

1 what GOD would do for JUST ONE SOUL?

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*I*t is easy to think in a general sense when we consider what God would be willing to do. We may read Bible statements like, “For God so loved the world” (John 3:16), and “Christ died for all” (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; 1 Timothy 2:6), and think: “Of course, **all of us** have a great value for God.” But later on, in the dark of the night, when each of us reflects on his own soul, someone asks: “Do **I** really matter to God? And if I do, what would God be willing to do if I were the **only** object of His love?”

When considering this question, we need to remember that God is not a man, and that His thoughts are not ours (Isaiah 55:8-9). Then, what would God do for just one soul?

God would create one soul and would create for one soul.

First, God would create one soul. Although it is true that the question we are considering already implies the existence of a soul, the point is that the creation of a soul reveals its importance to God, and in turn, this importance warrants its creation. Genesis 2:7 says: “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.” Note that when God determined to create humanity, He made just **one** person. He also created Eve, but He made her later. This does not mean that the woman is inferior to man, but underlines the fact that God created man and woman **individually**. They had an individual value for God, so each one of us.

God still create us. He has established for our bodies to be the result of natural reproduction, but He creates our souls individually. God “forms the spirit of man within him” (Zacharias 12:1); therefore, He is “the Father of spirits” (Hebrews

12:9). God cares so much for you that He has decided to give life to your body by creating a spirit within you.

But now note the second part of this first point: God would create for a soul. In Genesis 1, we see that He did this in the reverse order—first, He created for man, and then He created man. Though He created in this order, the thought behind this method of creation is different. That is, God did not decide to create the Universe and then realized that the Universe was empty and needed people. Rather, He decided to create man, and knew that man would need a Universe. This is what love does: love prepares everything necessary for the object of love.

Jesus said: “For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matthew 16:26). We have no problem understanding the meaning of this passage: one soul is worth more than the entire world. If one soul is worth more than the entire world, then, God would be willing to create an entire world for just one soul.

Yes, God would create one soul and would create for one soul.

God would love one soul.

God loves the entire world (John 3:16), but His love is also individual. Note the account of the rich young ruler in Mark 10. This young man came to Jesus and asked: “Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? (vs. 17). Since they were under the Mosaic Law, Jesus told him that he needed to keep the commandments in that Law. The young man pointed out that he had kept them since very early in his life. “Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him” (vs. 21). In that very moment, Jesus’ heart was scanned by the omniscient Spirit and recorded by inspiration. God gave us the opportunity to have a glimpse of Christ’s personal love for just one soul.

But what about the person who thinks that is not “good” enough as this young man to deserve God’s love? That person can find comfort in knowing that God’s love is based on His own nature—not our personal feelings, what others say about us, or what we have done in the past. God is a God of love (1 John 4:8); this is His very nature, and He cannot

deny Himself (2 Timothy 2:13). He loves you because He has determined that you would have enough value to be loved.

There was a very well-known speaker who traveled around the country helping people see their personal value. In one of his lectureships, he began by holding a \$20 bill, and asked the audience who wanted the bill. Many raised their hands. He said: “I will give this \$20 to someone, but first, let me do this.” He proceeded to crumple the bill with his hands, and asked: “Who still wants it?” Many still raised their hands. He asked: “What if I do this?” And he threw the bill on the floor and began to step on it. Then he picked it up and said: “Now, who wants it?” Still, many people raised their hands. In spite of all the things the speaker had done to the bill, the bill had not lost its value for the audience (or him).

We have cut a piece of paper, had put a number on it, and some unique impressions, and we have decided that it will have value for us. But it is just paper! It is, but we work for it and give it value. God has done much more for us. In the beginning, He took some dust and formed a body, He put a singular “number” (a spirit) in each one of us, He put some of His own unique impressions in us (part of His love, intelligence, compassion, eternity, etc.), and He decided that we would be worth His love. Maybe you cannot see your value because you have been mistreated as the bill in the hands of the speaker, or because it seems to you that your life is ruined. But this does not change nor minimize the fact that God has determined that your life will have value for him. If one day you or I are eternally lost, it will not be because we did not have value for God, but because we failed to consider our value before Him, and we did not live according to that value.

Yes, God would love one soul.

God would save one soul.

If someone loved a person, then he would protect him if that person were in danger. Man is at spiritual danger. His problem is sin. This is a universal and individual problem (Psalm 53; Romans 3:10). Each man’s dilemma is that the “wages of sin are death” (Romans 6:23), and he cannot save himself. But as Jesus responded to His disciples when they asked Him, “Who then can be saved?,” “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:25-26).

Consider Jesus' love mission for souls: "for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Here is a generic idea; all humanity was lost. But there is also a singular aspect in His mission. Luke 15 reveals this in a beautiful way. Here Jesus spoke of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son. Although a common thread in these parables is that the three were lost, a second common thread is that that loss was singular; Jesus spoke of **one** lost sheep, **one** lost coin, and **one** lost son. And He came to seek and to save that which was lost.

Did the one lost and wandering sheep really matter in view that the shepherd still had 99 sheep left? Did the one lost coin with scant value really matter in view that the woman still had nine coins left? Did the stubborn, immoral, prodigal, wasteful, and ungrateful son really matter in view that the father still had another son, and this was a faithful one? Yes! Why? Because "the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Luke 7:36-50 additionally reveals divine love and sacrifice for one soul—any soul. Simon the Pharisee had invited Jesus for dinner. While they were at the table, a sinful woman, very well-known for her public sins (a woman of evil reputation or a prostitute), came and anointed Jesus. She began to cry and wash Jesus' feet with her tears, and then began to wipe them with her hair, and kiss them. The Pharisee began to murmur in his mind against Jesus, but Jesus discerned his thoughts. He rebuked Simon for his lack of hospitality and love, and told him that the woman had been forgiven of her many sins. The form of the Greek verb indicates that Jesus had already forgiven her, not that He was forgiving her at that moment. The woman was not anointing Jesus to receive forgiveness, but she was doing it as a way of gratitude for the forgiveness she had already received. She was now a different woman, although she was still viewed as a sinner.

Now, consider this scene with Calvary. We see Jesus there, after been cruelly scourged. There is blood coming out of His forehead, back, hands, and feet. His body is hanging on a cross, and the agony is becoming more intense. The priests, elders, Pharisees, and Scribes come close and begin to mock Him, saying: "He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him" (Matthew 27:42). Jesus knows very well that He could call 12 legions of angels to

save Him if He wished, but He is silent and continues to bear the intense pain. Ask Him: "Lord, why are You still on that cross? He looks back to the past, to the scene in Simon's house, and says: "Because I told that sinful woman, to whom no one loved, that I could save her." Ask Him again: "Lord, why are You still on that cross?" He looks to the present, turns His head toward one of the crosses besides Him, and says: "Because I told that former thief, condemned justly by his fellow countrymen, that He could be with Me in paradise." Ask Him one more time: "But, Lord, why are You still on that cross? He looks to the future, about 2,000 years later, and says: "Because I told _____ [write your name] that he/she could be saved."

Yes, God created you wonderfully (Psalm 139), loves you profoundly (John 3:16), and suffered intensely for you (Matthew 27). He wants you to be saved (2 Peter 3:9). Jesus said: "He who believes and is baptized will be saved" (Mark 16:16). Will you receive God's love?

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