

Prayer Changes People

Just as a conversation with another human being can at times make a dramatic change in their lives, so the Creator God uses prayer to change us, not only to possibly change circumstances.

Within this article there are some profound statements based on God's Word, the Christian Bible, that need pauseful meditation.

The Word of God clearly tells us that to the Creator God of all physical things, humans are vastly more important to Him than any other part of His physical creation.

One human being is of more value to the Creator God than thousands of galaxies and all their stars and planets.

Why?

Because human beings are made in the image of the Creator God.

Genesis 1:26-27 [NIV] *“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”*

The Hebrew word translated “image” is “*tselem*” referring to a shadow of the real thing.

At this original creation of humanity we should notice that the original plan of the Creator God was a physical and spiritual creation, for the Hebrew word translated “likeness” is “*demûwth*” which is referring to “character” which can only be formed through experience and a period of time.

This is the reason humans are given a physical lifetime, however short, in which to develop the very character of the Creator God.

However, since human beings have a material body and must live in an environment of matter, time and space, things are easily more important to a human being.

Our human life is to a large degree interwoven with matter and the laws that govern matter.

Humans are often deeply affected by the reports their physical senses bring to them from the world around them.

Within this physical body and world, each human being has an invisible spiritual entity that separates us from other animals.

Job 32:8 [New Jerusalem Bible] *“There is, you see, a spirit residing in humanity, the breath of God conferring intelligence.”*

It is this non-physical part of every human being that allows us to think and plan our lives.

1 Corinthians 2:11 [NIV] *“For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no-one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.”*

It is only when the human spirit and the Holy Spirit are united that we can truly understand why human beings have existence and how we should be conducting our lives in order for the “likeness” of our Creator God to be developed in us.

We can get to know and reflect the character of another human being, who we admire, through conversation.

That is, spending time with them, talking to them and listening to their words.

In the same way, we can develop the very “likeness,” character of our Creator God, through conversation.

That is, spending time in prayer and in reading His Words as recorded in the Christian Bible.

Situations sometimes develop where the welfare of our inner self, the human spirit, becomes dependent on outward physical circumstances, at such a time we should pray for the physical climate to become more favourable for the growth of our spiritual life.

Within God’s Word, the Christian Bible, we find many promises recorded to encourage us to ask and seek for God to change or remove altogether unfavourable physical things.

The recorded history of Israel and the Christian Church abundantly demonstrates that God does hear and answer such prayers.

In all our praying, however, it is important that we keep in mind that God will **not** alter His purposes, for us individually or world circumstances as a whole.

We should never pray in order to persuade God to alter His mind.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 [NIV] *“To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 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 about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”*

God was far more concerned with the development of character within Paul, than to allow him to have a more comfortable life.

Prayer must **never** be an assault upon the reluctance of our Creator God, nor an effort to secure a suspension of His will for us or for those for whom we pray.

1 John 5:14-17 [NIV] *“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have what we asked of him. If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that he should pray about that. All wrongdoing is sin, and there is sin that does not lead to death.”*

There is no way we can know if John is referring to physical or spiritual death.

Christians died because they took communion “*in an unworthy manner.*” [**1 Corinthians 11:27-30**]

Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead when they lied to God. [**Acts 5:1-11**]

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit does result in eternal death. [**Mark 3:29**]

The book of Hebrews describes the spiritual death of a person who turns against Jesus Christ, antichrists. [**Hebrews 6:4-6**]

By rejecting the known only way of salvation, these people were putting themselves out of reach of prayer.

Note that the apostle John says, *“I am not saying that he should pray about that,”* rather than, *“you cannot pray about that.”*

John was leaving the judgement up to the all-knowing Creator God, recognising the lack of certainty of the outcome of such prayers.

God will never be other than Himself, no matter how many people pray, nor how long nor how earnestly.

God’s perfect love desires the best of all of us, and He desires to give us the best at any cost. [**John 3:17; 1 Timothy 2:3-4; 2 Peter 3:9**]

What we are praying for may **not** be best in the end for us or the person we are praying for. [**1 Corinthians 5:1-5; 1 Timothy 1:18-20**]

The Creator God has opened rivers in desert places. [**Exodus 15:22-27**]

Stilled turbulent waves. [**Matthew 8:23-27**]

Sent angel to release an apostle from prison. [**Acts 12:1-17**]

All the above events and thousands of others our Creator God has done and will continue to do in answer to prayer, but only because it has been His will to do it from the beginning.

No-one persuades the Creator God to move outside His will and purpose.

What every effective praying person does is to bring their will into line with the will of the Creator God.

We know this through a diligent study of His Word.

Only then can the Creator God do what He has all along been willing to do.

Thus prayer changes people and enables God to change things and circumstances in answer to human prayer.