

Pray a Prayer that Always Gets God's Affirmative Answer

What God wills is always going to transpire, and everything that is not part of His plan will never come to pass. He is completely sovereign, so every aspect of His divine desire is destined to be fulfilled without fail; see **Joshua 23:14** (*all God's promises are fulfilled, not one of them fails*). If you pray a prayer that is known to be part of God's will, you can be certain the request will be granted. Let's see what kind of prayer that might be.

Matthew 18—Christ's Parable of the Lost Sheep

Christ said that it is not in the heavenly Father's program for one of His wandering sheep to “perish”—**Matthew 18:14**. In positive terms, Jesus was saying: it IS your heavenly Father's will that all sheep NOT perish, where “perish” (Greek *apolEtai*), means “to be lost” and NOT to perish designates salvation. Jesus thereby confirmed that all sheep will get saved, in accordance with His Father's will.

Some Bible passages like **Luke 13:5**, do indicate that certain people will perish. These verses, however, refer to temporary judgment, and are not in conflict with Christ's saving statements in **Matthew 18:14**, in **John 12:32** (*that if He is crucified, Jesus will draw ALL men unto himself*), and in other Bible texts, as well. One of these many verses says that God will not endlessly contend in anger with lost people because He knows that judgment of such extreme severity would over-tax the spirits and souls of those very people whom He has created (**Isaiah 57:16**). Paul taught that that the Lord will have mercy on all people (**Romans 11:32**). Paul was also inspired to write that the “destruction” dealt out to evil-doers will be for the Glory of God and will come straight from God's “face.” It will be “age-enduring” (*aiOnion*) and not everlasting in its span--**II Thessalonians 1:7-9**.

The one lost sheep in the **Matthew 18** parable represents all who have been wandering from God, the Shepherd. Those wanderers do not remain lost forever but are rescued by the Shepherd, after which there is much rejoicing

What Bearing Do Little Children in Matthew 18:10 Have on the Subsequent Parable?

Before stating the parable concerning the lost sheep, Jesus spoke about little children by saying that their angels are “*always before the Father*”--**Matthew 18:10**. But the sheep in the parable which follows (**verses 12-15**) are not limited to young animals. They are sheep in general (*probata*) and not little lambs (*amnos*).

Isaiah 53:6, Psalm 100:1-3, and Matthew 18:12-15 Teach the Ultimate Reconciliation of All

“*All we like sheep have gone astray, and He has laid on Him the iniquity of us all*” Isaiah wrote (**53:6**) and his words were in congruity with the psalmist who had commanded “*all the earth*” to worship, to sing joyful songs, and to shout for joy to the Lord—**Psalm 100:1-2**. For the whole earth to behave this way would mean that everyone had been saved. Still addressing the whole world, the author of Psalm 100 then proclaimed in verse 3: “*WE [the whole world] are His people and the SHEEP of His pasture.*” The sheep in **Isaiah 53:6**, in **Psalm 100:3**, and in **Matthew 18:12-15** all demonstrate that God is going to save all people, with no limitations of time or space.

What about Matthew 18:11 which Is Present in some Bible Versions and Absent in Others?

Matthew 18 verse 11 is found in the old King James Bible but was not included in several modern translations. This is because the Greek text used for the earlier King James contained that verse, while the manuscripts upon which the modern translations were based did not. But this in no way detracts from the truth of verse 11 because **Matthew 18:11** is almost the same as **Luke 19:10**, a verse about which there are no manuscript questions. “*For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost*” is what **Matthew 18:11** says while “*The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost*” is the corresponding phrase in **Luke 19:10**. Both verses show that Jesus purpose in appearing on earth was to save lost people. Since all people are “*lost people,*” Christ will seek and save everyone as these verses plainly proclaim.

Peter Made the Same Point

“The Lord is not slow with His promise, as some count slowness; but is long-suffering to us, not willing that any should perish, but that all people should come to repentance” II Peter 3:9. Here Peter showed that the reason God may appear to delay in fulfilling His promises is not that He is slack or tardy. Instead, it results because of His patience as a kind Father, directing His children to repent. It is the forbearance of the loving God Who will not allow one person to perish forever. Thus Peter concurred with the other Bible writers in showing that God's will and plan are going to prevail for all people, bringing them to repentance and not to everlasting punishment.

Pray a Prayer that Will Be Answered “YES”

On this basis, every prayer requesting that God save some person could be called a “slam-dunk” prayer because it will invariably receive a positive reply. There is no need to even attach the God-given caveat, “...if it be *Your will...*” because we have been told throughout the Bible that it IS God's will that ALL people repent and get saved. Knowing this, let us pray earnestly for God to save people and then let's go our way rejoicing, realizing that God will do that work.

Let us pray that even people who have passed away will receive the faith of Christ. We need not limit our prayers to cover only the grief-stricken relatives of those who have died but we can (and should) intercede directly for the souls of dead individuals. There is nothing in the Bible prohibiting such prayers on behalf of those who have passed away. God can and will perform salvific work on their behalf—**Romans 14:9** (*Christ died and was raised in order that He might be the God of the dead and of the living*), **Ruth 2:20** (*God has not stopped showing His kindness to the living and to the dead*), and **I Peter 4:6** (*the gospel was preached to the dead people also in order that after judgment they might live unto God in the Spirit.*) Amen.