



LESSON 5

Pleasing Prayers



“Therefore give to Your SERVANT an *understanding heart* to judge Your people, that I may DISCERN between *good* and *evil*. For who is able to judge this *great people* of YOURS?’ The speech PLEASED the Lord, that Solomon had asked *this* thing.”

1 Kings 3:9-10



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A member of my family is dying as I write this. He has been sick for a couple of years. He has endured horrific surgeries, endless treatments, and tests. The cycle was painful and scary for him, his wife, and his kids. It goes away; it comes back. There is hope; then there is no hope. Back and forth. Up and down.

One who has suffered greatly throughout this ordeal is his mother. She has already lost her husband, her daughter, and many other friends and family; now, she faces the death of a son, her youngest child. She endures this long goodbye with questions and fears, pain and sorrow—and many prayers. She is a believer, and so is her son, and together they are believing for a healing miracle. She is settled with knowing he will see Jesus, and she will see him again on the other side of this life. But still, she is a mother.

His last diagnosis was brutal. “There is nothing more we can do. He should go on hospice care and make the best of this last bit of time he has.” The hospital bed was moved in. Nurses were assigned to alleviate pain. His wife tends to his every need, feeding him tiny bites of food when he is too weak to lift a fork.

His mother cried buckets of tears. Whenever I called her, she broke down. She couldn’t talk about it. Would God really take yet another family member from her? It didn’t seem fair, coming from a loving Father’s hand. This must be the work of the enemy! God would surely step in and rescue them all from this terrible ordeal! If only she had more faith! Maybe another doctor would give another diagnosis! A different hospital! Different tests! These thoughts tormented her day and night.

One day, months later, she admitted quietly to me, “I’ve given my son to God. I can do nothing for him. I have prayed and released him.”

She came to a place of **agreeing with God**.

When we **agree with God**, we are saying that His will is perfect, He knows how to perform it, and He has the power and means to do so. It is a wise woman who can pray for God’s will to be done and really mean it in the depths of her being. **Agreeing with God** is saying that we can do nothing apart from Him, that He has the answers, and that His answers will be the best thing for us, for truly, we have nothing within ourselves to do what we are called to do. It requires humility to acknowledge that we don’t have what it takes and to let the One who does to lead the way.

A couple of days after I wrote the above, this family member died. Those that agreed with God—agreed that God would do what was good, that God’s will is what should be done, that God’s healing would now be accomplished in a new body—are now numb. They are tired physically and have spent every ounce of emotion they possess on grieving this loss. They don’t know why God didn’t heal in this life, but some day they will understand.

This week we will look at prayer that pleases God.

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God gave a spectacular offer to King Solomon. Please read about it in 1 Kings 3:1-15.

1. What does verse 3 tell us about Solomon?

2. Why was Solomon in Gibeon?

Gibeon was a “high place” where men legitimately offered sacrifices to God.

3. What happened to Solomon while he was in Gibeon? What was said to him, and who was speaking to him?

4. What was the “great kindness” God had shown to Solomon? (vs.6)

5. What words did Solomon use to characterize himself in verse 7?

6. What did Solomon request of God in verse 9?

“Give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge your people...” The Hebrew word translated **understanding** is, literally, *hearing*. Solomon wanted a heart that could hear or listen to God and to the people.

7. What does Paul pray for in Ephesians 1:18a?

8. Write out 1 Kings 3:10.

9. Summarize God’s gifts to Solomon from 1 Kings 3:12-13.

10. In verse 14, what is required of Solomon in order to have a long life?



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Solomon didn't consider himself to be anything special, but he knew God had appointed him to be king. He desperately needed God's wisdom in order to rule wisely and fairly.

When a person asks for help to do a hard thing, this person is said to be **humble**. They aren't arrogant, bragging and boasting about their abilities, but are conservative in their estimation of themselves. They may feel inadequate, perhaps inferior, or lowly when compared to others. They do not assume they can do anything and everything. They are not pretentious. They ask someone smarter, stronger, and/or wiser for help.

Please read 1 Kings 10:1-9.

The Queen of Sheba was either the wife of a king or ruler or was a ruler herself. Sheba was located in the vicinity of present-day Yemen, on the western coast of Arabia. The journey to see Solomon in Jerusalem would have been about 1,400 miles, taking several months traveling by camel.

11. Fill in the missing words from 1 Kings 10:9. "*Blessed be the LORD your God, _____, _____, _____, setting you on the throne of Israel!*"

In the ancient Eastern cultures, rulers were to properly represent the "patron god" of their country or region. They were to make sure that their nation carried out their god's decrees; this was assumed to be what pleased and appeased their god. The ruler was considered to be the deity's agent. Thus, the Queen of Sheba assumed that Solomon was leading the Israelites, God's people, to carry out God's decrees in order to please and appease God.

We have seen that Solomon was humble in his request. We have seen that God was pleased with his request. We can also see that God was pleased with what Solomon did NOT ask for.

12. What did Solomon NOT ask for? (1 Kings 3:11)

13. Write out the second half of Proverbs 15:8. "*The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but _____.*"

At this point in his life, Solomon was humbly surrendered to God, asking for God's gifts to spend not on himself but on others, asking only for what he needed in order to do what God had appointed for him. God, pleased with Solomon's humble request, bestowed on him what one might have expected other rulers to ask for: riches and honor.

14. Write out Ephesians 3:20.

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15. The state of mind of a humble person is precious to God. In 1 Peter 3:4, what words are used to describe a humble person?

16. In Romans 12:3, what words describe a humble person's thoughts about himself?

17. How did Christ exhibit humility in Philippians 2:7-8?

18. What did God do for Christ after He humbly offered Himself as our sacrifice? (Philippians 2:9)

19. How does Christ describe His own heart in Matthew 11:29?

20. In Psalm 147:6, what does God do for the humble?

21. In Isaiah 57:15, what does God do for the humble?

22. According to 2 Chronicles 7:14, what will God do if His people humble themselves, pray, seek Him, and repent?

Humility has always been one mark of someone who has a right heart before God. As these past few verses demonstrate, God does beyond what we would ever hope or think to ask for in response to humble prayers of the righteous. What better answer to prayer could there be other than God Himself attending to our needs, being present with us, forgiving us, visiting us, hearing us, and lifting us up?! Humility is not only an identifying characteristic of a righteous person, but it is also a requirement set forth by God.

23. What does God require of us, according to Micah 6:8?

Jesus was undoubtedly the humblest person to ever walk the earth. In all that He did, He pleased His Father.

24. When Jesus was baptized in Luke 3:22, what did God say to Jesus?

Jesus was not only humble, but He had the testimony that He pleased God. Both His prayers and His life were well-pleasing to God. In His prayers, He always sought the will of His Father. When His disciples asked Him to teach them how to pray, He prayed, "*Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven*"

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(Luke 11:2-3). In this, He showed us how to **agree with** God. Whatever God's will is, it is best for everyone if that is what happens.

Likewise, when Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane, He prayed earnestly to the Father to take away the cup of suffering away from Him, **IF IT WAS GOD'S WILL**. He **agreed with** God on this matter of dying for our sins.

25. What were Jesus's last words on the subject? (Luke 22:42). *'Nevertheless, _____, _____, but _____, _____.'*

26. David also prayed humble prayers that pleased God. From Psalm 131:1-3, write down any words or phrases that show his humility.

27. In 2 Samuel 7:18-20, write down any words or phrases that show David's humility.

28. What do you currently most need to **agree with God** about?

29. Do you see any lack of humility on your part when you pray about this matter?

30. What mindset needs to change in you in order to humble yourself before God in this matter?

31. We know God can answer our prayers, giving us what we pray for. But will He? There are times when it depends on whether or not our heart is right with Him. These verses from Psalm 10 show a right heart in humble prayer, which makes a good model for our own prayers.

- Verse 12: *"Arise, O LORD! O God, lift up Your hand! Do not forget the humble...."*
- Verse 14b: *"The helpless commits himself to You..."*
- Verse 17: *"LORD, You have heard the desire of the humble; You will prepare their heart; You will cause Your ear to hear."*

31. Write a humble, pleasing prayer to the Lord in your prayer journal. You may want to tell Him that you **agree with Him**—agree that His decision is best—in the matter before you.



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Optional—For further study

Look up the following verses to see other heart attitudes that please God. Write the heart attitude that pleases God next to each.

- Hebrews 11:6
- 1 Thessalonians 4:1-5
- 1 Timothy 5:4
- Psalm 147:10
- Romans 8:8
- 2 Corinthians 5:6-10
- Colossians 1:9-10
- 1 John 3:22
- Ephesians 5:8-10
- Hebrews 13:15-16
- Ezekiel 18:32
- Colossians 3:20
- Galatians 1:10
- 2 Timothy 2:4
- Psalm 19:14
- Hebrews 13:20 (HOW the change comes)

