

Finances to Prayer



Living in Sin

Throughout the entire Bible God has clearly and consistently warned us about the state of our heart and it's implications on our connection with Him. Let's start with the basics...

The Bible reminds us in Romans 3:23 that, "all have sinned and fall short of the Glory of God." But, it is by the grace of God through His son Jesus that we now have the gift of redemption, if we choose to believe through faith (Acts 12:39 & Ephesians 8:9). The salvation that we receive through Jesus' blood requires us to change the way we think and live if we are to be able to live in His will...

Romans 12:1-3

"Offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is true worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is..."

So in light of this verse, we as followers of Christ, as expected to die to sin (Romans 6:11-12) and become slaves to righteousness (Romans 6:18). In contrast, if we are living in sin we can not be living in righteousness. Right?

Ok, so how do sin and righteousness affect our prayers?

Let's find out what God says about the righteous...

1 Peter 3:12

"For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and His ears are attentive to their prayers."

Proverbs 15:8

...the prayer of the upright pleases Him.

James 5:16b

The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

John 15:7

If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

That's all very comforting isn't it...but let's look at what he says about the sinners...

Proverbs 28:9

If anyone turns a deaf ear to my instruction, even their prayers are detestable.

Isaiah 59:2

2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear."

Proverbs 15:29

The Lord is far from the wicked...

Psalms 66:18

"If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened."

Ok so those weren't so nice were they?

The key question to ask yourself at this stage is...

"Am I living a righteous life which is pleasing to God, or a sinful life which is detestable to Him?"

To answer this, you could ask yourself...

"Am I living in Him and allowing His word to live in me, or, am I turning a deaf ear to His instruction?"

Or if you're still not sure you could ask yourself...

"Are my prayers powerful and effective or do I feel like God is never listening?"

Basically your sin separates you from God...if you are living a 'life of sin' God will hide His face from you and will not hear your prayers. But if you are living in the righteous will of God, then He will delight in you and hear your prayers. John 9:31 confirms this truth...

*"We know that God does not listen to sinners.
He listens to the Godly person who does His will."*

Is your sin keeping you from God?

Unrepentant & Unforgiving

So what is repentance? Is it different from confession?

Confession is an expression of faith and an act of obedience toward God. Through our confession we are acknowledging that we are wrong and he is right.

Repentance is the act of turning around and walking away from your sin.

Anyone that thinks he has not sinned needs to read the following...

Romans 3:23

All have sinned and fall short of the Glory of God

1 John 1:10

*If we claim that we have not sinned we make him out to be a liar
And his word has no place in our lives*

2 Peter 3:9

He wants no one to perish but for all to come to repentance

But don't be fooled...repentance isn't a one off thing...it's a continual process.

1 John 3:3 tells us to 'continually purify ourselves' and in Luke 9:23 Jesus tells us to 'take up our cross daily'.

The fact is...unless we confess our sins to God and turn away from our sin we cannot come into his presence...

But the beauty is that if we confess our sins God is faithful to forgive us (1 John 1:9). All we've got to do is ask!!

Don't think you get off that easy though...we are also told to forgive others as we have been forgiven...

Matthew 6:12

Forgive us our debts as we have also forgiven our debtors

Mark 11:25-26

And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.

Colossians 3:13

Bear with each other and forgive any grievances you may have against one another. If all that didn't make you want to repent...you should read this...

Revelation 2:5

*"Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.
Remember, therefore from where you have fallen, repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lamp stand from its place unless you repent."*

Asking Amiss

Does this verse have a familiar theme?

James 4:3

When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

Are you a victim of unanswered prayer because you asked with selfish desires? Do you ask for what God wants, for His glory...or are you asking for what you want for your own pleasure? Or maybe your motive is to test God? What is the motive driving your prayer? God wants us to delight in what He wants...and when you ask God for things He wants...would He not give them to you?

Psalm 4:4

I sought the Lord and He answered me...

Psalm 37:4

Take delight in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart

John 14:13

And I will do whatever you ask in my name

Doubt & Lack of Faith

How many of us ask God for something, expecting not to get it? Is that faith or doubt? The truth is, we may not always get what we ask for...but if we are asking in faith our chances are a whole lot better. Did you ever wonder why it is you doubt...could it be because you weren't asking for His will to be done? Why would He not want to answer a pray that asked for His will...that would mean He was saying no to what He wanted...not much chance of that happening! The desires of His heart will always get done, so if that's what you're asking for in your prayers then all your prayers will be answered. So doubt could quite often go back to the motive of your prayers, as discussed previously.

God sends a very strong message to those people who doubt when they pray...

James 1:6-7

*But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt...
Those who doubt should not think they will receive anything from the Lord;
They are double minded and unstable in all they do.*

Romans 14:23b

...everything that does not come from faith is sin.

Hebrews 11:6

Without faith it is impossible to please God...

But He also has an awesome promise for those who pray in faith...

Mark 11:22-24

*"Have faith in God," Jesus answered.
Truly I tell you, if you say to this mountain, 'Go throw yourself into the sea,' and you do not doubt in your heart but believe that what you say will happen, it will be done for you. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.*

Unthankful

When Jesus taught the disciples how to pray the very first thing that he instructed them to do was to praise God. Psalm 100:4 also tell us how we should come before God...

Psalm 100:4

Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise; give thanks to Him and praise His name.

And again in Thessalonians we are reminded of the importance of praising and thank God. We are also reminded here that we are to praise regardless of our circumstances. How many of us could say that we do that? Do you winge and whine to God about how bad your life is or do you choose to thank Him for what you do and do-not have knowing that He is your provider? We are told to thank Him in ALL circumstances...

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Rejoice always, pray continually, and give thanks in all circumstances...

And again God is gracious enough to offer us our hearts desire when our heart truly delights in Him...but don't be fooled...that doesn't mean He is necessarily going to give you the flash sports car you have always wanted... remember the motive of your prayers should be the desires of His heart...

Psalm 37:4

Take delight in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.

Not Praying Earnestly

Wonder how many of us ask for something once and expect that we are going to get it. If your child asked you for a chocolate and then walked away and didn't ask again...what are the chances that you would give them one? Kids know that often if they really want something they need to nag and nag and nag and keep nagging. It's the same with God...He wants you to ask, but He wants you to keep asking and not give up. You never know when the answer to your prayer is just around the corner...it could be just one more prayer away...what if you gave up and never made that last prayer!?

Luke 18:1

Jesus told His disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up...

Romans 12:12

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer.

But that's not to say we need to nag God...we need to seek God through prayer. Prayer is our way of talking to God...that's another reason He wants us to pray continuously...He wants a relationship with us, and that's what people do in relationships...they talk!?

Colossians 4:2

*Devote yourselves to prayer...
(Devote yourselves to our relationship)*

1 Thessalonians 5:17

*...pray continually...
(Talk to me all the time)*

And once again God is faithful to reward those who are faithful...

Luke 18:7

And will God not bring about justice for his chosen ones who cry out to Him day and night?