

Can Prayer Cause God to Relent?

Prayer can cause God to relent. Many times the fate of the world is not in the hands of governors or kings, but in the hands of mighty intercessors. You, too, can influence society as did Abraham and Daniel and others in the Old Testament (see Gen. 18:17-30; Num. 14:11-23; 1 Sam. 7:8-13; 2 Kings 20:1-11; Dan. 9:2,3). It is exciting to realize that your prayers not only affect those you are praying for, but can also help to mold national or international events. As you read the following passage, notice how God changed His mind based on Moses' prayer:

"But Moses sought the favor of the Lord his God, and said, 'Lord, why does Your wrath burn against Your people, whom You have brought forth from the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians speak, saying, "With evil *intent* He brought them out, to kill them in the mountains and to destroy them from the face of the earth"? Turn from Your fierce wrath and relent of this harm against Your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Yourself, and said to them, "I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heavens, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give to your descendants, and they will inherit *it* forever."' Then the Lord relented of the harm which He said He would do to His people" (Ex. 32:11-14).

Not only does the Lord change His mind when His people pray, but He also gives revelation knowledge and the mind of God through His Holy Spirit. As you pray, He will pinpoint a problem area in someone's life or in a situation, allowing you to see as He sees. Luke tells us that "all things have been handed over to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son,

and *anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him*" (Luke 10:22, italics added). The role of intercession is a sacred trust. The intercessor must carefully guard the secrets God reveals during prayer and be obedient to share only when the Lord directs. Seek His clear guidance on the proper follow-up of His revelation (see Matt. 11:25,26; Phil. 3:15).

As you continue in prayer, the kingdom of God will become real through the miracles of God operating in your life. You will see the manifest power of God confirm your spiritual walk. Jesus said that "these signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it shall not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover" (Mark 16:17,18). Do not be afraid to believe God for the miraculous.

The Warfare of Prayer

But remember, you have an enemy. Ephesians tells us that "our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places" (6:12).

You are called to do spiritual warfare through prayer over Satan's strongholds until you win! Satan will usually attack us most in our greatest area of strength. I used to think the reverse was true—that he would attack most in our area of greatest weakness. But I have found that in our areas of weakness, we are more apt to call upon the Lord and rely upon Him. In our areas of strength, however, we tend to rely on self and often find ourselves burning out from fighting our battles alone. Every area of your life is subject to enemy attack, so you must fight on your knees before you can stand on your mission field.

Jesus Himself had to battle Satan through prayer for His

ministry and in other situations. We find this clearly illustrated in His wilderness temptation. He experienced spiritual warfare and won before He ever went out into public ministry. You, too, must win before you can fully function in what God has called you to do. The success of your Christian life is dependent on winning ... winning in prayer (see Josh. 1:3,11,15; Matt. 4:11; Mark 3:27).

Daniel's spiritual battle clearly illustrates the war that occurs in the heavenlies:

"Then he said to me, 'Do not be afraid, Daniel. For from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and to humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come because of your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstood me for twenty-one days. So, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia'" (Dan. 10:12-13).

Daniel's story gives hope for those who are in the midst of battle. Don't give up. You are in a win-win situation. God is for you, and the battle is the Lord's.

The Invitation of Prayer

Prayer is not just a call to war; it is also an invitation to rest. Jesus said, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with gratitude, make your requests known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will protect your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:6-7).

Knowing that God is on your side will help you to enter into the rest He offers. He invites you to give Him your problems, cares, concerns and worries (see 1 Pet. 5:7; Matt. 6:25,26). "Cast your burden on the Lord, and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be moved" (Ps. 55:22). Cease striving and partner with Him. He loves you and longs to share His heart with you. He has called you, dear child of God, to

rest in His love as you come away with Him in prayer. Will you say yes to that invitation today? {eoa}

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