

Before You Hit Rock Bottom

Like that father, most of us surrender our will to God only after we hit rock bottom. When we have no alternatives and God is the last resort, we grudgingly give up our independence and let him take over. It doesn't have to be that way.

You can begin by trusting God before things get out of control. He will not be offended if you test him in your prayers. When you have the all-knowing, all-powerful Ruler of the Universe looking out for you in perfect love, doesn't it make sense to rely on his will instead of your own puny resources?

Everything in this world that we put our faith in has the potential to fail. God does not. He is consistently reliable, even if we do not agree with his decisions. He always leads us in the right direction if we give in to his will.

In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus said to his Father, "...your will be done." (Matthew 6:10, NIV). When we can say that with sincerity and trust, we have reached the turning point in prayer. God never abandons those who trust him.

It's not about me, it's not about you. It's about God and his will. The sooner we learn that, the sooner our prayers will touch the heart of the One to whom

nothing is impossible.

Notes gathered from Jack Zavada for About.com. Used with permission.

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So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. - John 8:36 ASSOCIATION

The Turning Point in Prayer



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The Turning Point in Prayer

Prayer is both the most exhilarating and the most frustrating experience in life. When God answers your prayer, it's a feeling like no other.

You stagger around for days, awestruck because the Creator of the Universe reached down and worked in your life. You know a miracle happened, big or small, and that God did it for just one reason: because he loves you.

When your feet finally touch the ground, you stop bumping into walls long enough to ask a crucial question: "How can I make that happen again?"

When It Doesn't Happen

So often our prayers don't get answered the way we want. When that's the case, it can be so disappointing it drives you to tears. It's especially hard when you asked God for something undeniably good—someone's healing, a job, or mending an important relationship.

You can't understand why God didn't answer the way you wanted. You see other people getting their prayers answered and you ask, "Why not me?" Then you start to second-guess yourself, thinking maybe some hid-

den sin in your life is keeping God from intervening. If you can think of it, confess it and repent of it. But the truth is that we are all sinners and can never come before God totally free of sin.

Fortunately, our great mediator is Jesus Christ, the spotless sacrifice who can bring our requests before his Father knowing God will deny his Son nothing.

Still, we keep looking for a pattern. We think about times we got exactly what we wanted and try to recall everything we did. Is there a formula we can follow to control how God answers our prayers?

We believe praying is like baking a cake mix: follow three simple steps and it comes out perfect every time. Despite all the books that promise such a thing, there is no secret procedure we can use to guarantee the results we want.

The Turning Point in Prayer

With all that in mind, how can we avoid the frustration that commonly accompanies our prayers? I believe the answer lies in studying the way Jesus prayed.

If anybody knew how to pray, it was Jesus. He knew how God thinks because He is God: "I and the Father are one." (John 10:30, NIV).

Jesus demonstrated a pattern throughout his prayer life all of us can copy. In obedience, he brought his desires in line with his Father's.

When we reach the place where we are willing to do or accept God's will instead of our own, we have reached the turning point in prayer.

Jesus lived that: "For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me." (John 6:38, NIV)

Choosing God's will over our own is so hard when we want something passionately. It is agonizing to act as if it doesn't matter to us. It does matter. Our emotions try to convince us there is no possible way we can give in.

We can submit to God's will instead of our own solely because God is absolutely trustworthy. We have faith that his love is pure. God has our best interest at heart, and he always does what is most beneficial for us, no matter how it appears at the time.

But sometimes to surrender to God's will, we also have to cry out as the father of a sick child did to Jesus, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24, NIV)