

THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM

*I asked for strength that I might achieve;
I was made weak that I might learn humbly to
obey.
I asked for health that I might do greater things;
I was given infirmity that I might do better things.
I asked for riches that I might be happy;
I was given poverty that I might be wise.
I asked for power that I might have the praise of
men;
I was given weakness that I might feel the need of
God.
I asked for all things that I might enjoy life;
I was given life that I might enjoy all things.
I got nothing that I had asked for,
but everything that I had hoped for.
Almost despite myself my unspoken prayers were
answered;
I am, among all men, most richly blessed.
-Unknown Confederate soldier*

What Happens When We Pray

As Abraham was praying to God (talking to Him is Prayer), He must have counted wrong or thought maybe Lot had at least four righteous servants. At any rate, he got what he prayed for.

Gen 18:32 Then he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak but once more: Suppose ten should be found there?" And He said, "I will not destroy *it* for the sake of ten."

The nine word prayer that most mothers pray almost always leaves a lasting impression on children "God help you if you ever do that again".

Hopefully you and I have learned to pray better than that. Here are some biblical principles to help you with prayer.

1. I do not have because I do not ask.

James 4:2 You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask.

2. You ask for the wrong reasons

Jas 4:3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend *it* on your pleasures.

So to paraphrase, I didn't get anything because I didn't ask and when I did I asked for the wrong thing.

God will not grant anything that contradicts His righteous loving character.

The Anatomy of a Petition

1, He can say Yes to our petition and No to our motive.

Numbers 11:4-6 Now the mixed multitude who were among them yielded to intense craving; so the children of Israel also wept again and said: "Who will give us meat to eat? (5) We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; (6) but now our whole being is dried up; there is nothing at all except this manna before our eyes!"

He let them know about the way they were complaining by granting their request with a diet of quail... for an entire month! You'll eat it until it's running out your ears!

Numbers 11:19-20 You shall eat, not one day, nor two days, nor five days, nor ten days, nor twenty days, (20) but for a whole month, until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you, because you have despised the LORD who is among you, and have wept before Him, saying, "Why did we ever come up out of Egypt?" ' "

2. He can say No to our petition and Yes to our motive

Genesis 19:15-16

God honored the motive of Abraham's petition without granting his specific request.