

# A Simple Guide to Experience Miracles

*Instruction and Inspiration for Living Supernaturally in Christ*

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## Chapter 3 – Clearing Up Some Unproductive Misunderstandings About Prayer

*[Medical Missionary Story, pp. 45-48]*

### Why Did God Set up an Arrangement That Included Efficacious Petitionary Prayer?

“First we need to...clarify the reasons God created the world—specifically, human history—in the first place.” (*pp. 48-49*)

- To build a **community**
- **Voluntary** [to] join
- Progressively experience and grow in...**relationships** (toward God, others in the community, and the created world)
- **Co-labor** with God to defeat evil

“Given the centrality of love in the kingdom, if love cannot be coerced, **free will** is important. Among other things, this implies that our actions for good or evil, for God or against God, actually matter.” (*p. 49*)

“God is personal—indeed, tri-personal—and persons (created or divine) have the unique feature that by nature they love to share good things with others, *desire* to create other persons...and very much enjoy doing things with others, including working together.” (*p. 49*)

*[cf. The most important thing I learned in seminary]*

### Why Pray if God Already Knows What We Are Going to Ask For?

“It is not God’s foreknowledge that fixes a future event; rather, it is the fact that a future event will happen that explains what, exactly, God foreknows.” (*p. 52*)

*[read excerpt re: medical missionary story, pp. 52-3]*

‘God answered the prayer *because* we prayed, but not *after* we prayed! (p. 53)

Effective prayer is born out of relationship:

- *e.g.* Praying like a youngest child
- The Sons of Sceva (Acts 19.11-20)

## **Wouldn't a Perfect God Do What is Truly Good and Prevent What is Truly Evil, Whether or Not We Pray?**

“Some things we pray for...are things he is unwilling to do (for example, overriding the free will of his image bearers).” (p. 57)

*[cf. praying for someone's salvation—what does it accomplish?]*

*[cf. praying for guidance for a friend or family member]*

“If we stopped praying for things that God cannot or will not grant, our sample of unanswered prayers would be smaller, and we would avoid mistaken discouragement about prayer by approaching it more thoughtfully.” (p. 58)

“God's purpose for history and our individual lives is bigger than making sure he achieves the greatest amount of blessings and the least amount of bad things possible.” (p. 58)

“If God were to shower us with good things all the time, whether we asked for them or not, we would likely grow spoiled, begin to feel entitled, and even take God for granted.” (p. 59)

“Specific answers to prayer are signs that God is real and that he listens to us and responds to our requests.... Such answers to prayer strengthen and build our faith, as well as encourage us and assure us we are not alone.” (p. 60)

“Dallas Willard once told me he was glad that God didn't answer a high percentage of his prayers because he eventually saw that God's refusals turned out for the best.” (p. 64) *[cf. Song: “Unanswered Prayers” by Garth Brooks]*

## When Should We Stop Praying? Why Pray More Than Once?

“Matthew 7.7 includes the encouragement to keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking.” (p. 65)—*Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.*

*[cf. the parable of the persistent widow—Luke 18.1-8]*

“God wants us to learn what **dependency** on him means and how we can practice it.” (p. 65)

**Spiritual Interference:** Daniel 10.2-3, 10-14

A less understood form of petitionary prayer is **soaking prayer**. We can see an example in the historical account found in Exodus 17.10-13, where Moses raises his hands and God gives victory to the Israelites over the Amalekites.... As one engages in soaking prayer and God’s power is directed onto the problem, prayer itself becomes a *conduit* of the power of God.” (p. 66)

## Chapter 4 – Miraculous Answers to Prayer

“Sociologist Christian Smith claimed that far and away the chief source of doubt came from God’s apparent inactivity, indifference, or impotence in the face of tragedy and the apparent lack of God’s intervention in daily trials.” (p. 69)

“While unanswered prayer is a genuine concern in our lives, the simple fact is that God *is* intervening all over the world all the time. Our problem is that we fixate on the unanswered prayers, forget the ones that were answered, or don’t hear of real cases of miraculous answers in the lives of others. A major part of witnessing to and about God is giving testimony to what we have seen and hear.” (p. 69).

- *cf. Old Testament professor’s teaching*
- *benefits of journaling*

“Around 25 to 30 percent of the Psalms in the Bible are laments or complaints against God for being indifferent to requests and not doing anything.” (p. 72)

*[Miracle story of provision of a house, p. 79]*

*[Miracle story of provision for hurricane relief supplies, pp. 85-86]*