



HEZEKIAH'S PRAYER

Talking with God in prayer seems simple enough. Yet it brings up some questions like, *Is there anything I should or shouldn't ask for? Or if I pray hard enough and ask long enough, will God always give me what I want?*

God invites us to draw near to Him through prayer, and the Bible doesn't contain a list of right and wrong things to say to God. The writers of the Psalms reveal that we can bring our deepest heartaches and honest questions to the Lord in prayer. While our conversations with our Creator need not be prescriptive, we can learn many lessons on prayer through the examples we find in the Bible.

In Isaiah 37, the nation of Judah faced threats from Assyria. This country had already defeated many other nations, including Judah's relatives in the land of Israel. Isaiah recorded the prayer of a king named Hezekiah, a man who had good reason to feel desperate.

Some kings who preceded him had sought counterfeit gods in times of trouble or trusted in their own skill or logic. But Hezekiah turned to prayer. When we feel threatened by difficult circumstances, we have choices too. Hezekiah inspires us to bring our problems to God rather than turn to worry, distraction, or despair. Here are some phrases from Isaiah 37 that remind us of the power of prayer:

"Because you prayed about King Sennacherib of Assyria, the LORD has spoken this word against him." (ISAIAH 37:21b-22a NLT)

"But have you not heard? I decided this long ago. Long ago I planned it, and now I am making it happen." (ISAIAH 37:26a)

"Here is the proof that what I say is true: 'This year you will eat only what grows up by itself, and next year you will eat what springs up from that. But in the third year you will plant crops and harvest them; you will tend vineyards and eat their fruit.'" (ISAIAH 37:30)



HERE WE SEE EXAMPLES OF THREE IMPORTANT TRUTHS ABOUT THE LORD'S CHARACTER WHEN IT COMES TO PRAYER:

- God responds to prayer.
- When God plans things (even if they were long ago), He will make them happen.
- Sometimes the Lord tells us how long things will take (the three harvests before the fields would recover), and sometimes He doesn't.

Hezekiah's prayer focused on God's character. He didn't pray rote words or seek to manipulate God. Instead, he spoke honestly and simply—like a child trusts a parent's ability to meet a need. Hezekiah asked for what he needed. He was specific in his request, but ultimately trusted the Lord to make the best decision.

Though we may not be facing a physical army, each of us is likely facing challenges today. Like Hezekiah, we can focus on God's character—His knowledge of our circumstances, His ability to intervene, His long-term plan, and His discretion regarding how much He reveals to us. We make our requests honestly and simply, trusting that our loving Father will help us through every difficulty. In his later years, Hezekiah prayed about a terminal illness, and the Lord granted him fifteen more years of life. We may still have questions about how prayer works, but may we never forget that God invites us to come to Him. And He responds to our prayers according to His character and calendar.