

The Bounty of His Hand

The prayer of petition

Introduction

So what about asking God for things? Shouldn't we just thank Him and trust Him? And what difference does it make anyway? Won't things work out anyway?

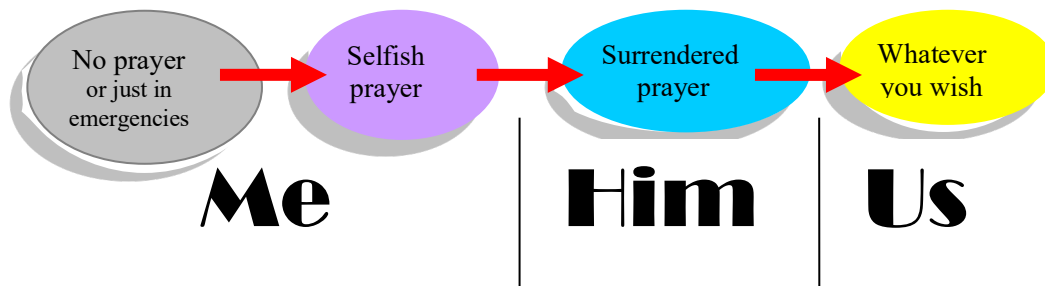
1. Helpful illustrations

- a) spiritual “bombs” (power)
- b) the guns of Navarone (aim)
- c) fireman’s hose (perseverance)

“My creed leads me to think that prayer is effective, and surely a day spent in asking God to overrule all events for good is not a waste of time. Still there is a great feeling that when a man is praying he is doing nothing, and this feeling makes us put our main efforts into work and activity, sometimes even to the hurrying over or even to the neglect of prayer.

Do we not rest in our day too much on the arm of flesh? Cannot the same wonders be done now as of old? Do not the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth still to show himself strong on behalf of those who put their trust in him? Oh, that God would give me a more practical faith in him! **Where is now the Lord God of Elijah? He is waiting for Elijah to call on him.**” (James Gilmore of Mongolia)

2. Growth in the prayer of petition



John 15:7

“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you.”

Ice cream store

Better than a magic lamp. Unlimited wishes!

He wants you to ask. But doesn't he already know? This binds us to heaven. It promotes humility. It is God's chosen channel.

It's not a concession, it's a command!

Testimony: praying for laborers for Argentina. How many do you want?

What if I pray “wrong”?

Rom 8: 26-27 "And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to *the will of God*. "

"When we say that God answers prayer we do not mean by that God always literally gives us everything we ask for; but we do mean this, that when he withholds from us what we have asked from him in silver it is only so he might bestow it upon us in gold."
(Charles Spurgeon)

3. The issue of Desire

What do you want? Does it matter?
Strong desires make strong prayers. (E.M. Bounds)

Matthew 15:28 “It shall be done for you as you **wish**.”

Matthew 20:21 “What do you **wish**?”

John 5:6 “Do you **wish** to get well?”

Matthew 20:32 “What do you **want** me to do for you?” (Bartimaeus)

Wrong desires

Jn. 8:44 “you want to do the **desires** of your father (the devil)”

Eph. 2:3 “Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the **desires** of the flesh and of the mind and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.”

Several quotes by E. M. Bounds on desire:

The secret of unanswered barren prayers is found in the weakness of our desires. The neglect of prayer is the fearful token of dead spiritual desires. The soul has turned away from God when desire after him no longer presses him to the closet. There is no true praying without desire.

Do our desires not map out the region covered by our prayers? Desire is intense and narrow – it cannot spread itself over a wide field. It wants a few things and it wants them badly – so badly that nothing but God's will can content it with anything else.

Do not our prayers often lie in the sickly regions of a mere wish, or the feeble expression of a memorized concern or want? Sometimes our prayers are but stereotyped editions of set phrases ... whose freshness and life went out years ago.

It is the flame of a present and filling desire that mounts to God. It is the burden of a weighty desire that sobers, and makes restless and reduces to quiet the soul in its mighty wrestlings. It is desire that arms prayer with a thousand pleas, and robes it with invincible courage and all-conquering force.

Desire is said to be the will in action. Desire has choice and fixedness and flame in it. Prayer ought to enter into the spiritual habits, but it ceases to be prayer when it is carried on by habit only. It is the depth and intensity of the spiritual desires that give intensity and depth to prayer. Desire gives fervor to prayer. The soul cannot be listless when some great desire fixes and inflames it. **Strong desires make strong prayers.** (E.M. Bounds)

4. Prayer list - Using index cards.

“I thank my God on every remembrance of you.” (Philippians 1:3)

High priest entering the presence of the Lord with the stones over his chest. (Exodus 28)

Different kinds of petitions

- 1) Maintenance (remembering people in prayer)
- 2) Crisis (calling out for help)
- 3) Specific needs (praying down rain)

Practice on 5 cards:

- 1) immediate family members
- 2) leaders at your church
- 3) Current specific requests
- 4) extended family
- 5) government leaders.

Other possibilities

Coworkers, needs for provision, guidance, people in your area of ministry

A particular country that God lays on your heart a decision to be made

Requests for your city/state, neighbors, praise for answered prayers