

The Divine Equation

Somehow, somehow, I convinced myself that the further along I got in my spiritual journey the less and less I'd need God.

It got to the point where life was testing my theory and I had to ask myself a question that I believe we all should ask: *what if we need Yahweh just the same on any given day?* On days that are sunny and warm, gloomy and cold; tranquil and easy, and arduous and difficult, what if we need God in the same way everyday? Now, it's easy to read that and think, "yes, absolutely, we need God all days no matter the kind." But while we might say that do we really believe it?

My Saving Account

Often, we try to quantify our need for God. "Maybe if I go through X amount of pain in addition to Y amount of sorrow divided by exhaustion and finally multiplied by 'I can't do this anymore,' then that will equate to my needing God." It's almost like we think we have a saving account. An account that keeps track of the number and kind of life experiences that will produce our needing to be saved by God. But is that really the key? Is it only when we have reached the end of ourselves and are in utter despair that we need God? If this is the case, then for what reason would we need God in any other capacity than to help us during our worst moments in life?

Measuring What Can't Be Counted

As human beings, we thrive on quantification. To help keep track of events, moments, responsibilities and more, we use time. Money helps us buy and trade. And we use age to remind us of the maturation process that happens daily, physically and emotionally. Quantification puts us in a position to better control what might come ahead. It allows us to feel more aware, equipped and prepared.

Now, don't get me wrong, quantification can be a very good thing, however we run into an issue when we try to quantify something that at its very core cannot be calculated or boxed into a simple equation.

We need God for our condition and not just for our day to day mistakes.

Quantity vs Quality

In Mark 14 we find Peter, a disciple who was loyal and extremely committed to Christ. So to hear the words, "Truly I tell you, today- yes, tonight- before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown me three times," was unfathomable to him! How could he betray the one whom he left everything for? "Peter insisted emphatically, 'Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you'" (Mark 14:31). Everyone figured, if there was anyone who would remain true, it would be him.

Later on in the story, Peter is faced with the very situation that Christ forewarned. There, in the presence of those who already knew his truth, Peter

denied his association with Jesus. Realizing the fulfillment of what the Savior said about him, verse 72 says that, "He broke down and wept." If Peter claimed true loyalty, then why did he deny Jesus? Did he not have enough loyalty to sustain him in that moment? Did he not have enough courage to speak his truth? Here we see that Peter's issue wasn't the quantity of his loyalty, but the *quality of his loyalty*.

When Will Power Isn't Enough

But Peter is not the only one whose will power fell short. While in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus brought only three disciples with him: James, John and Peter. He asked them to keep watch and to pray (Mark 14:34). When Jesus returned He found all three disciples asleep. Waking them He asks again if they will keep watch and pray. And specifically, He calls to Peter to remain awake and pray. Soon, Christ returns and finds them all asleep, again. All three disciples, especially Peter, needed that time of prayer to prepare them to receive the kind of strength needed to overcome their flesh whenever they would hit a weak moment. Peter didn't need more strength, Peter needed a different kind of strength. Peter needed the strength that comes, "not by power, nor by might, but by [His] Spirit" (Zechariah 4:10). It was because of Peter's quantification of his loyalty, that he did not stay up to pray. Peter believed that his loyalty would be enough to sustain him, even in his weakest moments. The problem with that assumption is that it didn't take into consideration his sinful nature.

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Anyone who has accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior has committed to loving and following Him. Such a decision inherently suggests that in your heart you are deeply loyal to God.

But the truth of the matter is that in our weakest moments our sinful nature will always overpower our loyalty when our loyalty is not empowered by the Holy Spirit.

We must lay aside our assessment of how loyal, obedient, believing, faithful, or committed we *think* we are. It is crucial that we accept that we do not have a quantity issue, but a quality issue. And this quality issue is that our condition is sinful.

No matter how much we decide to sin or not to sin, we will still *be* sinful. To be sinful is not a matter of quantity, but quality.

When we try to assess our condition as being quantifiable, we run into the issue of adding up our good actions in hopes that they will cancel out our bad ones.

But despite Sin's complexities, we know that this condition, this illness (Romans 3), is rectified not by what we do, but instead by who can do. Our issue isn't that we need a collection of whats to cover our lack. No, we need a who; someone that will dwell in us and work through us daily.

Society will tell you that our good behavior is the sum of our experiences multiplied by our good nature. But that equation always falls short. We simply don't have an inherently good nature. Paul says it like this: "For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out" (Romans 7:18 ESV). In other words, we need God's divine equation. His divine equation says that the sum of Christ's life multiplied by His death on the cross plus our faith equals His righteousness credited to us as our own. When we accept God's divine equation by faith it is then that we receive the power to produce the fruit of His spirit, fruit that is pleasing to God.

In other words, we need God in everything and for everything.

As you continue to reflect on these thoughts I invite you to sit with this question:

What can I incorporate within my day, no matter the circumstance, that will help remind me that I always need God?