



Will God Extend Your Life if You Ask Him?

2 Kings 20:1: (NASB) *In those days Hezekiah became mortally ill. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him and said to him, Thus says the LORD, Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live.*



Special Guest: David Christiansen

Prayer is a powerful thing. We as Christians speak of it often and we encourage others by telling them that we are praying for them. We ask for prayers. We pray for forgiveness, for strength, for discernment. We pray for direction, for patience, and for wisdom. We pray to praise honor and worship our Almighty God and His son Jesus. This morning we are going to look at the experiences of one man, one King of Israel, Hezekiah, who prayed for God to extend his life. Why did he ask that? Should he have asked that? What is the lesson for us? Stay with us as we talk about the most familiar topic of prayer in a relatively unfamiliar way.

What kind of state was Israel in at the time of King Hezekiah?

Israel was originally divided into twelve tribes. There was a split and the ten tribes in the north were called "Israel," and two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, formed in the southern part and they were called "Judah." They eventually were so separated that often the southern part was called "Sumaria." Hezekiah was a king of Judah.

Hezekiah's father was Ahab, a very wicked king and an idolater. The people were worshipping idols and the temple was closed. Hezekiah became the king around age 25. At various times in the history of the two kingdoms, the kings were at war, at peace, or simply indifferent. God viewed them as one, however, calling them the "House of Israel and the House of Judah."

Was he a good king? Yes.

2 Kings 18:1-4: (NASB) ¹Now it came about in the third year of Hoshea, (the king of Israel) the son of Elah king of Israel, that Hezekiah the son of Ahaz king of Judah became king. ²He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Abi the daughter of Zechariah. ³**He did right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father David had done.** ⁴He removed the high places and broke down the sacred pillars and cut down the Asherah. He also broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the sons of Israel burned incense to it; and it was called Nehushtan.

He removed the places of idol worship.

Unanswered prayer, the Centurion's faith, Our Daily Bread

- Luke tells of a Roman centurion with great faith.
- It was expressed as an acknowledgement that Jesus could heal his son anytime, anywhere.
- He didn't ask Jesus to do things his way.

The principle is not telling Jesus how to do the work, but simply making the request in faith. We know God has healing power that sometimes he chooses to use and sometimes not.



2 Kings 18:5-6: (NASB) ⁵*He trusted in the LORD, the God of Israel; so that after him there was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor among those who were before him. ⁶For he clung to the LORD; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the LORD had commanded Moses.*

Clearly he had a special place in God's heart.

King Hezekiah appeared to have lived in accordance with this text:

Proverbs 3:5-6: (NASB) ⁵*Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. ⁶In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.*

What kind of prayer life did Hezekiah have before his illness?

2 Kings 19:14-15: (NASB) ¹⁴*Then Hezekiah took the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it, and he went up to the house of the LORD and spread it out before the LORD. ¹⁵Hezekiah prayed before the LORD and said, O LORD, the God of Israel, who are enthroned above the cherubim, You are the God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth.*

He has a letter from the king of Assyria, Sennacherib, that tells him of horrible things that will happen if he doesn't turn over his kingdom to Sennacherib.

One Lesson: Notice Hezekiah "*spread it out before the Lord.*" Sometimes we ask for the Lord's help, but He wants us to be so involved with Him that we lay out our problem in detail. Of course He knows the detail, but He wants us to be communicating with Him.

Another Lesson: He starts his prayer by bringing praise and honor first, with an attitude of humility.

2 Kings 19:16-18: (NASB) ¹⁶*Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see; and listen to the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God. ¹⁷Truly, O LORD, the kings of Assyria have devastated the nations and their lands ¹⁸and have cast their gods into the fire, for they were not gods but the work of men's hands, wood and stone. So they have destroyed them.*



God answers all prayers - the problem of unanswered prayer, *pleaseconvincemeTV*

- *The only answer we would find acceptable to prayer is yes - that's not how it works with God. No prayer goes unanswered. Sometimes the answer is yes, but sometimes no and sometimes the answer is simply, not yet.*

God will supply all of your needs, but sometimes the answer is still no. God knows what we need, but we know what we want. God knows what we need to grow spiritually. We sometimes bring requests to God to make our lives more comfortable or convenient, but that is not necessarily what will help us best for growing spiritually.

What is Hezekiah's final request?

2 Kings 19:19: (NASB) *Now, O LORD our God, I pray, deliver us from his hand that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You alone, O LORD, are God.*

One Lesson: Are our prayers just lip-service or are they true heart-service?

Hezekiah had a depth of dedication to the Lord before the prayer and throughout the prayer.



Another Lesson: Remember we are talking to the God of the Universe. We should be respectfully asking for things more in line with what will help us spiritually. Prayers should be in the context of devotion.

Matthew 7:7-8: (NASB) ⁷Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

Now, on to Hezekiah's request for longer life...

Isaiah 38:9-10: (NASB) ⁹A writing of Hezekiah king of Judah after his illness and recovery: ¹⁰I said, In the middle of my life I am to enter the gates of Sheol; I am to be deprived of the rest of my years.

Why is this prayer recorded in the book of Isaiah and not the book of Kings? Isaiah was a contemporary of Hezekiah. Kings and prophets kept in contact when things were going well. Hezekiah sought wisdom from the Lord through Isaiah. (The Bible is not chronological.) Isaiah delivers Hezekiah the message that Hezekiah will soon die. Hezekiah did not have a son and would need to quickly decide succession.

It sounds like Hezekiah is mourning his coming death:

Isaiah 38:11-14: (NASB) ¹¹I said, I will not see the LORD, the LORD in the land of the living; I will look on man no more among the inhabitants of the world. ¹²Like a shepherd's tent my dwelling is pulled up and removed from me; As a weaver I rolled up my life. He cuts me off from the loom; From day until night You make an end of me. ¹³I composed my soul until morning. Like a lion—so He breaks all my bones, from day until night You make an end of me. ¹⁴Like a swallow, like a crane, so I twitter; I moan like a dove; My eyes look wistfully to the heights; O Lord, I am oppressed, be my security.

Whatever God wants, that is what I will accept.

Selfish prayers are not good. We are to acquiesce to God's will, not the other way around. Sometimes the intensity of the issues in our lives overrides that perspective.

Psalms 66:16-20: (NASB) ¹⁶Come and hear, all who fear God, and I will tell of what He has done for my soul. ¹⁷I cried to Him with my mouth, and He was extolled with my tongue. ¹⁸If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear; ¹⁹But certainly God has heard; He has given heed to the voice of my prayer. ²⁰Blessed be God, who has not turned away my prayer or His lovingkindness from me.

This scripture tells us that we should have an attitude of unselfish prayers.



Hezekiah is pleading with the Lord to let him live:

Isaiah 38:15-16: (NASB) ¹⁵What shall I say? For He has spoken to me, and He Himself has done it; I will wander about all my years because of the bitterness of my soul. ¹⁶O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these is the life of my spirit; O restore me to health and let me live!

He felt he couldn't set his house in order in time because he did not have a son. There was a national consequence, not just a personal consequence. Hezekiah was thinking of the responsibility of King and asking for God's grace in that for the people of Judah that he loved.



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Isaiah 38:17-20: (NASB) ¹⁷Lo, for my own welfare I had great bitterness; It is You who has kept my soul from the pit of nothingness, for You have cast all my sins behind Your back. ¹⁸For Sheol cannot thank You, death cannot praise You; Those who go down to the pit cannot hope for Your faithfulness. ¹⁹It is the living who give thanks to You, as I do today; A father tells his sons about Your faithfulness. ²⁰The LORD will surely save me; So we will play my songs on stringed instruments all the days of our life at the house of the LORD.

The trials of your faith are more precious than gold. Trials are very important to us. Jesus went through great trial, as did Paul. Hezekiah's response is that he promised to walk through life soberly because of this blessing of additional years.

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But what is our definition of "success?" As a Christian, our definition should be: Revelation 20:2: *Be thou faithful unto death and I will give you a crown of life.*

Psalms 40:1-3: (NASB) ¹I waited patiently for the LORD; And He inclined to me and heard my cry. ²He brought me up out of the pit of destruction, out of the miry clay, and He set my feet upon a rock making my footsteps firm. ³He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God; Many will see and fear and will trust in the LORD.

*Reverence demands acknowledging
that God sets the rules.*

Luke 22:41-42: (NASB) ⁴¹And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and he knelt down and began to pray, ⁴²saying, Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from me; yet not my will, but Yours be done.



So, Hezekiah lived happily ever after, right?

2 Chronicles 32:25: (NASB) *But Hezekiah gave no return for the benefit he received, because his heart was proud; therefore wrath came on him and on Judah and Jerusalem.*

What happened? Hezekiah stopped Sennacherib and became prideful, even though he was truly a godly man. This is a warning! It is so easy for pride to enter our hearts.

The circumstances surrounding this rise of pride:

2 Chronicles 32:23: (NASB) *And many were bringing gifts to the LORD at Jerusalem and choice presents to Hezekiah king of Judah, so that he was exalted in the sight of all nations thereafter.*

He is now being exalted. His original prayer was so that all nations would know He is God, and now it seems he is pleased that all nations know Hezekiah is king! He lost perspective.

2 Chronicles 32:27-29: (NASB) *²⁷Now Hezekiah had immense riches and honor; and he made for himself treasuries for silver, gold, precious stones, spices, shields and all kinds of valuable articles, ²⁸storehouses also for the produce of grain, wine and oil, pens for all kinds of cattle and sheepfolds for the flocks. ²⁹He made cities for himself and acquired flocks and herds in abundance, for God had given him very great wealth.*

2 Kings 20:13: (NASB) *Hezekiah listened to them, and showed them all his treasure house, the silver and the gold and the spices and the precious oil and the house of his armor and all that was found in his treasuries. There was nothing in his house nor in all his dominion that Hezekiah did not show them.*

Wow! He did these things for himself - there was a pride in his heart. Representatives from Babylon came down and Hezekiah couldn't resist showing him all of his treasures. There was no reason to do this, other than pride. Isaiah had to tell him that he was out of line.



I command - The Atomic Power of Prayer, cindytrimm.com

- *In the name of Jesus I command that the spiritual, economic, social, cultural, educational, political ecclesiastical climates all shift...*
- *I command that the atmosphere must be filled with the Glory of God.*

"I command that..." We see a marked contrast between this and Jesus' words, "not my will but Thy will be done." Prayer is a powerful tool but it can be abused. We are faulty and must be careful.

*Don't ask God to extend your life,
ask Him to expand your life.*

Psalms 121:7,8: *⁷The Lord will guard you from all evil, He will always guard your life. ⁸The Lord will guard you coming and going, both now and forever.*

Many people pray as if God were a big aspirin pill; they come only when they hurt. -B. Graham Dienert



How did pride work out for Hezekiah?

2 Chronicles 32:25-26: (NASB) ²⁵But Hezekiah gave no return for the benefit he received, because his heart was proud; therefore wrath came on him and on Judah and Jerusalem. ²⁶However, Hezekiah humbled the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD did not come on them in the days of Hezekiah.

How did this turn around occur?

2 Chronicles 32:31: (NASB) Even in the matter of the envoys of the rulers of Babylon, who sent to him to inquire of the wonder that had happened in the land, God left him alone only to test him, that He might know all that was in his heart.

So Hezekiah was able to turn himself around and realized he had become prideful. With the awesome power of prayer, we need to wield that power with extreme reverence. We want to feed that reverence, not our own egos.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10: (NASB) ⁷Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself! ⁸Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. ⁹And he has said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. ¹⁰Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

The Apostle Paul wanted to preach the Gospel more fervently and prayed that his eyesight would return. The lesson is that Paul accepted the answer (no, the grace of God was sufficient) and "would rather glory in infirmities." This is how prayer ought to operate in our lives.

Proverbs 14:12: (NASB) There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.

The power of prayer is not for things that are right for our flesh. People often pray for things.

James 4:3: (NKJ) You ask and you don't receive because you ask amiss that you may spend it on your pleasures.

We need God to build us up spiritually, not for our wants. Paul never asked for a nicer robe or better chariot to ride around in. Humility is the key and Hezekiah learned that lesson. It is interesting that three years after he was granted his prayer for a longer life, his son, Manassah, was born. Manassah turned out to be one of the most wicked kings, immediately turning the people back to idolatry.

We should learn from a prominent king of Israel. He prayed to God, his prayer was answered, but he soon fell into pride. He learned from that. We must be careful that our prayers are in accordance with the will of God. It is about God's way, not ours.

**Will God extend your life if you ask him?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!**