

If God already knows our needs, why pray?

In the Sermon on the Mount before Jesus began teaching His disciples how to pray, He said, "...your Father knows what you need before you ask Him." (Matthew 6:8) He then taught the model prayer, often called the Lord's Prayer, saying we should ask for "daily bread"—daily needs of life. If God already knows what we need, why should we ask?

One reason is to show our total dependence on God. When we pray about the simplest daily things, we humble ourselves by acknowledging how much we need Him. If we pray as we move through the day, this provides opportunities for God to answer many prayers quickly and obviously. Every answered prayer helps build our faith.

As we cultivate the habit of turning to God for everything, we can't help but develop a growing sensitivity to see and acknowledge His answers. This helps us realize how important every detail of our lives is to Him: Which road should I take? (He knows which one has danger ahead.) Where should I sit? (Someone may be waiting on our witness.) Should I take time to stop and talk? (A person may need the encouragement only we can give.) Sometimes people think they shouldn't bother God with small, unimportant things. How do we know what's not important?

We mustn't overlook another important reason we should ask for daily needs to be met: James says clearly, "You do not have because you do not ask." (James 4:2b) God is waiting for our prayers.