

## PRAYER LESSON 139

### Does Prayer Change Others?

I asked before if prayer can change God or can prayer change circumstances? In both cases I think the answer is, “Yes,” at least it seems like it. Our question for today is this: “Does prayer change others?”

Some of the most impassioned prayers are for someone else and many of those prayers are for God to change a person. The Bible has examples of these kinds of prayers. Jesus says in Matthew 5:44 **Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.** What we pray for our enemies is for God to change them.

Paul exhorts Timothy in 1 Timothy 2:1-2 **I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone--for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.** Sometimes our prayers for those in authority must be for them to change.

Paul also writes in Ephesians 6:18 **keep on praying for all the saints.** When we pray for others we assume that our prayers will make a difference, that God will effect a change. This, of course, is the whole point of intercession.

We must keep in mind, though, that our prayers may not be able to override the will, or sin, of the person we are praying for. God allows people to make bad choices and we cannot force them to good behavior simply by our prayers. However, God can, by his Spirit, lead a person to salvation and to changed behavior. This is what we pray for, that God’s Spirit will be active in a person to lead them to Christ.

We have a responsibility to pray for others, God expects it. God will answer by acting with a powerful influence against sin and toward righteousness in the other person’s life.