

Prayers That Frustrate

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In my testimony about prayer, I spoke about knowing God's will and the prayers of faith that move mountains. Mark 11:22 – 23 says, "And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith."

Faith is the key to how to pray. Hebrews 11:3 says, "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." In other words, to have faith in God is to have understanding.

Elijah demonstrated this kind of seeing faith in 1Ki 18:36, which says, "And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word."

This is the kind of faith you need. You need seeing faith. The seeing faith from God. The faith that gives understanding.

In my testimony about facing my personal crisis with cancer, I said that the key that unlocked my understanding of prayers that move mountains was when I understood Mark 11:22. Have faith in God. Know what God wants you to pray for, then pray for it, fully confident and believing that it will happen.

The prayers of faith move mountains because it is God's will.

But there is another kind of prayer that I want to address this evening. There are the prayers that frustrate. These are prayers of uncertainty and a lack of understanding.

When the doctor told me that I had cancer, I felt like I was in a slow-motion melodrama. What should I say? What should I do? How do I prepare for my death? How do I prepare my family for my death?

A dilemma challenged me. How should I pray? Should I pray for my life or not? I talked with Br. Brian about this. He said that he was praying for my healing.

If I prayed without knowing what to pray for, then how could I believe without doubt? It is not possible.

I had no doubt that God could heal. The question was would He heal? Without it revealed to me, I had reason to doubt. The prayers that frustrate are prayers contrary to God's will.

What if you examine yourself and do not see a problem of lacking faith in God or even of lacking love for God. In other words, you really do want God's will to be done in your life and are more than eager to believe and accept His will, if you only knew what it was.

I can hear the cry now: Lord, tell me what to pray for, and I will pray earnestly, believing with all my heart, shedding all doubt. Please Lord, just show me the prayer you want me to pray, and I will get on my knees! How many here would turn down the opportunity to pray such a prayer?

I could pray, thy will be done. Whatever that was. Prayers that frustrate are prayers only for your will, not God's.

I will tell you why there is so much confusion and frustration about praying with absolute certainty in every prayer you offer. The fact is that not all prayer answers are revealed by God. That is, God does not always reveal how you should pray. God does not always want you to move mountains. He does not want all mountains moved. He does not want to manifest amazing miracles all the time.

Applying the promise in Mark 11:22-23 to every prayer causes unrealistic expectations and frustration.

And if I demand to know what God wants me to pray for every time I pray, I am not praying in His will. Some of you may be puzzled by this claim. And that makes my point. We frustrate ourselves with unrealistic expectations and subsequently discourage ourselves from praying. God does not always reveal what to pray for. Therefore, pray His will be done. This is God's will. (Matthew 6:10).

Most of our prayers are offered for what we want to happen. I am not talking about selfish prayers. I am talking about prayers for God's blessings and asking for things that you think should or want to happen. And this is OK.

This is OK when you are walking with God, in His Word, and living for Him. It is this kind of life that blends your heart with His. His will is your will. His goals are your goals. His desires are your goals. It is at this point when you experience Psalm 37:4-5, which says "Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass."

Mt 26:42 records Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane when "He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." Jesus said, not my will but thy will be done. You can pray for change in circumstances even of those circumstances that God has asked you to endure. Was this a lack of faith on Jesus' part? Obviously not. By faith, He knew what His Father required of Him. But He was expressing His preference. He was willing to endure the suffering, but he did not want to endure it, if it could be avoided.

Likewise, Job prayed this way often. In one prayer recorded in Job 6:8, he says, 'Oh that I might have my request; and that God would grant me the thing that I long for!'

And Paul said in Ro 1:10 that he was, 'Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you.'

I struggled in my own time of crisis after finding out about having cancer. It was difficult for me to pray for my life if it was God's will that I die. I am willing and ready to go. But after counsel and prayer, God gave me reasons to pray for my life.

Like Christ, I was resigned to accept whatever God's will was for me, but unlike Christ, I did not have to die, at that time anyway. And I was resolved to pray for God's intervention to spare me from death. I prayed earnestly and confidently. That prayer was answered.

Some day we will all die. Some sooner than later. 1Pe 1:24 "For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away."

But three things I was absolutely assured of by faith: 1) God gave me liberty to pray for my life, 2) God was able to heal me, and 3) God's will would be done.

How does this apply to the prayers that move mountains? Simply this. When God wants you to move a mountain, He will tell you to pray for it. In the meantime, keep praying for His will to be done and make your requests known in prayer. He wants to hear from you.

Prayers of frustration are due to an unwillingness to accept God’s will. Therefore, focus on “Thy will be done.”

Kaleb said, “The problem is not about knowing the will of God, but rather not having the will to know what God wants.”—Kaleb Kovach.

Perhaps the failure to know God’s will is due to not wanting to know His will.

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