



## God's Plan for You

WITH BISHOP RONALD K. POWELL

*Jeremiah 29:11, which says "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope."*

### *God is all-knowing.*

*He knows who we are and what we're capable of. He knows the circumstances around us. He knows what we want and what we need. And He knows His plan for our lives and how to best accomplish that plan. So why pray? Specifically, why pray with requests (supplication)? If He's going to do what He's going to do anyway, why even give input?*

### **There are two fundamental problems with this point of view.**

- The first is that we tend to assume that God's plan for us is too specific for us to have any effect on it. We may want to know exactly which college to go to, which major to choose, which job to pursue, which person to marry, thinking that God has every step of our lives all worked out.
- The truth is, He may have some specifics that need to be taken care of before we can move toward His plan (Ephesians 2:10). But maybe not. In many circumstances, it is possible His plan is larger and more fluid than we think.

**For example, in Genesis 12:1-3 God promised Abraham that Abraham's descendants would be a great nation.**

He even said that the nation would come through Isaac and Jacob (Genesis 28:13-15).

- Fast-forward several hundred years to Exodus 32:1–35.
- While Moses was on the top of the mountain with God, the Israelites were below, worshipping a statue of a calf make with their jewelry.

- In verse 10, God tells Moses, "Now then let Me alone, that My anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them; and I will make of you a great nation."
- If God destroyed the Israelites and made Moses a great nation, would that contradict His promise to Abraham?

#### *Not in the least.*

- God's promise was to make Abraham's descendants through Isaac and Jacob into a great nation.
- Moses was descended from Isaac and Jacob. The plan was intact, even if it was completed with a great number of casualties.
- In the following verses, Moses talks God out of His offer. In verses 11-13, Moses eloquently and powerfully argues that God shouldn't kill the people.

#### *God relents. Why?*

- For the same reason He asked Adam and Eve where they were hiding in Genesis 3:9, and for the same reason He asked Abraham to sacrifice Isaac in Genesis 22.
- God wanted Moses to understand where *Moses* stood in the situation and openly declare his loyalty to God.
- Only by doing so could Moses accept the commitment and be the leader God's plan called him to be in Exodus 3.

#### *God's promise to Abraham was that he would be the father of the chosen people through Isaac and Jacob.*

- That could happen with the Israelites or through Moses' new line.
- God's plan for Moses was that he would lead God's people into the Promised Land.
- That could happen with the Israelites or with Moses' new line.
- God did not change His plans.
- But Moses' expression of faith through a prayer of supplication impacted how those plans were fulfilled.
- In the same way, when we offer desires, thoughts, and feelings to God in submission, we are openly acknowledging our character and where we stand with God.
- He can then move us through the specific steps we need to take to accomplish His plan.
- Our error comes in when we make His plan too small.
- Perhaps it is to attend a specific school and earn a specific major.
- But it may just be to grow spiritually into a leader or a teacher who is devoted to Him.
- And that may be accomplished through any number of God-honoring life situations.

*The second problem with rejecting prayer and simply relying on God's choices is that we tend to view prayers of supplication as primarily a way to get God to do what we want.*

- We see our situation, we understand where we want to go, and we ask God to carry out the steps to get there.
- Or we realize (or fear!) that God may have different ideas, so instead of asking for what we want we just don't pray at all.
- That's a very passive way of relating to God. In fact, it's so passive, it isn't really relating.
- God didn't create us to be passionless robots who merely accept everything He arranges, resenting most of it because we don't really like where it's headed.
- That's not a child of God—it's more like a grumpy appliance. [Philippians 2:12-13](#) says, "Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."
- We are to work out our salvation—figure out what it means and how it impacts our lives.
- At the same time, it is God Who works in us.
- It is impossible to integrate these two things without talking to God.

[Prayers of supplication are our way of bringing our issues to God so He can work through them with us.](#)

- They are also the way we realize and openly acknowledge where we are in relation to God—whether that's hiding, like Adam and Eve, or willing to make the biggest sacrifice, like Abraham.
- Once we realize where we are, God can more easily help us get further.

### [Closing](#)

*To reject prayers of supplication is to live a passive life that doesn't allow God into the deep desires of our hearts.*

- To ask, submit, argue, and trust is to recognize that our relationship with God is messy and scary and infinitely important.
- David wrote 73 of the 150 Psalms, many of them asking God to fill his desires and struggling when answers didn't come soon enough—and David was called "a man after God's own heart".

### [Acts 13:22](#)

And when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king, of whom he testified and said, 'I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will.'

- We don't chase after God's heart by blandly accepting everything that comes our way, but by opening our own hearts with vulnerability, submission, and trust.

Let's Pray