

One of the greatest men of prayer in the Bible has to be Daniel who was such an avid “pray-er” that three times a day in full view of the public he got down on his knees to pray and give thanks to God knowing it could cost him his life.

What we learn from a closer examination of his prayers recorded in Daniel 9-10 is that first of all **Daniel’s petitions were purposeful**. According to the angel who came in answer to his prayer, Daniel prayed for two reasons: 1) to understand and 2) to humble himself before God. (10:12) The next thing we see is that **Daniel’s petitions were persistent**. Not only did he pray while mourning and fasting for three full weeks, but he prayed until the answer came. (Daniel 10:2) **Purposeful and persistent prayer gets the attention of God**. Not only was God’s response tender, comforting and encouraging: “You’re treasured” (9:23; 10:11,19); “Don’t be afraid” (10:12,19); “Peace to you” (10:19); “Be very strong” (10:19), but it was sent quickly: “At the beginning of your petitions” (9:23) “From the first day... your prayers were heard” (10:12)—and it was timely: “in my extreme weariness” (9:21); “while I was praying” (9:21). God responded by giving Daniel understanding (10:14) *because* he prayed (10:12).

Purposeful, and persistent prayer may get attention from God, but it also gets attention from the enemy. Attention in the form of such strong opposition that in Daniel’s case it took 21 days for the answer to come. When the answer did come, the enemy had been defeated. Victory was defined by Daniel gaining understanding (not by fulfillment of the vision he had received). Understanding was what Daniel prayed for. So many times we’re more concerned with the who—*Who are You going to use to do what I want You to do?*, and the how—*How are You going to do what I want You to do?*, and the when—*When are You going to do what I want You to do?*, instead of being concerned with the what—*What is it You want me to know?* You see prayer is not about us getting from God the things we ask for, but God getting from us the things He desires: faith, trust, love and total dependence on Him. In the process we receive insight into His character and purposes as He reveals Himself and we become more intimately acquainted with Him.

- Prayer acknowledges that we are powerless over situations and circumstances.
- Prayer acknowledges God as Sovereign over every situation and circumstance.
- Prayer is a position of submission.

The intense prayer of the righteous is very powerful. (James 5:17)

Scriptures for further meditation: Matthew 26:36-41; Ephesians 6:18; I Thessalonians 5:17



Let our fervent prayers ascend to His Throne that He would not desert us in this hour of extreme peril, but remember us as he did our fathers in the darkest days of the revolution; and preserve our Constitution and our Union, the work of their hands, for ages yet to come.

— James Buchanan, *President of the United States of America*
A Proclamation for a Day of Humiliation, Fasting, & Prayer, December 14, 1860