



# BEACON

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## How God Answers the Sinner's Prayer

*J. D. Tant*

No subject in the Bible comes in for greater abuse and is more misapplied than the subject of prayer. Especially during our summer meetings, you will find men in all walks of life praying most earnestly for things impossible to obtain, and many things they do not expect to get, and for many things that would wreck the universe if God should hear and answer their prayers.

In all this confusion, the seeker after truth may ask himself the question, "Is it right to pray for salvation?" Two theories along this line have been advanced. If one can be true the other, is in harmony with the Word of God? One claims the sinner may approach God through the medium of prayer—God in one place and the sinner in another, and the line between the two takes the place of prayer; that the sinner and the church may pray together; that God will hear and answer their prayers and save the sinner from his sins. Under this theory comes the mourners' bench system of getting religion which has been so popular for the past 100 years.

The other claims that God is the moving cause in man's redemption, that God's love is demonstrated by Christ coming to die for us, that Christ selected the twelve apostles and sent them out after being baptized with the Holy Ghost, and that they preached the Word of truth and established the church of Christ. From the sinner's standpoint, it is claimed that he must hear, have faith, repent, confess Christ, and be baptized for

the remission of sins. This, they claim, completes the scheme of human redemption, and by anything short of this, no one can expect salvation.

Which way does the Bible teach? I select two examples of prayer in the Bible. God heard and answered both and saved them. There is no man today, wanting salvation, who cannot apply this answer to himself and be saved, just like they were.

- Cornelius was a praying man (Acts 10:2).
- He was praying to know what to do to be saved, as the language of the angel shows.
- His prayer was heard—went up as a memorial before God. He saw an angel and talked with him. Upon this experience of grace, Cornelius could have joined almost any sectarian church, for they would declare he was saved. Yet the Lord did not accept that experience, but told him to send for Peter, who would tell him words whereby he and his house should be saved. All things were fulfilled. Peter got there to answer his prayer. Now, can we not apply the answer of Peter to ourselves, and do as Cornelius did, and be saved? But what did Peter tell him to do?

Peter preached the Gospel to him and fulfilled the mission of the Spirit. Which taught that God had ordained, through the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe (1 Cor. 1:21).

1. Cornelius heard him, and Paul taught that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (Rom. 10:17).
2. Cornelius believed the preaching of Peter, as was demonstrated at the trial of Peter who argued that God had chosen him that the Gentiles should hear the Word of the Lord and believe (Acts 15:6-9).
3. Cornelius repented of his sins after believing in Jesus, for we hear the apostles rejoicing that God, to the Gentiles, had granted repentance unto life when Peter related the circumstances to them (11:18).
4. Cornelius confessed the Son of God for Peter went to tell him what he must do to be saved, and Cornelius believed with all his heart. Paul taught that what we believe in our hearts we must confess with our mouth, “for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Rom. 10:8-9).
5. Cornelius was commanded to be baptized (Acts 10:48). Why? Because Peter went to answer his prayer for salvation to tell him what he must do to be saved, and Jesus had taught, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16). Peter could not promise him salvation until he obeyed.

Thus, we find one man praying for salvation, and a servant of God was sent to answer his prayer. The Gospel saved this man, and, in being saved by it, he had to hear, believe, repent, confess

Christ, and be baptized by His authority. Is it safe for us to expect salvation on anything less?

We now take up Paul’s salvation. Cornelius represents the best of moral men on one side, and Paul the chief of sinners on the other. Yet both men were religious men, which shows that a man may be religious, and at the same time is not a Christian, but may be even persecuting the church of God, as Paul was doing.

1. Paul was a praying man when Ananias went to him (Acts 9:11).
2. Ananias went to tell him what to do to be saved (9:6).
3. When Ananias got there, he preached to him the Gospel, which Paul claims is the power of God unto salvation to all who believe (Rom. 1:16).
4. Paul was commanded to be baptized and wash away his sins, calling on the name of the Lord (Acts 22:16).

But was that all that Paul was commanded to do?

1. Paul heard the teaching of Ananias.
2. He believed; for he was saved by the Gospel and afterwards taught that no one could come to God without believing (Heb. 11:6).
3. Paul repented; for he taught that God commands all men to repent (Acts 17:30).
4. Paul confessed Christ; for he taught that with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.
5. Paul was baptized to wash away his sins; for Peter commanded on Pentecost to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins (2:38).

Thus, we have examined these two cases of conversion, and found them saved in answer to prayer, but that neither was saved according to the sinner’s prayer system of salvation. Then, dear reader, which way will you accept? One is from God, the other is from man; one is doing the will of God, the other is open rebellion in His sight; one is salvation at the end of obedience, the other is deception which prevents obedience.

“There is no greater or more important part of our Father’s work for us to do here on earth than to make peace where storms of anger and hatred hold sway; and there is not one of us but has opportunity for this work.”

*Author Unknown*

You may ask me if I do not think it is right to pray for sinners. Certainly, I do, for Paul teaches that I should pray for all men everywhere (1 Tim. 2:1). But do you think God will come down in converting power and save them directly in answer to prayer? A thousand times, **no**; for Solomon has said, “He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, Even his prayer *shall be*

abomination” (Pro. 28:9). The law says, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16) and no believer in the Word of God can expect or pray for salvation in any other way.

Then, if God has offered salvation through obedience to His Word, let us **not expect salvation** through praying a “Sinner’s Prayer.”

*Deceased*

## “Just Like My Dad”

“What are you going to be, my boy,  
When you’ve reached manhood’s years:  
A Doctor, a lawyer, or actor great,  
Moving throngs to laughter and tears?”  
But he shook his head, as he gave reply  
In a serious way he had:  
“I wouldn’t care to be any of them;  
I want to be like my Dad!”  
He wants to be like his Dad! “You men,  
Did you ever think, as you pause,  
The boy who watches your every move  
Is building a set of laws?  
He’s molding a life  
You’re the model for,  
And whether it’s good or bad,  
Depends on the kind of example set  
To the boy who’d be like his Dad.  
Should you have him go where you go?

Have him do just the things you do?  
And see everything your eyes behold,  
And who are the gods you woo?  
When you see the worship  
That shines in the eyes,  
Of your lovable little lad,  
Could you rest content if he gets his wish  
And grows up to be like his Dad?  
It’s a job that no one but you can fill;  
It’s a charge you must answer for;  
It’s a duty to show him the road to tread  
Ere he reaches his manhood’s door.  
It’s debt you owe for the greatest joy  
On this old earth to be had—  
This pleasure of having a boy to rear,  
Who wants to be like his Dad!”

*Author Unknown*

## How Do We Feel about Being Corrected...More Thoughts

*Johnny Oxendine*

Our attitude toward personal correction will determine our ultimate estate in heaven. It is part of God’s plan that we accept the corrective efforts of our fellow Christian when it comes to personal sin (Mat. 18:15-17). While it is not comfortable for us to do this, and while sometimes it is a painful experience, we can be assured that God will bless those who appropriately display the right attitude toward personal correction. Ultimately, we all will stand before God in judgment

as to how we received these efforts. On the day of judgment, do we really want to stand before God and say that we were not receptive to other’s efforts to provide personal correction? Do we really want to face God with that attitude? How much better is God’s plan to face our own peers now and make correction than to face Him when no more opportunity for correction is available.

*San Mateo, CA*

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### Available Via Email

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## Sick

### Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Linda Worley

Carla Burlison

Bill & Pam Busch

Linda Parks

Pete Maldonado

## Please Remember

June 21

Birthdays and Anniversaries Get-together will be held in the zone room after the afternoon service.

## Weekly Services

### Sunday

Bible Classes for all ages — 9:00 a.m.

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

### Wednesday

Bible Classes for all ages — 7:00 p.m.

## Bellview Church of Christ

**Bishops:** Paul Brantley

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Bill Busch

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