FIRST WEDNESDAY: Does Prayer Really Matter
November 4, 2026 | Dr. Kirk Walters
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"I am the LORD, and I do not change."
Malachi 3:6a NLT

So the LORD changed his mind…
Exodus 32:14 NLT

1. Does Scripture Actually Say God Changed His Mind?

9 Then the LORD said, "I have seen how stubborn and rebellious these people are. 10 Now
leave me alone so my fierce anger can blaze against them, and I will destroy them. Then I will
make you, Moses, into a great nation." 11 But Moses tried to pacify the LORD his God. "O
LORD!" he said. "Why are you so angry with your own people whom you brought from the
land of Egypt with such great power and such a strong hand? 12 Why let the Egyptians say,
'Their God rescued them with the evil intention of slaughtering them in the mountains and
wiping them from the face of the earth'? Turn away from your fierce anger. Change your mind
about this terrible disaster you have threatened against your people! 13 Remember your
servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. You bound yourself with an oath to them, saying, 'I will
make your descendants as numerous as the stars of heaven. And I will give them all of this
land that I have promised to your descendants, and they will possess it forever.'" 14 So the
LORD changed his mind about the terrible disaster he had threatened to bring on his people.
Exodus 32:9-14 NLT

God has chosen to involve His people in the unfolding of His purposes.

[4] On the day Jonah entered the city, he shouted to the crowds: "Forty days from now Nineveh will be destroyed!" [5] The people of Nineveh believed God's message, and from the greatest to the least, they declared a fast and put on burlap to show their sorrow.[6] When the king of Nineveh heard what Jonah was saying, he stepped down from his throne and took off his royal robes. He dressed himself in burlap and sat on a heap of ashes. [7] Then the king and his nobles sent this decree throughout the city: "No one, not even the animals from your herds and flocks, may eat or drink anything at all. [8] People and animals alike must wear garments of mourning, and everyone must pray earnestly to God. They must turn from their evil ways and stop all their violence. [9] Who can tell? Perhaps even yet God will change his mind and hold back his fierce anger from destroying us." [10] When God saw what they had done and how they had put a stop to their evil ways, he changed his mind and did not carry out the destruction he had threatened.
Jonah 3:4–10 NLT

[7] If I announce that a certain nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down, and destroyed, [8] but then that nation renounces its evil ways, I will not destroy it as I had planned. [9] And if I announce that I will plant and build up a certain nation or kingdom, [10] but then that nation turns to evil and refuses to obey me, I will not bless it as I said I would.
Jeremiah 18:7–10 NLT

When people change their response to God, they may experience a different response from God.

2. How Can God Be Unchanging and Still Respond to Prayer?

"I am the Lord, and I do not change. That is why you descendants of Jacob are not already destroyed."
Malachi 3:6 NLT

Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow.
James 1:17 NLT

God's character is unchanging, but His dealings with people can change.

You know what I am going to say even before I say it, Lord.
Psalm 139:4 NLT

Prayer isn't about giving God information He doesn't have. It's about participating in a relationship He's invited us to enjoy.

“Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.”
Luke 22:42 NLT

3. Can Our Prayers Actually Change What Happens?

16 Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.
17 Elijah was as human as we are, and yet when he prayed earnestly that no rain would fall, none fell for three and a half years! 18 Then, when he prayed again, the sky sent down rain and the earth began to yield its crops.
James 5:16–18 NLT

God's promises aren't an excuse to stop praying. They're an invitation to start praying.

Sometimes God changes our circumstances. Sometimes He gives us the grace to walk through them.