

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." Romans 8:28

Have you ever prayed earnestly that God would hear and answer the need of your heart, and the answer didn't come? Did you get discouraged, knowing God does answer prayer, but didn't answer yours?

Obviously, all through the Bible God has miraculously answered prayers. One instance can be found in II Kings 20:1-6, where King Hezekiah was sick unto death, and God told him to get his affairs in order because he was going to die. But he prayed and asked God to heal him. God heard his prayers and gave him 15 extra years of life. What a blessing! But when we read Kings 20:21 through Kings 21:1-17, was it really a blessing? For during those 15 years Hezekiah had a son who became a very wicked king who turned his people away from God. Reading further in Kings 21, we discover that the pattern of evil then continued through two additional generations of kings.

Many years ago, I worked under a manager who caused quite a bit of stress. I heard that different companies were hiring at the time, so I applied and got interviews with two different places. A friend said I could use him as a reference where he worked, so I was hopeful that God was allowing me to move to another job without such long hours and bitterly cold weather. Instead of answering that prayer, God answered a prayer I hadn't prayed. He kept me where I was and moved the manager somewhere else.

Perhaps country singer Garth Brooks can give us some insight into prayer with his hit song "Unanswered Prayers", when he and his wife ran into his old high school flame that he had spent time praying that God would "make her mine". After a few minutes, he realized they both had changed over the years, and after looking back at his wife, he thanked God for all the blessings in his life. He knew then that some of God's greatest gifts are "Unanswered Prayers".

The answers we get when we pray are not always what we ask for, and not always even what we want, but we know that our Heavenly Father loves us and wants what's best for us. We should pray the prayer instead that Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, "not my will, but Thine be done." (Luke 22:42)

And as the song goes, "I guess the Lord knows what he's doing after all!"

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