

Praying God's Wish List

Since time is limited for all of us, how do we take full advantage of the precious minutes we allocate to talk to God? Though all of us want to ask for things like job success, physical healing, and traveling safety, the Lord often has other plans. So my small group has developed a way to broaden our prayers according to His "wish list."

Let's say a man named John approaches our prayer team with a request: "Please pray that at the end of my job interview this week, I'll be offered the position."

Is that a good prayer? We can't know for certain. But there are quite a few things we know God wants for John's employment—things like hope, wisdom, and peace. John and his job hunt would benefit from any of these. Although there's nothing wrong with praying as he asked, landing that particular job might be forfeiting something more valuable that God wants to do within him first.

God's wish list is full of blessings available for the asking—a compilation of the many good gifts He wants to give. It includes things like comfort, strength, joy, and perseverance. His Word reminds us these priceless gifts are available to us, which is why we can't go wrong praying from His wish list.

Prayers by the Mug

To facilitate this, my prayer group has compiled 400 Bible verses—20 each on 20 different topics—typing them onto small cards, color-coded by subject. We keep the cards in mugs where they're ready to pull out and apply during prayer. Here's a sample verse: "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope" (Rom. 15:13, ESV).

If we use that verse regarding John's employment, we might pray like this: "Father, please fill John with abounding hope as he awaits your choice of job for him."

By putting John's name into this bit of God's active, living Word, we're requesting things far more significant than a job itself can offer. God loves to say yes to things like hope, especially for someone going through a challenging life change.

Another example is Diane. She survived an auto accident and requested prayer for rapid healing of her injuries.

That's a good prayer. But maybe God's first choice would be for Diane to have a prolonged recovery so He can get her full attention while she's flat on her back. His intent might be to pour spiritual riches into her before she heals, things she can continue using well after recovery.

As we lift up Diane in prayer, we can also pluck some items from God's wish list that might be higher priorities than a speedy recovery. We can ask Him to increase her joy or develop a greater trust in Him while she's sidelined. Adding these cards ensures we are praying according to God's wish list.

The Lord's standing invitation is, "Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know" (Jer. 33:3). If we call according to His wish list, we won't miss even one of those great and mighty things!

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