

How to Pray in Power Part 2: The Power of Sovereignty

August 27, 2023

Matthew 6:7-8

Prayer does not manipulate God or change His mind. Sacrifices in the OT were not for the purpose of gaining favor with God, they were sacrifices for sin. Obedience to God and His commands brought blessing. Eph. 1:11, we are "predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will." It is His will and His purposes that come to pass.

5 Purposes of Prayer Related to the Sovereignty of God:

- 1) **To Complete God's Decree:** God has decreed all things. Prayer does not change God's purposes, mind, or plan. The results of God's decree are set. Our prayers are a channel by which God's decree is accomplished. a) Elijah prayed for the rain, 1 Kgs 18:41-46. b) Jeremiah 33: 3, 6, 8, 9, God tells Jeremiah to pray to ask for mighty things. c) David prays to God asking for the peace of Jerusalem, Ps. 122:6. d) Jesus prayed to the Father for us to see His glory and be where He was, Jn. 10:27-29, 17:24-26. God has caused or allowed all things. He is the primary cause but uses us a secondary cause to bring it to pass.
- 2) **To Conform Our Wishes:** God uses prayer to conform our desires and wishes to His wishes, Jn. 16:23, 1 John 5:14. God will grant anything we ask according to His will. We know His will by knowing Scripture and having a proper view of Christ. We delight in His word, Ps. 37:4. We are saturated in God's will by His word in Ps. 119:38, 44, 50, 89, 97, 103-104, 160.
Our heart's desire will change to desire God's desires through knowing His will.
- 3) **To Confirm my Faith:** it is a regular, daily, reminder that God answers prayers, Ps. 145:18, 27:13. David reminded himself of God's goodness while alive.
- 4) **To Correct Our Soul:** it provides a corrective chastening. King Saul's prayer was not heard because of his wickedness, 1 Sam. 28:6. Israel was not heard by the Lord because of their iniquities, Is. 59:1-2. David knew if he kept sin in his heart, God would not hear, Ps. 66:18. God answers when He pleases as He pleases.
 - a. **Sometimes "Yes."** Nehemiah in Neh. 2:1-8. David in Ps. 40:1-2. Bartimaeus in Mk. 10:49-52.
 - b. **Sometimes "No."** Moses from entering the land, Deut. 3:23-29. David's son with Bathsheba, 2 Sam. 12:16, 19. The mother of James and John to sit on either side of Jesus' throne, Matt. 20:20-28. Paul's thorn in the flesh, 2 Cor. 12:8-10.
 - c. **Sometimes "Not Yet."** Haman felt God had left him, Ps. 88:14. Paul hindered from reaching Rome, Rom. 1:13. Paul returning to Thessalonica, 1 Thess. 3:10.
 - d. **Sometimes "Yes," but not for the reason requested:** Saul as king over Israel, 1 Sam. 8:4-10, 18. The quail sent upon the Israelites, Num. 11:32-33.
- 5) **To Commune with God:** prayer is a real interaction with God and my soul. It is a response to the revelation of God and His Word. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are involved in our prayers. The Father hears us, is called Abba Father, the throne room is opened to us Heb. 4:16. The Son always lives to make intercession for us, Heb. 7:25. The Holy Spirit prays on our behalf when we don't know what to pray or perfects our prayer to the Father, Rom. 8:26-27.

The sovereignty of God and prayer come together. God's intended outcome always better than our prayers alone.

Further Discussion and Application

What things should we be praying for knowing that God's will is sovereign and certain to come to pass? What requests in prayer are always God's will? What requests might not be His will? 1 John 5:14, Jn. 16:23.

How are our prayer God's will even if He says, "No," to them? Why do we keep praying and asking Him for them even if they are answered "No?" What examples in Scripture do we have that demonstrate that see our prayers answered doesn't mean we should give up?

What are some of the descriptions of delighting in the Lord in Ps. 37? In the chapter, what actions and responses to God demonstrate us delighting in the Lord?

The correction of our soul is a blessing of prayer. What do we learn from David, Saul, and Isaiah about having sin in our lives and God's ear towards us? What is the solution then to God hearing our prayer? Read 1 Peter 5:5. Who receives grace and is accepted by God?

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are involved in our prayers to them. What confidence does that give us when we pray? What prayers might we begin praying that would bring Him more glory and honor?

Why is humility and a contrite heart necessary to approach God? How must we approach God and prepare to commune with God?