

What has your prayer life done for you?

Psalm 116

The old saying, "Prayer changes things," can be misleading. When we pray we are not grabbing God's ear and pressuring Him to do our will. In II Corinthians 12:7-11 Paul asked God three times to remove something from his life. Paul did not get his request. Yet, his prayer was answered and his life was changed.

In Scripture we are taught:

- To be persistent in prayer, never quitting (Luke 18:1-8; I Thessalonians 5:17; Psalm 123:1-2).
- To bring every concern to God without fear (I Peter 5:7; Hebrews 4:16; James 1:5).
- To ask in faith, expecting to receive (James 1:6-8; Mark 11:22-24; John 14:13-14).

Yet, prayer is not like placing an order at the drive-up window of a fast food restaurant. "In Jesus name" is not an incantation that conjures up anything we want. When Christ taught us to pray He also taught us:

- To obey (John 14:13-15 cp. I John 3:22).
- To abide in Him, letting His Word become an integral part of our life (John 15:7 cp. I John 5:14).
- To be willing to change, becoming more like our heavenly father (Mark 11:25-26 cp. Matthew 5:43-48).

So, does prayer change things? Certainly, we should see measurable results from our prayer life, but while things around us may change, we should also see change in us. Prayer is communion with God. We are to harmonize and unite with God in prayer. We should find ourselves becoming more like Him. Without this genuine seeking of the Lord Himself (not just trying to get a hand-out cp. Psalm 105:4) our prayer life will be fruitless and vain (Psalm 66:18; James 4:1-10 cp. I Peter 3:7).

Psalm 116 is an example of one who is experiencing a fruitful prayer life and is contemplating how he will deepen his relationship with God.

An increased love for the Lord — Psalm 116:1

The Law requires love (Deuteronomy 6:4-5) but Grace produces love. (I John 4:19; Psalm 103:1-6 cp. Hebrews 13:15; Psalm 18:1-6, 46-50)

A life-long commitment to the Lord — Psalm 116:2, 12-19

See also Psalm 63:1-8; II Timothy 2:22.

A testimony for the Lord — Psalm 116:3-6

See also 32:5-7; 34:1-11; 65:1-3; 66:16-20.

A greater faith and confidence in the Lord — Psalm 116:7-11

Note vs. 10-11: Our prayer life should cause hastiness and impatience to diminish. (Psalm 31:19-24; James 1:2-8 & Romans 5:1-5) See also Philippians 4:6-8; I John 5:14-15.