

God's Sovereignty & Our Prayers: Does Prayer Change Things?

Systematic Theology

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Luke 11:9-10

- “When God wills the end...he also wills the means...thus, prayer does not change what he has purposed to do. It is the means by which he accomplishes his end. It is vital, then, that a prayer be uttered, for without it the desired result will not come to pass.” - Millard Erickson, *Introduction to Christian Doctrine*, p.135.

1) Prayer is commanded

- Philippians 4:6 *do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*
- Isaiah 55:6 *Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near;*
- Luke 11:9-10 *And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.*

2) Prayer influences God's interaction in our life

- Daniel 10:12 *Then he said to me, "Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words.*
- 2 Chronicles 7:14 *if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.*

2) Prayer influences God's interaction in your life

- 1 John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*
- James (the entire book)
- James 5:16 *The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.*

2) Prayer influences God's interaction in your life

- Acts 4:29-31 *And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, ³⁰ while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” ³¹ And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.*

3) Prayer is not about trying to getting God to do our will but aligning ourselves with His will...prayer changes us

- Matthew 6:10 *Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*

4) Real prayer is continual

Parable of the Persistent Widow

- Luke 18:1-8 And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. ² He said, “In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. ³ And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, ‘Give me justice against my adversary.’ ⁴ For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, ‘Though I neither fear God nor respect man, ⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.’ ” ⁶ And the Lord said, “Hear what the unrighteous judge says. ⁷ And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? ⁸ Will he delay long over them? ⁸ I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”

5) Prayer is the lifeline to the power of God

- “The man who mobilizes the Christian church to pray will make the greatest contribution to world evangelization in history.” - Andrew Murray

Jonathan Edwards sermon, *Hypocrites
Deficient in the Duty of Prayer*

“However hypocrites may continue for a season in the duty of prayer, yet it is their manner, after a while, in a great measure, to leave it off.”

Discussion

- What are some of the temptations that cause you to stop praying for a certain need?
- How do you become “deficient in the duty of prayer?”
- What do you think it says about you when you don’t give priority to prayer?
- How can you begin to practice the discipline of prayer?