

## Preserved by Purpose – When God Answers Your Prayer

There are more tears shed over answered prayers than over unanswered prayers. --  
Teresa of Avila.

We know what to do when God hasn't answered our prayers. First, we repent. Then, we seek out another more "spiritual" prayer partner. We go on an extended fast. We might even start going to both Sunday worship services. Some of us believe that by showing God how spiritual we are that he will suddenly then decide to answer our prayers.

James 4:3 says, "When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures." There are countless books that claim to have strategies on what to do to get your prayers answered. I admit that I've read some of them and put into practice the strategies. More attention seems to be given to the idea of prayers left unanswered than prayers being answered by God.

But what do you do when God answers your prayers? As strange as it sounds, knowing how to respond to God when you answers your prayer is just as important as knowing how to respond to God when you are waiting on your prayer gets answered. Hannah from the Old Testament shows there is more to it than just being grateful.

The Bible shows us in 1 Samuel 1 how Hannah prayed to the Lord for a child for many years. In verse 10 of that chapter, she made a vow to the Lord that if he blessed her to have a son, she would give the child back to him. Eventually, the Lord answered her prayers and she had a son she named Samuel. Verses 27- 28 say, "I prayed for this child, and the LORD has granted me what I asked of him. So now I give him to the LORD. For his whole life he will be given over to the LORD. "

When we have unanswered prayers, often we focus on how God in his sovereignty chooses to answer prayers when he wants to, how he wants to and for whom he wants. Waiting on prayers to be answered teaches us how to have faith and, most importantly, develop patience.

I Samuel 2 shows that she didn't brag about her prayer being answered. She kept her promise to God. It takes humility to do like Hannah and give back to God what he has given to us. In looking at Hannah's story, we see the wisdom of her response. When our prayers get answered, we have to learn how to accept God's favor. Answered prayers can teach us how to be humble and gracious.

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