

WHAT DOES THE WORD 'SUPPLICATION' REALLY MEAN?

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. Philippians 4:6

I think at one time or another we have all heard that verse before. But what does it mean from the original Hebraic perspective of the author? Does the word really mean "prayer?" If so, then why is Paul saying in a sense, "...but in everything by prayer and prayer,..." If supplications are just generic prayers then Paul is saying the same thing twice. But if we dig a little deeper we discover that the Hebrew sheds quite a bit more light on the true meaning and leaves us with a much greater understanding of what the Creator is trying to tell us when He says to bring our prayers AND our supplications before Him.



Let's start with a simple word search in Strong's and see where it leads us. When we do that we discover that there are several words for "*supplication*" in Hebrew but every single one of them leads back to a word that no one would remotely connect to the word supplication. These Hebrew words are powerful, quite possibly the most powerful words in all of creation. Let's take a look.

While the word "*pray*" is a fairly catch-all word to describe bringing requests before the Father, the word "*supplication*" is much deeper. There is a specific motive behind supplication that we don't find with regular prayer. The first word we come to is *chanan* (Strong's 2603). It means to bend or *stoop in kindness to an inferior*. It doesn't say that it is **US** bending toward a superior, but **HIM** bending toward us in kindness! That definitely got my attention. It comes from Strong's 2583, so I went there.

Strong's 2583 is the word *chanah*, a closely related word to *chanan*. This is where it gets blistering amazing. It means to pitch a tent (a sukkah!), to encamp or rest in a tent. It also has the idea of something declining, like the rays of the sun at sunset. This was very exciting to me as the Hebrew word picture was starting to really come to the surface. But there was one thing I needed to check. I knew what the Hebrew word *chen* meant and told myself that there was no way that the root word of these words was actually *chen* because that would be just too incredible and really send this study over the top. So I double-checked. Sure enough, all of these words are referenced in Strong's 2580, which is one of the most powerful words in the Hebrew language: grace. You read that right. *Supplication at its root is Yahweh's grace.*

To offer up supplication is not just to pray. It is to camp out before His throne in hopeful expectation of His grace. Where the idea of general prayer is us sending our requests up to the throne, supplication carries with it more of the idea of pressing in, camping out in your prayer closet, and petitioning for His grace and kindness in your situation.

Now that we understand the deeper side to this word, it will be of no surprise that the most common word for supplication in the Old Testament is *techinnah* (Strong's 8467), which is from 2603 and means "entreaty, graciousness, favor, grace, or supplication." No matter how you slice it, this amazing word comes down to a deep request before His throne for grace.

It's easy to throw up prayers before our King. But when was the last time you took the time to camp out in His presence, beseeching Him with all your heart for the power of His mighty grace, asking the Father to "bend in kindness" to His servant?

For those of you that are familiar with the feasts, the feast of **Sukkot** should be coming to mind. It's a time where we literally camp out before Him for an extended period of time, offering Him our prayers, praise, and now our supplications.

Shalom!

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