

Because You Prayed

Scripture Reference:

Isaiah 37:5-6 & 20 (NIV) “When King Hezekiah’s officials came to Isaiah, Isaiah said to them, “Tell your master, ‘This is what the LORD says: Do not be afraid of what you have heard—those words with which the underlings of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. Now, LORD our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, LORD, are the only God.””

Main Idea: When we pray, doubts are able to creep in because we do not really know relationally or intimately, the God whom we are making are requests known to. As believers we must make sure that our approach to prayer is relationship based not transaction based.

Three purposes of prayer:

- 1. Strengthens our Spiritual Core** - In the same way that a lack of strength in our abdomen can lead to back pain, a lack of zeal in our prayer life can lead to doubt and shame rising up in our hearts and minds. Our confidence in praying is directly related to how well we know God. We need not to be anxious when we truly know how our Heavenly Father feels about us.

Philippians 4:6-7 (NIV) “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

- 2. Helps Us to Obey God** - Praying people are obedient people because the more we pray the less we demand our own way. The key function of prayer is not getting our way but surrendering to His will. Prayer isn’t just asking for a way out, but a way through.

Matthew 26:42 (NIV) “He went away a second time and prayed, “My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.”

Question: Can you think of a time in your life where you prayed God’s will even though you knew it may result in your own pain? Can you look back now and see how God used your pain to bless others in the same way He used Jesus’ pain to deliver the world?

- 3. Shifts Our Focus to His will** – We must learn to pray God’s will before we ask for our bread. The disciples asked Jesus how to pray not because they had never been shown but because Jesus’ prayers were effective.

Luke 11:2 (NIV): “Father hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread.”

James 4:3 (NIV): “When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.”

Question: Have you ever noticed yourself becoming offended at God because a prayer that lined up with your will did not seem like a priority to Him?

Closing: Prayer is not about convincing a reluctant God to give me my way. It is about reminding ourselves that He is in control. Hezekiah laid out the letters before God of what the enemy said and asked God what He was going to do about it. We can feel confident to bring anything before God that is bothering us or weighing us down knowing He truly does have the whole world in His hands. So, how do we pray before we petition? Habakkuk 2:1 teaches us five practical ways to develop our prayer life and relationship with God, *“I will stand at my watch and station myself on the ramparts; I will look to see what he will say to me, and what answer I am to give to this complaint.”* Our prayer life and relationship with God needs a plan, a place, a willingness to wait, a commitment to look to His Word, and a readiness to answer.

Call to action: The biggest enemies to the prayer life of a believer are not planning the time and rushing through it when we have some time. Just like anything in our lives that is important we must plan to pray. Secondly, we must not rush. If God doesn't have time to speak our prayer isn't relational, it's transactional. Set aside a time that you will pray, and make sure to leave some time where you are able to wait on God to speak through His Word.