

# God Has an Answer for Our Unmet Needs

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## John 11:1-2 (KJV)

<sup>1</sup> Now a certain *man* was sick, *named* Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

<sup>2</sup> (It was *that* Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)

I have just returned from the mission field in Roatan, Honduras. During that visit one evening after preaching an evangelistic meeting a lady approached me and had the following conversation with me. "Sometimes it is nearly three o'clock in the morning before I can go to sleep." Tears filled the woman's eyes as she related her story. "I try to go to sleep, but my mind is like a roller coaster traveling on an endless track. One thought leads to another and then another. Before I know it I am worried and wondering how I will face the next day. Does God know about my needs? Does He care?"



At some point, each of us has asked these questions. We face a difficult challenge and wonder if God truly understands the depth of our need. No matter how many times we tell ourselves that He knows what we are facing, it always is comforting to sense His Spirit reminding us that we are not alone, and that He is aware of our every need.

The psalmist writes, "**I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined to me and heard my cry**" ([Psalm 40:1](#)). Nothing escapes the awareness of God. He is personally involved in our lives. He understands our feelings, but He wants us to learn to trust Him with all the details of life.

We know that He has a plan for our future. ([Jeremiah 29:11](#)) Therefore, He has a plan for the immediate challenges we face. Our responsibility is to allow Him to work in and through our circumstances so that He is glorified. At times, this may seem difficult to do, especially when the problems of life are pressing hard against us.

The temptation to worry and become fretful is great. Worry, however, does not bring clarity. Instead, it prevents us from seeing God's solution through eyes of faith. Fear and thoughts of doubt paralyze, but reading God's Word and applying its principles to our lives prepares us for life's battles. We are victorious when we learn to lean into the winds of adversity while clinging to God through faith.

Will God meet every need we have? Yes, He meets every legitimate need perfectly and on time. This does not mean that He will satisfy every desire we have. There are desires that do not line up with His will. Yet even when we try to meet our needs apart from His plan, He remains faithful in His love for us. The moment we turn back to Him, He takes the broken pieces—the shattered dreams and the misguided desires—and reshapes them so they become a part of His wondrous work in our lives.

**What need do you have that is greater than God?** There is not one. He knows your needs, and He will provide for each one as you trust Him. You can rest because the God who loves you with an eternal

love never slumbers.

There is a good chance that you are facing a situation that seems beyond your control. You wonder how you will handle it. You have prayed and diligently sought God's mind, but your need, at least from your perspective, has remained unmet.

How do you handle shattered dreams? Or how do you redirect the desires that fill and overflow your heart emotions? Does God have an answer? Does He care when you hurt and struggle against the pressures of life? How should you handle times of spiritual silence when you feel as though He is standing at a distance and not going to answer your prayers according to your expectations?

The best way to understand God's mind and heart is by studying the principles found in His Word. Before you decide this will not work for you or your situation, take a few moments to read the story of Mary and Martha and Lazarus. Each of these people had definite needs.

Lazarus needed a healing touch from God. He was deathly sick ([John 11:1](#)), and Jesus had the power to heal him. Mary and Martha had tremendous needs. How would they survive without Lazarus? Not only was he their brother, he also was their financial provider. He was the head of their household, and because they were not married, Lazarus took care of them. Jesus knew this.

In fact, the Lord was their close friend and a frequent guest in their home, especially whenever He was in Jerusalem. Bethany, where Lazarus and his sisters lived, was not far from Jerusalem. Once Mary and Martha realized that the sickness of their brother could lead to death, it only seemed right to send for Jesus. They knew the power that God had given Him. Their appeal to the Lord was one of love and friendship. "**Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick**" ([John 11:3](#)).

**The issue in this story is not one of healing. It is one of need and how God met that need.** God has the power to heal every disease. The issue that confronts us in situations like this one is God's will versus our will. We are taught to pray and ask God to meet our needs.

But there is something deep within this process that God wants us to learn. We begin to understand just how committed He is to meeting our needs when we learn to accept His will as being perfect. We also must acknowledge that His timing is right just as His strength is sufficient and His love is eternal.

Up until this point, Mary and Martha did not understand how deeply involved God was in their lives. More than likely, we have failed to understand this at times as well. However, Jesus was determined to demonstrate His intimate care for these women and for His friend, Lazarus. But first, Mary and Martha would have to wait. Their prayers, though synchronized with God's will, would appear to go unanswered.

### **Many times we chose the wrong way to respond to our unmet needs:**

**Denial.** We tell ourselves there is not a problem. While denial is an initial defense we use to protect us from the reality of deep tragedy, a prolonged period of denial is not healthy. We need to face reality with God, knowing that He has a solution for the problems we face.

**Avoidance.** We distance ourselves from the problem in an attempt to protect ourselves from further pain. Avoidance works for a short span of time. We can see how God used it in the lives of His saints to provide short periods of rest.

However, just like denial, avoidance prevents us from dealing with the problem. The solution is to seek God for wisdom and a precise way to handle our circumstances, even if this includes waiting for Him to lead us beyond this moment in time. We must be willing to wait for God's best. Jumping ahead of Him only leads to more confusion.

**Projection.** We use projection when we blame others. Mary and Martha were quick to tell Jesus, "**If you had been here, my brother would not have died**" ([John 11:21](#)). God is not unaware of our situations. He knows exactly what we are facing, and He knows how we will react. This is why it is crucial for us to turn to Him for wisdom and for the right response. We must accept responsibility for our lives and the problems we are facing. Lazarus's illness was a fact of life and not a form a punishment. God is not the author of disease or tragedy. However, He uses the circumstances of life to mold our lives.

**Lying.** When we avoid telling the truth, we usually end up hurting others and ourselves. There is only one way to handle the trials of life and that is truthfully. This does not mean that we have to disclose all that we know or feel. God wants us to be careful with the words of our mouths. Lying and rationalization do not help solve the problem. These only hinder a final godly resolve.

**Giving in and giving up.** Usually, when the trials of life come, we are faced with the temptation to quit. Discouragement is one of Satan's favorite forms of attack. He believes that if he can discourage us, we will give up and turn away from God's will or plan for our lives.

**Never give up! Trust God to the end, and you will see His goodness become a reality in your life.**

**Conformity.** Rather than stand for what we know is true, we conform to the situation. Our initiative and creativity drain away, and we sink into depression.

Mary and Martha may have been tempted to fall into self-pity and doubt, but they did not yield to either of these. When Jesus arrived in Bethany, Martha met Him with these words, "**Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You**" ([John 11:21-22](#)).

How did the sisters deal with the fact that Jesus did not rush to their dying brother's side? We are not given their immediate response. However, we know that they were probably disappointed. After all, they loved their brother.

At some point Mary and Martha had to deal with the sovereignty of God. They had to come to a point where they accepted God's will over their own wills. Each one of us will face this decision at some point in our lives.

We may wonder why, on the surface of life, it appears that God has not met our needs. Yet deep inside we must know that God never leaves us hopeless. He has a plan and design for our lives that is well-fitted for every trial, sorrow, heartache, or problem we face.

Jesus had predetermined that He would heal Lazarus, but He would do it in such a way that He would be glorified alone. He also would accomplish His will in the lives of Mary and Martha. They would come to a point of acceptance.

**How do you handle your unmet needs?**

**Begin with prayer.** Let your needs be made known to God. ([Philippians 4:6](#)) Prayer is a lifestyle, not just an activity in which you participate. Jesus taught His disciples to pray. When you feel overwhelmed by the circumstances of life, prayer is the one activity that changes the direction of your mind and heart. It places your focus on God who is the only source of hope and truth.

**Acknowledge your need and the burden that you are carrying.** The old saints of the church would use an endearing phrase when they would talk about giving their problems to God in prayer. They would say, "**Roll your burden over onto the Lord.**" This is your hope: Jesus never fails. His mercies are new every morning, and they are specifically designed to help you bear up under the pressure that comes from trial, tragedy, and sorrow.

**Claim God's promises.** When you are facing a difficult situation, train yourself to claim God's promises. His Word is your greatest source of encouragement. Resist the temptation to run to several different people seeking verification for what He has required you to do. Faith is a strong anchor that holds you steady when emotional gale-force winds strike. Claiming God's promises and remaining committed to the course He has given you is a powerful way to face any kind of tribulation or change.

**Seek God's direction.** You can do this through the study of His Word and through prayer. Ask Him to help you distinguish between the real need you have and what you perceive as a need. Many times you "think" you have a specific need when actually it is a desire. Many times, if God gave you what you "wanted," you would drift in your devotion to Him. Make sure that your motives are pure and God-centered and not self-centered.

Also, pray that the Lord will show you exactly where you are missing His best. If there are walls that you have erected, you will not be able to accept His will easily for your life. Ask Him to tear down any walls that separate you from Him. Once you let go and allow Him to meet the needs of your life according to His timing and plan, you will discover His goodness and grace flowing into every area of your life.

**Be willing to wait.** This is crucial. Mary and Martha had to wait. Their hope had faded. Their brother was dead. Jesus had not come when they sent for Him. But God had a grander purpose in mind than just meeting their expectations. He would demonstrate His power to bring new life to a dead man.

What was the greater miracle: healing Lazarus or bringing him back to life after being dead for four days? Of course, we know it was his resurrection. This miracle also pointed to the future resurrection of Christ. God always has a greater good in mind. Many times our spiritual insight is very limited, but God sees all. He knows exactly what is transpiring on every spiritual level along with all that we are facing. He has a plan, and, if we are wise, we will wait for Him to reveal it to us. Have you trusted the Savior with your unmet needs or are you still focused on meeting your needs your way? Only God can completely meet your unmet needs. Trust Him—give Him your burden to carry and you will witness a tremendous miracle. He will resurrect your hope and give you the breath of new life.