

Desperation or Entitlement: What Does Your Prayer Life Look Like?

Do you expect to receive when you pray? How do you approach God? Do you come with defined needs, or do you default to: "If the Lord wills"?

The story of the woman with the issue of blood (Matt. 9:20-22, Mark 5:25-34, Luke 8:43-48), reveals a person who demonstrates faith accompanied with expectation.

James 2:17 says, "So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead." This woman's faith drove her to action. Despite knowing Jesus only by reputation, she desperately believed that "perhaps" He could be the answer.

She stepped out at the mere possibility of a miracle; the miracle was not guaranteed. Remember, the New Testament had not been written. She didn't know Jesus as one can know Him today. All she knew about Him was hearsay; nonetheless, her expectation led to action despite uncertainty. She risked much for a chance to touch the Rabbi.

How often have we taken the safer course and pacified our prayers, leaving out the specifics? Do we consider it a grand gesture of faith to leave it in God's hands and accept any result, when in actuality this is the opposite of faith? I believe most prayers remain unanswered for the lack of courage to define the need and move with expectation.

When we fail to boldly make our requests known, we may be actually demonstrating a lack of faith that yields no results at all. Why? Perhaps we fear God will not answer us, and leaving things to providence is safer.

Certainly we ought to always pray according to the Lord's will, but this is a direction of prayer, not an excuse to be vague. In other words, you ought to know God's will in many instances and then pray it. Instead, we often sit idly by, waiting for God to move, when God is waiting on us to move toward Him in faith. At times when we may not know God's will on a matter, the Bible reveals enough to keep us moving.

Philippians 4:6 says, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with gratitude, make your requests known to God."

When people approached Jesus, He often asked, "What do you need?" He wanted to know their need. To state a specific need turns handouts into miracles and requires humility.

Do you approach God for handouts or for the miraculous? The attitude of "whatever you want Jesus" instead of "Jesus, Son of David have mercy!" demonstrates desperation over entitlement.

The question you must ask yourself is this: "How badly do I want it?"

The church must become bold, specific and intentional in prayer, discerning God's will and lining up personal wants with God's desires.

When we begin push toward Jesus through the obstacles and excuses, we will begin to see a true move of God. Unlike the woman in this passage, for us it's never "perhaps." We are guaranteed a result when we come with faith and expectation.

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