

"In Jesus' Name" - this phrase helps me focus on my need to obey Him and keep on doing what is right. It is NOT a magical incantation

"I Surrender All" - this helps me remember that my very existence is in God's hands, but it has no significance if I don't change my daily life.

"Just As I Am" - this helps me remember that I cannot change without first going to God and His Word for direction.

All these are good sentiments, and they point to gratitude to Yeshua as my substitute sacrifice. When I sing these songs, and sincerely intend to stop my bad ways, is that enough? What do I do next? I need to be sure I have a good perspective on life before I make any changes.

The consequence of sin is death - eternal death (separation from God). Overcoming sin is MY job, and I should do that at the start.

Genesis 4:7

You know that if you do what is right, I will accept you. But if you don't, sin is ready to attack you. That sin will want to control you, but you must control it.

James 1:14-15

But each one is tempted when he is dragged away and enticed by his own desire. Then when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is full grown, it brings forth death.

How can I become "unsinned"? Not literally of course - even a broken glass that has all the pieces glued back together perfectly is no longer a glass - it is a mended glass and you can see the cracks. Nothing is ever completely restored - the past cannot be undone, and making amends only allows us to move on, but the history remains. That's where maturity allows us to work with others who also have been mended - only One person is perfect.

The consequences of our disobedience - some people call those consequences punishment - remain even after forgiveness. If I stick my hand in the fire, I get burned - that is not punishment. If I go against the (moral) laws God put in place in the universe, I get consequences the results of what I do. Forgiveness of sin does not erase consequences of sin.

Every decision I make is my own personal responsibility. I can't say "the devil made me do it" - because I CHOSE to do it. I can't say that "the enemy attacks me and causes my problems" - although decisions by others do affect me, and my decisions affect others, that is not from some supernatural interference.

What payment can redeem me? So that I am "paid in full" for my sin?

Atone means to correct a previous wrongdoing by uniting in feelings two parties who have been estranged or at odds. The two parties are myself and God. Instead of the word atone use consecrate or hallow or make holy, but in the Torah all have the same root word קָדַשׁ.

This concept of consecration- "paid in full" - has two possibilities.

1. I die in my sin, thus my payment is complete, but I have lost EVERYTHING.

2. Someone else pays for me.

Animal sacrifices were the first implementation of #2 in Genesis 3, and those were a temporary payment for that one confession of sin, pointing to the need of a permanent payment by another person who would literally sacrifice himself.

What about paying for my own sin? Two examples for #1

In Exodus 29, YHVH tells Moses how to consecrate the priests. In Leviticus the consecration of the Tabernacle and priests is documented.

Leviticus 8:12,31-36

Moses poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head and anointed him to consecrate him. Moses then said to Aaron and to his sons, "Boil the meat at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting and eat it there, along with the bread that is in the basket of ordination, as I commanded, saying: 'Aaron and his sons are to eat it.' What remains of the meat and of the bread you shall burn with fire. *You are not to go out from the entrance of the Tent of Meeting for seven days*, until the days of your ordination are fulfilled, for he will be filling your hands for seven days. What has been done this day, YHVH has commanded to be done, in order to make atonement for you. You are to *stay at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting day and night for seven days*, and keep YHVH's command, so that you do not die, for so I have been commanded." Thus Aaron and his sons did all the things that YHVH commanded through Moses.

Leviticus 9:1,5-7,22-24

Now it happened on the eighth day that Moses called Aaron, his sons, and the elders of Israel. So they brought what Moses commanded before the Tent of Meeting, and the entire congregation drew near and stood before YHVH. Moses said, "This is what YHVH commanded that you shall do, so that the glory of YHVH may appear to you." Moses said to Aaron, "Draw near to the altar, and bring your sin offering, and your burnt offering, and make atonement for yourself and for the people. Then present the offering for the people, and make atonement for them, as YHVH commanded." Then Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them. Then he stepped down from presenting the sin offering, the burnt offering and the fellowship offerings. Moses and Aaron then went into the Tent of Meeting. *When they came back out and blessed the people, the glory of YHVH appeared to all the people. Fire came out from the presence of YHVH, and devoured the burnt offering and the fat on the altar.* When all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces.

The people faced YHVH directly and saw His acceptance of the sacrifice!

Nadab and Abihu, two sons of Aaron, wanted to show how important they were, so they got in the front of the sacrifice to get some of that glory for themselves.

Leviticus 10:1-2,6-7

Now Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu each took his own censer, put fire in it, laid incense over it, and offered unauthorized fire before YHVH - which He had not commanded them. *So fire came out from the presence of YHVH and consumed them. So they died before YHVH.* Then Moses said to Aaron, and to Eleazar and Ithamar his sons: "Do not uncover your heads or tear your clothes, so you may not die and He will not be angry with the entire congregation. But let your kinsmen - the whole house of Israel - mourn over the burning that YHVH has kindled. You must not go out from the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, or you will die, for the anointing oil of YHVH is on you." So they acted according to the word of Moses.

Nadab and Abihu became crispy critters.

Another example is Korah, Dathan, Abiram, On, and 250 council men. They rebelled against the leadership of Moses and Aaron.

Numbers 16:3,5-7,23-35

They assembled against Moses and Aaron. They said to them, "You've gone too far! All the community is holy - all of them - and YHVH is with them! Then why do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of YHVH?" Then he [Moses] said to Korah and all his following saying, "In the morning YHVH will reveal who is His and who is holy. The one whom He will let come near to Him will be the one He chooses to come near to Him. Do this, Korah and your whole following! Take for yourselves censers. Put fire and incense into them in the presence of YHVH. Tomorrow the man that YHVH chooses will be the holy one! You sons of Levi are the ones who have gone too far!" Then YHVH spoke to Moses saying, "Speak to the assembly saying, 'Move away from the dwelling of Korah, Dathan and Abiram!'" Moses got up and went to Dathan and Abiram. The elders of Israel followed after him. He warned the assembly saying, "Move away from the tents of these wicked men! Don't touch anything that is theirs, or you will be swept away because of all their sins!" So they moved away from near the dwelling of Korah, Dathan and Abiram. Dathan and Abiram came outside and were standing at the entrance of their tents with their wives, their children, and their little ones. Moses said, "By this you will know that YHVH has sent me to do all these works, that they are not from my own heart. If every one of these men die a common death and experience what happens to all people, then YHVH has not sent me. But if YHVH brings about a new thing, and the earth opens her mouth and swallows them and everything that is theirs, and they go down alive into Sheol, then you will know that these men have despised YHVH." As soon as he finished saying all these things, the ground split under them. The earth opened its mouth and swallowed them, along with all their households, all of Korah's people and all their possessions. They went down alive into Sheol, they and everything that was theirs. The earth

closed over them and they were gone from among the community. All Israel around them fled at their outcry, for they shouted, "Perhaps the earth will swallow us!" Fire also came out from YHVH and consumed the 250 men offering the incense.

Numbers 17:1-15 (16:36-50 English Bible)

YHVH spoke to Moses saying, "Tell Eleazar, son of Aaron the kohen, to take the censers from the burning, because they are **holy**, and scatter the coals at a distance. As for the censers of these men who sinned at the cost of their lives, let them be taken and hammered into sheets as a covering for the altar. For they were presented before YHVH, so they are **holy** קִדְּשׁוּ. They are to be a sign to Bnei-Yisrael." So Eleazar the kohen collected the bronze censers brought by the ones who were burned and hammered them into an overlay for the altar, just as YHVH had spoken to him by Moses' hand, so that it would be as a reminder to Bnei-Yisrael that no one who was not a descendant of Aaron should burn incense before YHVH, and so no one would become like Korah and his following.

The next day, the entire community of Bnei-Yisrael grumbled against Moses and Aaron, saying, "You killed YHVH's people!" But when they gathered in opposition to Moses and Aaron and turned toward the Tent of Meeting, behold, the cloud covered it and the glory appeared! Moses and Aaron went to the front of the Tent of Meeting. YHVH spoke to Moses saying, "Get away from among this assembly so that I may immediately consume them!" So they fell on their faces. Then Moses said to Aaron, "Take the censer, put into it fire from the altar and put in incense. Get going and hurry to the assembly and **make atonement** for them, because wrath has come out from YHVH and the plague has started." Aaron did just as Moses had said, and ran into the middle of the assembly. Behold, the plague had already started among the people. But he offered the incense and **made atonement** for the people. He stood between the dead and the living and the plague stopped. However, there were 14,700 dead from the plague, besides those who died because of Korah. Then Aaron returned to Moses at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, when the plague had been halted.

It is not a good idea to pay for your own sins - physical death and eternal death.

So "paid in full" happens when Someone else pays for me. When I realize that God has reached out to me, by the Holy Spirit through His Word (the Bible), and that the Bible is true, and that I have been turning away from God and what He wants, then I acknowledge my sin, my guilt, my shame, and accept payment by Yeshua as part of a binding contract [covenant, promise, agreement] to continue learning what God wants, and continue doing what God wants, in ongoing parallel processes in my life.

This belief is now the foundation of my life, and I must always refresh my mind with this contract and act on it by obeying.

I will repeat this process of confession, repentance, and renewal as needed. God knows that I get distracted - like a dog in a wooded park full of squirrels - so I need to remember His commands. He set up these reminders in His Word, and in the feasts, to keep me on track.

Please notice the sequence - confess, repent, obey, THEN petition. Merely petitioning and saying "in Jesus' name" is meaningless.

God loves us, and promises to be with us, when we choose to stop rebelling and start moving toward Him through our actions (deeds), which come from faith.

Deuteronomy 4:29

But from there you will seek YHVH your God, and you will find Him if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul.

Proverbs 8:17

I love those who love Me; and those who diligently seek Me will find Me.

Isaiah 26:8-9

Indeed, while following the way of Your judgments, we have waited for You eagerly; Your name, even Your memory, is the desire of our souls. At night my soul longs for You, indeed, my spirit within me seeks You diligently; for when the earth experiences Your judgments, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.

Isaiah 55:6

Seek YHVH while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near.

Jeremiah 29:12-13

Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.

Hebrews 11:6

And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

As we obey, when we take action as God wants, then we are - at THAT moment - representing Him. Continuous obedience transforms our lives.

In a vaguely similar way, driving the same vehicle through many different locations under many different circumstances (oppressive heat and sun, heavy rain, slight drizzle that freezes on contact, roads in poor condition, heavy traffic, aggressive drivers, very slow drivers) can help you respond properly almost without thinking.

Similarly, continuous obedience becomes easier the more that you do it.

Obeying God's commands all the time forms your thoughts to be like God's thoughts and desires. When you pray in His Name, it will be granted, because you are asking what He has already put into motion.

John 11:22

But I know, even now, that whatever You may ask of God, He will give You.

Matthew 21:22

And whatever you ask in prayer, trusting, you shall receive.

Mark 11:24

For this reason I say to you, whatever you pray and ask, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

John 14:13

And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

John 15:7

If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you.

John 16:23

In that day, you will ask Me nothing. Amen, amen I tell you, whatever you ask the Father in My name, He will give you.

Practice makes perfect - not true. PERFECT practice makes perfect performance. The more experience we have, when done correctly, then the more confidently we continue doing that. THAT gives a firm feeling of trust, without reservation, that all that is happening BECAUSE OF MY ACTIONS is aligned with God's purposes. Unfortunately, other people might not be as consistently trustworthy, and their actions cause a negative situation in my life, which might NOT be aligned with God's purposes. If I still obey and follow His commands, the situation will be "less bad" than if I respond out of my personal desires that are NOT obedient to Him.

Believe, then obey, The next issue is this - do you TRUST God? Like the man who crossed Niagara Falls many times pushing a wheelbarrow, would you get in that wheelbarrow and trust him to take you across? THAT is what trust is. I must relax in faith that God will take care of me in the future, just like the past. I should study the commands of God - all of them. That gets me rooted in what it could be like to walk in the path God wants for me.

Deuteronomy 30:10-14

Obey YHVH your God to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the law, and turn to YHVH your God with all your heart and soul. For this commandment, which I command you today, is not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach. It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will go up to heaven for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?' Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will cross the sea for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?' [Do you know someone who has researched or tried almost every religion or mind-body connection? Does it seem that they go to the ends of the earth, or heaven, or the depths of the ocean, but won't look into the Bible?] But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may obey it.

How many times in our lives have we seen or known directly of God's love and care for us, yet we continue in our rejection of His guidance through His Word? Sometimes we even knowingly rebel against Him, and then wonder why our lives are so warped. Promising obedience in the future while asking for deliverance today is like negotiating with God. Making bargains with God is as silly as staring at a fireplace and saying, "when you give me heat then I will give you logs."

Our trust becomes real as we put it into action. "Lamp to my feet and light to my path" - we can only see just far enough ahead to avoid stumbling; the long-term planning we leave with God and trust Him for a great outcome.

God will not bother to try to steer a parked car.

None of the negative situations in my life are the desire of YHVH for me. It's not about bad things happening in my life - it's about how I handle my response to those bad things.

James 1:23-25

For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror - because once he looks at himself and goes away, he immediately forgets what sort of person he was. But the one who looks intently into the perfect Torah, the Torah that gives freedom, and continues in it, not becoming a hearer who forgets but a doer who acts - he shall be blessed in what he does.

Don't fret over the future - just do TODAY what you should (obeying God's commands), toward achieving your (proper) desires. Recall what God told the Israelites about their new homes in Babylon during the exile.

Jeremiah 29:5-7

Build houses and live in them; also plant gardens and eat their fruit; take wives and have sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, so that they may bear sons and daughters; and multiply there, and do not decrease. Also seek the shalom of the city where I took you as captives in exile, and pray to YHVH for it - for in its shalom will you have shalom.

In her book *Quest For Love*, Elizabeth Elliot tells us,

"Does it make sense to pray for guidance about the future if we are not obeying in the thing that lies before us today? How many momentous events in Scripture depended on one person's seemingly small act of obedience! Rest assured: Do what God tells you to do now, and, depend upon it, you will be shown what to do next."

She was once praised for the great things she has accomplished, but she was irritated by that. She could accept appropriate thanks for her deeds, but she replied that all she EVER did was daily obeying God in all the small things of life.

It's all about daily living.

Philippians 4:8

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable - if there is any virtue and if there is anything worthy of praise - dwell on these things.

How do we determine if something actually qualifies for these attributes? It should not clash with the Bible. Period. That means I must study the Bible, maybe even memorize important passages, so I can quickly analyze if something distracts from focusing on God and His Word.

The Creator of the universe, long before you existed, set in motion a plan to give you freedom - you can choose death or you can choose life.

Deuteronomy 30:19-20

I call on heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have presented you with life and death, the blessing and the curse. Therefore, choose life, so that you will live, you and your descendants, loving YHVH your God, paying attention to what he says and clinging to him - for that is the purpose of your life!

Keep it simple. Start each day saying "I follow the Torah" and then obey.