

The Foundation For Received Prayer (So God Hears You), And the Bible

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We pray because we need. We pray when we intuitively know “*the need*” is beyond human capacity to meet. Prayer is simply an utterance from an individual to “*God*.” It is no more complex than that. But questions necessarily follow. First, is there actually ... “*God*”? If so, can He hear? Does He hear? Can He respond? Does He respond? Prayer is pointless if He isn't ... or, if He cannot, does not, or will not, receive one's requests and then potentially act upon them. Fortunately, the Bible addresses each of these matters in great detail. Successful transactions can occur between an individual and the living Creator. Let's take this step by step.

“*There is no God.*”

Everyone knows there is ... “*God*.” Those who deny this, have suppressed this knowledge for any number of reasons. But, whatever the reason, God calls it an unrighteous reason. God-deniers “*have suppressed the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them*” (Ro 1:18,19). When, where and how He did this will be exposed when that individual stands before Him. He states that the creation itself declares His existence and power, and individuals who deny this have become “*futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart (has been) darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools ...*” (Ro 1:20,21). “*The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God’*” (Ps 53:1). This temporary, delusional state never holds up. I have read that the deathbeds of adamant atheists are sometimes filled with remarks toward “*God*” ... whom they profess does not exist. And even if one remains firm through the end, this bubble will pop. “*I have sworn by Myself, the word has gone forth from My mouth ... and will not turn back; that to Me every knee will bow*” (Isa 45:23,24), “*... and all who (are) angry at Him will be put to shame ... even he who cannot keep his soul alive*” (Ps 22:29).

“*Can He Hear? Does He Hear?*” - The Problem

“*Behold, the Lord's hand is not so short that it cannot save; neither is His ear so dull that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He does not hear*” (Isa 59:1,2). The Bible declares “*all unrighteousness is sin*” (1Jn 5:17), and “*all have sinned*” (Ro 3:23). This is the “*natural man*” (1Cor 2:14 and Eph 2:3) and all are in that state ... at least initially. This is a condition of rupture between the individual and God. He *can* hear ... but, not so as to respond. I compare this to an overcast day. You know there is a sun, but the clouds hide it. God is behind our veil of sin. Prayers ascend, crash into this impregnable veil and fall back down ... in pieces. This is a very bad situation.

“*Can This Situation Be Rectified?*” - The Problem Further Explained

Yes, it can ... but only on God's terms. It is precisely at this point that individuals make huge blunders. Most people think **they** determine the grounds upon which the relationship with God is to be rectified - and how that relationship is then to proceed. This error is as lethal as it is colossal. Religions are simply groups of like-minded individuals who have done this.

The Heart of the Matter

God is the offended party ... and He is also in the power position. Furthermore, He does not need us. We need Him. If you offend a king who can execute you at any moment, and you are

powerless to stop him, this leaves you totally at his mercy. If that king decides mercy is possible, it will be extended solely upon the grounds **he** determines. That is exactly the position we are in before God. *“I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.”* So then, it does not depend on the man who decrees, or man’s efforts, but on God who has mercy” (Ro 9:15,16). For man to forward the conditions for the relationship with Him ... is a grave offense. His strongest judgments will come for such arrogance (2Pet 2:1, Jude 4,12,13).

Fortunately, God **did decide** to construct grounds for mercy. He did not consult men, or angels, on its substance. It is not open for amendment or subject to the creature's approval. Interestingly, this construct is also the foundation for all future interactions ... including prayer as you will soon see. Jesus stated the matter bluntly; *“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father **but through Me**”* (Jn14:6). *“Enter by the narrow gate ... for the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life”* (Mt 7:13,14). *“He who does not enter by the door ... but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber”* (Jn 10:1). (Incidentally, Jesus later informed His listeners, *“I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me, has given Me commandment what to say, and what to speak”* [Jn 12:49]).

Jesus Christ is the only way to God. He is that gate and He is *“the door”* (Jn 10:9).

Two Grounds From Which Mercy Springs ... And Two Reasons Why Man Says, “No!”

First, the blood of Christ is the only substance that can present one spotless from sin before God. It has the ability to evaporate our sins to the status of nonexistence. This is a gift - and an act of God. That blood removes our sins *“as far as the east is from the west”* ... to be remembered *“no more”* (Ps 103:12 and Jer 31:34/Heb 8:12).

Second, only Christ’s 100% obedient record to God’s Law can make one righteous before God. The Law is perfect, but condemns us all (Ps 19:7 and 2Cor 3:7). So God prepared for Himself a body, and entered human history as a Jew born under the same Law He had declared through Moses. He then practiced what He had preached (Heb 10:5 and Gal 4:4). Jesus fulfilled *all* the righteous requirements of the Law, and when one calls upon Him, believes in Him, turns to Him, receives Him – in other words makes a successful faith-based transaction with Him, that perfect record is credited to that person (Ac 2:21, Jn 3:16, 2Cor 3:16 and Jn 1:12). *He* becomes our righteousness (Phil 3:9, 2 Pet 1:1). This too is a gift - and an act of God (Ro 5:15-17).

Both of these *“things”* have been created by God, and are as flawless and powerful as He is ... as He authored them both. By calling upon Jesus Christ, you are accepting these gifts as your only hope for acceptance by God. It is certain death to set Him, and them, aside and attempt forging other grounds for acceptance by God. But, that is exactly what many have done and continue doing.

An individual’s pride is **one reason** for rejecting these conditions of acceptance before an offended Creator. Many want to approach God on his/her own terms with his/her own self-made righteousness. That means God owes them acceptance. He will owe no one.

But a **second reason** for rejecting this avenue - is laziness. Many find it easier to join some religion, practice its associated rituals - and trust the religious leader’s propositions as authoritative. Just obey those thinkers, analysts, and leaders, *“and everything will be okay.”* These are houses of cards. *“Work out **your own salvation** with fear and trembling”* (Phil 2:12).

“So, How Does This Relate to Prayer?”

After all, the title of this Article has yet to be addressed. Well, probably three months into my Christian journey, I had come to a conclusion about prayer; *“I sin so much, there is no reason to pray. I*

*am so foul, there is **no way** God will ever hear me.*” I had been under some very Law-oriented teaching - that rightly hammered on the evil of sin - but, left hearers sliced in shreds on the floor. Anyway, that was my final thought before I fell asleep. A few hours later I awoke ... in the grips of a flu virus. If I exit this life as the victim of some strain of this microbe, I will not be surprised.

By midweek, I was beginning to have some glimpses of life and was able to read a little. I had a book at hand by a saint of yesteryear named R.A.Torrey. I opened it to a section about prayer and the exchange went something like this (paraphrased from forty years ago); “*Satan will say to you, ‘Robin, you sin so much, there is no reason to pray. You are so foul, there is **no way** God will ever hear you.’*” I thought, “*Wow! That is exactly what I said the other night!*” Torrey continued, “*Now when Satan tells you that, you tell him, ‘Satan, you’re right. I do sin so much - and I am so foul - there is **no way** God will ever hear me. That is why I do not come to Him in **my** name. I come to Him ... **in the name of Jesus!** Room is made for me **based upon His merits!** That is how I can come boldly before the Throne of Grace ... making any, and all, of my requests known!*” That completely, and forever, revolutionized my prayer life. Prayer, that is heard by God, proceeds from the same foundation as salvation does - the blood and the righteousness of Christ. The breadth of this liberty and consequent freedom of spirit ... is an overwhelming balm for any injury to my pride, self-sufficiency and/or self-grandeur.

So, ... do you want God to hear you? “*Whenever a man turns to the Lord, the veil ... is taken away*” (2Cor3:16). The overcast clouds ... evaporate. My next Article will be, “***The Content Of Received Prayer and the Bible.***” But now, you have ... the foundation!

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