



BRIDGES

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Answering Prayer

One of the greatest privileges that we have as Christians is prayer. For it is through prayer that we connect with God and seek His guidance, wisdom, and strength in our daily lives. In prayer, we give thanks, worship, confess our sins, and make requests to our Heavenly Father. During prayer, we experience God's presence, find peace, and enjoy Him. By prayer, we align ourselves with God's will and become instruments of His work and purpose in the world. Because of prayer, we grow in our faith, deepen our relationship with God, and witness His power and grace in our lives and the lives of others. Prayer is central to the life of a Christian.

Yet, for many, prayer is a struggle. Many things cause prayer to be a struggle, such as distractions, busyness, feelings of unworthiness, lack of faith, or just being spiritually dry. Often, people become discouraged in prayer because they do not feel God is listening. People will pray for their needs and then wait for God to answer, yet he never does. They say to themselves, "Lord, why are you not answering? Hello, is there anyone home? I have just prayed, but I am not hearing anything; why do you not answer my prayer? Maybe you can relate.

In the Bible, there is a story about a man who felt this way toward God when he prayed. His name was Job. He would pray day and night to the Lord and then complain, "I cry to you for help, and you do not answer me (Job 30:20)." Job goes on to say, "Oh, that I had one to hear me! (Here is my signature! Let the Almighty answer me! (Job 31:35))." Job struggled with prayer. He would cry out to God and then demand that the Almighty answer him. I think this is exactly how many people pray.

People pray to God, presenting their needs and wants to the Lord, and then wait for His answer, which seems to never come.

Well, the Lord did answer Job, and it was not what Job was expecting. When God spoke to Job, he challenged Him and said to him, "Dress for action like a man; I will question you, and you make it known to me" (Job 38:3). Then the Lord spoke, and it showed that it is Job who must answer Him, the Lord.

I think this applies to us as well. We are like Job in that it is not us who speak to God and then wait for him to answer, but rather it is God who speaks and it is us who give answer. This is what prayer is. Prayer is listening to God speak and then giving an answer to Him.

AND God has spoken to us and continues to speak to us through His Word. The Lord has revealed massive amounts of things about Himself. He has poured Himself to you. And so (therefore) when we open our mouths to pray, we ought to be basing what we say (what you pray) on what He has said. This is

why prayer is not speaking to God as much as answering God according to what he has spoken in scripture. And when we answer God according to what He has spoken, it is then that the Words of God transform our hearts.

For example, I recently read Psalm 50 in my daily devotions. Verse 23 reads, "The one who offers thanksgiving as his sacrifice glorifies me." This single passage from God's Word transformed my prayers into a time of giving thanks. It is His Word that speaks, and it is we who give answer. I pray that you will hear God speaking to you through His Word and that, in response, you will enter into a deeper fellowship with Him.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Trent Eastman

"Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your Word (Psalm 119:18)."

