

4 Secrets to Answered Prayer

“I beseech You, O Lord God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and mercy for those who love Him and keep His commandments. Let Your ear now be attentive, and Your eyes open, that You may hear the prayer of Your servant, which I now pray before You, day and night, for the children of Israel Your servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against You ... O Lord, I implore You, let Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant, and to the prayer of Your servants who delight to revere Your name. And let Your servant prosper this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man” (Neh. 1:5-7, 11).

Here are four secrets to answered prayer from the life of Nehemiah:

Base your request on God’s character. Pray as though you know God will answer you: “I’m expecting you to answer this prayer because of who you are. You are a faithful God. You are a great God. You are a loving God. You are a wonderful God. You can handle this problem, God!”

Confess the sins of which you’re aware. After Nehemiah based his prayer on who God is, he confessed his sins. It wasn’t Nehemiah’s fault that Israel went into captivity. He wasn’t even born when it happened; he was most likely born in captivity. Yet, he’s including himself in the national sins. He says, “I’ve been a part of the problem.”

Claim the promises of God. Nehemiah prays to the Lord, saying, “I want you to remember what you told your servant Moses.” Can you imagine saying “remember” to God? Nehemiah reminds God of a promise he made to the nation of Israel. In effect, he prays, “God, you warned through Moses that if we were unfaithful, we would lose the land of Israel. But you also promised that if we repent, you’d give it back to us.”

Does God have to be reminded? No. Does he forget what he's promised? No. Then why do we do this? Because it helps us remember what God has promised.

Be very specific in what you ask for. If you want specific answers to prayer, then make specific requests. If your prayers consist of general requests, how will you know if they're answered?

Nehemiah is not hesitant to pray for success. He's very bold in his praying. Have you ever prayed, "Lord, make me successful?" If you haven't, why haven't you? What is the alternative—a failure?

Is it OK to ask God to make you successful? It all depends on your definition of success! I believe a good definition of success is this: "fulfilling God's purpose for my life in faith, love and the power of the Holy Spirit and expecting the results from God." That is a worthy life-objective that you should be able to pray for with confidence.

Talk It Over

- Consider this: If you can't ask God to make you a success at what you're doing, you should be doing something else. God doesn't want you to waste your life.
- What are the promises of God you need to claim today?
- Why is it important to be able to recognize answered prayer? {eoa}

Rick Warren is the founding pastor of Saddleback Church. His book, *The Purpose Driven Church*, was named one of the 100 Christian books that changed the 20th century. He is also founder of , a global Internet community for pastors.

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