

## Prayer: Assumptions and Conclusions

S. R. 1 Peter 3:10 - 12

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### I. Assumptions When We Pray.

- A. God does indeed live.
  - 1. Some suggest prayer is a worthy exercise whether or not God exists.
  - 2. If God does not exist and you pray to Him you place your trust in one who does not exist. Foolish exercise.
- B. God hears us.
  - 1. We would say, of course He hears us.
  - 2. Remember that throughout history people have prayed to gods that may not have existed, except in their imagination.
  - 3. The gods were often not responsive to the pleas of those who prayed.
  - 4. Elijah – mocked the worshippers of Baal (1 Kings 18: 27)
  - 5. But we assume (believe) that God hears us.
- C. We assume that He cares about us.
- D. We assume that He is able to do something or anything we need.
  - 1. Three Hebrews in Daniel 3:16 – 18
  - 2. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego recognized God's ability to choose without doubting His ability and power to rescue.
  - 3. If our prayers are in faith they must be accompanied by the assumption that God is able to respond to our requests for help.
- E. We assume that God is willing to change His mind.
  - 1. Bible confronts us with God's willingness to change his mind.
    - a. Genesis 19: Sodom and Gomorrah - Abraham negotiated with God. (50 persons – 10 righteous persons)
    - b. Moses – interceded on behalf of calf – worshippers (Ex. 32:28f.)
    - c. Hezekiah – plead for an additional 15 years of life (Isa. 38:5)
  - 2. Sequence of passages in Jeremiah (7:16)
    - a. "Therefore do not pray for this people, nor lift up a cry or prayer for them, nor make intercession to Me; for I will not hear you." (Jer. 7:16)
    - b. Obviously in one sense God hears, but is indicating He is not going to respond favorably to Jeremiah's request.
    - c. Why did God tell Jeremiah not to pray?
      - 1) Jer. 15:1 Then the LORD said to me: "Even if Moses and Samuel were to stand before me, my heart would not go out to this people. Send them away from my presence! Let them go!"
  - 3. Reminds us that even though there are times when God is willing to change his mind there are also times when God's patience is exhausted.

### II. Who Should Pray?

- A. Everyone who fears God.
  1. Question: But I'm not a holy person. Need a priest or *clergyman*.
  2. All of God's new covenant people are described as priest (1 Peter 2:5, 9)
  3. We all have the privilege and ability to pray for one another (Jas. 5:16)
  4. Everyone is encouraged to pray (James 5:13).
- B. Should those who are not in Christ pray?
  1. Psalm 34: 12 – 16 (cf. 1 Peter 3:10 – 12)
  2. Proverbs 28:9
  3. John 9:31 Jewish people say, "'Now we know that God does not hear sinners;'" Summarizes the principle in Psalm 34.
  4. In every case in the Old Testament note that those statements that indicate God will not hear sinners are addressed, not to people who are not children of God, but rather to those who are children of God but are living an ungodly life.
  5. God will not respond favorably to that request.
- C. On the other hand God did respond favorably to the request of those who are not yet a part of the family of God.
  1. Naaman, servant girl's prayer (2 Kings 5)
  2. Cornelius - Acts 10
    - a. Their prayer may need an answer quite different than what they requested.
    - b. Cornelius probably didn't pray for Peter to come and tell him to be baptized.
    - c. God heard the prayer of Cornelius (Acts 10:4, 31).
  3. Because we are God's children we know our Father hears and responds.

### **III. Conditions Under Which Prayer is Acceptable to God**

- A. Prayer must be offered in faith. (James 1:6 – 7; Mark 11:24)
- B. In a spirit of obedience (Psalm 34:12 – 16; 1 Peter 3:10 – 12) Submission.
- C. Reverence and Humility (Luke 18:10 – 17) Publican and Pharisee
- D. Willingness to Forgive and Love (Matthew 6:12 – 15)
- E. Must be offered through Christ as a mediator (1 Tim. 2:5; 1 John 2:1; Heb. 4:14)
- F. For Prayer to be Acceptable it Must be according to His will (1 John 5:14)
  1. We don't always know what His will is and we have to submit.
  2. "And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us."

Conclusion: Song: "I am Praying for You"

- Friends and loved ones have been praying for you.
- But for their prayer to be answered you must humble yourself before God.