

All in all, we should pray with a childlike heart toward “our Father which art in heaven.” Manton said, “A word from a child moves the father more than an orator can move all his hearers. Simple trust, reverence, and love please God. To come as a child to the Father is to honor Him in the highest degree and to engage His deepest compassion. Joel Beeke

GADSBY’S CATECHISM

By William Gadsby, about 1800

(Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the Riverside Baptist Church)

Question III. How may we know that there is a God?

Answer. The works of creation and providence plainly declare that there is a God, but His Word and Spirit only do it effectually to the salvation of His people.

Job 38 & 39; Psa. 19; Jn. 16.8-14 & 17.8; 1 Cor. 2.10.

Question IV. What is the Word of God?

Answer. The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the Word of God, and the only certain rule of faith and obedience.

Psa. 119.140; Prov. 30.5; Isa. 40.8; 2 Tim. 3.14-17.

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Sunday Morning Bible Study -- 10:00 AM

Sunday Morning Worship -- 11:00 AM

Prayer and Bible Study Wednesday Evening 6:30 PM

WCWV 92.9 FM – 8:00 AM Sunday Morning

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Pillar and ground of the Truth” -- 1 Timothy 3:15

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REJOICING IN GOD

*And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.
Romans 5:11*

In reading Romans 5 we become conscious of blessedness being “piled on.” The procession from “faith to faith” accesses an ever-unfolding picture of the greatness of our God and the wondrous salvation He has given us in Christ Jesus our Lord. At every revelation of something He has done in bringing salvation to us, we are made to realize that there is more. Sadly, we note that many become quite satisfied at some minimal level of religious experience and need nothing more. They have neither a desire for a greater knowledge of Christ our Lord nor the joy that attends those who are ever discovering greater awareness of Him and all His glorious attributes. Furthermore, they presume to be delivered from eternal punishment while expressing no interest in the life of faith which is always laying hold on Christ and eternal life.

The thought here is of rejoicing or exulting in God. It is certain that we must be “in God” in order to see Him and thus to rejoice. This is the expression that one has when someone he loves does well. We often watch parents beaming at the slightest accomplishment of their children. How much more should there be delight and rejoicing over the accomplishments of the One who has graciously and wondrously brought us to Himself. Thus, it should be the inclination of the believer to be pointing to the magnificent being and existence of God and to all that He has done in bringing His own to eternal life in Him. David Brown expressed it well: “Our first feeling towards God, after we have found peace

with Him, is that of clinging gratitude for so costly a salvation; but no sooner have we learned to cry, Abba, Father, under the sweet sense of reconciliation, than “gloriation” in Him takes the place of dread of Him, and now He appears to us ‘altogether lovely!’”

It has now been many years ago that I was invited to preach at a sister church. The pastor, who had a unique way with words, introduced me and then said, “brother come on up here and brag on Jesus.” Needless to say, I have never forgotten those words and am often inspired by them. Men are often extolling the accomplishments of athletes and other heroes. How much more should the redeemed of the Lord declare His praises. This we are given, and Paul addresses it here as the expression of those who are aware of life abundantly given in Christ.

Sometimes it is good to start at an expression and work back from it. The “not only so” looks to what was required and accomplished in bringing salvation. Having been shown that the love of God is commended to us by Christ dying for us, Paul proceeds to declare what that accomplished. There is *much more* to it in that having been justified we are saved from wrath through Him. But there is even more. It is wonderful to think of a deliverance from punishment, but by this we are reconciled to God in that the death of His Son took away the cause of the enmity. The *much more* this time refers to the resurrection life of Christ and the fact that we are made partakers of the

divine nature. We shall be saved by His life – future assured. In addition to all that, we are given the ability to celebrate the accomplishments of God in Christ.

In Galatians 5:22 we read that the fruit of the Spirit is, among other things, joy. This refers to that imparting of the divine nature in us whereby we are able to experience the happiness of being fully identified with God in Christ. The word in the text is the expression of that happiness at the revelation and accomplishment of God in salvation. I am often reminded of the words of the Psalmist: *Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul. Psalms 66:16.* The Psalmist wanted to “brag” about God to all who would hear.

There is no place for boasting in us; we have nothing of which we might boast either in who we are or our accomplishments. Christ set the example for us Himself. William Hendriksen wrote: “And indeed, if, speaking about the results of Christian labor, one constantly keeps his focus on Jesus Christ, God’s chosen servant, who was the very opposite of a boaster, and derives all power from Him, all will be well.” Men are given to boasting about anything from who has the best church, to how many converts they have. Paul saw such an issue with the Galatians. Some things never change.

So, it is that our rejoicing is in God and it is

through Christ. “...for it is only in and through Him that God is their covenant God and Father; by him only have they the agreeable view of His glorious perfections; in Him only all His purposes and promises have their fulfilment; it is by His hand, and through His blood, that all the blessings of grace are conveyed to them; their access to God is only by Him...” (John Gill).

From Matthew Henry we read: “God is now so far from being a terror to us that he is our joy, and our hope in the day of evil, Jer 17:17. We are reconciled and saved from wrath. Iniquity, blessed be God, shall not be our ruin. And not only so, there is more in it yet, a constant stream of favours; we not only go to heaven, but go to heaven triumphantly; not only get into the harbour, but come in with full sail: We joy in God, not only saved from his wrath, but solacing ourselves in his love, and this through Jesus Christ, who is the Alpha and the Omega, the foundation-stone and the top-stone of all our comforts and hopes - not only our salvation, but our strength and our song; and all this (which he repeats as a string he loved to be harping upon) by virtue of the atonement, for by him we Christians, we believers, have now, now in gospel times, or now in this life, received the atonement, which was typified by the sacrifices under the law, and is an earnest of our happiness in heaven. True believers do by Jesus Christ receive the atonement.”. *bhs*

How to Plead for Unbelievers

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. Romans 10:1

Paul prays that God would convert Israel. He prays for her salvation! He does not pray for ineffectual influences, but for effectual influences. And that is how we should pray too.

We should take the new covenant promises of God and plead with God to bring them to pass in our children and our neighbors and on all the mission fields of the world.

God, take out of their flesh the heart of stone and give them a new heart of flesh. (Ezekiel 11:19)

Circumcise their heart so that they love you! (Deuteronomy 30:6)

Father, put your Spirit within them and cause them to walk in your statutes.
(Ezekiel 36:27)

Grant them repentance and a knowledge of the truth that they may escape from the snare of the devil. (2 Timothy 2:25–26)

Open their hearts so that they believe the gospel! (Acts 16:14)

When we believe in the sovereignty of God — in the right and power of God to elect and then bring hardened sinners to faith and salvation — then we will be able to pray with no inconsistency, and with the confidence of great biblical promises for the conversion of the lost.

Thus, God has pleasure in this kind of praying because it ascribes to him the right and honor to be the free and sovereign God that he is in election and salvation.

John Piper, *The Pleasures of God*, pages 208–209

OUR INTERCESSOR

Here in Christ we find the intercessor who is fully competent to meet our every need. As William Symington observed, Christ is a skillful intercessor who knows God and us perfectly and thus can plead for us in accordance with both God's law and our needs. His intercession is marked by moral purity and absolute righteousness, pleasing in every way to the Judge of all the earth. Christ is a compassionate intercessor, "able to enter into their feelings, and to make their case his own." His intercession is prompt and timely, obtaining grace just at the point in the crisis when we most need it. He is an earnest intercessor, who presents His petitions for us with warmth and fervor. Christ intercedes with authority, as once licensed and authorized by God to obtain mercy for His own. He is unique as the Mediator who alone atones for sin and obtains all the graces of the covenant. Christ is a prevailing intercessor whose Father always hears Him. And He is a constant intercessor who never ceases to watch over us with His full energy.¹¹ Jesus Christ, who is "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8), will be your anchor when you begin to slip away, your friend when you are have to stand alone, and your helper when your situation appears helpless. Therefore, go to the throne of grace. The Scriptures advise us to learn from examples of faithful ministers (Heb. 13:7). The Puritans of seventeenth-century Britain are a body of such ministers, whose teaching and living can be particularly encouraging to troubled and discouraged pastors today. They were steadfast in adhering to Scripture as the Word of God, in confessing the great truths of the Reformed faith, and in applying sound doctrine to the problems of life in an age and culture with many parallels to our own.

-- Joel R. Beeke and Terry D. Slachter

Paul outlines the essentials of spiritual peace and unity. Unity requires three things: a gracious disposition of love and humility (Ephesians 4:1-2); a religious experience of God's salvation (4:4-6); and a comprehensive commitment to biblical and apostolic doctrine (4:7-16). Nothing can easily break this threefold cord of spiritual unity.

--Greg Nichols, *Systematic Theology: The Doctrine of God*