

What Is God Like? Lesson 12: God is Sovereign, So We Pray

Introduction:

- Does it make any difference to pray for something if God already has a plan for the way things will turn out?
- The answer is: _____ !

1. The Reason for Prayer

A. God allows us to _____ with Him through prayer.

- Through prayer God allows us to:
 - Make requests for ourselves or others
 - Confess our sins
 - Give Him adoration and praise
 - Give Him thanksgiving
- Prayer brings us into deeper _____ with God.

B. God wants us to pray so that our _____ on Him can increase.

- God does not want us to pray so the He can _____ what we need.

***Matt 6.8** your Father knows what you need before you ask him.*

- When we pray to God about something, we are showing _____ in Him.

***Matt 7.9–11** Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? 11 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!*

***Matt 6.9** Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven..."*

***Matt 7.7–8** "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.*

- Our faith is our _____ that God will do what He promised.

C. Through prayer, God allows us to be _____ in things that are of eternal importance.

Eph 6.18–20 **praying at all times** in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, 19 and also for me, **that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.**

2. The Effectiveness of Prayer (The Power of Prayer)

- We've already learned that:
 - God never changes.
 - God's will is the reason for everything that will ever happen.

- Do our prayers affect the _____ of things?

A. God decided to use prayer as a _____ to bring about His will in the world.

- When we earnestly pray for a person or situation, we will often find that God had _____ that we pray for it.
- God _____ our prayers to bring about the changes in the world that He wants.

B. When we pray, God _____.

Matt 7.7 "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

- Sometimes, when we _____ to ask God for what we need, we don't get what God would have given to us.

James 4.2 You do not have, because you do not ask.

- **EXAMPLE: Moses**

Ex 32.11–12 But Moses implored the LORD his God and said, "O LORD, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? 12 Why should the Egyptians say, 'With evil intent did he bring them out, to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth'? **Turn from your burning anger and relent from this disaster against your people.**

Ex 32.14 *And the LORD relented from the disaster that he had spoken of bringing on his people.*

2 Chr 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.***

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.***

- God does bring about remarkable _____ in the world in response to prayer.

C. Effective prayer is made possible by our _____, Jesus Christ.

- On our own, we have no _____ to boldly ask God for anything.

John 14.6 *Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. **No one comes to the Father except through me.***

- If our faith is in Jesus, He is the _____ our prayers are effective.

1 Tim 2.5 *For there is one God, and there is **one mediator** between God and men, the man **Christ Jesus,***

Heb 10.19–22 *Therefore, brothers, since **we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus,** 20 by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 **let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith,** with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.*

- When we pray “in Jesus’ name”, our prayers are based on His righteousness and _____, not our own.

John 16.23 *Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you.*

3. Our Attitude in Prayer

A. We must pray according to God’s will.

1 John 5.14-15 *And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that **if we ask anything according to his will** he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, **we know that we have the requests that we have asked** of him.*

Matt 6.10 *Your kingdom come, **your will be done**, on earth as it is in heaven.*

Matt 26.39 *And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, **not as I will, but as you will.**”*

- This requires us to not simply pray for what we desire, but for what God _____.
- We can know that what we ask for is according to God’s will:
 - If what we ask for is in accordance with a direct _____ of Scripture.
 - If what we ask for is in accordance with a clear declaration of God’s _____ in Scripture.

John 15.7 *If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.*

- Regularly reading and memorizing Scripture will cause your prayers to increase in _____, _____, and _____.
- When we do not know what God’s will is, we should pray according to the general _____ of Scripture.
 - We can ask God for deeper understanding and _____.
 - Pray for what seems _____ to us.
 - Give the Lord _____ why we are praying for what seems best to us.
 - And be humble to say, “*Lord, if it is Your will.*”

- When we pray and do not know God’s will:
 - Sometimes God will give us what we have asked Him for.

Matt 21.22 *And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith.”*

- Sometimes God will make us _____ for the answer to our prayer.

1 Sam 1.20 *And in due time Hannah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Samuel, for she said, “I have asked for him from the LORD.”*

- Sometimes God will not give us what we ask for, but will require us to _____ to His will.

2 Cor 12.8–9 *Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. 9 But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

- Sometimes God will give us deeper _____.

James 1.5 *If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.*

- Sometimes God will change our _____.

Acts 16.6–10 *And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been **forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia.** 7 And when they had come up to Mysia, they **attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them.** 8 So, passing by Mysia, **they went down to Troas.** 9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” 10 And when Paul had seen the vision, **immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.***

B. We must pray with humility.

James 4.6 *“God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”*

James 4.10 *Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.*

Luke 18.10–14 *“Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ 13 But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. **For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.**”*

- We must never think that God is ever:
 - impressed by our performance,
 - manipulated by our words
 - forced to give us what we want