

Dear Angela,

Thank you for writing us at Christian Questions Radio. You told us that you knew that God is sovereign and has a plan for everyone. Nonetheless, you wanted to know how to pray for such things as healing or deliverance when none of us knows if these things are actually God's will for us or not. You wondered why we need to ask, "If it is your will, please" when God's will is done anyway. You said you found prayer difficult because you did not want "to walk outside of His will."

It is true that God's will is not dependent on us asking for it to be done. It will be done regardless of whether we ask or not. However, when we petition God in prayer regarding a particular matter and say, "nevertheless, your will, not mine," we are exhibiting our complete faith in God's omniscience, or infinite knowledge. We are trusting God's perfect wisdom to achieve His desired result, even if that result is not what we would have desired. Therefore, the act of asking for God's will to be done is actually an exercise in our own faithfulness to God and respect for his infinite knowledge.

Should you even pray for healing and deliverance? You can, but such a prayer may not be in your best spiritual interest. Consider the apostles. They had the gift of healing as well as the privileges of prayer, but they never used these privileges on themselves. There is no record in the Bible of the apostles praying for health or other earthly blessings for themselves, except in the case of Paul (2 Corinthians 12:7-9) and his request was not granted. He was told instead to pray for grace to compensate and enable him to bear his burden patiently.

The apostles healed only those outside the early Christian Church in order to demonstrate to the general public what Christ's kingdom would be like on earth in the future. The apostles did not pray for their own healing. In fact, they were exhorted to lay down their lives (John 15:13) in self-sacrifice, self-denials and services, not save their lives, which implied not praying for their deliverance from persecutions, diseases or ailments. Rather than pray for deliverance, we, like the apostles, are to delight in our afflictions and self-denials as gifts from God to benefit our spiritual development. "That is why for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong." (2 Corinthians 12:10)

Should you pray for God's will to be done when petitioning Him in prayer? Yes, you should because you honor God's sovereign power and authority when you do so. We hope we have answered your question. Be sure to sign up for CQ Rewind at www.christianquestions.net. The service is free without obligation and will provide you with scriptural perspective on many questions and topics.

Sincerely,

Christian Questions Radio