



# GOOD NEWS

for the unsaved WORLD!

(#34)  
God's sovereignty and our prayer.

## IF GOD ALREADY KNOWS WHAT I'M GOING TO PRAY...

**WHY PRAY?**



... for your **Father** knows what you need, before you ask Him.  
Matthew 6:8b (NASB)

... your Father knows what you need, before you ask Him.  
Matthew 6:8b (NASB)

"If God already knows what I'm going to pray, why pray?"



The WORLD teaches that SOVEREIGNTY and RESPONSIBILITY work AGAINST each other.



GOD teaches that SOVEREIGNTY and RESPONSIBILITY work TOGETHER.

A manifestation of God's SOVEREIGNTY.

A confused view of how SOVEREIGNTY and RESPONSIBILITY relate.



### THE WORLD'S VIEW CANNOT CONSISTENTLY EXIST!

"God already knows what I'm going to pray, so I don't need to do it"

✦ ✦ It is impossible for this to occur! ✦ ✦

- God wouldn't KNOW what you're "going to pray," if you aren't going to pray!
- Instead, he'd KNOW what you're "going to refuse to pray"!



### GOD'S WORD ALWAYS CONSISTENTLY PRESENTS SOVEREIGNTY AND RESPONSIBILITY AS WORKING TOGETHER!

Both OLD and NEW Testaments are filled with examples!

SOVEREIGNTY AND RESPONSIBILITY ARE OFTEN SEEN:

- In the same passage, without any suggestion of incompatibility.
- In different passages that describe the same event. (This includes many prophecies.)

### EXAMPLES – BOTH WORKING TOGETHER!

(Just a few, since this isn't today's focus.)

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE	A MANIFESTATION OF SOVEREIGNTY	HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY
Genesis 50:20	God planned good to occur.	You planned evil against me.
Philippians 2:12-13	God is at work in you (to enable you).	Continue to work out your salvation.
2 Timothy 2:19	The Lord knows those who are his.	Those who call on his name must turn away from wickedness.
John 6:37	All that the Father gives me will come to me.	I will not turn away anyone who comes to me.
Acts 4:27-28	You decided beforehand that it would happen.	The leaders came together to oppose (and kill) Jesus.
Acts 2:40-41, 47b	The Lord added to their number.	Those who accepted the message were added to their number.

WHY should we be surprised that PRAYER has the same characteristics?

**SCRIPTURE OBVIOUSLY SHOWS THAT THEY WORK TOGETHER! SO WHY ALL THE CONFUSION?**

Because of the world's influence,  
it's easy to overlook the differences that exist  
between GOD as creator and PEOPLE as created.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND!



**GOD, UNCREATED.**      **PEOPLE, CREATED.**

**GOD, UNCREATED.**      **2 REALMS OF EXISTENCE**

**GOD IS NOT A PART OF CREATION.**  
Yet he can interact with people on their level.

**PEOPLE, CREATED.**

**WE ARE NOT UNCREATED.**  
We cannot interact with God on his level.

SEPARATE ISSUES...      WORKING TOGETHER...

**GOD, UNCREATED.**      **SOVEREIGNTY & RESPONSIBILITY**

**SOVEREIGNTY** occurs here, where we cannot interact.  
(We would NOT know about sovereignty, except that God told us about it.)

**PEOPLE, CREATED.**

**RESPONSIBILITY** occurs here, where we DO interact and make choices.

SEPARATE ISSUES...      WORKING TOGETHER...

**IF WE CAN'T INTERACT WITH SOVEREIGNTY, WHY DOES GOD TELL US ABOUT IT?**

**SOME OF THE REASONS:**

- ✓ **WARNING:** To remind us that we can't get away with sin.
- ✓ **HUMILITY:** To remind us that our salvation is from God, and not from ourselves.
- ✓ **ENCOURAGEMENT:** To remind us that our struggles and efforts (for God's kingdom) are not in vain.

**GOD, UNCREATED.**      **OUR INTERACTION**

We are never told to interact with sovereignty.  
(We must accept the facts about sovereignty, but there are no commands to respond to.)

**PEOPLE, CREATED.**

All God's commands are given to us on our level.  
We are RESPONSIBLE for how we respond to them.

SEPARATE ISSUES...      WORKING TOGETHER...

**GOD, UNCREATED.**      **HOW GOD INTERACTS**

Here, GOD interacts with us as creator.

**PEOPLE, CREATED.**

Here, GOD interacts with us as Lord, friend, encourager, law-giver, savior, judge, etc.

SEPARATE ISSUES...      WORKING TOGETHER...

**GOD, UNCREATED.** **APPLIED TO PRAYER**

GOD interacting as creator.

... your Father knows what you need, before you ask Him.  
Matthew 6:8b (NASB)

**PEOPLE, CREATED.**

GOD interacting on our level.

For we don't even know what we should pray for, nor how we should pray. But **the Holy Spirit prays** for us...  
Romans 8:26b (NLT)

Diagram labels: **SEPARATE ISSUES...** (dashed red arrow), **WORKING TOGETHER...** (solid blue arrow)

**JESUS HIMSELF SAW NO CONTRADICTION BETWEEN GOD KNOWING ALL THINGS, AND PEOPLE PRAYING TO GOD!**

**JESUS IS THE ONE WHO SAID...** → ... your Father knows what you need, before you ask Him.  
Matthew 6:8b (NASB)

**AWARE OF THIS FACT, HOW DID HE RESPOND?** →

1. He prayed.
2. He told us to pray!

IF JESUS SAW NO CONTRADICTION BETWEEN THE TWO, WHY SHOULD WE THINK THERE IS ONE?

(THIS IDEA IS FROM THE DEVIL WHO WANTS TO KEEP US FROM PRAYING!)

**AWARE OF THIS FACT...**

**JESUS PRAYED**  
(and demonstrated how to pray).

And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, ...  
Luke 22:44a (NIV)

[Jesus] looked toward heaven and prayed...  
John 17:1b (NIV)

While Jesus was praying, ...  
Luke 9:29a (GW)

During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.  
Hebrews 5:7 (NIV)

**AWARE OF THIS FACT...**

**JESUS TOLD US TO PRAY**  
(and told us how to pray).

Pray for those who persecute you!  
Matthew 5:44b (NLT)

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.  
Luke 18:1 (NIV)

This, then, is how you should pray...  
Matthew 6:9a (NIV)

On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation."  
Luke 22:40 (NIV)

**THEN WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF PRAYER?**

- ✓ **NOT TO INFORM:** Since God already knows what we will pray, our prayers aren't to inform him!
- ✓ **GROW:** To grow us and to develop our values, as we conform our prayers to his will.
- ✓ **TEACH:** To teach us obedience and trust.
- ✓ **PARTICIPATE:** To make possible our participation in God's purposes for the world. God uses us when we pray according to his will!
- ✓ **EMPOWER:** To turn us into the type of people (or "environment") where the Holy Spirit likes to reside and work powerfully (especially in group prayer).

**THIS WEEK...**

**SINCE GOD ALREADY KNOWS OUR NEEDS,**  
**WE CAN FOCUS MORE ON OUR VALUES!**

**HERE IS A GOOD PLACE TO START! TRY MAKING THIS PASSAGE THE FOCUS OF YOUR PRAYER!**

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things [= your actual needs] will be given to you as well.  
Matthew 6:33 (NIV)

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