

Joel Hunter: 5 Prayers God Always Answers

How is a guy supposed to pray? These five prayers are simple, and they always get results!

Prayer is tough for men. We like to have the answers before we talk, even to God. We are not much for “processing out loud” like our female counterparts. And we don’t like to get turned down, discovering that what we were asking for was not in the will of God. It’s not that we get mad at God, but we think, How could we not have known that?

On the other (folded) hand, we don’t want a wimpy prayer life that is so general we can’t tell whether it was God who answered, or it was just a good bet on our parts. Safe prayers are like bikes with training wheels: We think we are being grown-up in our faith, when we are really immature.

Immature faith doesn’t want to risk a fall so it only prays prayers that (in the flesh) have a good chance of success without God’s intervention. Success may even rest on some human device.

But grown-up faith trusts fully in God. It “goes for it” in prayers. If God doesn’t choose to answer in the way we were expecting, yes, we crash and get hurt. But at least we know we didn’t fake it, just pretending we were trusting.

So how is a guy to pray? One solution is to pray to-the-point prayers that we know God will answer in His own way. Here are five prayers that God always answers:

1: “Lord, get me out of this temptation!” Believe it or not, when we earnestly pray this prayer, we have to climb over God’s impediments to sin!

Not only does He promise a way out (see 1 Cor. 10:13), He also gives us disincentives.

When I first entered the ministry, I was still smoking cigarettes. It was a nasty habit left over from college, and I wanted God to take it away.

I prayed for help. I then stopped to buy a pack, miles away from the church, and the attendant recognized me: "Say, aren't you a minister?" I bought them anyhow, lit up in the car as I had a 100 times before and dropped the ash in my lap.

Swerving, I pulled over. A young man in my youth group came up to the car and wanted a ride to the church.

We may decide to overcome God's way out, but we will be both miserable and pitiful at the same time.

2: "Lord, amaze me with a glimpse of the supernatural." As shallow as this sounds, this isn't the same as a generation always looking for signs.

This prayer is a request to see God's hand in our lives and appreciate His nearness. He loves to reveal Himself above all rational explanation, but we do not usually ask or look.

My friend Vernon loves to tell the good news to people at God's opportunity. Recently, his heart was quickened to pray for opportunities only God could arrange.

Soon he was invited to emcee a totally secular convention in Europe and challenged to "somehow work in the gospel." When he got home, someone who swore he never wanted to hear the good news asked Vernon questions about Jesus Christ.

We ask for healing in the face of illness, rescue in the face of danger and miracles in the midst of hopelessness. Why do we not ask for glimpses of His supernatural presence every day? Isn't He "with us?" (See Matt. 1:23.)

3: "Lord, show me better ways to love and serve." Most guys are bored with their own routines and are frustrated with their own lack of creativity. Why not ask God to break you out of your rut?

A word of caution: If you pray this prayer, you will discover that people are yelling at you for a reason. It is God's ventriloquism trying to get you to see a new perspective.

Eddie has a ministry to professionals and is very efficient. He felt convicted, though, that he might not be really compassionate. He prayed a version of this prayer and got his answer traffic!

Instead of a competitive response to a rude driver, it occurred to him to pray for the hostile driver. Then he decided to let others into the lane as a way to serve and began praying for them. He now has a ministry on the highway.

If you can customize your service to people (that's what God did in Jesus), you will find new ways to serve.

4: "Lord, use me for Your purpose in this situation." The great adequacy of God is that He can use us when we do not know what to say or do or even think! Many times we are reluctant to enter into a potential place of ministry because we think we surely would mess it up.

Herb was an introvert. He dreaded going to the funeral home and speaking to his friend's widow. He knew anything that came out of his mouth would sound trite and stupid.

He rehearsed, "You have my sympathies," but when he got in front of the widow, all he could do was break down in tears and hug her.

Years later, I asked a young widow what was the most helpful thing that was said to her during her husband's funeral. She replied: "I don't remember many of the words, only the hugs.

Those were God's arms for me."

We think people need a professional, rather than an available Christian. Well, unless we are talking about medical care, we couldn't be more wrong. Second Corinthians 3:5-6 is a reminder to pray ("...our adequacy is from God") before we act!

5: "Lord, glorify Your name." There are many times when I have no idea what God wants me to pray. I can see the good and bad in each alternative.

There was an old man that I had loved dearly. His wife had gone to be with the Lord. He was tired of living without her, even though he was still a great blessing to any who knew him.

He had suffered a massive stroke. I could pray for healing on this side of the curtain or perfection on the other side. What should I pray?

I remembered what Jesus prayed facing death, so I figured it was still a pretty solid prayer. To this day, I use it when I don't know what else to pray: "Father, glorify Your name." He always does.

Joel Hunter has been the senior pastor of an innovative, nondenominational church in Florida (). While he was a United Methodist pastor in Indiana, he was continually awakened in the middle of the night in response to a small group of women praying in Florida that God would disturb the heart of the pastor who was supposed to come to them. He did.