

Our Decisions Demonstrate His Completion

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Introduction

Whether true or just truly perceived there appears to be an inherent trait in the souls of men to believe they are in control of their fates and life's destinations. Mankind will fight to remove the cloak of oppression which stunts life's decisions and forces a destiny which was not requested or thrust upon them without consultation. Such a destiny would be more readily accepted if initially the option was made available for destiny to be of personal choices and decisions. We would place our fates whether, emotional, financial, political and otherwise in the hands of others as long as we were given the option to and decided willingly to do so without compulsion and without duress.

God has already planned and prepared for our lives. However, He does not force nor impose His will upon us. It must be requested by our decisions. There are times when our dilemmas are magnified or grow to such large proportions where we are almost compelled to decide to accept His answers. This is usually more of desperation based upon a lack of other more viable alternatives. We are in no way minimizing the sovereignty of God. In fact that God chooses to act in the way described above is a result of His sovereign choice. It is with these thoughts in mind that we consider prayer, knowing that God has already provided the answer to our prayers prior to the requests being made.

God's Omniscience and Prayer

We begin by addressing our responsibility in praying in the light of God's omniscience. This is captured quite succinctly in the Book of Matthew by Jesus' words which are recorded below.

⁵And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

⁶But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

Matthew 6:5-9 KJV

The five verses above are taken from Jesus' treatise found in the Gospel of Matthew, often labeled as the Sermon on the Mount[ain]. Here He speaks against prayer for the personal, public display of piety which would cause observers to note or declare the pray-er as a truly righteous person. We should quickly note Jesus is not anti-prayer, after all He prayed often, [Matt. 14:23; 26:39; Luke 9:29; John 18:1]. He uses the phrases, when thou [ye] prayest [pray], three times, signifying He expected them to pray. Just as there was an expectation to pray, there was an expectation in doing it properly and with the correct motive. Jesus tells what not to do and what to do. Finally, there was an expectation in prayer being answered or rewarded, resulting from its proper exercise.

Let us turn our focus to verse eight where Jesus provides a startling reason for not praying like the hypocrites and it is because your Father knows what things we need before we ask. This was a direct response to verse seven, those who use repeated terms, who say a lot, supposing that the length of their prayer or perhaps the *quality* of their prayer increases the probability of a favorable response from God. Jesus says, "God knows what we need before we ask." This raises several questions.



1. Does He know what we need before we knew what we needed?
2. Did He know our needs before the immediate events went into motion necessitating the need[s]?
3. If He knew ahead of time, has He already made provision for these needs?

4. Why pray for the needs if He knows and has already made provision?
5. Is this statement to inspire confidence in prayer that God knows beforehand and has already made provision?
6. Does God knowing our needs, necessitate us agreeing that they will be provided?

Man's Reason to Pray

Why then should we act in prayer? If God is knowledgeable of our requests ahead of time, should it not necessitate Him to act without provocation in prayer? Logically the answer may seem to be yes. However, we must consider how God created man to function. In the Book of Genesis an environment was created, a system to adhere to and limitations of choice with positive benefits. One can ask, “if God knew Adam would disobey His command, why did He make available the option which leads to sin?” Could not man have lived without the option of disobedience? Perhaps the tree in the garden was to be a testament to choice. That knowing it was off limits, every time it was ignored, passed by or repudiated it made the selection of all the other choices more valuable. That Adam could have taken the route of disobedience but instead chose obedience increases the value of the choice. Such is exemplified by the love of God; it is a matter of choice. Though my sins, motives, faults and intents are known by God, He loved me prior to me repairing all my ills. While I was steeped in sin and a sinner He loved me (Rom. 5:8), this type of love is a choice. It says, in spite of past mistakes, present failures, planned wrongs – I still choose to love you. It is a choice that closes its eyes to all other options and focuses solely one choice and one alone – which is to love us unconditionally.



Why pray to a person who knows our need prior to our request? It means he is the person who is most uniquely suited to have prepared an answer for my question; a resource for my need and hope for my despair. Prayer on our behalf tells God, that we see ourselves as insufficient, that we desire His will, His support. Though I think I am able in my mind and abilities to tackle the challenges of life, I make myself dependent on His good and His purpose.

God's Completion Through Foreknowledge and Prayer

Foreknowledge of my need places God in the distinct position of being able to plan our escape and set in motion our answers before the need arises. Who is most qualified to deal with our life's issues at the moment they become an issue? No one other than God, our Heavenly Father who has prepared the answers to all our needs prior to them becoming a necessity.

Consider Abraham, who was asked to sacrifice his long awaited son of promise. Abraham had to choose to obey God. God already had a ewe and a ram procreate at least 1 – 2 years prior to produce the ram needed for Abraham. God, fed the ram, protected the ram and directed him up the mountain at just the right time. Then ensured that a thicket was growing in just the correct location strong enough to hold the ram in place for Abraham. The requirement for the ram to be caught in the thicket on the correct day, and the right time, in the proper location by the intended man was God knowing Abraham's need, his prayer if you will before it became a need or prayer to him. Had Abraham not chosen to follow God, he would still have his son, but not know God had already answered his yet unknown prayer.

Conclusion

This is the God who has already planned and worked. He is awaiting our decision. He awaits our action. He awaits our prayers. It is easy to work with a God who has already acted on our behalf before we knew we required action. This fuels our hope, our confidence and our faith. The answer to prayer is completed and available in regards to God. If we go to Him for His answer we chose Him, and He has already developed and has awaiting us, the consequences of our choice. In many instances our perceived needs are in opposition to God's perceived needs for us. If this be the case we many times end up with unanswered prayers (I John 5: 13 – 15). These are prayers offered to God with specifically requested solutions which God defers to provide.

I John 5:13-15

13I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. **14**This is the confidence we have in approaching God: 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 what we asked of him.

NIV

When decisions were made and actions wrought which generates needs in our lives; remember that God already had His countermeasure in motion, which would bring the answer to our yet unknown and unasked prayer. This is the attribute of a personal God, who is concerned with our lives and how it is affected by the actions and decisions of others.

Why should I pray, if God has already completed His agenda, for a need yet unknown and yet unanswered? Why am I to engage in a seemingly unnecessary activity? It is because God already knows the solution to the puzzle which is yet to hit our lives. We on the other hand must willingly decide and act to acquire the consequence of His answers. This begins with prayer to the God who has already completed and provided what we have yet to ask for and need.