

## PRAYING SUBMISSIVELY

As a noted minister of long ago spoke to his congregation with regard to their being submissive to the will of God, he said, "I always like to qualify my most earnest prayer with, 'Not as I will, but as Thou wilt.' Not only *ought* I to do it, but I would *like* to do it, because otherwise I might ask for something that would be dangerous for me to receive. God might give it to me in anger, and I might find little sweetness in the grant, but much soreness in the grief it caused me. You remember how Israel of old asked for flesh, and God gave them quails; but while the meat was yet in their mouths the wrath of God came upon them. Ask for the meat, if you like, but always put in this; 'Lord, if this is not a real blessing, do not give it me. Bless me indeed.'

"I hardly like to repeat the old story of the good woman whose son was ill; a little child near death's door, and she begged the minister to pray for his life. He did pray very earnestly, but he put in, 'If it be Thy will, save this child.' The woman said, 'I cannot bear that: I must have you pray that the child shall live. Do not put in any *ifs* or *buts*.'

"'Woman," said the minister, 'it may be you will live to rue the day that ever you wished to set *your* will up against *God's* will.' Twenty years afterwards, she was carried away in a fainting fit from under Tyburn gallows tree, where that son was put to death as a felon. Although she had lived to see her child grow up to be a man, it would have been infinitely better for her had the child died, and infinitely wiser had she left it to God's will."

This brings to mind a case here in our own community of a woman who had a baby boy that developed Spinal Meningitis. She prayed one whole night that the Lord would spare the child, and indeed he did live, but he was mentally impaired and developed epileptic fits. He has required special care all his life, and has been in an institution ever since he was a young man. His mother died when he was a small child and someone else has had to care for him ever since. It is indeed a dangerous thing to pray selfishly and without submission to God's will.

The Lord's ways and thoughts are immeasurably higher than ours (see Isaiah 55:8-9), and this should certainly teach us that He knows far better what is best for us than we do. Consequently *all* our prayers should reflect entire dependence upon Him, and total resignation to His will. The model prayer that Christ outlined for His disciples teaches us to pray, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10, Luke 11:2).

Our son had the worst type of Mononucleosis when he was five years old, and was near death for about seventy-two hours. I and his mother sent up many prayers during

this time, but the essence of those prayers was, "Dear Lord, Thou knowest that with all our heart we desire that our son live and be healthy, nevertheless, we want to be submissive to Thee and to Thy will; and if it should please Thee to take him we beg that we might be reconciled to it, for Thou knowest what is best." We are very thankful that it pleased the Lord to spare him and to give us every evidence that he is one of His children, but I feel confident that if he had been taken the Lord would have given us the grace we would have needed at that time.

May He ever help us, both in our prayers and in every other aspect of our lives, to be humbly submissive to His inerrant will. He has always been far better to us than we could ever have asked or thought, and we have no reason to think it will ever be otherwise. Even when providence appears to frown upon us we may be certain that He is still dealing with us in mercy, and by and by we shall see His hand in it. —Elder  
Ralph Harris