

For Effective Prayers, Keep This Vital Principle in Mind

Years ago, I discovered the secret to having your prayers answered. I am sure I was not the first to make this discovery.

In fact, if I was a better student of the Word, I would have figured it out earlier. But once I did, I let nothing hold me back! Let me share it with you.

First we have some amazing promises in Scripture.

"I will do whatever you ask in My name, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it" (John 14:13-14, MEV).

"Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you will received them, and you will have them" (Mark 11:24, MEV).

At first glance, most people get these passages wrong. One well-known teacher taught that these promises are just like a *blank check* that Yeshua has signed. We just need to fill in the amount and cash it. Indeed, many prosperity preachers *misuse* verses like these to appeal to our most selfish desires.

Be Honest, It Doesn't Work!

Let's be honest. If I pray right now in the name of Yeshua for a million-dollar house (albeit in Tel Aviv that won't buy much) it is not going to happen. If I ask God for a yacht, using the name of Yeshua like it is the New Covenant equivalent of "Abracadabra," it is not going to work.

There two reasons why. First, everything we receive from God is supposed to come from and through a loving relationship

with Him, not through executing a formula. And the second reason, which is what we want to focus on today, is issue of *God's will*.

Let Your Will Be Done

God is very strong-willed. He is not manipulated by our will. He has a plan for us and indeed He delights in blessing us. But Yeshua is not a Santa Claus to whom we present our list of goodies. Nor is He some genie sent to grant our wishes.

All these promises were given with the *holy assumption* that we are praying as Yeshua taught us to pray: "Let your will be done on Earth as it is in heaven." The children of God, those who have received mercy and the gift of salvation, are assumed to not misuse God's generosity for their own selfish desires, but use the name of Yeshua to pray down God's will.

Faith or Manipulation?

The underlying theme of the New Covenant is that we are dead to ourselves and alive to God. So, when a preacher uses biblical promises to appeal to carnal desires, often in an attempt to get you to give him or her something, he or she is using manipulation and is in error.

Conversely, when we are praying in agreement with God's will, *nothing can stop us*. For this reason, I try and pray every day, "God let your will be done in my life as it has been preordained in heaven."

God's Will Is Not Weak

In the past the Lord has revealed to us His will regarding certain positions in ministry. I simply prayed, "God, if this is Your will, no one can stop you." In my first position in ministry, as a \$4,000 dollar-a-year youth leader, there was fierce opposition. This was before I understood these principles. Despite having the confidence of the senior

leader, one eldership couple aggressively opposed the idea of me functioning as the youth leader. They felt they should have been in that position.

I panicked a little—I really wanted to be the youth leader and was pretty sure it was God's will. But there was no reason to panic. God's will prevailed and in short order the other couple left the congregation. It was during this time that another youth leader, Greg Zetts, said something powerful that has never left me: "God's will is not some weak membrane that can be easily thwarted."

I have learned over the years *there is no reason to panic*. If it is God's will, He can do it. My job is to agree in prayer with *His will* as Yeshua taught and do nothing in the flesh to try and make it happen.

We have a Part to Play

While God's will is strong, we do have a part to play in battling to see it come to pass—why else would Yeshua ask us to pray that way? But we do not battle using manipulation, selfish ambition or jockeying for position—no, we battle in prayer and fasting.

Just a few weeks ago a friend called me. The Lord has placed him in a new position in ministry, but there were those resisting him. I said to him, "This is easy, we simply will pray for God's will and battle in prayer." We prayed with authority and faith that everyone with wrong, selfish desires over this ministry would walk away and that only those God had called to be in it would remain." I talked to him a week later and the change was amazing. Those who were opposing him were no longer.

Prayer and Fasting for God's Will

Several years ago when Elana and I returned to Tel Aviv after serving several years in Jerusalem, we were not sure where we

should be. I prayed and fasted, asking God for *His plan*. Out of the blue, Ari Sorko-Ram called me asked us to return to Tiferet Yeshua—the congregation we were a part of when we first moved to Israel. The next day I was hungry—for the first time in five days. We had our answer.

That led not only to several years of fruitful partnership in media ministry with Maoz Israel but eventually to me leading the congregation for three years—one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. But we didn't want any of it *unless it was God's will*. Once we are willing to get our will in line with God's, the sky is the limit.

Praying for the Right Order

Another friend inherited a ministry where one of the board members had an opposite vision of his. I said to him, "You can't coexist. One of you needs to resign." I started praying for him that God's will would be done on that board. One week later he told me that without any pressure or ultimatums, the other board member suddenly resigned!

No Witchcraft

To be clear, we are not talking about praying for bad things to happen to other people. God forbid! That is witchcraft! We are talking about praying for God's perfect will for all involved.

We can have God's will, once we crucify our own. And God does want to bless us! I do believe in prosperity. As we are faithful, God wants to bless us with every kind of blessing, whether a home to live in or a promotion at work. God loves to bless. But He doesn't want to give us more than we can handle. All we need to do is just look to the entertainment world to see how getting rich quick can destroy you (Lindsey Lohan, Miley Cyrus, Justin Bieber). Asher Intrater once said that the reason he doesn't play the lottery is because God doesn't bless that way. God gives wealth little by little or else it

will destroy us.

“Wealth gained by vanity will be diminished, but he who gathers by labor will increase” (Prov. 13:11, MEV).

So here are the keys:

- Conquer selfish desires.
- Ask God to show you His will—His perfect desire.
- Begin to boldly proclaim His will and take hold of Him in prayer and fasting.

Then we can ask for “anything” in His name and He will do it, because we would never dream to ask for something that is not according to His will.

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