

# alive

*magazine*  
April '23

KEEP ON

HOLDING ON



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# WHAT DOES THE PSALMIST MEAN IN PSALM 27:4 WHEN HE SAYS, “ONE THING I HAVE ASKED OF THE LORD”?

By: GOTQUESTIONS.ORG

King David’s singular longing for close fellowship with the Lord caused him to continually seek God’s presence and His favour. In the book of Psalms, David passionately stated, “One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple” (Psalm 27:4, ESV).

The “one thing” David asked of the Lord refers to the foremost ambition of his life—that which was of utmost importance to him. David’s “one thing” was to know God through an intimate, lifelong relationship with Him. In Psalm 23:6, David affirmed, “I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever” (ESV). The “house of the Lord” references the tabernacle, the Lord’s dwelling place (Leviticus 26:11). David prayed that He would abide in God’s presence all the days of his life.



David wanted to be in close fellowship with the Lord every single day. “Lord, I love the house where you live, the place where your glory dwells,” prayed David in Psalm 26:8. “How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord Almighty! My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God,” he declared in Psalm 84:1–2. These are not passing thoughts or flimsy intentions. These are the wholly devoted, passionate yearnings of a man after God’s own heart (Acts 13:22; 1 Samuel 13:14). More than anything else in life, David wanted God Himself.



Believers discover their true home is in the presence of God (Psalm 42:1–4; 84:1–4). “Blessed are those you choose and bring near to live in your courts! We are filled with the good things of your house,” declared David (Psalm 65:4). Believers experience “fullness of joy” in the Lord’s presence (Psalm 16:11; see also Psalm 21:6).

Morning by morning, day after day, David desired to experience the goodness of God’s presence. To “gaze upon the beauty of the Lord” refers to David’s desire to worship and adore God simply for who He is and not what He could get from Him—he sought God’s face, not His hand. Such an encounter encompasses the true nature and essence of worship.

Real intimacy is necessary to hold someone’s gaze attentively and contemplate that one’s beauty. Pursuing God’s face is equivalent to developing an intimate relationship with Him: “O God, you are my God; I earnestly search for you. My soul thirsts for you; my whole body longs for you in this parched and weary land where there is no water. I have seen you in your sanctuary and gazed upon your power and glory. Your unfailing love is better than life itself; how I praise you!” (Psalm 63:1–3, NLT). David’s “one thing” that he asked for and continually sought after was to look at God intently and to worship the beauty of His holiness (1 Chronicles 16:29; 2 Chronicles 20:21; Psalm 29:2; 96:9).

In Psalm 27:4, the word for “beauty” in the original language means “grace, favor, kindness, goodness.” The same term is used in Psalm 90:17: “May the favour of the Lord our God rest on us.” Those who earnestly desire unbroken communion with God will diligently set themselves to the “one thing” of seeking the Lord’s presence and favor.

When Mary of Bethany sat at Christ’s feet listening to His teaching and spending time in His presence, Jesus told Martha that Mary had “chosen the good portion,” the “one thing” that was “necessary” (Luke 10:38–42, ESV). Mary’s greatest desire was to know the Lord through intimate fellowship with Him. The apostle Paul pursued “one thing” in life as well: “I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings. . . . Not that I have already obtained all this, . . . but one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:10–14).

What is the greatest longing of your heart? Is it to seek God’s presence daily and know the Lord more intimately in all His beauty and wonder? Can you say like King David, “This one thing I have asked of the Lord”?





By: Andrew Roebert

# KEEP ON HOLDING ON

Recently I received an email, and the sender told me that they were at their wits end. They just wanted to give up. This feeling is something that we all have to face in the course of life. I want to encourage you today and remind you to **HOLD ON**. It is as we **HOLD ON** that we can step over into victory. The season of **HOLDING ON** is an important part in the development of our character. There is an old song that speaks in this regard. Its words are as follows: 'Hold to His hand - to God's unchanging hand'. Today, no matter what you are facing, keep on holding on.



# WHAT ARE YOU HOLDING ONTO?

We all need to ask ourselves this question. What are we holding onto in life for our security? Are we holding onto something that can be trusted? I have discovered that the ability to hold on depends on whether or not we have taken hold of that which can be depended on. When we hold onto anything other than God we can expect to be disappointed. People will let you down, money comes and goes, beauty is temporary and even those close to you will drop you. But God has told us that He will never leave us or forsake us!

## WHAT YOU HOLD ONTO WILL TAKE HOLD OF YOU

This is a very interesting phenomenon. If we will hold onto things, eventually those things will take hold of us. The issue is where we will place the emphasis in our lives. If we hold onto money, eventually money will take hold of us and influence us in all aspects of our lives. If we hold onto our fears, eventually our fears will take hold of us.

**Psalm 119:143 'Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me.'**

But if we will take hold of God and keep on holding on, faith will take hold within us, and we will be able to trust God.

## HOLDING ON TO WHAT GOD HAS GIVEN US

Perhaps you have promises or unanswered prayers. Things that God has spoken in your life that are as yet unfulfilled. I want to encourage you to hold on and not give up. In a sense it is a fight. It isn't simply a statement or a belief, but it is something that we have to take hold of. This is what faith is all about.





**1 Timothy 6:12**

**'Fight on for God. Hold tightly to the eternal life that God has given you.'**

**Hold onto everything that God has promised you!**

**Proverbs 4:13**

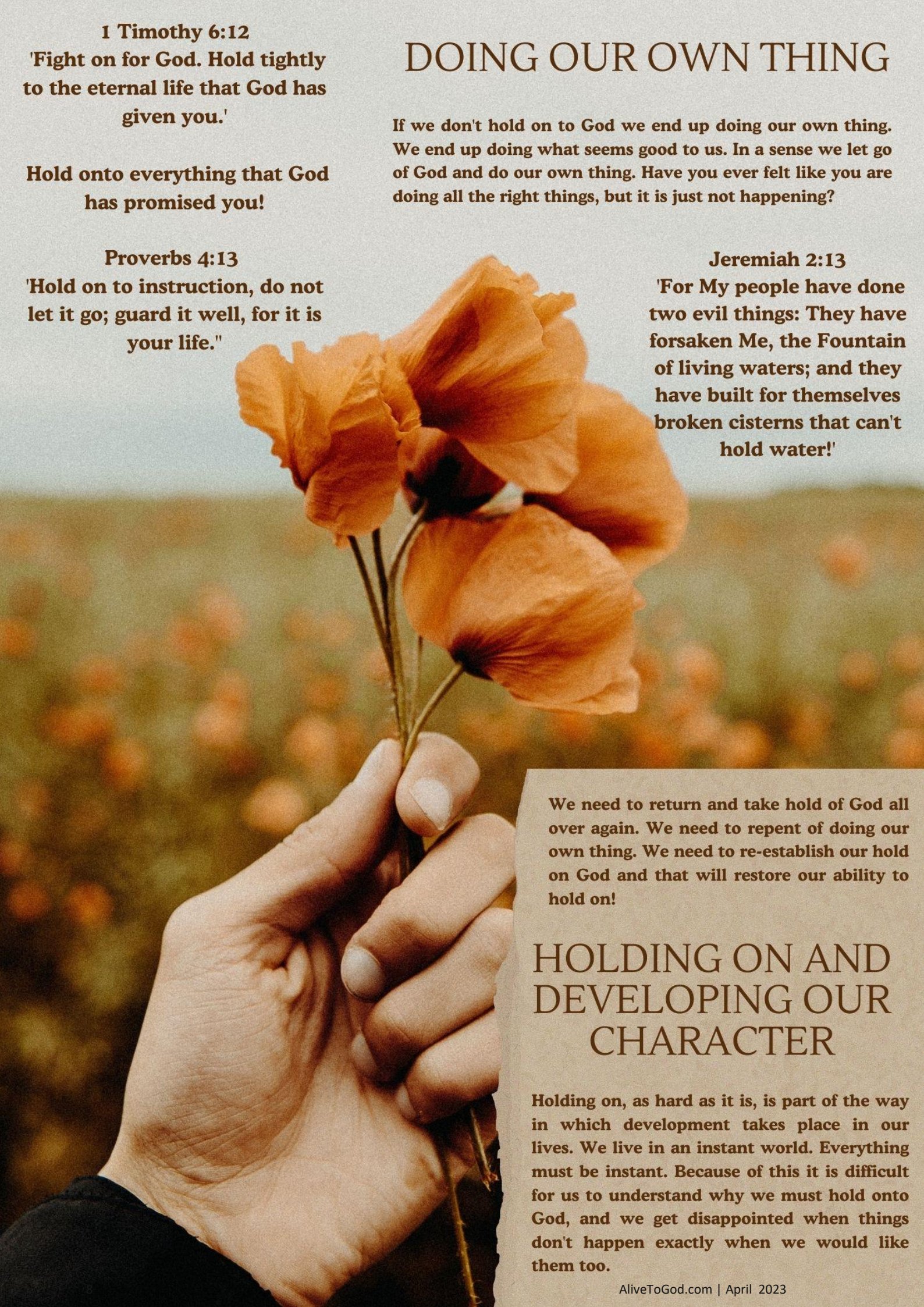
**'Hold on to instruction, do not let it go; guard it well, for it is your life.'**

# DOING OUR OWN THING

If we don't hold on to God we end up doing our own thing. We end up doing what seems good to us. In a sense we let go of God and do our own thing. Have you ever felt like you are doing all the right things, but it is just not happening?

**Jeremiah 2:13**

**'For My people have done two evil things: They have forsaken Me, the Fountain of living waters; and they have built for themselves broken cisterns that can't hold water!'**



**We need to return and take hold of God all over again. We need to repent of doing our own thing. We need to re-establish our hold on God and that will restore our ability to hold on!**

## HOLDING ON AND DEVELOPING OUR CHARACTER

**Holding on, as hard as it is, is part of the way in which development takes place in our lives. We live in an instant world. Everything must be instant. Because of this it is difficult for us to understand why we must hold onto God, and we get disappointed when things don't happen exactly when we would like them too.**





### **Romans 5:3-5**

**'We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they are good for us - they help us learn to be patient. And patience develops strength of character in us and helps us trust God more each time we use it until finally our hope and faith are strong and steady. Then, when that happens, we are able to hold our heads high no matter what happens and know that all is well, for we know how dearly God loves us, and we feel this warm love everywhere within us because God has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with His love.'**

## **GOD IS FAITHFUL**

**God intends to be faithful to us. If we will hold on and keep on holding on, God will be faithful to us.**

### **Hebrews 3:6**

**'But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And we are His house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.'**

**There is a key word right in the middle of this scripture and it is the word 'IF'. If we will hold on to our courage and our hope. Don't let go of your courage and your hope. God wants to be faithful to you!**

## **HOLD ON**

**This is what God is calling us to. He is calling us to a life of taking hold of Him and holding on to Him no matter what happens and no matter what the circumstances may look like.**

### **Revelation 3:11**

**'Look, I am coming soon! Hold tightly to the little strength you have.'**

**Perhaps you have let go or released your hold. I want to encourage you to turn back to the One Who can be trusted and take hold of God all over again. It will be worth it.**

### **Revelation 3:3 '**

**Go back to what you heard and believed at first; hold to it firmly and turn to Me again.'**



# ATTITUDE



KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL LIFE (KEY 1)

BY: ANDREW ROEBERT



We long to live successful lives. Our individual definition of success may differ, but the longing to be truly successful is fundamental to human desires. I have discovered that there are different keys, which if applied regularly in our daily lives, will open the door to success. For now we want to look at perhaps the most crucial and vital key. Without this element as an active positive element in our lives, success is sure to elude us. The key is attitude.

## ATTITUDE & ALTITUDE

My brother is a pilot and he has told me about a certain piece of equipment that they use as pilots. In aircraft there is an instrument called an ATTITUDE meter. This instrument measures the pitch of the plane. It shows if you are in a nose-up position or a nose-down position. You may ask why you would need such an instrument. Surely you can sense and tell that you are climbing or getting lower? However this is one of the aspects of flying that is very important and yet can easily bring confusion. After extended flying or especially in adverse conditions things can begin to feel different to the facts. At this point flying becomes dangerous. Are you going to trust your feelings or the gauges? The goal is this: if you are flying in a nose-up position you will hold and gain altitude. The danger is this: if you are not flying in a nose-up position, sooner or later you will crash. The attitude meter measures this aspect and constantly reports to the pilot. Our attitudes are like this meter. If our attitudes are in a nose-up position we will rise to new heights, no matter how much headwind. If however our attitudes are in a nose-down position, it will eventually bring us down – even in ideal circumstances. This calls for constant evaluation and adjustment. It is this flexibility to adjust our attitudes constantly to the prevailing situations so that it will constantly bring us out on top that leads to success in life!







# ATTITUDE – WHAT IS IT?

Our attitude is a very personal and internal aspect to our lives. Our attitude is how we really are feeling on the inside, as a result of the effect of things that are going on, on the outside. It can also include the position we take in a specific situation. It also includes our mental state, feeling or emotion towards a fact or a situation. Be Ready – your attitude will be tested. Our attitude is our state of readiness to respond in a characteristic way to a stimulus. This can be negative or positive.

## BAD ATTITUDES CAN DAMAGE OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD!

Bad attitudes damage our relationship with God and eventually lead to separation from God. This is perhaps the most critical aspect of negative or bad attitudes. It is strange, but when we develop a bad attitude, we often become un-teachable. This un-teachable state affects our relationships with others and especially with God. Example: In this example a bad attitude leads to not obeying God.

**Jeremiah 22:21**

**I spoke to you in your [times of]  
prosperity, but you said, I will not listen!  
This has been your attitude from your  
youth; you have not obeyed My voice.**





**This is what brings division and ultimately separation from God.**

**Isaiah 59:2**

**Your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.**



## **BAD DECISIONS FOLLOW BAD ATTITUDES**

**Attitude – the one thing you control 100%. You can't control circumstances, you can't control others, but you can control your attitude. Often bad attitudes lead to poor and bad decisions. This is because our attitudes affect every aspect of our lives. If we are battling with an attitude, it will influence and affect our choices.**



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**•Proverbs 14:6**

**A scoffer seeks Wisdom in vain [for his very attitude blinds and deafens him to it], but knowledge is easy to him who [being teachable] understands. (Amplified)**

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**Our attitudes can blind and deafen us, so that when we get the right advice from others or from God, it fails to move us!**

## **OUR ATTITUDES NEED TO BE BASED ON OUR TRUST IN GOD**

**If we trust God, then our attitudes can flow out of this relationship of trust. Negative or bad attitudes often emerge when we are threatened or feel injustice or a sense of insecurity. If we are going to trust in people and institutions, we will be let down and then bad attitudes can take hold. If, however we are trusting God, then we have a firm foundation on which to develop our attitudes.**

**Proverbs 29:25**

**The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever leans on, trusts in, and puts his confidence in the Lord is safe and set on high**

**The attitude that will bring us success in life must be an attitude that stands on the foundation of our trust and confidence in God. On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand!**



# ATTITUDE AND OUR CHOICE



As we mentioned earlier, attitude and choice go hand in hand. We can choose the attitude we would like. In life I have often found, that between an incident and the response or attitude, there is a moment in which a decision is made. This moment is so critical. I have actually developed a lifestyle in which I do not allow myself to respond or react immediately. I afford myself the opportunity of an extra moment in which I can make a calculated decision. So instead of reacting I can respond with an attitude that I know will not harm me in the long term. If we choose to fly off the handle, it is almost as if everything is lost. Give yourself a moment and make the right choice.

**Romans 12:2**

Do not be conformed to this world (this age), [fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs], but be transformed (changed) by the [entire] renewal of your mind [by its new ideals and its new attitude], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His sight for you].

Our choices can bring about this transformation. Circumstances and situations will not always be ideal, but the choice of our attitudes can make all the difference.

**Habakkuk 3:17-18**

Though the fig tree does not blossom and there is no fruit on the vines, [though] the product of the olive fails and the fields yield no food, though the flock is cut off from the fold and there are no cattle in the stalls, Yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will exult in the [victorious] God of my salvation!

## WHAT WOULD JESUS DO?

When it comes to our attitude we must constantly look to the One who is our example – JESUS. In those moments that we have to choose our attitude this is a question that we can ask ourselves. WHAT WOULD JESUS DO? Next time, before you respond or react to something ask yourself this question.

**Philippians 2:5**

Let this same attitude and purpose and [humble] mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus: [Let Him be your example in humility:]

Jesus is our example and if we will follow His example we are destined to win.



# CHANGE YOUR ATTITUDE

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**Change your attitude and change your life. This is the bottom line. Our attitude will either destroy us or take us to new heights. Every problem has a solution, only if we adjust or change our attitude.**

**Revelation 3:19**

**So be enthusiastic and in earnest and burning with zeal and repent [changing your mind and attitude].**

**We can change our minds and attitude. It is a God-given ability and God wants to help us to make those critical choices and go on to enjoy more of the abundant life that He has in store for us.**

**1 Peter 4:1**

**Since Christ suffered in His body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude.**

**Even though Jesus suffered on the cross He had the right attitude. Perhaps the greatest example to me is when Jesus hung dying on the cross in agony and in that state He utters the follow words: 'Father forgive them, for they know not what they do!' We started with the story of the attitude meter in aircraft. It is when the weather is bad that you really rely on this piece of equipment. In the same way it is when things are going rough that we need our positive attitude more than ever. It is easy to have a positive attitude when things are ideal, but when we find ourselves in a valley it may be difficult but our attitude is still our lifeline! It's your attitude towards life (In all its facets – family, work, etc.) that makes your life great!**

THE ATTITUDE



By: GotQuestions.org



# WHY WAS JESUS CRUCIFIED?





There is both an earthly reason and a heavenly reason Jesus was crucified. Simply put, the earthly reason is that mankind is evil. The heavenly reason is that God is good.

The earthly reason Jesus was crucified: mankind is evil. Wicked men conspired against Him, falsely accused Him, and murdered Him. The leaders of Israel had several reasons they wanted Jesus to be executed. They were envious of His following (Matthew 27:18). They were afraid that Jesus would gather too large a following, which might bring the Roman authorities down on the nation, causing them to lose their positions (John 11:48). They hated the fact that Jesus called out their sin publicly (Matthew 23). And they thought He was blaspheming when He claimed to be the Son of God (Luke 22:66–71). But all these reasons were simply symptoms of their underlying unbelief (John 5:46).

Jesus was crucified, rather than stoned, hanged, drowned, etc., because His execution was carried out by the Romans. Crucifixion was the method of execution employed by the Roman Empire to make an example of someone and to deter others from committing the same offense. It was normal to post the charges against the condemned on the cross. Pilate posted the charge “King of the Jews” on Jesus’ cross (Matthew 27:37). The Jewish leaders had made this accusation to goad the Roman governor into executing Jesus. John 19:12 reports, “From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jewish leaders kept shouting, ‘If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar.’” Pilate could not afford to be seen as tolerating a rival to Caesar.





**The heavenly reason Jesus was crucified: God is good. God had a plan to save sinners, and Jesus was the Lamb of God who came to take away the sin of the world (John 1:29). Even though the act of crucifying Jesus was evil, the crucifixion was still the plan of God to make atonement for sin. “Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen” (Acts 4:27–28).**

**The crucifixion was not a case of evil getting out of control. Jesus told Pilate, “You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above” (John 19:11). The powers of darkness were given divine permission to act (Luke 22:53). God allowed the hatred, the conspiracy, the false accusations, the sham trials, and the murder of His Son. In the crucifixion of Christ, God used the evil desires of evil men to accomplish the greatest good: the provision of salvation for mankind. “It was the LORD’s will to crush Him and to cause Him to suffer” (Isaiah 53:10); the result was glorious: “He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors” (verse 12).**



There is nothing in Old Testament prophecy that explicitly mandates that the Messiah be crucified. At the same time, there are hints of the manner of His death in the Law and the Prophets. In Galatians 3:13, Paul applies Deuteronomy 21:22–23 to the death of Christ. Crucifixion allowed for the “piercing” mentioned in Zechariah 12:10 (cf. John 19:37). Crucifixion results in the shedding of blood, necessary for a sacrifice (Hebrews 9:22; cf. Leviticus 17:11). In crucifixion, the breaking of bones can be avoided (Exodus 12:46; cf. John 19:36). And the crucifixion of Christ perfectly fits the description of the anguish David faced in Psalm 22.

We all have committed sins, and we are all worthy of death, but Christ took our place. He was publicly executed, and His blood was shed on our behalf, as Paul explains in Romans 3:25–26: “God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.”

In the final analysis, the reason that Jesus was crucified is the answer that each of us must come to understand and embrace by faith: Jesus was crucified to pay for my sin so that I can be forgiven and be made right with God.





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