Or perhaps the second, What does it mean to "hallow" something, much less a name? What about the will of God — what is it and how would we recognize it on earth? Or that haunting last line, What kind of evil is surrounding and threatening us?

However we might answer, we have Jesus's answer to the question. He chooses to say more about just one line, and it's not the one many of us might think.