

The Prayer of God - Genesis 12:1-7

Introduction: The main purpose of the Bible is to be God's inspired record of His revelation to man. When we read it and study it we can discover who God is and what He is about. In a very unique way, God's call of Abraham was the beginning of this process by God, for not only does the Bible call Abraham the father of the Hebrews, but the "*father of the faithful.*" So, from this point on, the Bible is a progressive explanation of what God did in revealing Himself to man.

Now, if I were to ask you what prayer was, you would probably say that, "*prayer is us talking to God.*" But prayer is so much more than that. Prayer is also God talking to us. It is more of a dialogue instead of a monologue. It is talking and listening rather than just us talking.

That is one reason I have entitled this message, "The Prayer of God," In this account of God calling Abraham, God is talking to Abraham and issuing a call. It is a dialogue in which God is communicating with man. Let's **READ Genesis 12:1-7.** The first thing we notice is that:

1. Prayer is Divinely Initiated (1)

Vs. 1 says, "*Now the Lord said to Abraham...*" Now we've always been conditioned to believe that prayer is something we do on our own initiative. If we need to confess something, or praise God for something, or thank Him or to intercede for someone, we come to God right? However, in this passage, we see that Abraham did not initiate the conversation. God did. So prayer is not initiated by us, but by God Himself. After all, He developed the concept of prayer. He moves us to pray, and He creates within us the hunger for communion and fellowship with Him. It's all His idea.

Acts 7:2-3 is a commentary on this aspect. Stephen declared that it was God who took the initiative in communicating His divine will to Abraham. **Acts 7:2-3 (NIV)** says, "*To this he replied: "Brothers and fathers, listen to me! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran. ³ 'Leave your country and your people,' God said, 'and go to the land I will show you.'"*" See; the whole thing was God's idea. God appeared, began the dialogue, and issued the command. Now we do not know how He appeared and initiated the experience. We don't know if it was a visible, an audible voice, a dream or a vision...we don't know. We just know that God appeared somehow to Abraham and began to communicate to him His plan. He prayed to Abraham, and Abraham prayed to Him. Doesn't it make sense that God initiates all our experiences with Him?

Think of it as you would a parent whose child lives a great distance away or parents who are separated by

an emotional distance. Those parents long to have meaningful fellowship with their children, and they are the ones who usually initiates the dialogue.

I have a nephew who lives in California. He moved there in June after he returned home from an 18 month military tour in Iraq. My sister has already been to see him two times. She longs to see her son and spend time with him.

That is the way it is with our heavenly Father. He longs to “*talk*” with His children. The second thing we notice about this “*prayer*” is that:

2. Prayer is a Direct Call and Command (1)

Here, God called and commanded Abraham. “*The LORD had said to Abram, ‘Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you.’*” **Genesis 12:1 (NIV).**

Again, we’ve been conditioned to think of prayer in terms of us asking or demanding of God. (Give me this. Give me that. Do this for me. Show me, etc.) But here, God is calling and commanding Abraham to do something. He tells him to leave his country and leave his family and go somewhere. Both commands carry the idea of separation. God called Abraham to separate himself from what he knew and was comfortable with. He had a plan for him, and that plan could never be fulfilled as long as he stayed where he was. So, God called for Abraham to separate himself from his environment. We know that it wasn’t a total separation from his family because we know that Abraham took his wife, his father, and his nephew with him. But the point is, there had to be a separation from his environment or there could not be the possibility for God’s plan to be fulfilled.

So we have to understand that as we come to God with our requests and demands, there is also something expected of us. There has to be a separation on our part before the request is fulfilled. In **Luke 12:51 (NIV)** Jesus says, “*Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division.*” If we want to be His disciples, we must give Him our undivided loyalty and love.

As Jesus was traveling one day, some came to Him and declared that they would follow Him. Jesus responded by saying, “*The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.*” (**Luke 9:58 NIV**). Then He turned and said, “*Follow Me.*” But they began to offer excuses...let me bury my father, let me say goodbye to my family, and so on. Jesus then said, “*No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.*” (**Luke 9:62 NIV**).

God issues a divine and direct call and command to His followers: “*Separate yourself from the familiar*

and the comfortable so I can use you and you won't have any divided loyalties." Along with every command of God, we see that:

3. Prayer Involves Distinct Promises (3-4)

Now the problem we have is that often, we want to claim the promises of God without meeting the conditions, but they are always tied together. In vs. 3-4, God gives Abraham five promises:

- 1. "I will make you into a great nation."**
- 2. "I will make your name great."**
- 3. "You will be a blessing."**
- 4. "I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you, I will curse."**
- 5. "All the peoples on earth will be blessed through you."**

These promises are conditional on Abraham's obedience, but they also contain a commission. God called Abraham and planned to use him and his descendants to be a blessing for the whole human race. God wanted to bless His people by revealing Himself as the God who redeems, the God who heals, the Almighty-God, and the only God.

Notice too, that God did not choose Abraham because there was anything special about him, or as a reward for something he'd done. He simply chose Him to be fruitful and productive...the same reasons He calls us.

It is not because of anything special about us. There was nothing special about Paul, but God called him and he listened and obeyed. There was nothing special about any of the disciples, they simply heard the call and responded. There's nothing special about me, but God called me to preach and minister, and I obeyed.

God's promises are given as a condition to our response, which leads us to the last thing I want to consider about this prayer of God:

4. Prayer Demands a Response (4-7)

Abraham responded to God's command with obedience. Vs. 4 says, "*Abram left as the Lord had told him.*" He heard, he considered, he obeyed. He placed his trust and confidence in the Lord to provide for him and back up His promise.

We need to follow Abraham's lead and hear what God is saying to us. When God prays to us about the sin in our lives, we need to separate ourselves from it. That's called repentance. When He prays to us about the direction He wants us to take, we need to remember His promises and obey Him. How do we hear God?

- 1. Through waiting and listening for His prayer to us.**

2. Through the leading and prompting of the Holy Spirit.

3. Through the wise counsel of Christian friends.

But mostly...

4. Through our reading and studying God's Word.

There can be no mistake about what He says to us in His Word.

Conclusion: Abraham's response to God's prayer was obedience, and that should also be our response when God clearly speaks to us through His Word. When we do, we can expect God to back up His promises. We can't lose when we obey God and take Him at His word. That's just like our God. He'll keep on blessing and blessing as we respond to Him with our obedience and faithfulness.