

Challenging Christians to Pray



Prayergram[®]

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GOD IS GOD; MAN IS MAN

To remake God, one must unmake God

From the beginning of time, man has been on a crusade to take the place of God by any means possible. Since he (man) cannot conquer the unconquerable God, he relies on his fallible mind to lock horns with God by way of pride and arrogant thinking, "If God wants my attention, He better change Himself." In our conceited mind we think God operates on our benevolence, not realizing that "God rules by His power for ever; his eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious exalt themselves" (Psalm 66:7). The irreverent way we treat God causes me to believe that we have fallen on perilous time. Man has progressed so much to the extent that he is attempting to build a civilization without God. Remember, the tower of Babel! (Read Genesis chapter 11)

Our world is never outside of God's care, and He is unaffected by the changes that occur in the universe. "From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God" (Psalms 90:2). The sovereign God apologizes to no one for executing His righteous rule in the world which He commands. Blessed is the man who humbly trusts the issues to God, and the issues of life are always in His hand. Only God is infinite in the superlative sense, and others are great only in their relation to Him. God alone is concrete and real, and everything else is abstract and potential. Marcus Aristides, a prolific author was profound when he said, "God is not in need of anything, but all things are in need of Him."

The God who created all things from nothing needs no help. He is the everlasting unconquerable One. Are we attempting to lend God a helping hand in the administration of His creation? God owes us no explanation, and He doesn't have to consult with us on His decisions; He simply wants us to trust him fully. God is on His throne, no matter how hard we try to dethrone Him. The Lord's throne never can be abdicated, never err in his sovereign majesty. His kingdom is forever, and that is not a wishful thinking, but a sublime reality. In our secular culture, many have come to assume that God is reputable only if He wins in the 'cosmic seesaw' battle between good and evil. We place such a premium on winning and losing, always demanding that God should perform miracles just prove it to the world that He is in control. If He does not, then He becomes powerless in our mind, and how can we place our faith and confidence in a powerless deity! Are we embarrassed to admit that our God reigns supreme, and His kingdom is forever! I submit to you that we can be sure our God is unperplexed, undisturbed, undismayed and unmoved by the events of the day. Remember, "There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the LORD" (Proverbs 21:30).

We treat God Almighty like an onstage performer, desiring our applause. God doesn't need our applause or approval. Such a notion is ludicrous, conceited and warrants no merit! Why do we insist that God should change Himself to accommodate sinful people like us! Friend, all changes must be on our part! "I am the Lord, I change not," says Jehovah God (Mal.3:6). God needs no changing and He never differs from Himself. The problem is not in the truth of God's

Word or His sovereign majesty, but in our egotistical and sin-damaged mind. Wrong ideas about God corrupt one's mind and prevent his ability to think critically. The world is transient, but God is eternal and immortal. We are affected by the changes that occur in the world. Imagine, man is trying to conceive the vastness of the universe, and the existence of its brilliant galaxies! The very thought of an infinite God who created and navigates our world can stagger and overwhelm us into utter insignificance. Many in our society think that they are the center of the universe and need no supernatural intervention. No wonder they are stuck in the mud and unable to extricate themselves. The words of **Stephen Merritt**, an American author, "You may move the needle of a clock to suit you, but you do not change the time." Without God life would become what **Gamaliel Bradford**, an American writer/ poet once called "a wilderness of barren horror."

Has our civilization passed the point of no return! The world seems to be in chaos, but God is unmoved and fully in control and what a comforting thought it is that we are part of an eternal kingdom! How much time and energy we spend to find the fastest computer, fastest Internet, latest iPhones, etc. It is never enough. The engine that drives this generation is speed. The modern church is facing a formidable challenge from the technological revolution. Vance Havner, an American revivalist and author was right when he said, "We have gained the world and lost our soul." But people say, "O preacher, you don't understand, this is the age of technology, and we are much smarter and faster than the generations of the past." Dear friend, I understand perfectly. I also understand that the Lord created the world, and He is the ruler and sustainer of all things. He is the same, yesterday, today and forever and His years shall have no end. I am a creation of God; created in the likeness of my creator with a living soul. I am loved by Him, and precious in His sight. I am not at the mercy of fickle fate or buffeted by the opinions of others.

What is the greatest form of idolatry in the world today? It is not recognizing God as Holy, majestic and infinite creator of the universe who dwells in glory and whose knowledge unfathomable and incalculable. Faith in God Almighty is the one thing we lost in the mix of modern civilization, and it is replaced with secularism. **Atheism** is the doctrine or belief that there is no God. **Deism** is the belief in the existence of God on the evidence of reason or nature only, with the rejection of the supernatural. **Deist** says that there is a God who is out somewhere, and he could care less about the world in which we live. Sad to say, there are some who profess to believe in God, but they prefer to be left alone without any supernatural intervention. To them, he is the man upstairs and regards him as someone who manages the universe. **Polytheism** is the doctrine or belief in more than one God, or in many gods, such as, the 'god of secularism, god of nature, god of wealth, the god of technology, and the god of sports and pleasure,' but Jehovah God is none of the above. Man is constantly at odds with God because he (man) cannot manage Him; and that which he cannot manage he opposes.

When we are rebellious, we tend to manufacture an anemic god that we can trick and manipulate, bend and shape whenever we wish, and such human puffery is very popular now. We do not change or alter the Bible to accommodate a changing culture; the Word of God is ageless, changeless and timeless! There are people among us who retain such preposterous notion that God is somewhat different today than in the past. He has aligned himself with modern man for the purpose of appeasement because God needs man's help. **Poor God! So, man is guilty of minimizing God's power, while maximizing his own. He is guilty of having a 'low view' of God while maintaining a 'higher view' of himself and pretending that he can micromanage God. "When they knew God," wrote Paul, "they glorified him not as God, neither were they thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened" (Romans 1:21).**

We live in a time of moral madness and social disintegration which has brought our present troubles. This has been a gradual process, undermining the sovereign rule of God as man advances in knowledge and technology, he is prone to covet honor for himself; so, he sets himself on a voyage to seek honor that comes from man. The Word of God tells us, "**For that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God**" (Luke 16:15). In our present culture of intellectual arrogance, it seems the creator has become the creature; the potter has become the pot, and the architect has become the building. No car has ever crashed into a mirage. No imaginary army has ever invaded a country. God's people ought to know a

mirage when they see one. It's no exaggeration to say that there are some in our midst who claim that they have special powers and can tame the untamable nature. Moreover, our God is not helpless as many would portray Him, but He is the One Who parted the Red Sea, walked with Daniel in the Lion's Den and believe me, He is still with us every step of the way! It is wise on our part to accept the wisdom of God as He navigates the universe. Friend, ours is no absentee God who is sitting on His throne wringing his hands, but an active presence vigorously at work in the affairs of men. Isn't it better and wiser to go with God than go against HIM? So, what's the point of trying to rearrange God to our liking!

I hear people say, if God is so powerful, why is He not responding to those who blasphemy his name and persecute his children! God's stillness is not weakness. His silence is not approval. He will arise and intervene at the most opportune moment. God is being still and beholding all things. He has his finger on the pulse of the world, keenly aware of life's various fluctuations and changes. When the Lord shakes the world, please do not run hither and thither in utter panic, but "be still and know that He is God." Dear friend, we have no clue as to what we're up against. **"Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treads out the corn"** (Deut. 25:4). Where are the tyrants of yester years who terrorized God's people? I will tell you where they are: Today, their bodies lie in some forgotten tomb of antiquity. For example, when Adolph Hitler became Fuhrer in 1933, he began a campaign of persecution and demoralization of the German Christian Church. He despised Christians, saying repeatedly, **"You can do anything you want with them. They will submit and they are insignificant little people, submissive as dogs."** In the past as well as the present, many have tried and are still trying to obliterate Christians and Christianity, but the result will always be the same. **Failure, utter Failure!**

May I close this article with the heart-warming words of Irenaeus, the leading Christian theologian of the 2nd century, **"God did not tell us to follow him because he needed our help, but because he knew that loving him would make us whole."** Beloved, if there ever a time, man needs cleansing and healing, that time is now! I stand amazed, awed, and humbled every time I bend my knees and bow my head before my sovereign God, the Holy One of Israel, my Savior and Redeemer. **Blessed be His Holy Name**

---Matthew Skariah

THE PROSPERITY DILEMMA

The most contented people in the world are not those who clamor for 'power and prestige,' but those who practice simple faith in Christ daily and live by God's precepts. What is the point of possessing great 'wealth and knowledge' without the fear of God? When our days here on earth are done, what will we be remembered for, that we made lots of money or became rich and famous! As believers we need to examine our priorities whether they are set on the things of God, or not. The Word of God tells us, **"... if riches increase, set not your heart upon them"** (Psalms 62:10b). The way of the Cross is a way of self-denial. I know some lives are so 'humbly full,' and others are so 'proudly empty.' The profound words of Martin Luther come to mind, **"I have held many things in my hands, and I have lost them all: but whatever I have placed in God's hands that I still possess."** This powerful statement from the heart of God's servant helped me so much in grasping the difference between earthly values and heavenly values. This is undeniably powerful and heart-warming when at a time many Christians are struggling with the issue of prosperity theology which has its root in **lavish lifestyle**. Friends, if we have no intimate friendship and fellowship with our heavenly Father, what purpose will it serve us to have friends, fortune and fame? It is something to think about, isn't it!

Beloved, prosperity has a way of enslaving us if we are not careful, and not being properly anchored on the solid Rock, the Lord Jesus Christ. Dr. Charles Conn, a powerful Bible expositor comments on prosperity, "Success in life is subtle because we are apt, in the intoxication of it, to become self-assured, self-sufficient, and self-centered. The self-replaces Christ as the center of our lives. And 'self' is too weak a pillar to be the mainstay of our lives." Today's material boasting demonstrates the futility of a life lived without God in the slippery world of fluctuating

materialism. Our wealth, our fame, and our manufactured pleasures leave us in a strange state of melancholy. The best part of one's life is not fame or wealth, but the assurance of God's tender love and implicit care, knowing that he ultimately belongs to Christ and Christ belongs to Him. Thomas A. Kempis, a 14th century follower of Christ and the author of the classic book, "The Imitation of Christ," was profound when he said, "God exists and that suffices to console the true Christian in all his disappointments, because he loves God more for His infinite perfections than for the favors he receives from him."

True joy in life is found in loving and walking with Christ, knowing that He will look after his children in ways beyond our comprehension. The beauty about the Christian faith is that it encourages people to go on serving and loving God in prosperous times as well as in lean times. Beloved, let us seek God and when we have Him, we have His blessings! Everything in life begins with God and ends with God. Let us ponder on what it means to be a real follower of Jesus of Nazareth! Today, if we look at Jesus through the prism of man, we see only abject poverty, total failure, no claims to any earthly belongings contrary to what we hear from the proponents of prosperity gospel. But on the other hand, if we look at Jesus through the prism of God, we will see the splendor and beauty of obedience, contentment, peace and the wisdom of God.

Now, let me bring this concept of 'Biblical Discipleship' into modern thinking! Suppose Jesus comes to us and says, "Will you be my disciple, though I cannot offer you any earthly comfort, no guarantee of wealth or fame, but only the possibility of trials, hardships, persecutions, mockery, betrayal, rejection and perhaps even martyrdom! How about my child! Do you still want to be my disciple?"

---Matthew Skariah

MY PLEDGE TO MY LORD

My Savior means everything to me. Years ago, as a young boy, growing up in Southern India, the Lord gave me a burden and an assignment that was unique and special; it was about prayer, intercession, standing in the gap for my brothers and sisters, the world over. I aspire to no human accolade or recognition to prove my worth to my Savior who knows me better than any of my earthly friends. Finally, one thing more I ask of the Lord is that He would let me die on my knees, and I am positive that my humble request will not be denied. Lord, grant unto thy servant the wisdom to see thy providence in all things and the glory of thy presence! My prayer for you is that you'll always find 'pure joy and delight' in serving the Lord no matter what comes your way. Be strong in the Lord!

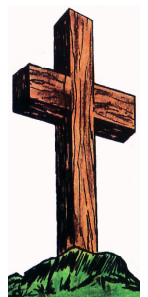
When all is said and done how would I like to be remembered? I would like to be remembered as a faithful servant of God who depended on Him for everything! That is all! Why should I covet any honor from the world that crucified my Lord!



PRAYER IS THE MIGHTIEST FORCE -- 2 Chronicles 7:14

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