

A Prayer Recognizing the Sovereignty of God

BY JOEL STEPHEN WILLIAMS

Lord, please forgive us when we speak too quickly and without proper respect for you. We are unworthy. We should put our hands over our mouths. We sometimes speak rashly about things we do not understand, things too wonderful for us to know. Who are we to talk back to you, O God? Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, "Why did you make me like this?" We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hands. Woe to the one who quarrels with his maker, to the one who is but a potsherd among the potsherds on the ground.

You are the Sovereign and Almighty God. We know that you can do

all things and that no plans of yours can be thwarted. Is anything too difficult for you? You are the Sovereign Lord who has made the heavens and the earth by your great power. Nothing is too hard for you. You will have mercy on whom you will have mercy, and you will have compassion on whom you will have compassion.

What are we that you are mindful of us? Who are we that you have brought us this far? We despise ourselves and repent in dust and ashes. You, O God, are in heaven, and we are on earth. So help us to guard our steps when we go to the house of God. Help us to learn to listen. May we not be

quick with our mouths, or hasty in our hearts to utter anything before you, our God. Let our words be few. Teach us, Lord, and we will be quiet. Show us where we are wrong. O Sovereign Lord, our confidence is in you. Remember us, our Lord; remember us. Through our only Sovereign and Lord we pray, Amen.

(Job 40:4; 42:3; Rom. 9:20; Isa. 64:8; 45:9; Gen. 15:2; 17:1; 2 Sam. 7:28; Job 42:2; Gen. 18:14; Jer. 32:17, 27; Ex. 33:19; Rom. 9:15; Psa. 8:4; 2 Sam. 7:18; Job 42:6; Eccl. 5:1-3; Job 6:24; Psa. 71:5; Judges 16:28; Jude 4).

A Prayer for an Elder's Ordination

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"And when they had ordained elders in every church and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they believed" (Acts 14:23).

Lord, you are our shepherd. We are the sheep of your flock. Christ, you are our chief shepherd. You have ordained that some among us should be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up. This is a noble task, because you have ordained it and declared it to be so. We praise you for giving us the perfect example of a shepherd in your care for Israel. We praise Jesus Christ our Lord as the good shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep.

We ask your blessings now on _____ as he becomes one of our shepherds, and on the rest of the shepherds of this flock. May they keep watch over themselves and over all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made them overseers. May they be shepherds of the church of God, the precious church which you bought with your own blood, the church which you have placed within their care. May they serve willingly, not because they must, but because they are eager to do so.

We pray that, as our shepherds, they may protect us from the wolves who come in among us not sparing the flock. May they take care of the flock. May they strengthen the weak, minister to the sick and bind up the injured. May

they bring back the strays and search for the lost sheep that have wandered away. May they rule gently. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, may they receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

Lord, help us to obey our leaders in all that is right and to submit to their authority.

We know that they keep watch over us as men who must give an account. We pray that their work will be a joy, not a burden.

To God our Shepherd, the Overseer of our souls, through the Son, the Chief Shepherd, and in the Holy Spirit, we offer our petition.

Amen.