

GOD'S PURPOSE FOR PRAYER

1 John 5:14 James 4:3

Introduction: "Oh God, I saw the van of my dreams yesterday and it's only \$46,000. Would you please grant me this prayer?" "Lord, if you will answer this prayer I'll not miss church for a whole year..."

"Lord, if you'll just answer this one prayer, I won't bother you any more..."

-What if a person could make deals with God? What kind of peace would one have in praying to a God whose mind could be changed from day to day as people demanded or made deals? When two teams are playing one another and both teams pray to win, whose side does God take?

-It's a fact! People "pray" to get from God whatever they want and are not really interested in what God has in mind if His interest is different from theirs.

It is God's unchangeableness that is the greatest encouragement to pray. Why does God want His children to pray? Just what is prayer to God anyhow?

I. GOD IS HONORED WHEN HIS CHILDREN PRAY

1. When God's children pray they are recognizing that He is in control of all things.
2. When God's children pray, they are bowing themselves before Him, worshiping Him.
3. When God's children pray, they are recognizing and acknowledging their dependency upon Him.

II. GOD BLESSES HIS CHILDREN WHEN THEY PRAY

1. God's children grow in His grace (undeserved favor) when they pray.
2. God's children grow in humility as they bow before Him.
3. God's children grow in faith as they trust and believe that God cares and will answer.
4. God's children grow in love for God and others.
5. God's children learn how to appreciate what God has already done for them.

III. GOD'S CHILDREN ASK GOD FOR THINGS THROUGH PRAYER

1. Why ask God for things if He already knows what is needed?
2. Prayer is not informing God of anything. Prayer is confessing one's needs before God.
3. Prayer is not intended for changing God's purpose or mind.
 - Prayer is a means God works through to bring about His will and purpose.
 - Elijah prayed for rain, knowing God said it was not going to rain.

- Daniel prayed for Israel's deliverance from the 70 years captivity but he knew that God was going to keep Israel captives.

4. Prayer is asking God to work His will however He chooses to do so.
 - Prayer is claiming the promises God has made.

IV. GOD AND HIS CHILDREN MUST AGREE UPON WHAT IS BEING ASKED FOR IN PRAYER

1. When any of God's children ask God to do things a certain way, expecting Him to do as they ask, then God is reduced to a servant doing whatever He is expected to do.
2. When God's children go to God in prayer, tell Him their need and then leave it to God to answer their prayer as He pleases, it brings honor and glory to God.
3. When God's children go to God in prayer and the prayer seems to be unanswered, it sometimes causes one's faith to weaken.
 - The two sisters of Lazarus sent Jesus a message about Lazarus being very sick and to come help. They said no more.
 - Paul had a reoccurring problem he called a "thorn" in his side and prayed often for it to be removed, but it never was.
4. When God's children's hearts unite with God's heart then there is unity and therefore communication. *"...ye ask, and receive not because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts..." (James 4:3)*
5. When God's children in prayer ask "in the name of Jesus," it is to ask for what Jesus would ask for. Would Jesus ask God for some of the things others ask Him for?

CONCLUSION:

1. What is God' purpose for prayer?
 - Prayer is the means for God's children to go to God and make their needs known, and leaving the rest to Him, accepting whatever God thinks best.
2. Prayer is not dictating to God.
3. Prayer is not asking God to change His mind or plans.
4. Prayer is depending on God and admitting, confessing helplessness and asking for help.
5. If God were to answer every prayer as requested, what kind of world would we have?