

Dear friend,

“Mom, can I stop watching TV and go do my homework?” “Mom, would it be OK with you if I got off the phone with my friend and did the dishes for you?” “Dad, could I have some money to buy gas for the lawn mower so I can mow the lawn today?” These are requests to which every mom and dad would enthusiastically say yes. The trouble is that very few (Probably none, though a parent can dream! 😊) children would ever want to make requests like these. While these are requests that would make a parent happy, they are not requests that would make a child happy. On the other hand requests that would make a child happy would not necessarily make a parent happy. “Dad, may I have the keys to the car so my friends and I can go speeding over country roads in the dark with the lights off?” “Mom, may I eat this half gallon of ice cream right now, ½ hour before dinner?”

It is in the nature of the relationship between parents and children that parents have the right and the resources to provide their children with what they need to have a happy life. Parents are supposed to relate to their children out of a desire for their well-being. They are to use their wisdom, their authority and their resources to insure that their children’s needs are met and that they grow into happy, responsible adults. Children on the other hand are supposed to submit to their parent’s superior wisdom and authority and trust their love for them. They have an obligation, which is in their own best interest, to respect and listen to their parents. They are free to ask for whatever they think they need but they must always do so in humility, knowing that what they want may not be what their parents deems best.

I’ve been thinking about parents and children as I’ve been seeking to understand the nature of prayer. As God’s child through faith in Jesus Christ I want to ask God for things that I know God wants to give me. I do not want to be a child who continually asks for things that God does not want me to have. I want to be confident that what I am asking God for is what God wants to give me. Therefore, I’m always looking for ways to pray for things that I want and that I know that God wants as well.

Yesterday morning, during our regular Wednesday morning prayer meeting at church (6am-8am, come for the whole time or just part of it!) I discovered, as we were praying through Psalm 21, confidence that I was asking God for things that he wanted to give to me. King David wrote psalm 21. I know, from numerous places in the New Testament, that the psalms David wrote in his office as king are also prophetic descriptions of the Son of David, our Lord Jesus Christ. You can see that quite clearly in this psalm. For example in v. 4 David says, “He asked life of you; you gave it to him, length of days forever and ever.” In John 17, Jesus prayed to his Father, “And now Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.” Jesus is asking the Father to give him the life of glory he had prior to his incarnation. We know that God answered that prayer by raising Jesus from the dead.

The verse that caught my attention and helped me to pray was v. 2, “You have given him his heart’s desire and have not withheld the request of his lips.” What struck me about that verse was that God the Father has given God the Son everything that he asked of him. That caused me to think of Jesus’ prayer in John 17. Psalm 21:2 means that everything Jesus asked the Father in

his prayer in John 17 he has given to him. Therefore if I want what Jesus wants as expressed in that prayer, I can ask it and know that God has heard and that God will answer.

I don't know about you but I want to be part of a church where people love each other and are united, not because they all love the same football team or have the same parenting philosophy or come from the same socio-economic group. I want to be a part of a church that is united by a common love for Jesus Christ. I want to be a part of a church where the members initiate with one another and encourage one another without expecting anything in return because they are so amazed to be loved by God. That is exactly what Jesus asked the Father to do in John 17: 20-21, "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you sent me." Then in v. 26, "I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you loved me may be in them, and I in them."

I was able, because of Psalm 21:2 along with John 17 to pray with great confidence that God would fulfill the prayer of Jesus in our church. These passages gave me the ability to ask God for something that I deeply desire and that I know he also desires. Children who are delighted to be loved for and cared for by their parents ask for things that make both they and their parents happy. Let's use God's word to become these kinds of children.

Learning to ask in faith,