

How To Make a Call To God

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Any person who has ever tried to lead another person to Christ has run into the one who insists that if you pray and ask Jesus into your heart that they will be saved. After all, it's in the little booklet "Four Spiritual Laws" and it's in the back of every Gideon Bible. Television preachers say it and all the major denominations teach it. The tracts you pick up at the airport all teach it.

I have a long-standing challenge. If anyone can point that phrase out in the Bible (excluding the back page of Gideon Bibles) I will give him or her a dollar. I've looked over and over again and have yet to find it. I also have never given anyone a dollar for that reason.

When asked how someone can support such a belief, Romans 10:13 will inevitably be brought up. It reads, "for 'WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.'"* Calling on the Lord is understood as the same as praying Jesus into your heart. This would be a good point in time to look at the book of Romans. First, notice that it was written to Christians. Paul addresses this letter to those who have already given their lives over to Christ. Chapter 1 verse 7 reads "to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called *as* saints:" The word *as* is supplied by the translators. This letter is literally addressed to those called saints. Saints are Christians. He does not proceed to tell the Roman Church how to become a Christian when they already are Christians. This will help us to understand the situation at Rome.

Paul's theme in this letter is found in 2:11, "For there is no partiality with God." Evidently there was a problem between the Hebrew Christians and the Gentile Christians. This can be seen from Paul's emphasis on every man or all men. Notice this theme in the following verses:

- 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to **everyone** who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.
- 2:6 who WILL RENDER TO **EACH PERSON** ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS:
- 2:9-11 There will be tribulation and distress for **every soul** of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is **no partiality** with God.
- 3:9-12 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are **all** under sin; as it is written, "THERE IS **NONE** RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE; THERE IS **NONE** WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS **NONE** WHO SEEKS FOR GOD; **ALL** HAVE TURNED ASIDE, **TOGETHER** THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS **NONE** WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS **NOT EVEN ONE**."
- 3:23 for **all** have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
- 5:12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to **all men**, because **all** sinned—
- 8:32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us **all**, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?
- 10:4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to **everyone** who believes.
- 10:12 For there is **no distinction** between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for **all** who call on Him;
- 14:11 For it is written, "AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, **EVERY** KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME, AND **EVERY** TONGUE SHALL GIVE PRAISE TO GOD."

* All Scripture is from the New American Standard Bible.

It does not matter whether the person was of Jewish descent or Gentile, all men were lost before Christ and they had no reason to think that Jew was better than Gentile or vice versa. In other words, lose your swelled head, we were all lost and without hope before we came to Christ.

Romans 10:13 fits right into this theme: “for ‘WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.’” **Whoever** will call upon the name of the Lord, whether Jew or Gentile will be saved. Remember, Paul is writing to the Church. He is not telling them HOW to call upon the Lord. He is making sure they understand that they are all the same in the eyes of God. They ALL had to come to Christ. They ALL had to call upon Him.

The question then, is HOW do we call upon the name of the Lord? Paul was perfectly aware how to do such. When his name was still Saul, he was met on the road to Damascus by Jesus Himself, “and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?’ And he said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And He said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, but get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do’” (Acts 9:4-6). Paul was led to Damascus “and a certain Ananias, a man who was devout by the standard of the Law, and well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, came to me, and standing near said to me, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight!’ And at that very time I looked up at him. And he said, ‘The God of our fathers has appointed you to know His will and to see the Righteous One and to hear an utterance from His mouth. For you will be a witness for Him to all men of what you have seen and heard. Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name’” (Acts 22:12-16).

In this passage of Scripture, Paul is told HOW to call upon the name of the Lord. He was told to Get up and be baptized. Notice that not once did Ananias tell him to pray and ask Jesus into his heart. Neither did Paul say to pray and ask Jesus into your heart in Romans 10:13. Paul knew, that to call upon the name of the Lord meant to be baptized for the forgiveness of sins.

Peter knew the same thing. Listen to what he said: “Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you--not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience--through the resurrection of Jesus Christ (I Peter 3:21). Baptism is an APPEAL to God for a good conscience. He does not mean to be baptized so that we FEEL better. Instead we APPEAL, that is, we call out to God by baptism so that we may be innocent before God.

In Romans 6:3-4 it states that we are buried into Christ’s death. He died so that the sins of mankind could be atoned for and forgiven. When we are baptized, we are buried into the forgiveness of Jesus. When our sins are forgiven, we can stand before God justified (just as if I’d never sinned). It should not surprise us that sin is forgiven at baptism. Peter stated that on the Day of Pentecost, the day the Church began, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). Knowledge that you stand innocent before God will give anyone a good conscience.

Jesus said that a person needed to be born again (John 3:1-7). The way to be born again is to be born of water and spirit. Peter said for his listeners to "repent, and each of you be baptized (water) for the forgiveness of sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (spirit). This is calling upon the Lord. Who can call upon the Lord? The Scriptures say that "WHOEVER WILL CALL UPON THE LORD WILL BE SAVED." We know WHO can call. We know HOW to call. The only question that remains, Do YOU need to call upon the Lord?