What Prayer Will Likely Not Change

Tony Mauck · Hebrews 4:14–16

INTRODUCTION

- Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help in time of need.
- Prayer, as powerful as it is, as much as it accomplishes in the believer's life, and perhaps even in the world, it is not a magical fix for all of life's ills.
- Even answered prayer does not mean that the request that you make will be answered affirmatively.

1 Requirements for Effecting Change Through Prayer

James 5:16; 1 Peter 3:7–12; James 4:2–4

- The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man accomplishes much or avails much.
- Prayer affects things that would not have otherwise occurred. Your praying makes a difference.
- But not everyone can affect change through prayer. This is reserved for those, who are in union with Christ, who are righteous.
- The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears attend to their prayers. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.
- In other words, our attempts at praying are thwarted by our poor treatment of our spouse.
- You ask and do not receive because your motives are wrong. You ask with wrong motives, that you may spend it on your pleasures.

2 Extraordinary Results, but Still a Limited Effect

Philippians 4:4–7; 2 Corinthians 12:9

- Prayer can do extraordinary things. And so I want you to understand that it's extraordinary, but still there is a limited effect.
- It will not alter every circumstance. And it is no insulation against pain. It is no guarantee of pleasant times.
- Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, with prayer and supplication and thanksgiving, let your request be made known unto God.
- Sometimes prayer for the sick will help them to recover. But sometimes they will not.
- God says, my grace is sufficient for you.
- So don't question the power of prayer and its extraordinary ability to change things, but just understand that it may not alter circumstances to where we might like them to be.

3 What Constant Prayer Does

Philippians 4:5; Psalm 46:1

- Now, he will not give you everything that you might want. God is not a cosmic vending machine.
- It'll keep you focused on what you need to be focused on. And that's the unseen realities.
- It nurtures your sense of dependency. If we stop praying, you know what that says? I'm depending on old number one.
- And finally, it appeals to the ultimate source of help.
- He is a very present help in trouble.

THE CHALLENGE

Have you come into initial union with God? Perhaps you found yourself not in the faithful place over a period of time that you need to be. Perhaps you need to respond in some public way.

MY NOTES