

Welcome to Midway Church of Christ

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The statement of the man who had been healed of his blindness: "Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him" ([Jn. 9:31](#)), is often read without considering the context and other Bible teaching on the subject.

Notice the example of Saul of Tarsus(Acts 9). He was "breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord" (v. 1), when the Lord appeared to him on the road to Damascus. When Jesus told him "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he was told to "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do" (v. 6). Three days later, the Lord told Ananias to go to Saul, "for he is praying" (v. 11). For what was he praying? The Bible does not say, but it does clearly reveal that Saul was not saved by prayer. He was not in Christ, and therefore could not pray for remission of sins. This is a spiritual blessing for those who have been baptized into Christ ([Acts 8:13-22](#)).

Saul was saved when he obeyed what he was told to do. Paul himself said Ananias told him to "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord" ([Acts 22:16](#)). "Calling on the name of the Lord" here is obviously not prayer, for Paul had been praying, but had not called on the Lord. Neither is believing "calling on the name of the Lord." Paul wrote, "For whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" ([Rom. 10:13,14](#)). Preaching, hearing, believing and calling are four different things! Peter said that in baptism we "appeal (call) to God for a good conscience" ([1 Pet. 3:21](#)). Clearly, Saul of Tarsus prayed before he was saved, but salvation was not by "the sinner's prayer," as denominational preachers teach.

The first Gentile convert, Cornelius, was "a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always" ([Acts 10:2](#)). Again, we do not know what he prayed for, but we know that he was not saved by prayer. In describing this conversion, Peter said, "Then the Spirit told me to go with them, doubting nothing. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. And he told us how he had seen an angel standing in his house, who said to him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon whose surname is Peter, who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved" ([Acts 11:12-14](#)). Cornelius prayed, and "his prayer was heard" before he was baptized, but he was saved by hearing and obeying words, not by praying. Peter told his family to "be baptized

in the name of the Lord" ([Acts 10:48](#)). Baptism "in the name of the Lord" is "for the remission of sins" ([Acts 2:38](#)).

What kind of sinner was the man talking about in John 9? Jesus had healed the blind man on the Sabbath day and some said, "This Man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath. Others said, How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" (v. 16). The Jews who were finding fault said, "we know this man is a sinner" (v. 24). The man who had been healed said, "Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshipper of God and does His will, He hears him" (v. 31). These Jews were not accusing Jesus of being a Gentile, but of being a disobedient Jew. The man who had been healed knew the Old Testament taught "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear" ([Ps. 66:18](#)), and "The Lord is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous" ([Prov. 15:29](#)).

The sinner that God will not hear is the person who professes to be a child of God, but lives a life of rebellion to God's word. It is a sobering thought to realize that if I refuse to listen to God's word, he will not listen to my prayers. God told His people of old, "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear" ([Is. 59:1,2](#)).

If a non-Christian prays for forgiveness, God will not hear (answer) that prayer. If a Christian lives in sin and refuses to repent, God will not hear (answer) his prayer. Think about it—if I refuse to listen to God's word, why should he listen to my words? The truth is He will not!

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