

Sunday, July 15, 2007

You Asked: Questions for God Week 6 – God, Does Prayer Really Make a Difference?

Genesis 18:16-33

When the men got up to leave, they looked down toward Sodom, and Abraham walked along with them to see them on their way. ¹⁷ Then the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?" ¹⁸ Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him. ¹⁹ For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him." ²⁰ Then the LORD said, "The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous ²¹ that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know." ²² The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the LORD. ²³ Then Abraham approached him and said: "Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? ²⁴ What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? ²⁵ Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?" ²⁶ The LORD said, "If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake." ²⁷ Then Abraham spoke up again: "Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes, ²⁸ what if the number of the righteous is five less than fifty? Will you destroy the whole city because of five people?" "If I find forty-five there," he said, "I will not destroy it." ²⁹ Once again he spoke to him, "What if only forty are found there?" He said, "For the sake of forty, I will not do it." ³⁰ Then he said, "May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak. What if only thirty can be found there?" He answered, "I will not do it if I find thirty there." ³¹ Abraham said, "Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, what if only twenty can be found there?" He said, "For the sake of twenty, I will not destroy it." ³² Then he said, "May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more. What if only ten can be found there?" He answered, "For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it." ³³ When the LORD had finished speaking with Abraham, he left, and Abraham returned home.

Part 1: Understanding the Basic Principles of Prayer

1. Prayer begins and ends with _____.

Psalm 46:10

"Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."

2. Prayer makes _____ with God possible.

God has chosen to work in and through his _____.

God _____ all, but it is through prayer that he _____ all.

3. Prayer is always _____.

Luke 22:41-43

He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, ⁴²"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." ⁴³An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him.

Philippians 4:6-7

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

The goal of prayer
is not to get God
to do what you want, but to
want what he wants
and then ask him to do it through you.

Prayer may not change the _____ but it will change your _____.

Prayer is where _____ and _____ are born.

Prayer focuses God's power on a _____, place, or _____.

Part 2: When Prayer Doesn't Seem to Be Making a Difference

1. We fail to pray _____.
2. We have _____.

Psalm 66:18

If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened;

James 5:16

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

3. We are _____ in our prayer.

Ephesians 6:18

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

Praying the Promises

When you're concerned about your salvation...Acts 2:21

When past sin haunts you...1 John 1:9

When you need assurance...Hebrews 13:5-6

When you're concerned about the future...Jeremiah 29:11

When you're concerned about our nation...2 Chronicles 7:14

When you're uncertain about your life direction...Jer. 33:3

When you're haunted by your past...Joel 2:25