

How Deep is Your Prayer?

How reasonable is your faith?

Our Greatest Need. O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years. HABAKKUK 3:2 KJV. I once asked a university professor what he thought our greatest need was. He said, "I may surprise you, because I'm not a religious man, but I believe that the greatest need that we have at this hour is a spiritual awakening that will restore individual and collective morals and integrity throughout the nation." How do we achieve such a renewal? First, there must be prayer—the kind that springs from a deep-seated heart-yearning for revival. We do not need pious platitudes and religious mouthings—but earnest, fervent prayer. Second, we must forsake our sins, both individually and corporately. We must forsake our pettiness, our peevishness, our littleness, and our conflicts, as well as our evil ways. Third, God must become real to us. Let the Bible's truth soak deeply into your heart and mind every day. Then you will rediscover that God is holy, righteous, absolute, personal, loving, and merciful—and this reality will be transferred into action, and revival can come. It has worked in history. It will work again. Billy Graham Daily Devotional. July 3. Page 383, Kindle Addition.

A deep-seated heart yearning for revival. When we think about David finally coming to repentance for his sin, we see the troubled and convicted soul of a man who must not only repent, but also feel the separation between himself and God. **"Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me. Psalm 51:5,** MacDonald notes that this passage is not focused on any wrongs of David's mother, but instead points to the fact that we are sinful in our natural state. This is not a get-out-of-jail-free pass, but rather something that can only be changed with God's help. David continues, **verse 6: "Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom." Verse 10-11, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me."** David goes on to acknowledge God's desire for obedience over sacrifice, and that David's heart is in a state of complete brokenness. This is how I often feel when I pray for others: that on my own, I don't have the power to do what is needed, and my heart yearns for God to see the depth of my desire to see people healed. This is how MacDonald is introducing us to both individual and corporate revival. Third, God must become real to us. Let the Bible's truth soak deeply into your heart and mind every day. Then you will rediscover that God is holy, righteous, absolute, personal, loving, and merciful—and this reality will be transferred into action, and revival can come. He goes on to point out all the fallacies in our self-deceiving, inflated attitudes that accomplish nothing.

One of the issues I continually need to focus on is the problem we face in our daily lives. I struggle with the absorbency of daily news. While I spend most of my working hours talking

with God, I become upset when I watch the evening news and see all that is happening in not just our cities and states, but throughout our entire world. Why can we not reach people who have little to no hope, who look at the same world we do, but without faith? Why is there such a strong resentment toward our Christ Jesus? We can discuss God with many people, but when we mention Jesus, many will turn away. What is it about the God man that drives people to resist?

We often hear people talk about change, but not in a spiritual sense, or perhaps they have a different spirit in mind. Far too many look for a satisfying spirit, not one who convicts and wants to help, but instead a spirit who gives an ear to their desires and renders affirmation to every wild hair scheme they come up with. Then there are those of us who feel so adamant about our understanding that we leave no place for discussion or debate. Must we be so dogmatic in our faith that we leave no room for others to err, as each one of us does? "But my errors are like their errors." Or so we think. Having God on our minds as much as possible throughout the day does not make us any better than the sins we see in others, and we all sin (1 John 1:8). The very judgment we place on others may very well become the judgment that God applies to us.

C S.. Lewis wrote, "Aim for heaven and you will get earth thrown in, aim for earth and you get neither." This may be best understood when we acknowledge the fact that, for the believer, we accept that this world will one day be destroyed. When we accept this understanding, we must also accept the truth of it and ask what will happen when such a thing occurs? Some people have an annihilation theology, when we are dead, that is all that awaits us, there is nothing else, no promise of life after death, we are just gone. It is a sad fate that we had no greater purpose in life than this.

For some, they seek to become one with the universe again, the place they believe they originated from, but who is in charge of this transformation? What would be the reason we were intentionally removed from the universe and given an individual identity to only become one with the universe again? Many fail to understand the process of reincarnation; it is not something to look forward to, but rather a punishment for not completing tasks properly in this life.

<https://people.howstuffworks.com/reincarnation.htm>

Buddhism. "Reincarnation is the concept that the soul, or some aspect of the soul, is reborn into new lives. Depending on the religion or philosophy, the soul can appear incarnate in humans, animals, or plants as it progresses toward an eventual escape from the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. The ancient belief is that after death, a person continues to undergo a series of deaths and rebirths into a new body until ultimately reaching a state of purification from sin. At this stage, the cycle of reincarnation ceases as the human soul obtains oneness with the spiritual "Absolute," and thereby experiences eternal peace."

What if the soul, as it is said here, is reincarnated in an animal or a plant? How does one then achieve perfection? The answer to this is that sometimes it may be reincarnated into a body other than human; others who come back in an animal or plant are said to be only for observation. I guess that makes it much more understandable?

Hinduism is much the same, but addresses the escape as achieving salvation. Still, reincarnation is seen as a form of punishment, offering another chance to get it right. Again, the question arises: Who sets the rules and distinguishes between good and evil, or right and wrong? There must be a law giver. Otherwise, there is no possibility of salvation, for there appears to be no one great authority to administer judgment. How can one judge the whole when it seems there is only one responsible for the entirety?

This is much different from Christianity in that the Godhead set the boundaries of right and wrong and offered the Son to remove the stain of sin for all who believe. Every other religious belief rests in the individual's hands. Reincarnation is not a purification process, as with the new birth in Christianity; it is a punishment, and one can only hope to remember past lives to struggle with getting things right in this new body.

"According to Hindu scriptures, a soul, which is a part of the Supreme Soul, dwells in every living organism (Pantheism.)¹ The term death applies to our body only and not to the soul because the soul is immortal. The soul changes the body after death, as we change our clothes daily. Depending upon our Karma, we get a new body. That is, if you have done good Karma in this birth, you would get the rewards for those in this and/or the next life. If you have done evil Karma, you would get punished for that in this or the next life. The present conditions in our lives are the results of our Karma in this and/or past lives. This cycle of birth, death, and reincarnation continues until we get salvation, i.e., becoming one with the Supreme Soul." <https://hinduismfacts.org/reincarnation/>

Let's look over this again. We must ask, did the soul, punished time and again, commit an evil worthy of birth, death, and rebirth until salvation is achieved? If so, then it implies that the Supreme Soul has flaws. The Christian God is flawless. In Eastern religions, the soul is believed to move on into another living person and change bodies after death. In Christianity, our soul is ours and remains ours for all eternity. My soul will not become Sam's soul, nor will our bodies belong to someone else. We will receive new bodies for the old has been done away with; **1 Corinthians 15:50. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.**

¹noun

A doctrine identifying the Deity with the universe and its phenomena.

Belief in and worship of all gods.

The doctrine that the universe, taken or conceived of as a whole, is God; the doctrine that there is no God but the combined force and natural laws which are manifested in the existing universe; cosmotheism. The doctrine denies that God is a rational personality. The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, 5th Edition •

Romans 8:23: And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption² of our body.

The sin we have committed, Karma, as used in Hindu teachings, is what the Hindu needs to overcome and is only attained through their works. Christianity does not depend on what we do to achieve perfection; Our Lord has already paid for it, we need only to believe. Our God sanctifies the believer, sets the believer apart from the rest of the world, and once a believer, one begins their eternal walk. Has death come? Yes, we die to the old man and are reborn into a new creation.

2 Corinthians 5:17: Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

Galatians 6:15: For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.

We recently explored the possibility of creating our own or a new religion. The impossibility of a devout Christian doing so indicates the depth of the congregation's understanding and commitment to the truth of our Lord Jesus. The Christian knows who the lawgiver is, and they are given all that is necessary to please their God. Every Christian is responsible for exercising their measure of faith that has been given to them as a gift from God. The exercising of faith is not in a power separate from God; He is our all and all. If I understand reincarnation, it seems to imply that there have been thirteen reincarnations, suggesting that the original soul, seeking perfection, has failed; therefore, the Dalai Lama has been reincarnated again and again in different human bodies.

The Christians promise is found in the greatest love story ever written, we know it as the Holy Bible, and it gives us direction, we find hope, and confidence, promises and assurance that we have a God who has acted in the realm of human activity, that has walked where we can walk today, and has faced the same trials we face. He who was without sin bore our sin that we might accept His offer of salvation.

So, in prayer with our hearts yearning, in earnest, fervent prayer, we come to our Father God and ask for revival, to see many saved, and to turn our world away from the evil it currently thinks and does. Father, guide us in Your ways, give us the words to share with others that they will not feel belittled or offended, but included, that they too can find the freedom from this world that believers everywhere feel as they walk in the power of the Holy Spirit this day. In Jesus' name, Amen.

² Romans 8:23: And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. Redemption, a releasing effected by payment of ransom; redemption, deliverance, liberation procured by the payment of a ransom;