

Prayer and Humility

Prayer, when it is defined as asking or petitioning God for anything, is not, of itself, a relationship with God that enables a Holy Spirit connection with Him. There are other elements that bring this about. The major one is humility toward Him. The definition of humility that I like best is in 1 Peter 5:5-7, where it says: "Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."

When prayer is combined with humility, it has a lot more impact. Philippians 4: 5-7 says: "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." The unconditional trust in God of being anxious for nothing precedes prayer, and results in the peace of God that passes all understanding which keeps our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. This is humility toward God. Then prayer follows. Prayer is talking to God. What precedes it is our relationship and trust in God. The order is important because righteousness is important when we pray. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).

This theme runs throughout the whole Bible. Psalm 91:14-15 says: "Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him." Throughout the psalms, answered prayer is connected with prior obedience to God.

Prayer can go unanswered. James 4:3 says: "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." Lust is the opposite of humility. In 4:10, James tells us to "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up." Lust is our attempt to lift ourselves without God. We incorrectly assume that some earthly object is going to bring us peace and contentment in life; but we never get enough to satisfy us. This is why lusts are referred to as corrupting and deceitful (Ephesians 4:22). 2 Peter 1:4 speaks of "having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." Lust is what keeps us inordinately attached to the things of this world and dissatisfied even though it may temporarily appear to satisfy us.

God wants us to ask and pray. Without prayer, an outcome would be different. God merges prayer with an event before He answers. He knows what we need, but He requires it anyway and takes our prayers into account. This is why we are to pray without ceasing. Even when God has made a promise of future deliverance, He has His prophets pray for the deliverance. An example of this is in Daniel 9:2-19 where even though Daniel knows that the Babylonian desolation of Jerusalem is supposed to last 70 years according to Jeremiah 29:10, Daniel goes into fasting and prayer, and asks God to not postpone His commitment.

"Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us" (1 John 3:21-24).

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