



BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING OF HUMAN NEEDS!

Lord Jesus said, "I Thirst."
John 19:28



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FIFTH STATEMENT OF JESUS FROM THE CROSS

THE BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING OF HUMAN NEEDS

*"After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), **"I thirst."** A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth."
(John 19:28)*

Jesus's suffering and death on the cross fulfilled scriptures that pointed towards the Messiah. Most of the Jewish people expected the Messiah to be a military Messiah instead of a spiritual Messiah.

However, here we have a Saviour who suffered, took the punishment of our sins on the cross, and died on our behalf. According to the words of John the Baptist, *"Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the whole world."*

From the lips of the suffering Messiah came the fifth statement which is one of the most basic human needs of mankind. He cried out for water but what was given to Him was sour vinegar.

What is the significance of Jesus saying "I thirst"?

1. It is no accident that Lord Jesus cried out, "I thirst", from the cross. It proved that He alone is the Messiah according to the scriptures. There are indicators in the Old Testament Scriptures that gave reference to the things that the Messiah would say and do. This action indicated the Messianic scripture **Psalms 69:21** where David wrote, *"They gave me poison for food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."* And also in **Psalms 22:15**, *"My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue cleaveth to My jaws; and Thou hast brought Me into the dust of death."*

2. Lord Jesus cried out "I thirst" to prove His humanity. Thirst is the most basic instinct in the human body due to lack of fluids or dehydration. On the cross, Jesus bled profusely and clearly the loss of fluids led to His thirst. It should not surprise us that Jesus is 100% divine and 100% human - that is the mystery of incarnation. As a human, Jesus wanted to know the full depth of pain; it shows what it costs God to share humanity. Could this be one of the most human moments of our Lord as He died asking for a simple drink of water which is a basic necessity of life?

We serve a God whose nature is so complete in love that in His humanity He says, "I thirst" and in His divinity proclaims, *"Come to me all who are thirsty and drink, I will give you rivers of living water"* (John 7:37-38).

What are the basic human needs?

Traditionally, the basic human needs are food, shelter, and clothing. However, a list developed by psychologist Abraham Maslow states that human needs are often demonstrated by using a pyramid model with various levels of hierarchy. The hierarchy includes: *physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, esteem needs, and finally self-actualization needs.* The diagram below describes Maslow's theory of Hierarchy of human needs:

Please note that a thorough review of human needs would not be complete without the inclusion of spiritual needs. Maslow, an atheist himself, would argue that spirituality and religion would belong in the category of self-actualization. For a believer of Jesus, the ultimate foundation for one's life is Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 3:11 says,
“For other foundation can no man lay that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

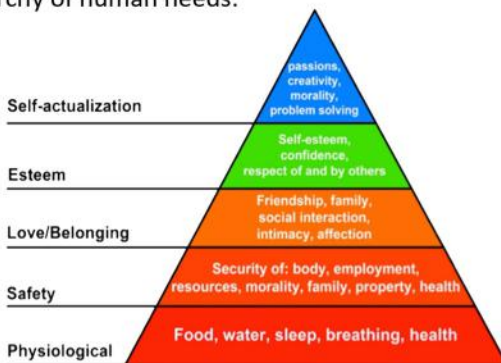


Figure: Maslow's hierarchy of needs

So rather than trying to make Christ fit into one of Maslow's levels of needs, a person could instead learn that Christ has “*come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*” (**John 10:10**) Compared to the hierarchical model, the Bible shows that God is the one who provides mankind's needs. This can be seen in the scripture that states, “*But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus*” (**Philippians 4:19**).

A reflection on Lord's Prayer shows that we depend on God for our physiology, safety, love & belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. (**Matthew 6:9-13**)

Does the Bible give importance to one's human needs?

Throughout Scripture, we see that God is interested in His people. **Matthew 6:26** says, “*Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?*” If God even meets the needs of birds who are not made in His image, who have no will to choose Him or reject Him, how much more will He care for our needs in detail?

Matthew 6:8, “*Your Father knows what you need before you ask him.*”

Psalms 37:25, “*I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his children begging for bread.*”

What does it mean to be human? How are we different from animals?

Man is different from animals. Both Biblical and scientific evidence demonstrates this. Humans bear God's image, the *imago dei* (**Genesis 1:26**) explains why you have real value, regardless of gender, race, intelligence, or earning potential why all human beings are equal. It tells you why human life has dignity, why you must not treat people as means rather than ends, and it also gives a foundation for morality and ethics.

We, as image bearers, carry incredible value and significance—value so high that Jesus was willing to pay the price of His life to redeem and restore the broken image of man.

It is said only about man that he was not only created “by God,” but also “for God” (**Colossians 1:16**). This high purpose is only ascribed to man. Animals are also creatures of God, but they did not receive the calling to become children of God (**John 1:12**).

“How we handle our life in the temporal will determine where we will be in eternal.”

Is God concerned about my body more than my spirit?

We can wrongly believe that God cares only about our spirit, and our bodies don't really matter. We think that for God our bodies are not important because it is only temporal, and it will fade and die. But if that view were true, then why did God make a physical universe? Why did He put Adam and Eve in the garden to cultivate and keep it?

God gives importance to your body just like He gives importance to the Spirit. **1 Corinthians 6:19** says, *"Don't you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God. You are not your own since you were bought with a price, so glorify God in your body."*

A wrong way of thinking is to value the eternal over the temporal so much that we believe only eternal things matter. Some people believe that if you work for things that won't last into eternity then you're wasting your time. This wrong thinking needs to be countered by the truth that God created two sides to reality, the temporal and the eternal. They are both real; they are both necessary. How we handle our life in the temporal will determine where we will be in eternal.

1 Thessalonians 5:23, *"May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

Your body is important and our God will never waste anything, He will resurrect your body after you die and make it perfect. (I Corinthians 15:35-58) And the body will be similar to Lord Jesus Christ's body after His resurrection from death.

Is work a part of the fallen world, how does God want us to see work?

Many Christians see work as part of the curse in a fallen world. Others make a false distinction between what they perceive as the **sacred** (serving God) and the **secular** (everything else). And others make work into an idol. They expect work to provide them with their identity and purpose in life, as well as to be their source of joy and fulfilment that only God can provide.

God wants us to see that work is His gift to us. It is not a result of 'the fall'. God gave Adam and Eve the job to cultivate the garden and to exercise dominion over the world before sin entered the world (**Genesis 2:15**). We were created to work, and for work.

Work is God's good gift to us! All work may not be the same as there are legitimate and illegitimate work in this world and our work must contribute to what God wants to be done in this world. Rick Warren says, "*Work becomes worship when you dedicate it to God and perform it with an awareness of His presence*".

James 2:17, "*So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*" It's in and through our works we develop and express attitudes and character.

Ecclesiastes 3:13, "*And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God.*"

Is full time ministry work holier than secular work?

It's an improper way to view life as divided between the sacred and the secular. ALL of life relates to God and is sacred - whether we make a business presentation, or change soiled diapers, or lead someone to faith in Christ. It's unwise to think that we do 'sacred things' and 'secular things'. It all depends on what's going on in our hearts. You can engage in what looks like holy activity like prayer and Bible study with a dark, self-centered, unforgiving spirit like the Pharisees. And on the other hand, you can work at a job in a very secular atmosphere where the conversation is littered with profanity, the work is sloppy, the politics are wearisome, and yet like Daniel or Joseph in the Old Testament you can keep your own conversation pure and your behaviour above reproach. You can bring honour and glory to God in a very worldly environment. God does not want us to do holy things; **He wants us to be holy people living in excellence.** (**Colossians 3:23-24**)

Ephesians 6:5-8, "*Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ,, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free.*"

Is being rich and wealthy a sin? What does the Bible say about having money?

Money is simply a measure of resources. God does not view being rich or having money as being sinful because God himself promised to give wealth without sorrow (**Proverbs 10:22**). The great heroes of the Bible like Abraham, Job, Joseph, David, Solomon, etc. were blessed in all substance from God. There is nothing wrong with saving money, working hard to better your life, setting financial goals, or even being wealthy/rich. However, let not money rule you. Let God be your true master! (**Matthew 6:24**)

Should I have savings for future?

The Bible instructs Christians not to worry about future needs and uncertainties. Does this contradict or cancel out biblical principles of responsible savings and investment? **NO**. Preparing for the future is a good thing. The Bible teaches us to save and invest in a responsible manner, but to do so without being hoarders of wealth (**Ecclesiastes 5:10**) and to possess an attitude of generosity. A word of caution here as you save for your future - we must never put our security and trust in our savings; rather it should be in the Lord.

(**1 Timothy 6:17, 2 Corinthians 8:9**)

Proverbs 6:6-8, *“Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. Without having any chief, officer, or ruler, she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest.”*

Biblical financial handling includes 1. Giving in and through the local church - your tithes and offerings 2. Expenses on personal and growth 3. Investments towards assets and savings.

Do you think Bible considers looking after one's own self as selfishness?

The Bible does not condemn the pursuit of legitimate self-interest. **Philippians 2:4** makes this very clear when Paul says, *“Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”* There is a place for legitimate self-interest, to which the Bible periodically appeals, only it must be balanced by a compassionate concern for the interest of others.

While the Bible cautions that self-interest can devolve into the sin of selfishness and greed, Biblical self-interest enables us to become well-functioning, contributing members of God's community.

The Bible is very clear that one must look after their own family. **1 Timothy 5:8**, *“If anyone does not provide for his own, and especially his own household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”*

According to the Bible, what are the principles of right eating and health?

Food is a great gift from God and it is necessary for us to stay breathing. God has even given us a sense of pleasure in eating and being satisfied. Our Lord Jesus himself broke bread and fed multitudes (**Matthew 14:13-21, John 6:1-15**)

A good gift from God can quickly become our idol. Remember that we are living for God's glory and not for our own satisfaction. We should look after our body by feeding it healthy foods. However, our body doesn't exist to satisfy our indulgences, but to serve and honour the God who made us. **Philippians 3:19**, *"Their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame."*

The "just enough" principle is a good one to remember - not just with sweet food, but with all food. The ability to say "no" to anything in excess—self-control—is one of the fruits of the Spirit common to all Believers (**Galatians 5:22**). **Proverbs 25:16**: *"If you find honey, eat just enough — too much of it, and you will vomit"*

It's a very important principle to say prayers of thanksgiving before eating food. (**Luke 24:30, 1 Corinthians 10:36, 1 Thessalonians 4:4-5**.)

What does the Bible have to say about human rights and justice?

The creation of humankind in the image of God is, in fact, the foundation of all human rights. Human Rights are expressions of what God is like, as revealed in Ten Commandments and in the laws of God given to His people.

The Bible teaches that God does not discriminate or show favouritism (**Acts 10:34**). Every person is a unique creation of His, and He loves each one (**John 3:16; 2 Peter 3:9**). *"Rich and poor have this in common: The LORD is the Maker of them all"* (**Proverbs 22:2**). In turn, the Bible teaches that Christians should not discriminate based on race, gender, cultural background, or social standing (**Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:11; James 2:1-4**). We are to be kind to all (**Luke 6:35-36**). The Bible gives strict warnings against taking advantage of the poor and downtrodden. *"He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honours God"* (**Proverbs 14:31**).

Throughout history, most Christians have understood their responsibility to give support to their fellow human beings. The majority of hospitals and orphanages in our world were founded by concerned Christians. Many of the great humanitarian reforms of history, including abolition, were spearheaded by Christian men and women who sought justice

When speaking of rights in the Bible, God rarely mentions what rights we should demand. Instead, He tells us what we are responsible for. This is seen in most of the laws on justice, but He also tells us to go beyond justice and into mercy.

Why God hates exploiting the poor?

Scripture harshly warns those who acquire wealth by exploiting the poor. *"You who make iniquitous decrees . . . that widows may be your spoil, and that you may make the orphans your prey! What will you do on the day of punishment?"* (Isaiah 10:1-4; see also Isaiah 3:14-15, Amos 2:7, Micah 2:1-5). Secondly, God's anger is also aroused by people who have plenty, yet neglect the needy. (Ezekiel 16:46 Luke 16:19-31). In God's eyes, ignoring the needs of the poorest is as grievous as idolatry and sexual abominations.

God identifies with the poor so strongly that caring for them is analogous to serving God. *"Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord"* (Proverbs 19:17). On the other hand, *"Those who oppress the poor insult their Maker"* (Proverbs 14:31). This theme reappears in Jesus' parable of the sheep and goats (Matthew 25:31-46), Lord Jesus surprises the righteous with His insistence that they had fed and clothed Him: *"Just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."* (Proverbs 31:8-9, Proverbs 17:5, Proverbs 22:22-23)

Why does it require a Believer to be generous and to help the poor?

If we do not share God's passion to uplift the poor, we cannot claim to know God in a Biblical way. *"How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?"* (1 John 3:17)

Proverbs 11:25, *"A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed."*

If we love Jesus and seek to conform our lives to Scripture, we will care for the wounded by poverty – physically, emotionally, and spiritually – and promote a society that shares resources to meet their needs. We will prayerfully intervene to break the yoke of generational poverty and create fresh opportunities for families to develop self-sufficiency. We will protect children and their families from exploitation and advocate their cause to those in power. And we will offer them the hope of our faith in Christ, who shared in their poverty during His sojourn on earth so that through Him all might live in abundance (2 Corinthians 8:9).

A word of caution: As a steward of God's money, you are responsible to exercise wisdom as you help the poor. We must help in wise manners with accountability to avoid frauds. Always evaluate the need of the individual and check their genuineness so you can avoid wrong or fake seekers. *"Be wise as a serpent and innocent as a dove"* (Matthew 10:16). If we are not careful in our generosity, we might end up being hurt or burned by whom we are helping and eventually become stingy which is not a good Christian attitude. (Proverbs 19:17, Acts 20:35)

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