

# God, Please Don't Look at Me

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**Scripture:** Genesis 3:8-10 (NIV)

<sup>8</sup> Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

<sup>9</sup> But the LORD God called to the man, 'Where are you?'

<sup>10</sup> He answered, 'I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.'

## Introduction

Have you ever noticed just how selective people's need for the presence of the Lord can be?

This might seem like a crazy statement to make. As Christians, we have an unquestionable need for the Lord's presence in all our life, at all times and in all things.

Yet reality says that there are those times when people do not want the presence of God, only to wonder a short while later, where was God?

Straight after falling to temptation, Adam and Even heard the sound of the Lord walking and tried to hide from the presence of the Lord. Any time we choose to do what is not right, we also choose hiddenness. And this hiddenness is also the quietest prayer that we can pray – or at least the prayer that we give the least recognition to, "God, please don't look at me."

## Body

In essence, "God, please don't look at me" was the first prayer prayed after the fall. God came into the garden to stroll with Adam and Eve, He called to Adam, "Where are you?" Adam answers, "*I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.*" In other words, "*God please don't look at me.*"

A businessman stays overnight in a hotel and knows which films are available to him in his room. Nobody will know. Not his wife, family, friend, or colleagues. The details won't be on his credit card statement either. But before he can go ahead, he must first pray, "*God, please don't look at me.*"

A married businesswoman is on a trip with a male colleague and after some dinner and wine, an opportunity presents itself. Who would know? It's a once-off. No strings attached, sort of meeting one another's need. She first silently prays, "*God, please don't look at me.*"

A parent who unreasonably tears into their children's character because of extreme frustration must also first pray, "*God, please don't look at me.*"

What about:

- A businessman who loads his expense account...
- A colleague intentionally trashing another colleagues' credibility...
- A student cheating in an exam...
- Gossip...

First the prayer, "*God, please don't look at me.*"

It is not a very loud prayer and perhaps not everyone will admit to praying it. But for us who, are aware of the presence of the Lord, will struggle to commit that sin while we are aware of the presence of the Lord. This prayer is a reflection of what is happening in the heart at that moment.

The danger is when this prayer becomes so part of one, that one does not really pray it anymore in that it reflects what is happening in the heart. I am reminded of Samson, a man of enormous potential who broke his promises to God, we read in Judges 16:20, "...*But he did not know that the LORD had left him.*"

The most sensible question that I could ask at this moment is, "*When a Christian prays, 'God, please don't look at me,' does God look away?'*"

The true Christian does not doubt that God is everywhere, does not doubt that God sees all and that God knows all. What this says is that God cannot not look at you. Every sinfully choice is carried out in the presence of God:

- Pornography is watched in the presence of God.
- Adultery and fornication are committed in the presence of God.

- Our words are spoken in the presence of God.
- Cheating is committed in the presence of God.
- And so on.

Let's look at things from another angle. In the presence of God, we welcome our children into His family, we get baptized – for some as infants, for others as believers –, we get married, we have our funerals, and we partake of Holy Communion. But in the in-between moments, where is God? Where are believers?

What can be said of the believer's relationship with God? How often is the prayer, "*God, please don't look at me*" prayed?

- Can God be invited, with a clear conscience, into the act of loading an expense account?
- Can God be invited, with a clear conscience, into the act of watching pornography?
- Can God be invited, with a clear conscience, into the act of committing adultery?
- Can God be invited, with a clear conscience, into the act of cheating in an exam?
- Can God be invited, with a clear conscience, into the act of gossip?

On the other hand:

- Can God be invited into the act of saving one's marriage?
- Can God be invited into those moments in between baptism, marriage, funerals, and Holy Communion?
- Can God be invited into the act of repenting?

The answer should be obvious. Christ is in us. He never went anywhere and never will. He promised never to leave us.

Now imagine how it would feel if, when you need Him the most, He is far away. How would it feel that when you most need a breakthrough, be it in your relationships, work, or marriage, that God feels far away?

People walk in the flesh, and it is usually when things go wrong that they start to look for God. It makes no sense!

How can it be that a Christian looks for Someone who is in them?

When Christians walk in the flesh, it means that they do not have a Christ-centred existence. When your existence is not Christ-centred it also means that your work ethic, your morals, your marriage, and your choice of words are also not Christ-centred.

It is when a Christian does not understand how the flesh corrupts his or her life that God sometimes feels far away and at other times, close by.

Do you realize that we never start a prayer by first asking God if He is available to us. We know He is with us and therefore we simply pray, knowing that we have already His ear.

I again ask, *“How can it be that a Christian looks for Someone who is in them?”*

What we must understand, is that the Christian life is a life of intimacy with God. If you are married, your marriage must be an expression of this intimacy with God. You must never ask, *“God, please don’t look at me.”* And even less, *“God, please don’t look at us.”*

Satan cannot force you to sin. Satan cannot force you to pray, *“God, please don’t look at me.”* But the condition of your heart and neglected relationships will lead you to that prayer.

God’s will is that your entire life is focused on Him so that you glorify Him in all that you do. Your thoughts must be focussed on the Holy Spirit who points you to Christ Jesus. Only then, will you experience a life characterized by the peace of God. It is only when we choose to rest in His life, that we experience those breakthroughs; this is when we are at true peace because God has “got it.” We have submitted to Him, we have cast our burdens on Him and in Him, we then rest!

The prayer, *“God, please don’t look at me”* is never prayed from within the rest and peace of God.

John 16:33 reads, *“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”* Where are your life and marriage?

## **Conclusion**

The things of the world are attractive, especially when my thoughts are not on God. It actually works like this, when I am not in Christ, I declare – for that time – independence. Pornography, fornication, adultery, poor ethics, gossip, cheating etc. are all declarations of independence because you try and lose sight of God to do it. Before you can do it, you must “un-align” your heart with His will and Word.

Independence is very fertile soil that leads to the requests, “*God, please don’t look at me*” and “*God, please don’t look at us.*”

Be careful of claiming the credit when you do overcome the flesh. That victory was given to you as a gift from God.

Maybe you feel that victory over the flesh must come through warfare. I guarantee that this is the quickest way to lose the battle and miss the peace of Christ. God gives victory to those who receive it through faith in His Son, Jesus Christ.

God never meant for you to fight the battle or war that He has already won through Christ Jesus. I challenge anyone to at the same time, fight and rest.

Rather place your life, relationships, marriage etc. in Him and in this way, never have to pray, “*God, please don’t look at me.*”

In fact, at that moment of fleshly weakness, turn to Him instead. If you can’t do it prayerfully, don’t do it.

If you find that – maybe even right now – the Holy Spirit is bringing to mind the need to repent, do it. What, right now, could be more important?

- God, I know that I am a sinner.
- I know that I deserve the consequences of my sin.
- However, I am trusting in Jesus Christ as my Saviour.
- I believe that His death and resurrection provided for my forgiveness.
- I repent of my sin (if you feel led to confess each that the Holy Spirit brings to mind, do so).
- I trust in Jesus and Jesus alone as my personal Lord and Saviour.
- Thank you, Lord, for saving me and forgiving me! Amen!