

## God in the Jukebox

### “Need a Favor” by Jelly Roll

I only talk to God when I need a favor  
And I only pray when I ain't got a prayer  
So, who the hell am I, who the hell am I  
To expect a Savior, oh  
If I only talk to God when I need a favor?  
But God, I need a favor

I know Amazing Grace, but I ain't been livin' them  
words  
Swear I spend most Sundays, drunk off my ass, than I  
have in church  
Hard cover King James only been savin' dust on the  
nightstand  
And I don't know what to say by the time I fold my  
hands

I only talk to God when I need a favor  
And I only pray when I ain't got a prayer  
So, who the hell am I, who the hell am I  
To expect a Savior, oh  
If I only talk to God when I need a favor?  
But God, I need a favor  
Amen, amen

Yeah, I owe you more than one and beggars can't be  
choosers  
But I'll pay for all I've done, just please don't let me  
lose her

I only talk to God when I need a favor  
And I only pray when I ain't got a prayer  
So, who the hell am I, who the hell am I  
To expect a Savior, oh  
If I only talk to God when I need a favor?  
But God, I need a favor  
Amen, amen  
Amen, amen

Hangin' in there, just barely  
Throwin' up prayers, like Hail Mary's  
If You're still there, Lord, spare me  
Oh my God, oh my God, Hail Mary

Hangin' in there, just barely  
Throwin' up prayers, like Hail Mary's  
If You're still there, Lord, spare me  
Oh my God, oh my God, Hail Mary

I only talk to God when I need a favor  
And I only pray when I ain't got a prayer  
So tell me, who the hell am I to expect a Savior  
When I only talk to God if I need a favor?  
God, I need a favor  
Amen  
God, I need a favor, woah  
Amen

*Source: [LyricFind](#)*

*Songwriters: Austin Nivarel / Jason De Ford / Joe Ragosta / Rob  
Ragosta*

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**Charts:** “Need a Favor” peaked on the US Billboard Hot 100 at number 14 and on the Billboard Hot Country at number three.

**Background:** “Need a Favor” was written by Jason DeFord, Austin Nivarel, Joe Ragosta, Rob Ragosta. It is performed by Jason DeFord, who is known professionally as “Jelly Roll.” DeFord is a multi-genre singer and songwriter as he has performed hip hop, rap, and country. He was raised in Nashville, Tennessee. Jelly Roll earned his G.E.D. while in jail at the age of 23. DeFord had a troubled past with a number of arrests. At the age of 14, he was arrested and charged with multiple counts of possession of marijuana and attempted robbery.

In 2003, he began his music career in hip hop. He was inspired by Three 6 Mafia, UGK, and 8Ball & MJG. He sold mixtapes out of his car. He made his Grand Ole Opry debut on November 9, 2021. Jelly Roll won the Male Breakthrough Video of the Year, Male Video of the Year for the song “Son of a Sinner” at the 2023 CMT Music Awards.

“Need a Favor” is pervaded by a sense of self-reproach, as he questions how he can possibly expect God to hear him out and help him yet again, when he only turns to prayer when it is his last resort. During a 2023 appearance on The Joe Rogan Experience Podcast, Jelly Roll said that “Need a Favor” was born from his experience revisiting the backroad church of his youth, Whitsitt Chapel, with his daughter. Following this, he was inspired to create an album about “going to church.”

He asked, “I was like, ‘What [does] worship music for sinners sound like?’”, before going on to explain, “When you're in church, it's ‘Holy, holy, you are great’, and I was like, ‘I don't necessarily feel that way, so how do I feel?’ You know what I mean? And then it was like, ‘I only talk to God when I need a favor’....I was like, ‘We've got to build it with a choir and big production. I want that old stomp, clap, that old church feel’.”

### **Theology: Prayer**

**For whom should we pray?** We should pray for ourselves and for all other people, even for our enemies.

- 1 Timothy 2:1-2
- Matthew 5:44

**Where should we pray?** We should pray everywhere – when we are alone, with our families, and in church.

- 1 Timothy 2:8
- Matthew 6:6
- Luke 5:16
- Acts 12:5

**How often should we pray?** Our Father encourages us to pray regularly and frequently – even constantly, and especially in times of trouble. The Holy Spirit turns even our sighs and groans into prayers.

- Psalm 65:8
- Psalm 119:164
- Luke 18:1
- 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18
- Psalm 50:15

**Martin Luther on Prayer:** “A Christian without prayer is just as impossible as a living person without a pulse. The pulse is never motionless; it moves and beats constantly, whether one is asleep or something else keeps one from being aware of it” (LW 24:89).

### **Luther’s “Simple Way to Pray”** (For Master Peter the Barber)

Instruction

Thanksgiving

Confession

Prayer

*(Based on Hebrews 13:17)*

**Prayer:** O Lord, open the mouths of Your humble servants to speak Your praise, so that leaving behind all error, we may rejoice in the confession of Your Name. Amen.

### **ITCP Example (from: LCMS Pres. Matt Harrison)**

**I:** Lord Christ, You instruct me here that I am to listen carefully and heed the word of my pastor when he speaks Your Word. The pastoral office is profound; You not only charge my pastor to watch over my soul, but You also call him to account for his service to me. Finally, You tell me in this text that I am to be a joy to my pastor and not a pain, and this for my own spiritual benefit.

**T:** Jesus, I thank You for my pastor. In fact, I thank You for the pastor who baptized me and all pastors who have served my life as a Christian. Thank you for all the sermons that have clearly shown me my sin and delivered to me the free forgiveness of the Gospel because of Your sacrifice for me on the cross.

**C:** Lord, I confess that so often I fail to pray for my pastor. I fail to be gracious to his family. I do not pay attention to his preaching. I have gossiped and failed to love and defend him and “put the best construction on everything.” I deserve to have my faithful pastor taken away. Forgive me my many sins, and help me to do better. Help me especially to be a joy to my pastor and to encourage him in his difficult office.

**P:** Savior, bless my pastor with faithfulness to Your Word. Cause him to grow in knowledge of Your Word. Give him courage and strength for his tasks. I thank You for (name) and for all faithful pastors. Grant success to the work of our seminaries. Bless our professors and students. And give my pastor joy. I ask all this for Your sake alone. Amen.

*Through practice this will become second nature and a great blessing for meditation and prayer.*

### **Luther’s “Simple Way to Pray” can be boiled down to this:**

Pray the Catechism. The Catechism should always be on our minds and hearts, that the Lord’s Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Creed would be on our lips whenever we talk to God or to our neighbor. For Luther, prayer is bound to the meditation on the Lord’s Word. Studying and meditating on the Scriptures turns into prayer, and prayer likewise leads us back to the Scriptures and where to the Lord refreshes us with His gifts of life, salvation, and the forgiveness of our sins. The Lord speaks to us in His Word, and we respond, speaking to Him our thanks and making known our requests.