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Prayer – Asking vs Thanking

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If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you. (John 15:7)
Devote yourselves to prayer and stay alert in it with thanksgiving! (Colossians 4:2)

Asking God when we do not know His will

Often we do not receive what we **ask** God for, because we ask with wrong motives or for things that are not in His will (James 4:3). And even if our motive is pure, we often do not know His will. We can be sure, though, that He is a gentle Father Who cares about our feelings and desires. He wants us to pour out our hearts before Him (Psalm 62:8) and to ask even though we may be unclear about His will! (Matthew 7:7) Also, Scripture teaches that our prayers move Him and can change the direction of events.

Asking God when we do know His will

We *can* know our prayer is His will when we pray according to His Word (His desire). We can be confident that He *will* answer in His time and His way. Our **asking** can turn to **thanking!** I have been invigorated by thanking Him, because He already told me His will in His Word. Here are two examples:

- If I **ask** God to lift the widow's heart from her grief, I can **thank** Him that He is working in her life.
Thank You, Lord, for comforting Beverly. Help her to hear your tender voice. (Psalm 34:18)
- If I **ask** God to free or save someone, I know this is His will. I can **thank** Him that He is moving and giving the person the opportunity to respond. I pray:
Thank You, Lord, for setting the prisoners free. (Psalm 146:7)
Thank You for drawing this person to Yourself. (John 6:44)
Thank You for helping the helpless. (Romans 5:6)
Thank You for opening the eyes of the blind when they turn to You. (2 Corinthians 3:14-16; 4:4)

Thanking God rather than asking because He has already answered

I have noticed that people often ask for things that God has already given and that He will never take away. The list is long, but here are two examples.

- We never have to **ask** God to forgive us because He already forgave us when we received Jesus. Rather, we **thank** Him. We are in Him, and His forgiveness covers our lives (Colossians 1:27). 1 John 1:9 instructs us to confess our sin (to agree with God about our sin), and then we **thank** Him for His forgiveness.

Although God's forgiveness is not contingent upon our confession, when we fail to confess our sin, we mar our fellowship with Him and others. However, when we *do* sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ! (1 John 2:1-2) His forgiveness for us was accomplished on the cross forever.

Thank You, Lord, for forgiving me for _____.

- We never have to **ask** Him to *not* leave us. King David prays this way in his grief (Psalm 51:11), but in the New Covenant, once we are born again, our Father will never leave us. (Matthew 28:16-20; John 10:28)

Thank You, Father, that You will always be with me. You will never leave me!