

About Our Prayers and God's Desire for Our Life

What do we ask from God when we pray to Him? Which is our main desire? Many of us ask Him to help us with certain situations or problems (which is good), but do we sometimes miss something at a certain point? The Bible says in [James 4:2, 3](#) that we might not receive because we don't ask correctly. Many of us could be asking just to satisfy our own desires. I am placing myself in this group, too. Which is His main desire for our lives?

If we look at what the Bible talks about, we see that God's main desire for us is to get saved. And this could be overlooked as we are so used to listening to this message that we might take salvation for granted many times. We might think, "Well, if John is saved, why then I wouldn't be?" or maybe we just don't see ourselves in need. One of the things that we can ask God is to be saved. We can ask Him in our prayers to accept Jesus. We should not feel ashamed or think we are less if we realize we are not saved and need Jesus in our lives. Someone might be thinking: "How do you know whether a person is saved or not? How can I know that I am saved?" Well, when we are saved, His Spirit testifies to our spirit that we are His children. A believer will surely know that he is saved. This won't be because of a certain event in a religious environment that happened or because someone "assured" him, but because God Himself assured him. Yes, a believer might have doubts sometimes that he might've lost his salvation (which, in most cases, is a devil's deceit), or he might doubt that he can overcome a trial he is in, but he will definitely know that he was saved one day and that God has worked in his life.

A passage in Romans that we all know says:

⁸But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach): ⁹that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart one believes unto

righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ¹¹ For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.” (Romans 10:8-11)

Surely this passage speaks about something deeper than someone just stating that he is saved. It talks about confessing with the mouth, but it also talks about believing in the heart. To be saved is one of the most fundamental things we need to have; it is not just an option. In His conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus says that for someone to be able to see the Kingdom of heaven, he needs to be born again.

“Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (John 3:3)

He said that this must happen. Further on, He carries His conversation with Nicodemus, saying:

“Jesus answered and said to him, “Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?” (John 3:10-12)

This is fundamental and represents something that needs to occur here on Earth. That’s why Jesus speaks of this occurrence as “earthly things.” Without this experience, we cannot see and perceive the heavenly things nor understand God’s plan for us. When Jesus spoke of “being born again,” He spoke of being saved. In the same chapter, verse 16, we find some of the most famous and known verses.

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)

This verse has often been taken as something that we already know of and that we mustn’t worry about most of the time. This is what usually happens with what we have heard and known for a long time. Many people get mistaken when it comes to this topic. With this, I am not judging; I am just speaking in general that

when it comes to salvation, some people get mistaken for not giving it the right value.

It could happen that sometimes the people go straight away on the third or the fourth step, and they miss the first ones. It cannot be done in this way. The first one obviously is salvation, but sometimes people want right away to grow or take some of the next steps in the Christian life without taking the most important, which is to be saved. It is impossible for someone to grow without it. He first needs to be born and then grow. It is the same as in natural life. A baby is first born, and after that, it starts growing, talking, etc. We need to repent first. This is like a foundation on which someone builds. If we don't have this strong foundation in our life, which is Christ, then we build on sand, and our house will eventually get swept away by the storms and winds coming into life. We must first dig deeper in the ground until we find a rock, and only after that do we start building. This is what the Bible tells us ([Luke 6:47, 48](#)).

Nicodemus, who had a conversation with Jesus on the new birth ([John 3:1-21](#)), was a teacher of Israel and a very learned person regarding the scriptures but still wasn't born again. He knew he was missing something. It is a question of faith and not just theological knowledge, even though it is needed sometimes. Knowledge, though, is a step that comes further on.

The Bible says in [James 4:3](#) that our prayers might not be answered sometimes. I think that this is also having to do with salvation. Depending on this, depending on the matter of whether what we ask will contribute to our salvation and relationship with Him, God will be moved to answer a prayer or not. He best knows what is good for us and what is not. He is more interested than us in our salvation. If He had to accomplish everything we ask Him for (even the things we esteem for good), we would probably find ourselves very far from Him in time. But, yes, He first looks at what stage we are in our relationship with Him and our salvation, as this is the most important thing. How good it is that God cares and knows what is best for us!

Salvation is an act of God, and it happens when God interferes in the life of someone. We have to say, though, that there are specific conditions and things that accompany this event. One of them is the sincere repentance that comes after realizing that man's condition. This comes along with a cry that comes from

the deepest of the heart. It is something natural that occurs after someone comes to the realization of his own condition. It is natural because after the Holy Spirit convinces us, and in this way, we see our condition, we realize our need for Him. It is the same that happened to Peter after he tried to walk on the water and then drowned. He started to cry out to Jesus to help him.

²⁹ So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw ^[e] that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"

³¹ And immediately Jesus stretched out *His* hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" ³² And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. (Matthew 14:29-32)

Here, we see how Peter cried out to the Lord, "Lord, save me!" Just imagine the way he did it. How natural was that? How sincere was that? Obviously, a lot, as he was drowning himself in the water! He knew he didn't have any other chance. He cried out with a need. This is the way we need to cry out to Jesus. This is how we need to be convinced by God and see our condition.

There is also another situation that, in certain aspects, is similar to this one. It is the story of snakes biting the nation of Israel while crossing the desert because of their rebellion against the Lord. There was only one way for them to get out of that situation. God told Moses to make a big serpent out of bronze so that whoever looked at it, to be healed.

"Then the Lord said to Moses, "Make a fiery *serpent*, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live." So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived." (Numbers 21:8, 9)

Just imagine again the way they were going to look at the serpent. Surely, they wouldn't say: "I can maybe do that tomorrow...", or "No, I don't think this is the

way...". Each normal person would do it straight away, as soon as he could. He will do it with a need and as quickly as possible. The same attitude we need to have concerning the gospel and salvation. But how can this happen? How can we really look at God with such a need? It is possible only by His grace and if He reveals our condition to us. We need to be disposed toward Him. We mustn't resist Him. We need to leave ourselves to be convinced by Him. When it is a matter of salvation, it is a matter of life and death. This is how we need to look at it and pray to God to show us that.

This situation about the serpents is also mentioned in John chapter 3. The same chapter in which Jesus talks to Nicodemus about the new birth. He actually gives him the example with the serpents, saying that as Moses lifted up the bronze serpent in the desert, so in the same way, the Son of Man needs to be lifted up so that whoever believes in Him will not perish but will have eternal life.

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:14, 15)

After this comes the verse that we all know, and this is John 3:16.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Salvation is something really fundamental. I don't want to exaggerate, but I have to say that probably 90 percent of people might've taken it the wrong way. With this, I am not saying that certain other people or I have more understanding, and that's why we got saved. I am just saying that if someone is saved, it is by the mercy of God and because he didn't conform himself to be like the rest of the crowd. When we speak about salvation, we don't talk about an event happening in a mass, but about a personal experience someone is having with Christ, and when we talk of a congregation, we have to say that in most cases, probably few of them are really saved.

This might sound shocking, but it is true in most cases. I don't talk about a non-religious environment where you will obviously say that most people don't care at all for the Lord, but I talk about a church or a congregation where everyone hears the word and regularly attends services. Some people might think that most of

the people there are saved and just those who obviously and openly refuse the Word of God are lost, but here we are talking about people who apparently believe and are even members of a church. I am not judging anyone with this or stating that congregations are wrong. No. On the contrary, a believer must attend a church and be a part of a body. I am just stating what the Bible says. A passage says that many will knock on the Lord's door at the end, but it will not be open to them. They will even say they were with Him and performed His works, but He will tell them that He doesn't know them. They were in a religious environment, but not for this it means that He knew them. He would know them if they have a personal relationship with Him and have repented.

²³ Then one said to Him, "Lord, are there few who are saved?"

And He said to them, ²⁴ "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. ²⁵ When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open for us,' and He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know you, where you are from,' ²⁶ then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.' ²⁷ But He will say, 'I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.' (Luke 13:23-27)

The Bible says that there are few who are saved. Whoever claims that most of the people attending church are saved is wrong most of the time, and it might be that he doesn't know the Lord.

"Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." (Luke 12:32)

Here, we see Jesus addressing the believers as a "little flock," meaning they are few. When I personally faced the gospel, I was a bit scared not to be taken away by the crowd and become part of the congregation just because all the rest were following it. With time, I had an opportunity to see and examine the life of the people belonging to the congregation as I was living in a Christian community

because it was a place providing a drug rehabilitation program, and in the past, I had this kind of problem. Living 24 hours with the same people lets you see how people live. I was a bit surprised when I noticed that most of them didn't live and behave in a Christian way. The place was Christian, and many people claimed to be believers, but still, very few of them walked in that way. With this, I am not saying that believers don't make mistakes. They make mistakes, but their life's core shows that they love God.

However, seeing that there were few believers in the congregation awoke my interest in spiritual matters and the Bible. I just thought that if there are very few believers and it is a question of belonging to God and not just to a place, then there is something true about it, and it doesn't depend on how the people influence you. This made me think that it is a privilege. At that moment, I started to get interested. In the beginning, I didn't want to be taken away and influenced by the masses as I thought that most of the people of the place belonged to that kind of belief, and I will try to stick as much as possible to my opinion, but then I realized I wasn't right. Things are probably happening this way only with Christianity. When I talk about Christianity, I am not referring to a denomination or just religion but to Christianity and faith as the Bible describes them. In most religious groups or sects, some of which also bear Christian names, you see that the majority, if not all, people attending the congregation there are acknowledged as already saved persons. It seems it is just enough to belong to that religion and place, and you are fine. This makes it look like salvation is by works – you just need to regularly attend a specific place and be a member. It is not this way when it comes to real faith and salvation. We are not Christians because we belong to a congregation but because we belong to Christ. It is by faith. By faith, by believing in His name, you are saved and belong to Him. With this, I am not saying that we mustn't belong to a congregation and a church, but what actually makes us belong and become members of a church body is not how we fit there or the acceptance of people there but if we belong to Christ and if we are saved by Him.

Many people might ask: "What is the will of God for my life?" or "What should I do for God?" The main thing He desires for us, and His will for us, is to be saved. All other things come in second place. God will not first answer any prayer someone is praying to Him. He will first do anything possible to get our attention

to salvation and the fact that we are lost. The Bible says: **“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”** (Matthew 6:33, emphasis added)

The kingdom is important, and what is first in the kingdom is repentance and salvation. This is how someone gets access to it. The rest of the kingdom's matters also have to do with that as they have to do with the will of God, which is reaching other people with the gospel's message. This is the expansion of the kingdom. It is not an expansion of a church or an organization, but more people who accept the gospel and repent, which may also lead to an expansion of a church. But the first thing first, which is knowing Jesus. All the rest of the things, which are an expansion of the church, growth, etc., are secondary.

“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” (Matthew 6:33, emphasis added)

Yes, we might sometimes pray for the things we need, but generally, God has promised He will care for them. I am talking about our daily and basic needs, such as food, clothing, or even health. God has promised that He will take care of them. This doesn't mean that we mustn't work or try to provide these things; it just means that we mustn't be overly worried about them. In the previous verses (Matthew 6:25-32) before Matthew 6:33, where it says to seek first the kingdom of heaven, it says that we mustn't worry about what we will drink, eat, or put on. All of these are very basic prime daily needs that most people usually worry about. Instead, we have to work as we can for those things, not to be worried at the same time and to be worried about the kingdom. That needs to be our priority. First, this, and then the rest. This needs to be like our bread and water. It is not something that comes from time to time to our mind, and then we remember to go to church.

We must also say that those who are saved and have the Spirit of God, by nature, tend to prioritize heavenly things. We always need to put an effort, though, to focus more on that. We just need to seek His kingdom. This means we need first to pray for repentance on a personal level and then for other people's repentance. Because they need to be saved for a judgment will come one day, and we don't want them to end up far from God. The Bible even says in Matthew 6:31, 32 that the Gentiles are looking for all the material needs first. This is also

probably the reason why they use many words and repetitions in their prayers ([Matthew 6:7](#)). There is nothing wrong with using many words in our prayers, but in this case, Jesus was probably referring to the prayer asking just for what is material, which is what God told us not to worry about as He promised to provide it for us. This means they were repeatedly praying for their primal material needs only, without seeking the kingdom. Christians might sometimes pray for the material things they need, and those prayers might be answered, but as we already said, they need to seek the kingdom of heaven first. Those who don't know God need first to pray to know Him and repent. God cannot just answer other prayers before that. He might do that just to show He is faithful, but He wants people to know Him first because that's the main purpose.

There is a passage in [John 6:28, 29](#) saying:

“Then they said to Him, “What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?”

Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.”

We see here how people asked Him, which is the work of God. Something that many people would like to know. Jesus answered that the work of God is to believe in Him whom He sent. This is the work of God. This is the essential thing He desires for us. This is His will above all others for us. And this is good news because if it depended only on what we desired for ourselves and what we retained as good, then we surely would get lost. We don't know exactly what is really good for us. God does. He will lead us always toward the salvation of our souls. Only after that will He show us the rest of His plan for us. He will actually provide it for us. Many times, people might think: “Maybe God wants me in this place, or in that country, or doing that job....” We cannot be sure about that. God, above all, wants us to be saved first. His initial interest in us is not the place we are, the job we have, or where we like to shop. We are usually focused on these things and think that our joy and life depend on them. His desire for us is to be saved, but if we eventually harden ourselves, we might miss it, and then He will have to judge us according to our deeds. He will probably do it with sadness as He doesn't enjoy (if we can say so) punishing or judging people. He does it because He is perfectly righteous, and justice is in His nature. Jesus wept when He saw the unbelief of the people around the tomb of Lazarus.

¹ Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks be made for all men, ² for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. ³ For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ **who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.** ⁵ For *there is* one God and one Mediator between God and men, *the Man* Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, (1 Timothy 2:1-5, emphasis added)

This statement by Apostle Paul shows that God desires for people to be saved. It is not only us desiring that, but He in the first place. He desires it more. Because as we already said, if it depended only on us, then very few or almost no one would have been saved. It is so because we like sin; we used to live in it and be enchanted by its enchantment. We need to be awakened so that we can see the truth. The truth is that we are lost, and we need a Savior. This is a work of God. He awakes our souls by convicting us of our sins. He sends His Holy Spirit to do that. This is His work. That's why He takes all the glory for our salvation. Not only did He send His only begotten Son to die for us, but He also works out the salvation in our life till the end as He convicts us of sin, and we become aware that we need the Savior He sent. He also keeps us and protects us along the way. He keeps on warning us and guiding us toward the end. We need to respond to the gospel's message after He convicts us of our sins, but He does all that and more than we can imagine. We need to appreciate it.

“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; **for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.**” (Philippians 2:12, 13, emphasis added)

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