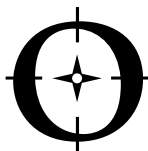


4

WHY: THE ULTIMATE PURPOSE OF PRAYER

Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. (John 14:13)



Ultimately, all prayer is for the glory of God. The best answer He can give to any prayer is whatever answer brings Him the most glory.

“For His name alone is exalted; His glory is above earth and heaven” (Ps. 148:13).

“Everyone who is called by My name,” He says, has been “created for My glory” (Isa. 43:7).

Glory is a word we hear a lot. It sounds familiar, especially in the language of Christian worship, yet we don’t always understand what it means. The Hebrew word for *glory* carries the idea of weight and importance. Majesty and honor. So the “glory of the Lord”—a phrase repeated numerous times in the Bible—is when God reveals a glimpse of who He is. Awesomeness on display. Visible evidence of the vast significance of His being. When He reveals His glory, He is unwrapping a measure of His identity—some of His nature, His holiness, His power, His lovingkindness.

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God, of course, already possesses the full weight of His glory, in all its forms and expressions. He exists eternally as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and is utterly complete within Himself, within this Trinity of the Godhead. Complete fullness, complete joy. He needs nothing else. One who has all authority in heaven and on earth certainly doesn't need *us* (Rom. 9:20–24). And so the mere fact that we're *here* is a testimony to His glory. The fact that He could and would choose to create us, as well as a world and a universe that we could live in, reveals first and foremost, more than anything else, His awesome glory as Creator. The galaxies and stars reveal His attributes as being the work of an awesome, powerful, majestic Creator. That's their job actually. "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows His handiwork" (Ps. 19:1 NKJV).

But watch what happens. Throughout history, throughout Scripture, we see God unwrapping additional features of His glory, revealing Himself to individuals in ways that are new and unexpected to them. Abraham, for instance, when God told him to offer his only son Isaac as a sacrifice (Gen. 22), had prior knowledge of God as Creator, as a guide, as a faithful promise-keeper. But in the context of this present challenge, God was about to unwrap a new element of His glory in a stunning display.

The Bible's reporting of this event shows Abraham's stoic obedience to what God had said: "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering" (Gen. 22:2). But the irrationality of this divine command could not have been lost on him. Isaac was the child of promise

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(Gen. 17:21). He was the miracle baby born to a hundred-year-old man and his ninety-year-old wife. To think, after twenty-five years of waiting, after the remarkable birth of this covenant child, that God would order Abraham now to kill him? It made absolutely no sense—the same way some of the events in your life perhaps seem to make no sense. You can't believe, as you pray, that this is happening. *What is God doing?*

He is thinking of His glory. Abraham expected that God would resurrect Isaac if he sacrificed him (Heb. 11:19). But on Mount Moriah, when the angel of the Lord saw Abraham's faith, when he stopped him from sacrificing Isaac, something unknown about God suddenly clicked. When Abraham heard the rustling of a ram in the nearby brush—an animal suitable as a sacrifice in Isaac's place—God was revealing Himself vividly as *Jehovah Jireh*, "The Lord Our Provider." He had kept this part of His glory somewhat hidden until He could reveal it at the exact, perfect moment when He knew Abraham would most value it and worship Him because of it.

God could've demonstrated or shown Himself to be Abraham's provider in another way, at an earlier time. But He chose *this* way, and *this* time, so His glory would be revealed with maximum impact.

This is God's pattern. He makes His glory known progressively in your life—and *through* your life—from one situation to the next.

Every prayer request (and every scenario that triggers a prayer request) is actually an opportunity for us to witness His glory firsthand. Because when He answers, that's what

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He's doing. He's wanting us to see what He is like. Our Provider. Our Healer (2 Kings 20:5). Our Sustainer (Ps. 54:4). The One who is wiser than our own wisdom (1 Cor. 1:25). He wants you to know Him as your Creator, Savior, Lord, Provider, Protector, Friend, Counselor . . . and for you to worship Him as such with full appreciation. Not just generally, but personally.

“Lord, show us Your glory,” we pray. And we can always be sure He will.

Jesus told the sisters of Lazarus that their brother's sickness would be “for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it” (John 11:4). And He intentionally waited until Lazarus was dead so His power as “the Resurrection and the Life” could be made known in an awesome display (John 11:1–45). It was a defining moment that revealed Jesus' power to everyone who heard about it.

Paul prayed for the church in Thessalonica “that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in you, and you in Him” (2 Thess. 1:12). The reason we do *anything*, Peter said, is “so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 4:11)—because Jesus is “the radiance of [the Father's] glory and the exact representation of His nature” (Heb. 1:3).

When you pray for something and ask “that the Father may be glorified in the Son” (John 14:13), prepare for Him to do what He knows will bring Him the most glory.

And when He does, your proper response, like Abraham's, should be to worship. This is what's meant by *glorifying* God—valuing and honoring by your thanks and praise the attribute He's just shown you and revealed about Himself. The Lord,

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in His many dealings with David, had shown Himself to be “a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and rich in faithful love and truth” (Ps. 86:15 HCSB)—same as He’d shown to Moses (Exod. 34:6). And David’s reaction to this revelation was to “give thanks to You, O Lord my God” and to “glorify Your name forever” (Ps. 86:12).

That leads to a second kind of response: telling others what God has done. David exhorted God’s people to “sing of the ways of the LORD, for great is the glory of the LORD. For though the LORD is exalted, yet He regards the lowly, but the haughty He knows from afar” (Ps. 138:5–6). Paul said the revelation of God’s grace should “cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God” (2 Cor. 4:15), so that others, too, can see and celebrate how God is being glorified through His work with His people. So when God answers prayer, brag on what He’s done and is doing. *It gives Him glory.* Of all the things prayer is and does, its greatest accomplishment—and its greatest joy—is that it allows us, His beloved children, to be part of bringing Him glory. To God be the glory!

Lord, Yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Forgive me for seeking my will and desires above Your glory. I’ve been looking at what I think You should do—what I’d do if I were You. And yet You’ve shown me that so much more is at stake. You know exactly what You’re doing. Your ways are higher than my ways. What I really want, Lord, is that You receive glory from my life. Maximum glory. The full weight of Your glory. Work in my heart and in each of my situations, Lord, so that You are most glorified. In Jesus’ name, amen.