



COMMON CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT PRAYERS AND HOW TO PRAY PROPERLY

By George Lujack

This article will address some common Catholic and Protestant (protesting Catholic) prayers and will offer critical analysis and commentary on them. The article will also show believers how Scripture instructs them to pray.

THE SERENITY PRAYER

*God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change;
Courage to change the things I can;
And wisdom to know the difference.
Living one day at a time;
Enjoying one moment at a time;
Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;
Taking, as He did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it;
Trusting that He will make all things right if I surrender to His Will;
So that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with Him
Forever and ever in the next. Amen.*

- Reinhold Niebuhr, Protestant (1892-1971)

THE SERENITY PRAYER

The portion of the Serenity Prayer asking God for acceptance, courage, and wisdom is most commonly excerpted from the prayer and shared:

*God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change;
Courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference.*

Prayers for wisdom are proper and excerpting this section from the whole of the Serenity Prayer is prudent.

SCRIPTURE DECLARES:

King Solomon requested wisdom from God.

2 CHRONICLES 1:7-12:

On that night God appeared to Solomon, and said to him, “Ask! What shall I give you?” And Solomon said to God: “You have shown great mercy to David my father, and have made me king in his place. Now, O YHWH (Lord) God, let Your promise to David my father be established, for You have made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude. Now give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people; for who can judge this great people of Yours?”

Then God said to Solomon: “Because this was in your heart, and you have not asked riches or wealth or honor or the life of your enemies, nor have you asked long life - but have asked wisdom and knowledge for yourself, that you may judge My people over whom I have made you king - wisdom and knowledge are granted to you; and I will give you riches and wealth and honor, such as none of the kings have had who were before you, nor shall any after you have the like.”

The whole of the Serenity Prayer, apart from the excerpted prayer for wisdom, is a defeatist, give up, faithless, white flag surrender prayer. It denies the power of God through His Holy Spirit to do wondrous things.

Here are some excerpts from the prayer:

- * “God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,”
- * “Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace,”
- * “Taking, as He did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it;”
- * “So that I may be *reasonably* happy in this life.”

Comparing the Serenity Prayer with Scripture:

SERENITY PRAYER:

“God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change...”

It is unclear what the author meant here in asking God for serenity in things he could not change. If he was asking to be at peace for the loss of a loved one due to death, or to accept other things decreed by God through Scripture, then this is understandable. If the author was asking God for serenity to accept bad circumstances that he felt he *or God* could not change, then this is a weak, faithless request of God.

Why would any believer in God pray to accept bad things that they, or God, supposedly could not change?

SCRIPTURE DECLARES:

MARK 10:27:

For with God all things are possible.

MATTHEW 17:20:

So Yeshua (Jesus) said to them, “Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.”

PHILIPPIANS 4:13:

I can do all things through Messiah (Christ) who strengthens me.

SERENITY PRAYER

“Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace,”

The acceptance of hardships as a pathway to peace is the acceptance of bondage, not peace at all. The acceptance of hardships is a hindrance to peace. Should believers not pray to God and not try to solve their hardships, to free themselves from burdens? If we accept hardships, how can we expect God to deliver us from them? When the Hebrew people were living in slavery to the Egyptians, they prayed for a deliverer to free them from their hardships and bondage (Exodus 3:7,6:5,18:8).

SCRIPTURE DECLARES:

MATTHEW 11:28:

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

LUKE 1:78-79:

Give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

SERENITY PRAYER:

“Taking, as He did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it;”

Did Yeshua (Jesus) merely take this sinful world as it is and not as He would have it? In one sense He did when He declared, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36). When Yeshua (Jesus) came as the Messiah, He did not come to take the world as it is, He came to change it. He called on people to repent. He came to change the state of the world, to die to atone for the sins of mankind, and to bear witness to the truth. We, as believers, have been given the Great Commission to spread the Gospel. We, as believers, should not be wallowing around in misery over the state of the sinful world, but instead we should be acting as positive agents, as the lights of the world to be fishers of men’s souls.

SCRIPTURE DECLARES

MATTHEW 4:17:

From that time Yeshua (Jesus) began to preach and to say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

JOHN 18:37:

Yeshua (Jesus) answered, “You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”

MATTHEW 28:19-20:

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

MATTHEW 5:14-16:

“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

MATTHEW 4:19; MARK 1:17:

Yeshua (Jesus) said, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

SERENITY PRAYER:

“So that I may be *reasonably* happy in this life.”

Should believers be reasonably happy in this life? As believers in Yeshua Messiah (Jesus Christ), having knowledge of the Scriptures and knowing our destiny as future sons and daughters of the Most High God (2 Corinthians 6:18), we should be bursting with joy and overwhelmed with happiness!

Bad circumstances happen to believers. Sometimes God’s people are unlawfully imprisoned or martyred. Yet even so, the Apostle Paul declared that if he were to die, he knew he would gain the kingdom and in his next conscious moment he would be standing before God in glory. For Him to live was joy in Messiah (Christ) and if he were to die he knew he would gain the kingdom (Philippians 1:21).

SCRIPTURE DECLARES:

PSALM 144:15:

Happy are the people whose God is the Lord!

PROVERBS 3:13:

Happy is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gains understanding.

PROVERBS 29:18:

Happy is he who keeps the law.

JOHN 10:10:

I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

‘The Serenity Prayer,’ the entirety of it, should be more aptly named, ‘The *Surrender* Prayer.’

THE SINNER’S PRAYER

*Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I ask for your forgiveness.
I believe you died for my sins and rose from the dead.
I turn from my sins and invite You to come into my heart and life.
I want to trust You as my Lord and Savior.
In Your Name. Amen.*

The problem with the Sinner’s Prayer is not so much the prayer itself; it is fine. It acknowledges that one is a sinner in need of a Savior and it confirms that the person praying it promises to turn from his or her sins.

The problem with the Sinner’s Prayer is with the false assurances many people give with it concerning the prayer. Many ministers say, “If you prayed the Sinner’s Prayer, it means you are saved and are now part of the family of God.” Many use the Sinner’s Prayer to promote the ‘Once Saved, Always Saved’ false doctrine. Many people falsely assume easy salvation is made by merely reciting the Sinner’s Prayer.

One must continue in the walk called for by the Sinner’s Prayer, which means to turn from one’s sins and live righteously.

SCRIPTURE DECLARES:

MATTHEW 10:22, 24:13; MARK 13:13:

“But he who endures to the end will be saved.”

No one is saved the moment they recite the Sinner’s Prayer, as no one is yet saved. He or she who endures in righteousness to the end, of the age or his or her life, will be (shall be - future tense) saved. If we live righteously and believe upon Yeshua (Jesus) for our salvation, we can live with the assurance that we will be saved.

2 CORINTHIANS 13:4:

Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Yeshua Messiah (Jesus Christ) is in you?

1 JOHN 2:3-6:

Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

Another commentary made by many ministers is that we are all hopeless sinners. While we all would be hopeless sinners if it were not for the free gift of salvation provided for us by God, the phrase ‘hopeless sinner(s)’ does not appear in Scripture. We should not look upon ourselves as hopeless sinners, but hopeful saints, former sinners looking forward to the promises of Almighty God.

SCRIPTURE DECLARES:

ROMANS 8:23-24:

Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. For we were saved in this hope.

1 PETER 3:15:

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you.

As faithful believing saints of Almighty God, we should not think of ourselves as being hopeless and of things as being impossible. He has empowered us to conquer obstacles in our life and to have power over our spiritual enemies.

MATTHEW 17:20:

So Yeshua (Jesus) said to them, “Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.”

LUKE 10:19-20:

“Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.”

CATHOLIC PRAYERS

Some of the most anti-Scriptural prayers are those that were introduced by the Roman Catholic Church. A complete list of man-made Catholic prayers is far too vast to cover in a single article, but many of the same errors recur throughout the Catholic faith, which is reflected in its repetitive prayers, as shown in the following examples. Catholics pray to Mary, angels, and dead saints. Catholics glorify and praise their church and declare it to be the holy institution that Jesus Christ founded.

ANIMA CHRISTI

Soul of Christ, make me holy, Body of Christ, be my salvation

Blood of Christ, let me drink your wine

Water flowing from the side of Christ, wash me clean

Passion of Christ, strengthen me, Kind Jesus, hear my prayer

Hide me within your wounds, And keep me close to you

Defend me from the evil enemy, And call me at the hour of my death

To the fellowship of your saints, That I may sing your praise with them for all eternity. Amen.

The Catholic Church through the Anima Christi prayer teaches that when believers die they go straight to heaven to have communion and fellowship with the saints.

SCRIPTURE DECLARES:

JOHN 6:39-40:

“This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up AT THE LAST DAY. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I WILL RAISE HIM UP AT THE LAST DAY.”

Righteous believers who die in this age will not be going straight to heaven to have fellowship with others and sing praises to God. All are believers going to the grave and will remain unconscious in death until the resurrection of the dead, which will occur at the last day of grace, at the final trumpet (1 Corinthians 15:51-54; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17).

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth;

and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, Our Lord,

Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,

suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into Hell. The third day He arose again from the dead;

He ascended into Heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty;

from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Apostles' Creed was not written or recited by the apostles of Yeshua Messiah (Jesus Christ); it is a creation of the founders of the Roman Catholic Church. The Catholic Church is not holy, and the mention of it being so in the Apostles' Creed is a self-serving, self-glorifying statement.

SCRIPTURE DECLARES:

1 CORINTHIANS 3:16-17:

Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.

We believers are the temple of God. The Spirit of God dwells in us and makes us holy, not the Catholic Church, an institution of men.

GLORY BE

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

The world is not the same now, as it was in the beginning, nor shall it remain as it is now.
The world, as it is in this age, will end.

SCRIPTURE DECLARES:

2 PETER 3:3-7:

Scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, ALL THINGS CONTINUE AS THEY WERE FROM THE BEGINNING OF CREATION.” For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

REVELATION 21:1:

Now I saw a new heaven AND A NEW EARTH, for the first heaven AND THE FIRST EARTH HAD PASSED AWAY. Also there was no more sea.

The Earth will be restored to its state before it was flooded in the great flood of Noah, in the Genesis account. This current age of lawlessness and sin will also end, when Yeshua (Jesus) returns to establish His millennium kingdom.

CATHOLIC PRAYERS TO MARY

THE ANGELIS

The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary.

And she conceived by the Holy Spirit. (Hail Mary....)

Behold the handmaid of the Lord.

Be it done unto me according to thy word. (Hail Mary....)

And the Word was made flesh. And dwelt among us. (Hail Mary....)

Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God.

That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

LET US PRAY: Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy Grace into our hearts; that, we to whom the Incarnation of Christ, Thy Son, was made known by the message of an Angel, may by His Passion and Cross, be brought to the glory of His Resurrection through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

HAIL HOLY QUEEN

Hail Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve: to thee we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile, show us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary! Amen.

HAIL MARY

Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

MEMORARE

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that any one who fled to thy protection, implored thy help or sought the intercession, was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, We fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins my Mother; to thee we do come, before thee we stand, sinful and sorrowful; O Mother of the World Incarnate, despise not our petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer them. Amen.

MIRACULOUS MEDAL PRAYER

O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee, and for those who do not have recourse to thee, especially the enemies of the Church and those recommend to thee. Amen.

Mary did not conceive a Child, Yeshua (Jesus). That which was inside her, Yeshua (Jesus) was conceived *of the Holy Spirit*. Mary served God as a handmaiden, a virgin surrogate mother. Mary is not declared to be holy in Scripture, and she herself declared that she was in need of the Savior who she bore.

Mary is dead. She is not a goddess to be prayed to, nor will she pray for us, nor can she hear prayers or petitions, only God can. If one wishes to be made worthy of the promises of Messiah (Christ), praying to Mary is an act of worthless futility. Salvation is a free gift and to be worthy of the free gift, we are to obey the will of Yeshua (Jesus) and obey His commandments.

Mary is not a queen, either on Earth or in heaven. She herself said she was a maidservant of a lowly state, not a queen. The false belief in a queen of heaven is of pagan origin and was applied by the Catholic Church and bestowed upon Mary with no Scripture justification.

Mary is not the source of our hope and dispenser of mercy, God is. Mary was a sinner, and was not conceived without sin, nor was she the Immaculate Conception; Yeshua (Jesus) was (Matthew 1:18-23). Catholics incorrectly pray to Mary as a goddess, a sinless perpetual virgin, an Advocate / Intercessor / Mediator, and a woman who was without sin.

SCRIPTURE DECLARES:

JEREMIAH 7:18:

The children gather wood, the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead dough, to make cakes for THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN; and they pour out drink offerings to other gods, that they may provoke Me to anger.

MATTHEW 1:20:

An angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, FOR THAT WHICH IS CONCEIVED IN HER IS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.”

MATTHEW 10:37-38:

“He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.”

LUKE 1:46-47:

And Mary said:

“My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant.”

JOHN 14:15:

“If you love Me, keep My commandments.”

EPHESIANS 2:4-5:

But God, who is rich in MERCY, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).

1 TIMOTHY 1:1:

Paul, an apostle of Yeshua Messiah (Jesus Christ), by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Yeshua Messiah (Jesus Christ), OUR HOPE.

JUDE 1:21:

Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the MERCY of our Lord Yeshua Messiah (Jesus Christ) unto eternal life.

Mary was a sinner, is dead awaiting the resurrection, and she has not been assumed into heaven. She is not a goddess to be prayed to, nor can she hear prayers or petitions, only God can. If one wishes to be made worthy of the promises of Messiah (Christ), praying to Mary is an act of worthless futility. Salvation is a free gift and to be worthy of the free gift, we are to obey the will of Yeshua (Jesus), love Him, and obey His commandments.

SCRIPTURE DECLARES:

EXODUS 20:3; DEUTERONOMY 5:7:

You shall have no other gods before Me.

1 TIMOTHY 2:5:

For there is one God and ONE MEDIATOR between God and men, the Man Messiah Yeshua (Christ Jesus).

1 JOHN 2:1:

My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have AN ADVOCATE with the Father, Yeshua Messiah (Jesus Christ) the righteous.

SAINT MICHAEL PRAYER

Saint Michael, the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray; and do thou, o Prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God cast into hell Satan and the evil spirits who prowl throughout the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

Catholics pray to angels for defense and worship them. God does not command us to pray to anyone but Him alone for our defense against the spiritual forces of wickedness and we are instructed to not worship angels.

SCRIPTURE DECLARES:

PSALM 59:9,17:

I will wait for You, O You his Strength; for God is my defense.

...

To You, O my Strength, I will sing praises; for God is my defense.

1 CORINTHIANS 6:3:

Do you not know that we shall judge angels?

COLOSSIANS 2:18:

Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels.

REVELATION 22:8-9:

Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things.

Then he said to me, "See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God."

YESHUA (JESUS) TELLS US HOW TO PRAY:

MATTHEW 6:5-13; LUKE 11:1-4:

"And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. In this manner, therefore, pray:

Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be Your name.

Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts (sins), as we forgive our debtors.

And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."

The Lord's Prayer covers many areas.

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name."

It is a prayer to God the Father in heaven who is holy.

"Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

God's kingdom is coming to Earth and Yeshua (Jesus) will establish righteousness and rule the nations with a rod of iron (Revelation 19:15, 20:4).

"Give us this day our daily bread."

We should pray for our daily needs.

"And forgive us our debts (sins), as we forgive our debtors."

If we forgive others, God will forgive us (Matthew 6:14).

"And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

Believers battle Satan and his demons in the spiritual realm. Pray for God's power and put on the full armor of God to defeat Satan and His spiritual hosts (Ephesians 6:10-13).

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.

God's kingdom will last forever and there will be no end to it.

Believers have leeway when praying to God in asking for their daily needs, seeking His strength in overcoming evil and sin, for help in forgiving others, and for meeting other spiritual needs in general. However, many church or faith-based institutionalized prayers are defeatist, faithless, repetitive, unscriptural, and therefore ineffective. The purpose of this article is to make believers aware of what they are praying, so that they carefully consider and comprehend the words that are said in prayer, as prayer is supernatural communication with Almighty God.