

Call to Prayer
Part 8
“Now That You’ve Prayed”

Ps 37: 1-7 “Do not fret because of those who are evil or be envious of those who do wrong; 2 for like the grass they will soon wither, like green plants they will soon die away. 3 Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. 4 Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. 5 Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this: 6 He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn, your vindication like the noonday sun. 7 Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him (to act)”;

Now, when we pray we invariably have a picture in our mind of how God’s going to answer.

And that picture builds a set of expectations.

So that if God decides to answer differently from how we imagined (and He often does), it throws us.

And sometimes we can even miss His answer because we’re looking over HERE when God’s answering over THERE...

We want Him to do it THIS WAY, and He chooses to do it THAT WAY.

We think He's going to use THIS PERSON, but He uses THAT PERSON instead.

We think we're going to walk through THIS DOOR, but He chooses to open THAT DOOR.

Or we become impatient over the TIMING of His answer and walk away before the answer comes.

We think He's going to answer in a DAY, but He decides to answer in a WEEK, or a MONTH, or a YEAR.

You see, Prayer requires us to leave the OUTWORKING of the answer to Him.

Because sometimes we pray right, but the WAY He chooses to answer we have all wrong.

So FALSE ASSUMPTIONS can really get in the way of God answering our prayers.

But you can be sure of one thing: He's going to do RIGHT by you, and He's going to do it BEST.

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So let me share some tips out of Psalm 37 on how to walk between the asking and the answer so that we leave the HOW to Him!

FIRST:

I. TRUST Him

David writes, "Trust in the Lord, and do good; Dwell in the land and feed on His faithfulness" (Ps. 37:3 NKJV).

He says that prayer begins with TRUST in the God who is faithful.

All prayer rests on trust in the character and Person of God.

The weeds of worry grow in the soil of mistrust in God.

When trust falters, faith wilts because FAITH stands on what we believe about God!

Is He trustworthy? Is He a God of His Word? Does He keep His promises? Our answers to those questions decide the strength of our faith.

This is why God continuously assures us of His trustworthy character in the Bible:

Deuteronomy 7:9 ESV "Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant..."

2 Thessalonians 3:3 ESV "But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one."

1 Corinthians 1:9 ESV "God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."

1 Corinthians 10:13 ESV "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it."

1 John 1:9 ESV "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Numbers 23:19 ESV "God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?"

So David first says, "After you've prayed, FEED on His faithfulness...FOCUS on His faithfulness...MEDITATE on His faithfulness...REMIND yourself of His faithfulness!"

Then next, David says, after you've prayed...

II. Delight in Him

"Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart" (37:4 NKJV).

Notice how delighting in Him and answered prayer are entwined together!

Now, to delight in someone you've got to find out WHO they are, WHAT they're like, get to KNOW them...

Thank God, He tells us who He is and what He's like...

And once we learn it, He's easy to delight in.

- **He is a MERCIFUL and LOVING God: "...*his compassion never ends*. It is only the Lord's mercies that have kept us from complete destruction. 23 Great is his faithfulness; his loving-kindness begins afresh each day" (Lam 3:22-23 LB).**

Every day God pours out His love on us. Every day He says, 'I love you!'

- **He is a GIVING God: "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!" (Matt. 7:11 NKJV).**
- **He is PATIENT with our flaws: "The Lord is like a father to his children, tender and compassionate to those who fear him. 14 For he knows how weak we are; he remembers we are only dust" (Ps. 103:13-14).**

In other places we're told He's longsuffering, forgiving, faithful, the Giver of hope, strength, encouragement, new beginnings, fresh horizons...

When we're hurting He comforts us, when we fail He encourages us, when we're lonely He comes alongside us, when we're struggling He strengthens us...

When we consider the God of the Bible, it becomes easier and easier to delight in Him!

No wonder David compared God to a wonderful feast, "Taste and see that the Lord is good. Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in him!" (Ps 34:8 NLT)

So after you've prayed, Trust Him, and Delight in Him.

And the next thing David mentions is, after you've prayed, be sure you've...

III. Surrendered all

"Commit your way to the Lord (everything you do), Trust also in Him, And He shall bring *it* to pass" (37:5 NKJV).

Be sure that the path you're walking down is the path of surrender.

You see—Sometimes the Lord can't answer our prayer because there's a boulder in the middle of the King's highway....something we're hanging onto that hinders our journey.

Listen: The quality of your walk with God will be in direct proportion to your level of surrender.

We sing, "I surrender all" which is easier to sing than to do!

Sometimes before God can answer our prayer, we must first surrender something.

For instance, the rich young ruler who approached Jesus about eternal life told the Lord that He had kept all the commandments since he was a boy.

Jesus said, "You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me. 23 When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was very wealthy" (Lk 18:22-23 NIV).

He couldn't surrender his riches, and so the Lord couldn't answer his prayer for eternal life!

My experience is that moving forward to the next level with God almost always requires surrendering something.

Before He can GUIDE us we must surrender our own way.

Before He can USE us we must surrender our pride.

Before He can FILL us we must surrender our life.

Before we can FOLLOW Him we must surrender all we have.

As Peter said to Jesus, "We have left all we had to follow you!" (Lk 18:28)

So after you've prayed, check out whether or not there's something you need to surrender before God can answer.

Trust Him, Delight in Him, Surrender to Him, and finally, David says:

IV. Rest in Him

"Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him;" (Ps. 37:7 NKJV)

The original Hebrew reads, "Hush! Be still!"

This is exactly what Jesus spoke to the storm at sea, "Peace, be still!"—And there was a great calm!

I believe REST is given last because after you've done the first three—Trust, Delight, and Surrender—only then are you able to enjoy God's REST!

Rest means you're not worried, storm-tossed, fearful, or agitated. His peace envelopes you!

You can REST in Him because you TRUST Him, have DELIGHTED in Him, and SURRENDERED to Him.

Let's stand and say together: TRUST Him, DELIGHT in Him, SURRENDER to Him, and REST in Him.

This is how you leave the HOW TO HIM after you've prayed!

