

A simple prayer such as this, prayed sincerely, can establish a relationship with the only One Who can grant eternal life. I invite you to find a quiet place and pray

Dear Lord Jesus, I confess that something vital is missing from my life and I need You. I admit that I'm a sinful person and I need total forgiveness. I call out to You and ask You to grant me the spiritual rebirth that You promise in the Bible. It was You who came to earth, lived a perfect life, and took the punishment that I deserve upon Yourself when You

shed YOUR blood on the cross as an atonement for MY sins. I confess my sin to you and my total inability to save myself. I put my trust and faith in Your finished work on the cross as the only way to receive eternal life and forgiveness of sins. Thank You for giving me this great gift and for promising to change my life as I walk daily with You. Amen.

that it was okay to cry and that I understood. His tender answer to me was, "I know that it's okay . . . that's what I'm trying to tell you!"

He later offered to give me his Bible. I refused, but promised that I would purchase one when I returned to Miami. To keep my word, I reluctantly bought one two weeks later.

I kept my new Bible well-hidden from any friends who might be passing through. From time to time I read the controversial best-seller, little of it making sense. Concurrently, I began to tune in on some of those TV evangelists who always appeared to be "loud-mouthed and after your money".

Then came the day I will never forget. A TV preacher was simply quoting straight from the Bible. He asked some pointed questions about death, salvation, and other serious things that many of us pilots have a way of pushing aside.

He continued to preach and explained what Christ's death on the cross really meant . . . how God Himself visited mankind personally, and how He took all of the wrath of heaven upon Himself for our . . . even my sins. I didn't totally understand it, but I knew it was true. Only moments later I found myself kneeling on the floor in front of the television. I was weeping from deep inside as I prayed the prayer to ask Jesus to forgive me for my sins and take over my life. Years of frustration, failure, delusion, hurt, bitterness and anger began to flood from my soul.

To some people this might sound like a scam or a trick played on the emotions. I would have said that too . . . until it happened to me. But now I know that what happened that day changed my life and brought me spiritual rebirth. The Lord also promised to make me a new person inside. A verse in II Corinthians says, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things

have passed away; behold; all things become new." And now the question "Why?" Why had things gone the way they had in my life? For one thing, I had been totally blinded to spiritual reality. When I had called upon the name of Jesus in that moment of decision, I had experienced a spiritual rebirth. It was the same rebirth that Jesus described to a Jewish rabbi who had come to Him at night in search of truth. Jesus' words, as recorded in the Bible, emphasize that a man must be born-again before he can enter into the things of God — a spiritual birth that I now understood.

As I continued to read the Bible, words jumped from the pages and came to life. I discovered that there really is a kingdom of light and a kingdom of darkness, a kingdom of God and a kingdom of the devil. Men were constantly choosing to serve one of these kingdoms in their everyday decisions. It was not difficult for me to realize that the service of my past life had been given to the wrong kingdom.

I began serving the right kingdom several years ago when I called upon the Name that the Bible says is above all names— Jesus! My life has been rebuilt. I now have those "squishy" attributes in my life . . . joy, peace, love, hope and more. I know in Whom I have believed.

I realize that some in whose hands this article may fall will be tempted to think that it's all a lot of nonsense. My appeal to any pilot, flight attendant, ramp serviceman, reservations agent, vice-president, CEO or whomever, is to honestly consider your own life and ask some questions. Is your life one of inner peace?

Do you really know what will happen to you when you die? What if the Bible is completely true? What if there is a hell and a lake of fire which will burn eternally? What if there really is a heaven and eternal life with God . . . and you surrender to Him?

There is a Bible passage that questions with incredulity, "How can anyone neglect so great a salvation?" Yet, the Bible also contains prophetic statements that many will do just that. I would urge each skeptic to give great consideration to the claims of the Bible, and to Jesus' statement, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, and no one comes to the Father, but by Me."

Our God is a God of incredible love, forgiveness and restoration. I am now remarried to a wonderful Christian woman. My former wife is married to an assistant pastor and each of the three children that I "lost" through my divorce are grown and have produced 10 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren, some of whom have become born-again Christians. I had the joy of leading my own father and mother to Christ some years ago.

It is important to realize that once you give your life to the Lord Jesus Christ, He takes you at your word, and He promises to "never leave you nor forsake you." Coming to the Lord Jesus does not guarantee a life in this world that is filled with pleasure and happiness. God uses the struggles of this life to conform us to His own image, but He grants joy in the midst of trials.

It is my earnest prayer that sharing some of my life with its failures and disappointments will help others to know that there is a way out of a misguided life. There is forgiveness, cleansing, joy, inner peace, healing, true meaning, and even eternal life to all who will acknowledge their need for a Savior. Won't you call on the only One who can grant it? You already know His name.



After the collapse and bankruptcy of Eastern Air Lines, Gary and his wife, Hellen, moved to Germany where Gary flew for Aero Lloyd for about 5 years. Returning to America in 1994, he has flown for three other airlines, two of which have gone out of business. The Kosaks currently live in South Florida where Gary is working as a flight instructor for Airbus North America. Gary has been involved with the Fellowship of Christian Airline Personnel since 1981, teaching Bible studies, leading prayer groups, serving on the Board of Directors and Advisory Board and speaking to groups throughout the world.

THE QUESTION REMAINED UNANSWERED

by Gary Kosak

As I had so many times before, and would again, I questioned. That three letter word, "why?" kept haunting me. Why him and not me?



**FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN
AIRLINE PERSONNEL**



136 Providence Road Phone: (770) 461-9320
Fayetteville, GA E-Mail: office@facp.com
30215-2844 USA

Tears streamed down my face blurring my vision of the colored lights at the Dallas Airport. It was mid-December 1965 and strains of Christmas music sounded over the cabin speakers of an American Airlines jetliner as we taxied out for an evening trip to Philadelphia. The weeks just behind me had taken their toll. I was exhausted, in deep sadness, and at the time, numb.

Earlier that month, my best friend had uttered his last desperate words, "I've got one-fifty (knots) and I'm getting out!" Bill yanked on the ejection seat handles of his crippled F-100D fighter, and rocketed himself skyward from the fast-falling plane only 300 feet above the ground. As he spun from his ejection seat, his parachute streamed from its backpack. Just as it was about to blossom, he hit the ground. In one split second a vibrant young man full of life and vitality was now a battered mass of flesh and bones, worthless, except as a memory.

As his best friend, the Air Force assigned me to care for his young wife and three small children. Bill's was one of several deaths over a short period of time which erased the lives of several of my squadron. Surrounding each of the deaths were young wives, children, mothers and fathers violated to the very core as they learned that their husband, daddy or son was dead.

The American Airlines flight attendant looked at me curiously as she handed me a drink. I could only try to imagine her thoughts as she looked upon this uniformed first lieutenant with tears coursing from both eyes, the first ones shed since bringing home the body of my friend to his family for burial.

As I had so many times before, and would again, I questioned. That three letter word, "why?" kept haunting me. Why him and not me? If there was a God in heaven, how could He let these things happen? Would I be next? I guessed that there must not be a God . . . or if there were, He must not care.

So many times I had stared blankly as chaplains uttered prayers over coffins and handed folded flags to widows.

The hardest part was when I had to look into the big brown eyes of a six-year-old boy, answering "Yes, he is" to his question, "Gary, is my dad dead?" As an adult, I was barely

able to grasp the finality of it, and I thought that this six-year-old certainly could not. A stranger who had overheard our short dialogue turned his head and wept.

Once again, the question burned away, Why? Why are things like they are? Why can I not find the happiness and joy that I seek?

The scotch and soda began to dull the pain I felt from having buried my friend on his 25th birthday. Finally, I was able to doze as my flight continued its way toward Philadelphia where I would limo to McGuire Air Force Base and hop aboard a military transport for the trip back to England. There my wife and kids waited for their own daddy to come home. I placed an overseas call to tell them the news that I was on the way, but my wife spoke angrily, complaining of another long absence. I was unable to discern her fear and worry, only her anger. What I had thought would be good news to her, turned into yet another fiery dart piercing my already tormented life.

I limped through my remaining days with the Air Force, working, it seemed, 25-hour days and eight-day weeks. I struggled to maintain a sense of order in an already deteriorating marriage. At the same time, I experienced new disappointments as more squadron mates were shipped back to the States in aluminum coffins, the grieving families following close behind. The question remained unanswered "why?"

This unanswered question was shelved as I made the decision to leave the military and try the airlines. I moved my family back to the States, settled them in Connecticut, and was sitting in a Boeing 720 ground school in Miami with Eastern Air Lines, all within five days.

Another long separation from my family ensued. The strain of completing the intense training successfully continued to set the stage for more failure. The physical distance of 1,500 miles did not even begin to match the even wider gap that existed between my wife and myself. After several years of co-existing rather than really being married, in 1973 I walked out of a Massachusetts courtroom, divorced.

VERSES QUOTED

1-II Corinthians 5:17
2-John 3:3-5
3-Philippians 2:9-10
4-John 8:24

5-Hebrews 2:3
6-John 14:6
7-Hebrews 13:5

I made my way south to Miami with only a car, a trunk full of clothes and a few thousand dollars. I had managed to lose a wife, three precious children, a house and furniture and I received the added burdens of guilt, failure, anger and bitterness.

Nevertheless, I had decided that I would make the best of it. I was now free from the encumbrances of a hostile home life, and for once, could do as I pleased. New thrills met me. I began to party more than I ever had. I traveled, took up skiing and within a few years tumbled down more slopes than I care to count.

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In search of someone to love and someone who would love me, I fumbled my way through one relationship after another. I met many others, just like me, playing a game—wanting all the thrills and rewards of life, but without any of the commitment. I wanted the warm comfort of a loving home, but was unwilling, afraid, and didn't know how to make it happen.

I began to realize that I was one in a whole population of mixedup and misled Americans who had grown up under Hollywood's definition of love—that it's just a feeling, and when that's gone, so is love.

Airlines were staffed with lots of people just like me. Under those spiffy uniforms and behind those party smiles were aching, empty hearts looking for what had eluded them for a lifetime—joy, peace, love, hope and so many other 'squishy' words that as men we often are reluctant to vocalize, but which deep in our hearts we long to possess.

The lie upon which my life was built continued to engulf me. And, in that darkness, I became more and more blinded to the way out. The call of the world had many devices with which to lure me and keep me under its spell. Once again, the question burned away, Why? Why are things like they are? Why can I not find the happiness and joy that I seek?

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

Romans 3:23, 6:23
Isaiah 59:2
I Peter 3:18

Ephesians 1:7, 2:8-9
Philippians 1:6

Unknown to me, I had already crossed the paths of various people who had found the joy I sought. They called themselves Christians, and some of them began to pray for me. However, I was totally unaware at the time, and I couldn't have cared less.

As I continued my work and my pursuit of pleasure, I found myself more and more in contact with "strange" people who would just sit down with me and start talking about God. Once I was in London and was encouraged by a stranger who simply told me about her Jesus. An elderly woman did the same. Another time in New York, a woman with her child confronted me on the bus, handed me a pamphlet titled, "How To Be Saved". Well . . . I wasn't interested in all that junk. I'd been around. I'd seen religion with all its hypocrisy. I'd seen dozens of my buddies die prematurely and watched the resulting broken homes. Where was God in the midst of all that? I discarded the pamphlet.

My career continued and as a flight instructor with Eastern Air Lines flight training department, I was assigned to duty in Toulouse, France to train our pilots on the A-300 Airbus.

In the process of making dozens of overseas trips, connecting through Paris, I became quite acquainted with this romantic city. I was able to give a whirlwind tour to first-timers as they came for their simulator training. On one such occasion I was escorting another Eastern pilot around the city and we stopped at a cafe just outside the Notre Dame Cathedral. We ate some bread, and began to talk.

In the course of the conversation, the pilot opened his heart and told me about the night that he and his wife had a terrible fight after which she ran up to the bedroom sobbing. He recalled his days of drinking to the point of railing against his family in his drunken stupor. He also told me that finally, in desperation, he had knelt down in the loneliness of his own living room and called out to God to fix his life.

As he talked, tears ran down his face at the memory of that night. He told how he had a personal encounter with Jesus Christ and was set free from the bondage of alcohol. This encounter began the healing of his marriage. I reached across the table to tell him