

# What Should We Be Praying For?

I am here reminded of Martin Zender's hilarious story about two churches who were praying with cross purposes. One group was praying for rain, and the other was praying for good weather for their church picnic. God was in a quandary and didn't know what to do. I am also reminded of the example given by a quantum physicist that sometimes one person's intentions can be at cross purposes with another's. For example, if two individuals are approaching a traffic light from different directions, the light cannot turn green for both of them at the same time. I believe that there is a divine blueprint by which God governs the affairs of mankind. However, He allows us individual latitude as to how we fit ourselves into that overall plan. There are almost an infinite number of routes we can all take that eventually get us ALL to the same destination. We often get in each other's way. That is why, in John 5:14, we are reminded of the importance of asking in accordance with God's will. Even Jesus was compelled to defer to the will of God as He agonized in the Garden of Gethsemane.

It's probably a very good thing that we cannot see God's ideal blueprint for our lives. The route God has chosen for us is probably not the one we would choose. There is no easy route to our final destination. Jesus did say, after all, that the broad, easy way leads to destruction (ie. becoming lost). The way that leads to the eternal (age-abiding) life is not an easy one. In the words of Robert Frost, it is "*the road less travelled.*" Every path we take will eventually get us to God's final destination, but the best way is the one that was first paved by Jesus Christ. I can assure you, it is not the easiest way.

I believe that God has given us internal spiritual resources that enable us to accomplish seemingly impossible goals. I believe that both Christians and non-Christians, even atheists, have this power within them. We all have a divine nature and we all have inborn creative abilities. For this reason, we do need to be careful what we pray for. Getting what we pray for might be totally at cross purposes with God's best path for us. We need to ask God's Holy Spirit to guide our thoughts and help us to pray for the right things. As we pray, we need to remember that many of life's most important lessons cannot be learned if God gives us everything we want.

So is it proper to ask for good things? Jesus did say that God loves to "*give good things to His children.*" Is it OK for us to ask for divine protection when embarking on a trip? Is it OK to ask for a better job, when so many in our society, and especially people in third-world countries, have no jobs at all? Is it OK to ask God to prosper us? Is it OK to ask God to relieve our pain and suffering? Of course it is, but at the same time we need know that there is a loving purpose behind every "no" answer. Whatever we ask, we need also to ask that God's will, not necessarily ours, be done.

If we do this, God will answer in one of four ways: (1) Yes, (2) No, (3) Wait a while, or (4) Roll up your sleeves and get to work.