

# Why should God answer your prayer?

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## Giving God a reason to answer -- based on the knowledge of His will and purpose in your life or the life of your church

### Putting God first

Secular humanism -- the glorification of man -- in the past two centuries has led to a spiritual inversion that keeps many Christians, perhaps most of us, from full understanding and full application of the power and joy that prayer should bring to our lives.

A major problem is that our praying, like our living, has put self on center stage, rather than God. Our prayers most often express our desire to secure maximum happiness for ourselves and those we love. And -- also most often -- our prayers focus on things, rather than on character or spiritual maturity or the management of life for God's glory.

It was not always so. If we examine the Scriptures, we quickly discover that Biblical prayers always, as T.W. Hunt observes in *Disciple's Prayer Life*, reflected divine purposes. Prayers of the saints of the Bible typically sought for God's will to be accomplished, not for personal safety or pleasure or benefit.

When Nehemiah became aware of the awful condition of the city of Jerusalem, its walls and its people, he prayed [Neh. 1:5-6] in recognition of Who God is, of His promises to His people, and of the needs of the city of David as it lay in disrepair. Both his prayers and his actions -- ultimately gaining the king's permission to return and rebuild those broken walls -- were centered upon God and His purposes for His people and His place.

Hezekiah's prayer, as he faced the dreaded Assyrian army and almost certain defeat, was not simply for life and deliverance from an enemy, but "that the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord God, even thou only." [2 Kings 19:19]

In Acts 3:11-13, we see Peter -- having healed the crippled man at the Temple Gate -- giving God the glory and turning the eyes of the witnesses away from himself and toward the Christ whom they had crucified.

### What about our prayers?

How do our prayers measure up? Can we give God a reason to answer when we pray? Are our prayers, like the prayer of Hezekiah, offered with the primary aim "that (others) may know that you are the Lord, and you alone...?"

This is what we mean by "giving God a reason" to answer. Can we give God a good reason to answer the prayer for a better job or a new car? Let's compare most of our prayers for greater comfort or safety with the testimony of Paul: "I delight in my weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties..." [2 Corinthians 12:10] What is his reason for such delight? "For Christ's sake..." And in this same passage

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Paul speaks of his "thorn in my flesh," which he asked God to remove, but without success. Who has a better right to seek God's favor than Paul? But his reason was not adequate; God knew that Paul needed the thorn as a reminder of his total dependence upon God. Paul's desire for comfort yielded to a greater purpose, and as a result he delighted in all the unhappy results of the life God had ordained for him. God was glorified in Paul's life.

As we seek God's favor, in any circumstance, we must be sure to give Him -- as best we can discern -- good reason to answer. And then, whatever His answer, we can delight in His response. The only good reason is that He may be glorified in our poverty or our prosperity, in our health or our suffering, in both the peaks and valleys of our lives. The prayer shaped by such desire brings blessing beyond anything we may imagine.