

Why Pray If Everything Is Predestined?

The Bible teaches both the doctrine of election, stating that God is sovereign and everything moves according to **His will** which was decreed before time, yet Scripture consistently reminds us to pray, and claims that prayer causes things to happen. Somehow both are true. In Scripture we see things like Paul saying that God predestined and called us to himself, and that His will shall prevail (Ephesians 1:11-14) and then a few lines down Paul prays so that this would happen (Ephesians 1:18).

C.H. Spurgeon has written that our prayers are **in the predestination**, and that God has as much ordained his people's prayers as anything else, and when we pray we are producing links in the chain of ordained facts. Destiny decrees that I should pray—I pray.*

Can Prayer Change Things?

God has foreordained some things that prayer will not alter. But how do we know what is pre-destined and what is up for grabs in prayer? We often don't. That's the mystery and a big dilemma for many of us. Outcomes are not necessarily predestined. Some are, it is true, but not all. Many things (perhaps MOST things) are up in the air until we pray. In scripture we are continually admonished, encouraged and commanded to pray. Jesus modeled this for us when he was on earth. If prayer did not affect the outcome, God wouldn't ask us to do it. **

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your request be made known unto God." (Philippians 4:6) Also Matthew 7:7-8 tells us to "Ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened." The Greek tense in this passage means to keep asking, keep seeking, and keep knocking.

Sometimes prayer changes the outcome based on a condition. A sample from Mark's gospel is: **"Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they shall be granted you."** (Mark 11:24) The condition here is faith or believing. Also James 4:2 says: **"You do not have because you do not ask."** This tells us that certain things never happen because of our failure to ask for them. Further in the same book James tells us; **"The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much."** (James 5:16) If events were predestined, prayer would accomplish "nothing" instead of "much."**

Since God Knows Everything, Why Should We Pray?

So again, **why should we pray when God already knows our needs? Why tell God what He already knows or ask Him to do what He already wants to do?** Thank God we don't have to understand prayer in order to pray.

First, here are two reasons we *don't* pray:

- **We don't pray to impress God.** We're not heard for our "much-speaking." You don't have to use poetic language or be an amateur Shakespeare. If an earthly child can speak to an earthly father, you can speak to your Heavenly Father. We're told to cry out to Him as our "Abba" Father — literally translated, "Daddy." (Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:6). We're not praying to impress Him.
- **We don't pray to inform God.** You can't tell God anything He doesn't know.

So if we don't pray to *impress* or *inform* God, why then do we pray? It's very important to understand this: **we are inviting God into our lives when we pray.**

When we pray, we experience —

- **Fellowship.** We become "workers together with Him" (2 Corinthians 6:1). When we pray, God gives us the joy and privilege of administrating His kingdom, His affairs — working together with Him. He could do it without us. We could not do it without Him. But what a glory that God allows us the privilege of doing it *with* Him!

- **Development.** When we pray, God is growing us. Have you ever prayed and didn't receive immediately what you asked for? What did you do? You kept on praying, but you also began to search your heart and life to see if something was hindering God's answer. Many times there is. God uses prayer to grow us.
- **Dependency.** God never wants us to live lives independent of Him. If God just did everything for us and we never had to pray, soon we would begin to take things for granted. We would cease to depend upon God.

Prayer binds us to God and that's why we tell God what He already knows. He knows what we have need of before we ask, but we're definitely, specifically, unqualifiedly told to pray and to ask — not to impress or inform God, but to invite God, so that we might have that fellowship with Him, so that we might grow, and we would learn to depend upon Him. ***

God Hardwired the Universe to work through Prayer

David Jeremiah says it this way: "Scripture insists that God has hard-wired the universe in such a way that He works primarily through prayer. God has set up creation so that the way He does His work is through the prayers of His children. At the moment we pray, we become subject to the most powerful force in the universe" (Jeremiah 2004, 44). ****

Not to be "cute," we must also recognize that when circumstances do change in response to our prayers, then we know that this was God's will to begin with. Yet, when we pray we are obeying what God has asked us to do. For reasons we don't yet fully comprehend God has made himself "subservient to the prayers of His people" (Jeremiah 2004, 47).

David Jeremiah continues,

- "Prayer is the way we defeat the devil (Luke 22:32).
- Prayer is the way we help to save the lost (Luke 18:13).
- Prayer is the way we acquire wisdom (James 1:5).
- Prayer is the way a backslider gets restored (James 5:16-20).
- Prayer is how the saints get strengthened (Jude 1:20, Matt. 26:41).
- Prayer is the way we get laborers out to the mission field (Matthew 9:38).
- Prayer is how we cure the sick (James 5:13-15).
- Prayer is how we accomplish the impossible (Mark 11:23-24).

Everything we do that's worth doing, everything God wants to do in the church, everything God wants to do in your life - all of this He has subjugated to one thing: Prayer" (Jeremiah 2004, 47-48). ****

Jesus Understood Sovereignty, Yet Prayed

Finally, John MacArthur asks us to consider this: ..."more than anyone who ever walked the earth, Jesus Christ understood God's sovereignty - yet He prayed, and prayed, and prayed. Obviously, if He considered prayer essential, so should we. Ultimately, to neglect or avoid prayer for any reason is to ignore the clear commands of God, and the numerous examples He's provided us in Scripture" (Tape..."a pattern of prayer"). *****

Keep asking, keep seeking, keep knocking - Pray and Ask.

REFERENCES

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