



World Christian Fellowship

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Prayer and Providence

One of the greatest privilege men ever has got from God is prayer.

God who listens to all our prayers.

God created everything and He is sovereign over everything.

Genesis 1:1, *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*

Colossians 1:16-17, *For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.*

Psalms 121:2, *My help comes from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth.*

God is Sovereign over everything.

Ephesians 1:11, *In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,*

Romans 8:28, *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*

If Almighty God who created everything and rules over everything then why must you pray?

God declared the end and the means to that!

God mapped out the end of everything.

God worked out a plan for that end.

God gave the plan of redemption.

That redemption comes to human through the preaching of the word of God.

God has the end and to reach that end he uses as the means of preaching by which God save them. Yet God wants us to preach.

Similarly, God works through the prayers.

Since God is ruling over everything and He is going to bring it to pass everything as per His plan so can I take a break not to preach or pray?

Rather it gives us excitement for us to preach and pray.

Bible commands us to pray!

Does prayer changes God's mind?

Absolutely not!

How can we think that our prayers and request can change the awesome almighty God?

Think for a minute!

What do you think that God can change His mind?

What kind of God you have in your mind?

Think with me for a minute.

God has a got a plan A.

That plan comes out of His mind with perfect knowledge and perfect Wisdom and fulfilling the perfect purpose!

The plan is born out of righteousness and perfect integrity.

That plan utterly not possible to have any evil in it.

That plan cannot have any foolish thing in it.

So, you begin to pray!

You ask God to change His plan?

Are you asking God the question about did You consider this God?

Are you trying to change His plan since His first plan is not a good one?

Maybe you can give some information which God does not have?

Maybe you are giving Him some insight that God lacked?

Are you have got better wisdom than God so you can give your wisdom?

What kind of God you have in your mind that you need to give the details to Him that He needs to know?

God knows what you need before you ask Him.

Matthew 6:8, *“Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.*

God who knows how many hairs you have in your head.

Matthew 10:30, *But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.*

God who knows every thought in your mind.

Psalms 139:1-2, *O Lord, You have searched me and known me.
2 You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off.*

God knows every word you are going to say.

Psalms 139:4, *For there is not a word on my tongue, But behold, O Lord, You know it altogether.*

God knows everything.

Job 21:22, *“Can anyone teach God knowledge, Since He judges those on high?*

Psalms 33:13-15, *The Lord looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men. ¹⁴ From the place of His dwelling He looks On all the inhabitants of the earth; ¹⁵ He fashions their hearts individually; He considers all their works.*

Since God knows all things, the beginning from the end.

Revelation 22:13, *I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.”*

Ephesians 1:4, *just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,*

It is not possible for Him to improve upon any plan that He has made. His plans are already perfect.

2 Samuel 22:31, *As for God, His way is perfect; The word of the Lord is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him.*

God has stated that His plans will prevail.

Isaiah 46:9–11, *Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, ¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,’ ¹¹ Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man who executes My counsel, from a far country.*

*Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass.
I have purposed it; I will also do it.*

How then do we explain verses that seem to say that God does change His mind?

Genesis 6:6, *“The LORD was grieved that He had made man on the earth, and His heart was filled with pain.”*

Exodus 32:14, *“Then the LORD relented and did not bring on His people the disaster He had threatened.”*

The Hebrew word *‘nacham,’* often translated “repent” or “change one’s mind,” can also mean “sorrow” or “to bring comfort.”

These verses speak of the Lord “repenting” or “relenting” of something and seem to contradict the doctrine of God’s immutability.

Another passage that is often used to show that God changes His mind is the story of Jonah. Through His prophet, God had told Nineveh He would destroy the city in forty days (**Jonah 3:4**).

However, Nineveh repented of their sin (**verses 5–9**). In response to the Assyrians’ repentance, God relented:

Jonah 3:10, *“He had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction He had threatened”*.

There are two important considerations involving the passages that say God changed His mind.

1. We can say statements such as “the LORD was grieved that He had made man on the earth” (**Genesis 6:6**) are examples of anthropopathism.

Anthropopathism is a figure of speech in which the feelings or thought processes of finite humanity are ascribed to the infinite God.

It is a way to help us understand God’s work from a human perspective.

In **Genesis 6:6** specifically, we understand God’s sorrow over man’s sin. God obviously did not reverse His decision to create man. The fact that we are alive today is proof that God did not “change His mind” about the creation.

2. We must make a distinction between conditional declarations of God and unconditional determinations of God.

When God said, “I will destroy Nineveh in forty days,” He was speaking conditionally upon the Assyrians’ response. We know this because the Assyrians repented and God did not, in fact, mete out the judgment.

God did not change His mind, rather, His message to Nineveh was a warning meant to provoke repentance, and His warning was successful.

An example of an unconditional declaration of God is the Lord's promise to David.

2 Samuel 7:16, *"Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever".*

There is no qualification expressed or implied in this declaration. No matter what David did or did not do, the word of the Lord would come to pass.

Jeremiah 18:7-11, *The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it, ⁸if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it. ⁹And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it, ¹⁰if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it.*

¹¹ *"Now therefore, speak to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, 'Thus says the Lord: "Behold, I am fashioning a disaster and devising a plan against you. Return now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good." ' "*

Note the conditional word if: *“If that nation I warned repents [like Assyria in Jonah 3] . . . then I will relent.”* Conversely, God may tell a nation they will be blessed, but “if it does evil in my sight [like Israel in Micah 1] . . . then I will reconsider the good I had intended to do.”

Still God asking us to come and pray to Me, why?

It is not for His benefit, or His education, or for His edification. It is for our benefits.

God is asking us to come and dwell in His presence and talk to Him.

When we go into the presence of almighty God, we receive the peace and encouragement when we express all our needs.

Do not ever think that,
Our wisdom greater than God’s
Our knowledge is greater than God’s

Does your prayer make God to change His mind?

His foreknowledge factored along in His plan!

Then you may think we are all like robot! Everything is planned then why should I pray?

So, our question must change as, **Does prayer changes things?**

Does prayer affect the things comes to pass?

YES!

By all means Yes!!

Book of James.

James 5:13-18, *Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. ¹⁴ Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. ¹⁶ Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. ¹⁷ Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. ¹⁸ And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.*

James is known as the Proverbs of New Testament.

Wisdom literature.

Short ethic statement without the qualifications.

What about God answering the prayers?

Nineveh

Sodom and Gomorrah

Few other places.

There are two things we must understand while we interpret the Bible.

1. Narrative passages
2. Didactic

Narrative passages give us what has happened in the past and how we people viewed them.

Example: Sunrise from the East.

We know Sun does not rise it is the earth revolves around the sun. The Bible often references where the sun rises as a poetic description of east, and where the sun sets as a poetic description of west.

Whereas there are other Didactic passages which shows God is absolute!

Numbers 23:19, *“God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?”*

Malachi 3:6, *“For I am the Lord, I do not change; Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob.”*

Does God answer all prayers?

Acts 12 shows that James was martyred whereas Peter got released.

Paul left Trophimus sick in Malta.

Paul himself was sick.

There is no absolute guarantee that everyone will be healed or delivered.

Christians are not exempted from sickness and problem.

People put answer to your prayer is put on faith.

Faith theology stretched out too much!

There is nothing wrong in saying that Lord if it is your will.

Lord Jesus said that in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Matthew 26:39, *He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."*

Matthew 26:42, *Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done."*

V 44, indicates He prayed the 3rd time the same.

How to Pray?

1 John 5:14-15, *Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.*

1 Kings 3:11-12, *Then God said to him: "Because you have asked this thing, and have not asked long life for yourself, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have asked the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern justice, ¹² behold, I have done according to your words; see, I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you.*

Because Solomon asked for wisdom to rule the people of God, He was pleased and granted the wisdom.

1 Kings 3:13-14, *And I have also given you what you have not asked: both riches and honour, so that there shall not be anyone like you among the kings all your days. ¹⁴ So if you walk in My ways, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days."*

As we know Solomon did not have length of days since he did not walk in the ways of God.

What do I Pray?

1. Pray that God would exalt His name in the world.

Matthew 6:9, *'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.'*"

2. Pray that God's kingdom will be extended.

Matthew 6:10, *"Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."*

3. Pray that the gospel to go ends of the earth.

2 Thessalonians 3:1, *Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honoured, as happened among you.*

4. Pray for the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

Luke 11:13, *If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"*

Ephesians 3:19, *to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

5. Pray God will open the eyes of your heart and discernment.

Ephesians 1:17-18, *that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him,¹⁸ the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know*

what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

Philippians 1:9-10, *And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ.*

6. Pray that God would save unbelievers.

Romans 10:1, *Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved.*

7. Pray for boldness in Preaching the Word of God.

Ephesians 6:18-19, *praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—¹⁹ and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel,*

Acts 4:29, *“And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness.”*

8. Pray for signs and wonders.

Acts 4:29–30, *Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word,³⁰ by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.”*

9. Pray for the healing of unbelievers.

Acts 28:8, *It happened that the father of Publius lay sick with fever and dysentery. And Paul visited him and prayed, and putting his hands on him healed him.*

10. Pray that God would supply all needs.

Matthew 6:11, *“Give us this day our daily bread.”*

11. Pray for wisdom.

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.*

12. Pray that God would establish leadership in the churches.

Acts 14:23, *And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.*

13. Pray that God would send out harvesters.

Matthew 9:38, *“Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”*

Acts 13:2-3, *While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.*

14. Pray for the success of other missionaries.

Romans 15:30-31, *I appeal to you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf, that I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints.*

15. Pray for unity and harmony among believers.

John 17:20-21, *“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.”*

16. Pray for a knowledge of God’s will.

Colossians 1:9, *And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.*

17. Pray to know God better.

Colossians 1:10, *that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;*

18. Pray for power to comprehend the love of Christ.

Ephesians 3:14–19,

19. Pray for strength and endurance.

Colossians 1:11, *strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy;*

20. Pray that you might not fall into temptation.

Matthew 6:13, *“Lead us not into temptation.”*

Matthew 26:41, *“Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”*

21. Pray for the forgiveness of your sins.

Matthew :12, *“Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.”*

22. Pray for protection from the evil one.

Matthew 6:13, *“Deliver us from evil.”*