

Why Do You Want God's Blessings?

In my opinion, one of the most powerful prayers in Scripture is found in **II Kings 19:15-19**. Assyria had been on a rampage, conquering the known world. Their most recent conquest was the northern kingdom of Israel. Jehovah God had allowed them to be defeated because of their idolatry. Sennacherib didn't understand that. He thought he had beaten them because his god Nisroch was more powerful than Jehovah. So, he moved on to the other nation that called on Jehovah. He moved on to the southern kingdom of Judah. His spokesman, Rabshakeh, threw down the gauntlet in **II Kings 18** claiming the God of Judah couldn't stand up to their army. When Hezekiah heard this, he did what any faithful servant of Jehovah does, he prayed to the only One that could help. Listen carefully to what he said.

O LORD, the God of Israel, enthroned above the cherubim, you are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made heaven and earth. Incline your ear, O LORD, and hear; open your eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to mock the living God. Truly, O LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands and have cast their gods into the fire, for they were not gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone. Therefore they were destroyed. So now, O LORD our God, save us, please, from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you O LORD, are God alone.

Hezekiah wanted the blessing of God on himself and his nation. But why? Did he pray that God would protect them so they could have continued life? Did he pray that God would deliver them because he longed for a better quality of life? No. What was his big concern? His big concern was how people viewed God. He wanted all the world to know that the God of Judah is the only true and living God, that He is the God of gods, Lord of lords, King of kings. He wanted Assyria to be completely aware that for all their power, they were not more powerful than Jehovah God.

I can't help but be humbled. Who knows how many blessings I have asked for from God, from extended life, to better health, to better finances, to better marriage, to better parenting, to more wisdom, to a growing congregation, and on and on the list goes. But what has been the motivation? What have been the motivations of your requested blessings? If you are like me, it has often not been nearly as noble as Hezekiah's. If you are like me, you have been thinking about the momentary and temporal pleasures of ease and comfortability you hope God will provide you. That's what I'm often thinking about. Or perhaps you were thinking about your own reputation. I don't know how many of my prayers have been motivated by me wanting to look good to you and to others.

But what was Hezekiah's motive? He wanted God to look good. He wanted God to be glorified. He wanted the world to know that it really does matter who your God is. That needs to impact our praying. The greatest joy we can have is to demonstrate to the world that our God is glorious and it makes a difference which God we follow.

In view of this account, I've had to ask myself some questions. I'll ask you these same questions. How often have you prayed that your marriage will have peace and harmony not simply because you want the comfort of peace and harmony but because you want other married couples to know that your God makes a difference? How many times have you prayed about your parenting and about your kids not simply because you want to look good as a parent but because you want all parents and children to know that it makes a difference who your God is? How many times have you prayed for health improvement or financial betterment not simply because you want to enjoy the ease and comfortableness of these things but because you want the people around you to know that who your God is makes a difference? How often have you prayed for the congregation not simply because you want people to think your congregation is great but because you want the churches around you to know that it makes a difference who your God is? How often have your prayers been motivated by the glory and reputation of God?

The world around us is blaspheming God. Sadly, those who claim to be Christians are not blazing forth the glory of God very well. Divorce rates among Christians are in lockstep with the world. Parenting problems, mental and emotional disorders, even immorality seems to be just as prevalent among churches as among social clubs. And far too often, I live how I want and then pray that God will take up my slack by fixing my problems that I walked into. That is just using God as a great big Santa Clause in the sky. Instead, I need to see Him as God. He deserves to be glorified. That needs to be the motivation of my praying and living. I want God to be glorified. And what I must want more than anything else is that God will act in my life in the way that will most cause Him to be glorified.

Now here is the scary part about this prayer. If I'm living in repeated rebellion against God, not walking in His way, pursuing my own path whether in marriage, parenting, working, health, or spirituality, the thing that most glorifies God in that is for me to be judged. That is why Israel was conquered. It most glorified God to judge, conquer, and destroy the idolaters. So, if I want God's blessings because that will glorify God, I need to be surrendering to Him as much as possible. Because deliverance only glorifies God when it is given to those who

glorify God. And thus, Hezekiah was delivered while Sennacherib was killed in the very temple of his weak and non-existent god, Nisroch.

So, why do you want God's blessings?

—Edwin L. Crozier