

527 Do We Need God?

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God's Answers to Life's Questions

I once had a conversation with a man while waiting in line at a store. I mentioned to him that I was a Christian and preached at the church of Christ. He scoffed at my faith in Christ and told me that he had everything he needed. He thought belief in God was merely a crutch and for “women and children.” He felt I couldn’t be much of a man if I had to go to church and listen to the Bible all the time. He said things in his life were going pretty good. He had a good job, a fine family, and a happy life. He could live life without God. Do we need God?

David said in Psalm 14, “The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’ They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; There is no one who does good. The LORD has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men To see if there are any who understand, Who seek after God. They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; There is no one who does good, not even one. Do all the workers of wickedness not know, Who eat up my people *as* they eat bread, *And* do not call upon the Lord? There they are in great dread, For God is with the righteous generation. You would put to shame the counsel of the afflicted, But the LORD is his refuge. Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion! When the LORD restores His captive people, Jacob will rejoice, Israel will be glad.” David looked at his time and wrote this psalm under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. His days were a lot like our own—filled with good and bad. He knew that there were people who lived as if God did not exist. He saw what they could not see—that God really does exist!

The Lord is looking for people who will seek after Him and His ways. Many people live as if they would live forever and never have to give an account to God. Hanani, the seer or prophet, told King Asa in 2 Chronicles 16:9, “For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him.” Many people live their lives never calling upon God, never seeking His will, and never needing Him. Is it any wonder that they do not have a meaningful relationship with God? God is looking to draw close to you, but he can’t if you won’t let Him.

Americans are famous for their belief in “rugged individualism,” not needing anything or anyone, pulling oneself up by one’s own bootstraps. Even Christians can fall into the trap of feeling self-sufficient. Luke-warm Laodicea was like that: Rev. 3:17-18 ‘Because you say, “I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,” and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and *that* the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.’”

Here was a *church* that did not realize its own problems. Spiritually it was wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. People often blind themselves to reality—not seeing how very vulnerable and weak they are. Laodicea had banks and were rich, had clothing business with purple, and had an eye business with salve. But they were not better spiritually! You can have all the money, fame, and power of men and yet still be weak and powerless with God. It is easy to feel satisfied with life, that all is okay. Then something happens which opens our eyes to the reality that we don’t have all the strings. Some strings belong only to God.

Exodus, chapter one, tells the story of Israel’s decline in Egypt from a wealthy and powerful position to one of slavery. It all happened when Egypt changed politically. Exodus 1:6-11 says, “Joseph died, and all his brothers and all that generation. But the sons

of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly, and multiplied, and became exceedingly mighty, so that the land was filled with them. Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. He said to his people, “Behold, the people of the sons of Israel are more and mightier than we.” The new king of Egypt was jealous of the power of Israel. “Come, let us deal wisely with them, or else they will multiply and in the event of war, they will also join themselves to those who hate us, and fight against us and depart from the land.” So they appointed taskmasters over them to afflict them with hard labor.” Time has an amazing way of changing things in life. No matter how secure you think you are, your whole life can be shattered in a day. At that point, you know that your life will never be the same. You can’t turn back the clock and recover what you lost. It is presumptuous to think that we’ll never need the help of God, never need Him as our friend.

James talked about assuming too much in life in chapter 4:13-15. He said, “Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.” Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are *just* a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Instead, *you ought* to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.” The fact is, none of us knows the future or what our lives will be like. We act in hope that things will go as we planned; but we don’t know what will happen to us in coming days and weeks.

Some people think of God like an ugly boss. They don’t like being told what to do, so they live in rebellion to God’s will and ignore God. They don’t need a boss. God, however, is not a boss but a loving guide. The time will come when they wish they had some guidance and wisdom to help them through the stormy days. The apostle Paul realized that people who trusted in their own wisdom and their own senses often became deceived by the wisdom and the assumptions of the world, which were never as wise or as right as God. It is easy for us to tell ourselves lies.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 1:20-25, “Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”

Paul later said in 1 Corinthians 2:14-16, “But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one. For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he will instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.” The natural or unspiritual man is one who never thinks beyond this life and is totally oblivious to God. He can only see the here and now and think of what pleases himself. This is why he cannot accept the things of God.

Some people want a Savior, but they don’t want a “Lord,” to whom they are accountable and whose Word they must obey. What they may not realize is that everyone has a “lord.” They are enslaved to someone or something. Unfortunately many people are enslaved to sin or to the devil. Jesus said in John 8:34, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.” A person commits sin because he thinks it’s pleasurable, but after a time the sin begins to

control the person, and he is a slave. Instead of being “in control,” he is “controlled.”

Peter spoke of some false teachers of his day as people enslaved to sin in 2 Pet. 2:17-19: “These are springs without water and mists driven by a storm, for whom the black darkness has been reserved. For speaking out arrogant *words* of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error, promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved.” Sin is cruel to those who are enslaved to it. It brings nothing but harm and shame and regret. Sin is a terrible master.

Everyone has a Lord, wouldn’t it be better to choose a master who will love you and bless you rather than one that curses and enslaves you. If you reject Jesus as Lord, you also reject His promises of blessing and the inheritance He has prepared for you.

Some people think they don’t need a Savior. They might say, “I am not really so bad as to deserve to be lost.” It is the tendency of every person to downplay his own sins. To many people “sin” is an outdated word and “hell” is a myth designed to manipulate. But if sin and hell are true concepts, we need a Savior!

Paul said in Rom. 6:23, “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Those wages have never changed in all these years. In Psalm 14:2-3, David wrote, “The LORD has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men To see if there are any who understand, Who seek after God. They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; There is no one who does good, not even one.” Paul said in Rom. 3:23, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Sin is a universal problem!

Someone says, “I can’t be all that bad.” But the apostle John said in 1 John 1:8-10, “If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.” We all need a Savior. We need Him to save us from sin, to give us hope and to lead us to heaven. Without the blood of Jesus, we’d all be lost and without any hope of forgiveness or heaven. Instead of getting proud, let us humble ourselves.

Peter said of Jesus, “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed” (1 Peter 2:24). That matters to me. What Jesus did is personal, very personal. The sins I committed and you committed meant that we were guilty and deserved death. God laid on Christ the penalty that you and I should have suffered. He suffered this penalty personally with his body and shedding his blood. Jesus died for us so that we could be healed from the terrible

stain and harm of sin. We should all be grateful for the great sacrifice the Lord Jesus made.

Paul said in Romans 5:6-8, “For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” It’s hard to imagine that kind of love. To die for people who were weak, ungodly, and sinners shows the surpassing love of Jesus. We can never forget or ignore that kind of love. You and I can be saved by Him, but at a tremendous cost. Your soul and my soul were not cheap.

Peter said in 1 Peter 1:18-19, “knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.” God took you and me seriously enough to sacrifice His Son. Jesus loved us enough to sacrifice His life. Let us never walk away from the cross, acting as if nothing went on there that day. What really happened? He took your punishment because He loved you and wanted to spend an eternity with you. Do we need the Lord? Of course we do!

We need the Lord! We need Him every day! We need Him in every facet of our lives! We need saving from sin. We need forgiveness. We need his counsel and wisdom. We need his guidance and leadership. We need to know Him and the power of his resurrection. We need the Father’s ear to hear our prayers. We need the Father’s care and protection every day of our lives. We need the Lord’s help to overcome sin. The God of heaven, the God of the Bible is a true and living God—the only God. If we do not have Him in our lives, we have nothing at all.

The apostle Paul in Philippians 3:7-8 reveals how much he needs the Lord. He said he’d give it all up to have Jesus in his life. “But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ.” Jesus and the kingdom is a pearl of great price. Let us sell all else to have this prize. Don’t let anything keep you from having Jesus as your Lord and Savior.

Where are you in your life?

Do you have a close, loving, peaceful relationship with God? Do you have peace of mind and heart inside? God hasn’t left you; it may be that you have left God. The greatest need of our time is to know God and to draw close to Him again by listening and obeying His Word. Won’t you do that?

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