What Is – and – Examples Of – The Sinner’s Prayer

What is the sinner's prayer?

The reason it has been labeled the Sinner’s Prayer is because the Bible tells us that we are all dead in our sins and trespasses until we get saved and born again by accepting Jesus as our Lord and Savior – hence the word ‘sinner’s prayer.’

The sinners prayer is a Christian term for a prayer that is said when someone wants to repent of their sin, ask God for forgiveness and state belief in the life, death, and saving resurrection of Jesus Christ. Romans 10:9-10 says that “if you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.”

Millions have come to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ through church services, friends, and family leading them in a salvation prayer. However it is not words in a prayer that save. Jesus Christ alone has the power to save through faith. J.D Greerer explains it well – “It’s not the prayer that saves; it’s the repentance and faith behind the prayer that lays hold of salvation. My concern is that over-emphasizing the prayer has often (though unintentionally) obscured the primary instruments for laying hold of salvation: repentance and faith.”

God the Father will draw the sinner to Jesus through the Holy Spirit.

“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.” (John 6:44)
“... and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.” (1 Corinthians 12:3)

The Bible tells us that one of the main jobs of the Holy Spirit is to bring “conviction” to the sinner. Bottom line – Jesus Christ came to our earth in the flesh to die on a cross for all of our sins. What this means is that you cannot begin to accept Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior unless you can see and realize that you are truly a sinner in need of a Savior. If you cannot see and admit that you are truly a sinner, then you will see no need to accept what Jesus did for you when He died on the cross for you.

Once a person understands his state and that which God offers, that reality may enter into this person’s mind, heart, and spirit – then the Holy Spirit can start to move in to illuminate and enlighten this person as to what the real meaning of God’s gift of eternal salvation through His Son and His death on the cross is really all about.

The Holy Spirit will now start to convict the sinner. He will show the person what a sinner they have been all of their life. He will show and point out certain sins of their past and how these sins and behaviors are totally unacceptable in the eyes of God the Father.
He will show them how powerless and helpless they really are in their natural state in being able to pull out of some of their sins.

Once you begin to see what a hopeless and miserable sinner you really are – and that you do not have the mental or emotional capacity within your own being to change yourself for the better – then you will become open to receiving the truth of the Gospel. Then you will be open to listening to what happened to Jesus when He came down to our earth in the flesh to die on the cross for all of our sins.

Once you fully see and fully realize that you have been born into this world as a sinner and that you have been living all of your life as a sinner, then you will be ready to accept God’s free gift of eternal salvation through His Son Jesus Christ and His sacrificial death on that cross.

Then you will see that it is the grace, mercy, love, and goodness of God and Jesus that will save you from yourself and your sinful state.

You will see that God the Father is now willing to grant you a pardon and make a way of escape for you from the eventual fires of a real, live, living hell if you are willing to believe on His Son Jesus Christ and His death on the cross.

The examples below of the sinner’s prayer can help you communicate with God that you repent of your sin, accept His forgiveness, and accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. Yet it is your words and your thoughts expressing these truly heartfelt beliefs with a sincere heart and true motive that determines their effectiveness. Remember the criminal who hung on the cross next to Jesus? His prayer consisted of these words only: "Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." God knows what is in our hearts.

Lord Jesus, for too long I’ve kept you out of my life. I know that I am a sinner and that I cannot save myself. I know that I deserve the consequences of my sin. I believe you are the Son of God who died on the cross, paying the price for my sins, and rose from the dead on the third day providing for my forgiveness. I am ready to trust you as my Lord and Savior. Come into my life and change me from the inside out, into who you designed me to be. Thank you for bearing my sins and giving me the gift of eternal life. I believe your words are true. Come into my heart, Lord Jesus, and be my Savior. By faith I gratefully receive your gift of salvation. From this day forward, help me to live every day for you and in a way that pleases you. Thank you Lord, for saving me and forgiving me! Amen!"

Dear God, I know that I am a sinner and there is nothing that I can do to save myself. I confess my complete helplessness to forgive my own sin or to work my way to heaven. At this moment I trust Christ alone as the One who bore my sin when He died on the cross. I believe that He did all that will ever be necessary for me to stand in your holy presence. I thank you that Christ was raised
from the dead as a guarantee of my own resurrection. As best as I can, I now transfer my trust to Him. I am grateful that He has promised to receive me despite my many sins and failures. Father, I take you at your word. I thank you that I can face death now that you are my Savior. Come into my life and make yourself known through your life changing ways. Thank you for the assurance that you will walk with me through all life’s trying times. Thank you for hearing this prayer. In Jesus’ Name. Amen

Dear Father, I now believe that Jesus Christ is your only begotten Son, that He came down to our earth in the flesh and died on the cross to take away all of my sins and the sins of this world. I believe that Jesus Christ then rose from the dead on the third day to give all of us eternal life. Lord Jesus, I now confess to you all of the wrong and sinful things that I have ever done in my life. I ask that you please forgive me and wash away all of my sins by the blood that you have personally shed for me on the cross. I am now ready to accept you as my personal Lord and Savior. I now ask that you come into and direct my life and live with me for all of eternity. Make yourself and your ways known to me through your Word and the Holy Spirit’s leading of my life guiding me to a life worthy of your name. Amen

Lord God, please forgive me for my sins. I believe that you sent your Son Jesus to die on the cross for my sins. I believe that you love me. I believe in my heart you are who you say you are. Jesus, you are the Son of God. I confess with my mouth that I am a sinner. I accept you Lord Jesus as my Savior. Please cleanse me from my sin and create a new and clean heart in me. I do believe that you are my Savior and I now want to live for you as my Lord and my God. I know that I have eternal life in you because of the work you did on Calvary’s cross for me. Thank you, God. In Jesus Name. Amen.

In the parable of the soils in (Matt.13:19) Jesus explains the four different types of soils that the seed landed on. Jesus states that the “seed” is the “Word of the Kingdom” or “the Gospel.” The soil is the heart of man. We need to remember, there is nothing wrong with this sower. There is nothing wrong with the seed. The seed is being thrown by the same method. There is also nothing wrong with the soil either. It was just the condition the soil was in. Consider the condition of your heart as you read the following.

* Matt. 13: v.4-8 is the parable – v. 19-23 explains the parable.

v.4) Some seed fell along the path and the birds came and ate it up
v.5,6) Some fell on rocky places where there was not much soil. It sprang up quickly because the soil was shallow but when the sun came up they were scorched and withered because they had no root.
v.7) Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants.
v.8) Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop – a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.
v.19) Explains - when anyone hears the message about the kingdom of God and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path.
v.20,21) What was sown on rocky places is the man who hears the Word and at once receives it with joy. But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble and persecution come because of his belief in the Word, he quickly falls away.

v.22) What was sown among the thorns is the man who hears the Word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of riches choke it, making it unfruitful.

v.23) But what was sown on good soil is the man who hears the Word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. (I believe meaning - bringing the Word to many others)

In verses 5,6 and 20,21 – This is a superficial, shallow heart. There is rockbed under the thin layer of soil and the roots can only go so far. The roots quickly take hold and grow fast and tall until the roots reach a limit of depth that provides no moisture and does not allow them to take hold and continue to grow. From that point they wither and die. This is where many are deceived about their salvation. They hear the gospel message, and receive it with great interest, joy, exhilaration and emotion. They believe – for a while - but in time they fall away, never developing their faith and trust in the Lord, allowing the cares of this world to sabotage their faith (vs. 7,22) however continuing to believe their initial acknowledgement of faith had sealed their salvation. “These people left our churches, but they never really belonged with us; otherwise they would have stayed with us. When they left, it proved that they did not belong with us.” (1 John 2:19)

Jesus tells us only one of the four soils accepted the seed properly and produced a good crop. We know many hear the gospel but not all follow through. If, in your acceptance your heart is right, God’s Spirit will lead you through a life of perseverance in the faith despite what life brings because you know God is good and your eternal destiny will be worth whatever you have to endure.

I have known a couple of people who have said that they had said a similar prayer as those listed above on several occasions but as their life went on they realized they never let the truth of the message settle completely in their heart with a settled finality. However, there came a time when in their heart, mind and soul they surrendered themselves to all that prayer stated and committed themselves to follow the Word and saw all they had hoped for along the way, (a transformed heart, a transformed perspective, attitude and lifestyle) come to pass as promised in the Word by a faithful God who wants to show Himself true to you.

If it takes more than once, don’t be too concerned as long as you get it right. The two main problems are that until you do, you do not have God’s guidance and will reap the consequences of the decisions you make and life being as fleeting as it is, (we know we are not guaranteed tomorrow), you don’t have the assurance of eternal life should you take your last breath before that commitment is made. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God. 1 John 5:13