

## Devotional on Wants and Needs

As a little girl I recall asking my mom for things I thought were extremely essential to my existence; and the thing I remember most is her reply. She would always say, “Trisha, is this something you *want* or is this something you really *need*?” I never really knew how to answer that question; but I would always think hummm . . . I know I want it . . . so I must need it! Looking back, I think my wants and needs were a little intermingled, and during my prayer time this morning I suddenly realized that I *still* struggle with a clear distinction between the two. It is so hard to knowing what the “right” thing is to ask from God and then even harder to understand if it is “according to His will,” (1 Jn. 5:14). Let’s look at a few examples from God’s Word about this subject.

As Jesus and his disciples entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the crowds had their agenda or “want” for Jesus to fulfill – Jesus; however, had a different and ultimately better agenda. They wanted Jesus as a ruler with political power and Jesus needed to be ruler of their hearts. This crowd *thought* they knew what they needed, but Jesus knew what was better (All 4 Gospels give an account of this – Mt. 21:1-11; Mk. 11:1-11; Lk. 19:28-44 & Jn. 12:12-19).

Even Jesus, while dwelling among us in the flesh (Jn. 1:14), struggled with the difference between wants and needs; therefore, he prayed Abba, Father everything is possible for you; take this cup from me, yet not what I will, but what you will (Mk. 14:36; Mt. 26:39 & Lk. 22:42). As the well-known writer C. S. Lewis contends, “the prayer in Gethsemane is the only model.” With Jesus’ prayer as our perfect model, we should pray as we feel led to pray, while asking God to align our prayers with His perfect will. Although Jesus was experiencing “sorrow” (*lypeisthai* – which means to be grieved or saddened to the point of distress), he demonstrated uncompromising obedience and determination to follow the Father’s will – regardless of the cost. I also find another point worth emphasizing here; he asked three of his disciples to “stay and keep watch” with Him (Mt. 26:38). In this hour of His greatest need the Lord wanted those with a sympathetic understanding and closeness to be praying with Him. When we pray, we need our most trusted prayer warriors to be backing us up with empathetic prayer as well.

Thankfully, God understands our struggle with what we think we need and what we really do need in our prayers. In Matthew 6:8 He assures us that He already knows what we “need” even before we ask Him. When I read this today a ton of weight was lifted off my shoulders! I can stop worrying if I am praying for the “right” thing . . . He already knows what that is, and thankfully we can rest assured that it will ultimately work towards our good (Romans 8:28) and for His glory (Phil. 4:19b). He is the only One we can trust to truly know what we need, because He alone knows what is in our future; He alone “knows everything” (1 John 3:20).

Father, we thank you that you know the desires of our hearts, and that we can trust you to discern between our wants and our needs while providing accordingly. Help us to remember to reach out to our trusted friends to stand in the gap with us as we pray through tough things that threaten to conquer us. Father help us to follow your Son’s example by being willing to let go of our fleshly “wants” to follow your good and perfect will – regardless of the cost. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.