

How effective is prayer if it can't change God's mind?

- Our actions change the world and others, without changing God's secret will
- Our prayers change the world and others even more, without changing God's secret will
- Whether or not we pray changes the future course of events and the destiny of others

Believing what cannot be understood

Truth	More truth	Heresy
God is one Lord	God exists as three Persons	<u>One</u> Lord cannot exist as <u>three</u> (Arianism)
Jesus is fully God	Jesus is fully human	Someone who is <u>fully God</u> cannot really be <u>fully human</u> (Docetism)
Prayer never changes God's mind	Prayer really changes people and events	If prayer does not <u>change God</u> , then it does not <u>change</u> people or events (Deism)

God's secret will

- GOD from all eternity did...freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass; yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.
- Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions; yet hath he not decreed anything because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.

What can come to pass

- "Therefore he said he would destroy them — had not Moses, his chosen one, stood in the breach before him, to turn away his wrath from destroying them." (Ps 106:23)
- "And I sought for a man among them who should build up the wall and stand in the breach before me for the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found none. Therefore I have poured out my indignation upon them." (Ezek. 22:30-31a)

What would have happened

What could have happened, and was in God's secret will	What could have happened, but was not in God's secret will
Moses interceded for Israel	Moses did not intercede for Israel
God saved Israel	God destroyed Israel

What would have happened

What could have happened, and was in God's secret will	What could have happened, but was not in God's secret will
No one stood in the gap for Israel	Someone stood in the gap for Israel
God punished Israel	God saved Israel

What would have happened

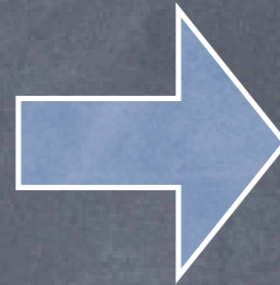
What could have happened, and was in God's secret will	What could have happened, but was not in God's secret will
Sodom did not see the miracles of Jesus	Sodom saw the miracles of Jesus
Sodom did not repent	Sodom repented

Do prayers change others?

What could happen — God's secret will is not yet known to us	What could happen — God's secret will is not yet known to us
You pray that your friend will have life	You do not pray that your friend will have life
Your friend repents	Your friend does not repent

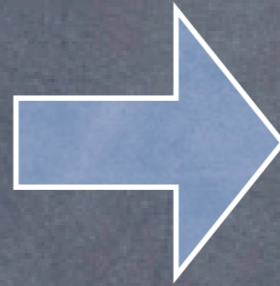
Prayer is effective

Moses prayed for mercy



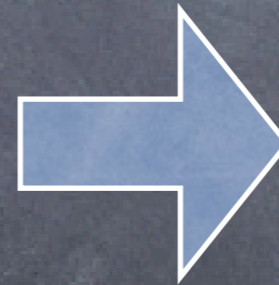
God forgave

Moses lifted his hands



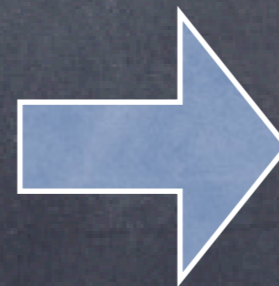
Victory in battle

Moses dropped his hands



Defeat in battle

You do not ask God



You do not have

What would God do if you asked?

General principle

You do not ask God in faith  You do not have

Example

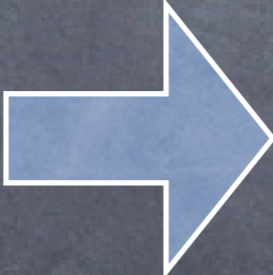
Ask in faith for wisdom  God will give wisdom

Do not ask in faith for wisdom  God will not give wisdom

What did God not ordain?

Work at your job  God will give a paycheck

Do not work at your job  God will not give a paycheck

Ask in faith for wisdom  God will give wisdom

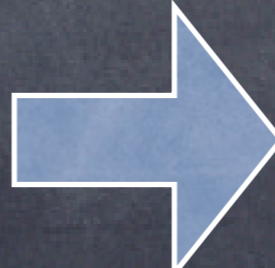
Do not ask in faith for wisdom  God will not give wisdom

You live by every command of God

God commanded bread  They lived not only by bread, but also by the command of God

God commanded manna  They still lived by God's word (God's command of food)

Ask in faith for wisdom  God will give wisdom

Work at your job
"Give us our daily bread"  God will give a paycheck

Lies that hinder prayer

<p>Lie #1: Prayer changes God's mind</p>	<p>Lie #2: Prayer does not change the world</p>
<p>Result: Praying without faith in God's wisdom leads to relying on prayers more than on God.</p>	<p>Result: A lack of faith in God's sovereignty leads to relying on work more than on God in prayer.</p>

Application

- If you believe your work is more effective than your prayers, what does that say about your faith in God's love and sovereignty?
- Could someone look at your prayer life and tell that you really depend on God to answer you? Or do you depend more on your own effort?
- Francis Schaeffer asked this question:
Would your life be very different if everything God said about the effectiveness of prayer were removed from the Bible?

More questions

- Are you ever too busy to pray?
- Are you ever too busy not to pray?
- Would that be different if you believed prayer is as effective as Scripture says?
- "...the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin... If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us..."