

## Does Prayer Really Make A Difference?

So I'm guessing that you been doing a lot more praying in these days of uncertainty and fear. But do your prayers make a difference?

I remember counseling a 16 year old boy about a problem he was having. I asked if he had prayed about it and he nonchalantly answered, "I haven't prayed in three years." When I asked him why not, he replied, "Because God is going to do what he's going to do whether I pray or not."

He sort of had a point. The Bible tells us in Psalm 135:6, "**The Lord does whatever pleases him.**" So why bother to pray?

Because God tells us to. In fact, he tells us to "**pray continually**" in 1 Thessalonians 5:17. And then he promises that our prayers make a difference. James 5:16 tells us: "**The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.**" The Bible tells us about times when prayer had a direct impact on things. God told Hezekiah that it was time for him to die. 2 Kings 20 records that Hezekiah prayed for God to spare his life and that God healed him and gave him 15 more years to live. Hannah was biologically unable to bear children. But in 1 Samuel 1 she prayed to God and he gave her a child (1 Samuel 1).

But wait. That just doesn't make sense. How can the God who plans and controls the future before the creation of the world still tell us that our prayers affect what he does and what happens? Beats me. I have no clue. But that's ok. All you and I need to know is that we can trust God.

It's kind of like when your kids come downstairs in the morning, asking for breakfast. Do they know how mom or dad got the money to buy the food? Do they know how the groceries got to Meijers? Do they know how the farmer prunes the orchard so the trees produce oranges for the juice? No. And you know what? It doesn't matter to them. They know that mom or dad puts breakfast on the table and so they ask and they receive. They get up in the morning believing, even knowing, that when they stumble downstairs and ask for cereal, they are going to be eating Cheerios within minutes.

So that is how YOU pray. You ask because God is your Father and you know he loves you, not because you so clearly deserve his love or because he has always given you what you asked for, but because he gave his only Son to be your Savior. Confidence in his love (that is really what faith is) is what leads you to ask for his help and blessings even if you can't really understand how your prayers synch with his sovereign will.

So ask away in prayer, humbly but also boldly, not because you fully understand how prayer works, but because you are fully convinced in Jesus Christ that God loves you and he will give you all you need.