

## God's Will and Our Prayer: Conflict or Sovereign Harmony?

On God's Sovereignty and His Plan of the Ages versus our responsibility to pray; how can these two be reconciled? Is He Sovereign or not? If He is, then why do we have to pray? If He is not, are we changing His mind?

Our praying to God is exactly what He has planned, and the outcome, be it change in us or in the arena we are praying for, is exactly what He has sought to achieve. Looking back to our beginning in Adam, we first must recognize the foundation of what Man was made for. Briefly, we were made for the glory of God, to have dominion over Creation, and to be stewards of it and its responsibilities. In this, we are made in the Image of God, Who has Dominion over *all*, and in Stewardship of His endless resource, chose to introduce Creation. He has an overall corporate 'plan', foreknowledge of what is to be achieved from before until after all of Creation. He has chosen to place us in the slip of it all, to glorify Him by our participation in His Creation and His course for it. He is being, and will be, glorified as this plan unfolds - and we have been made to be a part of it.

This supposed conflict of 'why pray if God is in control', and 'does prayer change His Mind', are both problems only if we look at it from man's standpoint. From man's point of view in our sinful, self-centered minds, none of this can hope to be rectified. But from a God point of view, all is indeed harmonious.

Does God want us to pray for change? Of course, because through it many things happen: we must humble ourselves before Him, and He is Glorified; we must turn to Him as *the* Sole and Primary Provider, and He is Glorified; the sinful issue at hand is contrasted with His Holy Standard, His Will and how it should be, and He is Glorified; we must recognize our sin, repent of it, confess it, and ask forgiveness, and He is Glorified; we must approach the Throne, Sanctified again by the Blood of the Lamb if we hope to be heard, and He is Glorified; we can proclaim our expectation of His promise to answer our request, and He is Glorified; being a prayer in faith, that it is in His Will because we are familiar with His Character and His Word, we can observe Him answering that prayer, and He is Glorified; and in an answered prayer, the believer is edified while the pagan is convicted - and so and He is Glorified.

Did God know these things would happen? Did He know we would pray (or not)? Do all things work together for good to those who love Him? Has He made it clear we have been placed as stewards in His Creation? Has He made it clear we are to pray? Does He answer prayer? To all of these, of course!

Is God not Sovereign? Is He not in control? Is He unaware of what lies ahead or for what purpose all issues occur? Do we have the influence, does any man, to change His Mind from what He has already intended? Was the Fall a big mistake He hadn't taken into account, only to have to scramble to compensate, and so reluctantly choose to send Christ afterwards? To all of these, of course not!

We have been enlisted in an unbelievably fortunate and blessed endeavor - to participate in the Work and Will of God over Creation. It is all His Will being done, often carried out through us as His vessels. We have the command and the means to be conduits of His Work. But, we must recognize His Sovereign Provision, which makes everything possible.

He is like the Master Craftsman, allowing a child to participate in his work in a real, meaningful way. The Master wants to have an end product, the one he envisions. He also wants to involve his young child, one that he loves. Under the exceeding bounty of his expertise, he sets aside parts of his work for his child to do, under his watch and always under his careful eye. The child is entrusted with as much as the Master sees appropriate, and gradually, the child learns lessons of the craft. The child learns, and becomes more like the Master. The Master's vision of the end product moves closer towards completion. And presently, and in the end, the Master is satisfied in his stewardship over what he possesses in himself - to see his work in the end product and to see the child fulfill his potential in the work the master is hailed for.