

God's Answer for Our Prayers

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With all of the craziness happening in the world today it is often daunting to know how we should pray. The turmoil on our globe now includes pandemics, rumors of war, racial tensions, and political strife. Closer to home we all face day to day challenges of almost unstoppable stress. We need healing for our hearts and lasting peace. Our days can often be overwhelming, and it seems that it would be easy to just throw up your hands and give up. Faith offers a better solution. Instead of despair we should throw up our hands in prayer. But for what exactly?

The story is told of little Johnny, a mischievous kid who had been misbehaving and was sent to his room. He emerged a couple minutes later and informed his mother that he had thought things over and had even said a little prayer. The mother was very happy and said, "If you asked God to help you not misbehave, He will help you." To which Johnny replied, "Oh, I didn't ask Him for help with that, I asked Him to help you put up with me."

You do have to be careful what you pray for. The Almighty answers prayer. So, what are you praying? Are you praying for the right things? Wouldn't it be nice to be able to utter a prayer that addresses every need or issue we could have? Well, there exists such a petition. It is the exact prayer that was spoken by Moses and later David. The Savior repeated the same plea. What could be so important that it was said by the Prince of Egypt, the King of Israel, and the Redeemer of all mankind? Let us read David's words to find out.

"O Lord; early will I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh longs for You. In a dry and thirsty land where there is no water. So, I have looked for You in the sanctuary, to see Your power and Your glory," Psalm 63:1-2, NKJV.

David did not pray for a bigger kingdom, more friends, or a new car. David's petition was to experience the glory of God. Regardless of his many afflictions, David asked to encounter the glory of God. David knew how significant the glory was. Indeed, the word "significance" is a good synonym for glory. God's glory is His significance. It is what makes Him special, different, powerful, and perfect. Glory is the prestige or feeling of preeminence a winner feels after victory. In the Bible, the word most often translated "glory" is the Hebrew phrase "kavod." This is not a scary Hebrew term. Instead, it is an amazing phrase that can help us better know God and His will for our world. Our daily prayer should be to expect and experience the great glory of God.

Dictionaries agree that the Lord's kavod is His "weight, attributes, heaviness, significance, praise, power, moral beauty, perfect character, visible presence, and honor." At certain places in the Bible, the kavod is spoken of as praise to the Almighty. Other times the kavod is a physical manifestation, usually seen as light or fire. Mostly though, kavod is seen in the Scriptures as the significance of a person. The Lord's kavod is the manifestation of who God is in Jesus. We can discover this clearly in Moses's own prayer to encounter the glory.

Moses had previously seen the burning bush. He had already performed many miracles including the plagues upon Egypt and the Red Sea parting. After all of those wonders, Moses still longed for the glory / kavod of the Lord. He wanted to know God more intimately.

"Moses said, "Please, show me Your glory." Then the Lord said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Yahweh before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live." And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "the Lord, the Lord, the God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation." So, Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped," Exodus 33:19-21, 34:5-8.

Moses prayed to see God's glory. The Lord revealed Himself through calling forth His Name and His character traits. Yahweh's glory is the revelation of His nature. Moses prayed for the glory and God's response was "I will cause my goodness to pass before you." The goodness of God is the kavod of the Lord. We find this again in the Newer Testament, in John 1:14. "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," John 1:14. Jesus was the walking and talking glory of God. When the people saw the Messiah, they were looking upon the glory of the Lord wrapped within human skin. Jesus is the Word made flesh. He is glory manifest. The glory is all of what makes God God.

Both Moses and David longed to see and experience the glory because they understood its significance. Moses the great prophet and David the man after Yahweh's own heart prayed for His kavod. How about you? When was the last time you prayed to see the Lord's glory? How often do you cry out to know God greater?

The story is told of a woman who entered a Haagen-Dazs store for an ice-cream cone. After making her selection, she turned and found herself face to face with Brad Pitt. He was in town filming a movie. Pitt's beautiful face and dark eyes caused her knees to buckle. She managed to pay for her cone, then left the shop, heart pounding. When she gained her composure, she realized she did not have her cone. She started back to the store to get it and met Pitt at the door. "Are you looking for your ice-cream cone?" he asked. She nodded, unable to speak. "You put it in your purse with your change."

How often does the presence of the Lord quicken your pulse? When were you recently surprised by a "God wink" of glory? If we are honest, we can agree that most believers have lost the hunger for the kavod. We have not prayed for His glory and THEREFORE we have not seen His glory! Sure, we have worshipped, prayed and served but have we really felt His kavod, His goodness? Think about it. The only time the Bible says that Moses bowed and worshipped was when He encountered the kavod. Moses was amazed when the bush burned. But Moses worshipped when the kavod came. We all need a fresh glimpse of glory.

Our world is vastly different those of ancient times but the need for the kavod remains. Mankind today may be religious, but we are often distant from God's

presence and power. We seldom see the Lord as grand and glorious. Instead, we picture Jesus as dehydrated and airless. We view Him as non-threatening and aloof. Many people have a "pocket-Jesus" which they pull out when in need and then put back after the emergency is over. Sadly, we have put other issues above the kavod. We think knowledge, doctrine, evangelism, or missions are the most important. However, these are all sub-issues to the glory of God. Everything should flow from the kavod. Not vice-versa. Our daily prayer should be to expect and experience the great glory of God.

Bible believers are to live glory-driven lives that reflect His kavod. Remember that kavod means "weight or heaviness." This teaches us that we should not take His kavod lightly. The praise of God should be the motivating factor behind our every action. Yet, our natural inclination is to rob Him of His glory and to put it on ourselves. Do you hear the warped theology in that idea? Is everything for our glory or His? The truth is that God sent His son to glorify Himself.

The main theme of the Bible and indeed the purpose of creation is to glorify Yahweh. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure (thy glory) they are and were created," Revelation 4:11. The book of Colossians agrees, "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and FOR him." Everything was made to bring Him glory. The creation account teaches us much about the kavod.

In the beginning, the Lord spoke the world into existence. The universe and everything it contain was made for the glory of God. "All things were created by him, and for Him," Colossians 1:13. Everything that is came from Him. From the Glorious One came a world filled with glory. "And blessed be his glorious name for ever: the whole earth is filled with his glory," Psalm 72:19. The crown of creation was mankind, made in the image of the Holy One. Like the Lord, man was originally crowned with glory. Psalm 8:5, "For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor."

Adam lived in perfection and had an unhindered relationship with the Lord. He walked with El Shaddai with a fullness of love and acceptance. But because of the fall, man was separated from God. When Adam sinned, mankind lost the glory.

Sin removed the crown of glory. "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God," Romans 3:23. Sin drove Adam out of the garden and pushed the glory away.

The glory / the significance of our relationship was broken because of selfishness. This is a pattern throughout the Scripture. Disobedience robs God from his preeminence. The desire to receive for self alone puts a wall between us and God. A prophet once spoke to the Hebrew people when they fell into sin, "the glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken," 1 Samuel 4:22.

Sin separates man from the *kavod*. Adam tried to replace his crown of glory and cover his shame by sewing fig leaves together. Like Adam, we too have tried to replace God's glory with our own works – our own garments. But these efforts are futile. Man cannot earn the crown of glory lost in Eden. This crown can only be replaced by King of Glory. It is to this purpose God sent His only begotten Son. Jesus wrapped Himself in human flesh to redeem the fall of Adam and restore mankind's position as the crown of creation.

Even at His birth the angels appeared in glory and proclaimed the *kavod*. "And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of God shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men," Luke 2:9, 14. Jesus came to earth amidst the glory in order to bring glory to the Lord by establishing peace between God and men. He came as "A light to *bring* revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel," Luke 2:32. When we are at peace with others, we bring glory to God. This is key to remember. Our relationship with people gives praise and honor to our Lord.

Jesus revealed the full glory of God. He traded His crown of glory for a crown of thorns in order to restore the *kavod* to mankind. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus," 2 Corinthians 4:6. Here we can understand that the glory of God is manifest when we shine the face of Jesus in this dark world. The abundant life is found when the Christ-life is our life. All we need to do is surrender so we can become the conduit to the glorious presence of God.

Christianity is not just about believing something because “the Bible says so.” No. Our faith is in the resurrection and person of Jesus. His mission was to restore the glory of God lost by Adam's sin. Believers can sense this glory through a relationship with Jesus which changes us to be more like Him. It’s all about Jesus! Remember the passage where we learn that the “word became flesh among us and we beheld his glory” – this is our Savior, our Messiah, our Friend Jesus. Our daily prayer should be to expect and experience the great glory of God.

Moses was different after he came face to face with the glory. Exodus 34 speaks of how Moses had to wear a veil over his face because it was so bright from the glory. This is a picture of how God wants to change His people today. We are to behold His face and be changed by His kavod. "But we all, with open face are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord," 2 Corinthians 3:18. We are changed by His glory when we acknowledge His presence and power

Psalm 82:9 says, "the whole earth is filled with His glory." This means that His presence is as close as our realization. The kavod is all around us. If only we could have eyes to see, ears to hear, and a spirit open to the kavod! Yahweh's glory can be revealed through a religious prayer, beautiful scene of nature, a love song, a good doctor, a strong businessman, or a loving mother. Consider these words from CS Lewis...

"If there lurks in most modern minds the notion that to desire our own good and earnestly hope for the enjoyment of it is a bad thing, I submit that this notion has crept in from Kant and the Stoics and is no part of the Christian faith. Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it will seem that our Lord finds our desires, not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling around with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased."

Our daily prayer should be to expect and experience the great glory of God. How often do we recognize His glory? Do you acknowledge God and glorify Him throughout the day? Do you praise Him for the good and the bad?

With these concepts in mind, consider the power of God's glory to bring purpose and meaning to life. Kavod can overcome the craziness in our world! To seek His kavod was the prayer of Moses, David, and even Jesus. The Lord wants us to seek His glory in everything that we do. He prayed, "Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world," John 17:24. It is to his significance and praise that we are to live our lives. Everything in our day should praise Him including what we wear, how we talk, where we go, and what we do. "Whether you eat or drink or whatsoever you do, do it all to the glory of God," 1 Corinthians 10:31. God's glory encompasses every aspect of our lives. He longs to shine through his children.

The glory is to be our prayer, our focus, and our hope. This is the solution to our problems and the answer to our needs. From His kavod flows all goodness. "My God shall supply all my needs according to His riches in glory," Philippians 4:19. In glory is everything we could ever require for life and godliness. Our daily prayer should be to expect and experience the great glory of God.

Just imagine a world filled with love, joy, peace, and patience – that is the glory of God. And we can dwell in such kavod all throughout our days. Consider these three questions for further understanding and application:

- 1) How can your daily prayer to expect and experience the great glory of God change your life?
- 2) Do your actions bring God glory or rob him of His praise?
- 3) What changes to your daily life can you make to be a conduit of the kavod?