How to Pray with Confidence

(How to receive God's answers to prayer)

(1 John 5:14-15)
8-25-2019

Introduction: v.14-15
"According to His will" - Anything which would fall in line with (match up with) God's desire.

**** Effective prayer that gets answers involves lining up our will to God's;***
We must pray according to God's will before we can expect Him to answer!

What does it mean to "pray according to His will"?

I. ***Praying according to God's will takes into consideration…***
God's PROMISES (The Bible)
(Make your request based on God's Word, because He gives us right things.)

II. ***Praying according to God's will takes into consideration…***
God's GOODNESS
(Make your request based on God's Love, because He gives us benevolent things.)

III. ***Praying according to God's will takes into consideration…***
God's WISDOM
(Make your request based on God's all knowing mind, because He gives us the best things.)

IV. ***Praying according to God's will takes into consideration…***
God's TIMING
(Make your request based on God's time-clock, because He gives us timely things.)

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Introduction:

Many Christians either don't pray, don't pray enough, don't know how to pray, or don't know if prayer does any good.

We ask for something and wait for days, weeks, and months, only to become disappointed. Then a loss of enthusiasm for prayer sets in. Finally, we stop communicating with God altogether.

Have you ever experienced the thrill of seeing God answer specific prayer in your life?

I have! Examples:

> *The box of $14,000.00 received in the mail when I requested for God to meet our church's financial need
>
> *The countless times I requested wisdom in my sermon preparation
>
> *Wisdom in understanding a difficult passage of Scripture (EX: Mt. 19:9; Heb. 6:1-6; the timing of the Rapture, etc.) - Psalm 119:18 - ¶ Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.

I John is the book of assurance. The word "know" occurs over and over. Examples: SEE I John 4:13; 5:13, 19, 20.

Now, in vv. 14-15, we can know how to receive answers to our prayers.

v. 14

"Confidence. . . in Him" - Boldness before Him; assurance in front of His presence (NOTE: we have direct access, don't need to go through Mary or a saint).

"Confidence" - (*parresia* - *pas* = all or every; *rhesis* = to speak or audibly utter). The word refers to an openness of speech; a respectful yet bold, free speech. Not one who shrinks back and cowers away from God in shame, unsure of himself and his requests.

The word basically "denotes that freedom of speech which enables us to express our thoughts and desires before God without hesitancy or fear of embarrassment" (Hiebert, p. 254).

So often we are like the fisherman who casts out his lure and hopes a fish just might be swimming by at that time. We pray, hoping God might just happen to hear and answer our prayer (maybe He's not too busy) (Bridges, p. 18).

"If we ask" - Prayer is "asking"

- "Ask, and it shall be given you" - Mt. 7:7
- "For every one that asketh receiveth" - Mt. 7:8
- "Ask, and ye shall receive" - Jn. 16:24
- "Ye have not, because ye ask not" - Ja. 4:2
- "How much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him" - Mt. 7:11
- "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" - Mt. 21:22
- "How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit tot hem that ask him" - Lk. 11:13
- "If ye shall ask any thing in My name, I will do it" - Jn. 14:14

"Ask" - used of a petition of an inferior to a superior (implies humility and respect, not demanding).

"Anything" - this is a wide invitation to request a wide variety of things.

"<u>If</u> we ask" -

The Bible assures us of answered prayer when we meet the following conditions:

1. God answers the prayers of those who <u>obey</u> Him
   (I Jn. 3:22 - And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.)
   Psalm 66:18 - If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear *me*:

2. God answers the prayer of those who <u>believe</u> Him
   Mk. 11:24 - Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive *them*, and ye shall have *them*.

   Ja. 1:6-7 - But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. 7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

3. God answers the prayers of those who are <u>close</u> to Him
   Jn. 15:7 - If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

Many are quick to notice the promising words "If we ask anything" and "whatsoever we ask"! And they fail to see the all-important condition: "<u>According to His will</u>"
"According to His will" - Anything which would <u>fall in line with</u> (match up with) God's desire.

By learning the mind of God, prayer becomes not the whimsical expression of our own poor minds, but it takes on a high and holy character. It is asking of God what He delights to give (H.A. Ironside, The Mission of and Praying in the Holy Spirit, p. 31).

It would be better to pray less and pray more accurately and thoughtfully than to utter 10,000 unbiblical, unthoughtful requests!

What we need is thoughtful prayer. We need to "prepare our case" and come into His presence with solid reasons why w believe such requests would line up with His will. You don't just rush helter-skelter into the presence of God. . .You come and say, "Lord, to the best of my knowledge, I believe it is your will for such and such to happen" (Jerry Bridges, How to Get Results Through Prayer, NAV Press, p. 15).

Mt. 18:19 - Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

The agreement is a determination that the request is God's will. It's not that we merely agree with each other, but that we agree with each other that such a request would be agreeable to God.

"Prayer is not a convenient device for imposing our will upon God, or bending His will to ours, but the prescribed way of subordinating our will to His. . . Every true prayer is a variation on the theme, 'Thy will be done'." (John R.W. Stott, p. 185)

Praying according to our Father's will involves knowing our Father. [To know His likes, dislikes; His character; the principles He operates under, etc.] It involves trying to see a situation as He sees it, from His perspective.

To prayer in "Jesus' name" is the same as praying according to Jesus' will (i.e. to request that which He would want for our lives).

John 14:13 - And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

ILLUS: As a boy, I would take a note to the pharmacy on behalf of my mother and would receive that which I requested since I was not coming on my authority but on hers.

"He heareth us" - the implication is that if a request does not line up with God's will, He does not hear us.

It's not that He does not know a request is being made (God is omniscient; He knows everything). However, there are requests that He pays no attention to, unworthy requests get no response from God.

v. 15

If you have the assurance in your heart that God is "giving ear to" (paying attention to) your request, then you can rest assured that He is going to grant (in His time and manner) the answer to your request.

"We have the petitions" - he does not say "we shall have" (future answer) , but a present tense - right now answer.

The tangible effect of the prayer may take God's time in reaching us, but He has heard and has answered immediately (EX: Daniel's request - Dan. 9:23).

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We must pray according to God's will before we can expect Him to answer!

What does it mean to "pray according to His will"?

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God's <u>PROMISES</u> (The Bible)

(Make your request based on God's <u>Word</u>, because He gives us <u>right</u> things.)

Daniel, when reading the prophecy of Jeremiah (as told in Dan. 9) "understood by the books" what God was about to do and immediately set himself to pray in accordance with the prophetic message (Ironside, p. 32).

To have an effective prayer life, it is imperative that we know God's will; and the only way we can know God's will is to know His Word. Here is where we see the definite connection or relationship between prayer and Bible reading and how the two go hand in hand (cp. Jn. 15:7).

The Bible uses the term *"thelema"* ("will") to describe some very specific desires that God has for us:

God will answer the prayer of someone who is seeking:

1. Salvation (I Tim. 2:4; II Pet. 3:9)

> I Tim.2:4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

II Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

2. Spirit-fullness (Eph. 5:17-18)

17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord *is*.
18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

3. Service (to serve Christ) (Heb. 13:20-21)

20 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,
21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

4. Sanctification (I Thes. 4:3)

3 For this is the will of God, *even* your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:

5. Joy (I Thes. 4:16-18)

16 ¶ Rejoice evermore.
17 Pray without ceasing.
18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

God will answer the prayer of His child, who asks Him for. . .

1. Food (any basic necessity to life - Mt. 7:7-11)
"Give us this day our daily bread"

2. Forgiveness (I Jn. 1:9)
"Forgive us our debts"

3. Freedom from Satan's lies and traps
"Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil"

God will absolutely answer the prayer of a Christian who seeks after. . .

1. Wisdom (Ja. 1:5 - If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.)

a. Wisdom regarding trials

b. Wisdom regarding child-rearing
c. Wisdom regarding career-choice
d. Wisdom regarding church leadership, sermon
e. Wisdom regarding financial purchases
f. Wisdom regarding dating (who and when)

2. The spiritual well-being of one of God's children

Proper intercessory praying gets answers! . . . That is, when you intercede for the right reasons.

See Paul's prayer requests on behalf of other believers

(Col. 1:9-11 - For this cause we also, since the day we heard *it*, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;

It sometimes sees very hard to get prayed for unless we're sick or out of a job. 90% or prayer requests concern someone who is sick or out of a job. The implication is that someone who is healthy and working doesn't need prayer. That's not true (Bridges, p. 16-17).

Intercessory prayer involves praying about a spiritual problem or struggle of a sinning believer (I Jn. 5:16).

A model intercessory prayer list (Col. 1:9-11; cp. Eph. 1:15-19; 3:14-19): Pray that other believers would:

--Fully know God (Col. 1:9)
(Pray for the spiritual minds of the saints)

--Faithfully walk with God (v. 10)
(Pray for the spiritual feet of the saints)

--Be fortified with strength from God (v. 11)
(Pray for the spiritual muscle of the saints)

One reason why it is wise to have a devotional time combining prayer with Bible reading is that as you read the Bible, you will come across (be reminded of) areas of Biblical need to pray about.

"A believer is discouraged because fellow employees are hostile to his Christian life, and he would like to find work some other place. But while he's praying about it, this statement of Christ comes to his mind, 'In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world' (Jn. 16:33). Those words bring about a change in that believer's attitude. Even though he might still prefer another position for his own personal enjoyment, he now prayer differently. He is determined to do what God wants him to do, to be what He wants him to be, and to be where He wants him to

be, no matter what ridicule it might involve. Rather than simply praying for a change in work, he prays now for the grace and strength to stay where he is and be a good testimony, if that is God's will for him." (How to Pray God's Way, Richard W. Dehaan, p. 14).

God is listening for Biblical requests, unselfish requests. He pays attention to the one whose heart beats with His, a child of His who would ask for things that He knows would be beneficial and in no way harmful to His kids.

II. Praying according to God's will takes into consideration…

God's GOODNESS

(Make your request based on God's Love, because He gives us benevolent things.)

Ja. 1:17 - "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Examples of people who prayed and God (in His goodness) answered:

--Abraham prayed, and God delivered Lot.

--Jacob prayed, and God caused Esau to meet him in peace.

--Moses prayed, and Amalek was defeated, and Israel victorious

--Hannah prayed definitely for a son, and God heard, and she received her little one Samuel ("asked of God")

--Daniel prayed, and the whole prophetic panorama was opened to him.

--Nehemiah prayed, and the king's heart was turned toward the remnant of Israel and the holy city.

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III. Praying according to God's will takes into consideration…

God's WISDOM

(Make your request based on God's all knowing mind, because He gives us the best things.)

God's wisdom not only gives what is good, but what is best for our benefit and for His own glory.

"God knows our deepest need. A single mother prayed for $2,000 to bring her financial relief. God denied the request as she expressed it. Instead of giving her the money, God gave her a job that she could handle. Then He gave her a friend who helped her to learnt o manage her finances. In time she was able to look back and see that God did answer her request, but in a way that reflected His wisdom. The best part is that she grew in her trust in God." (Praying with Confidence, Martin DeHaan)

It is not always God's will to heal us physically (EX: Paul's denied request, II Cor. 12).

IV. Praying according to God's will takes into consideration…

God's TIMING

(Make your request based on God's time-clock, because He gives us timely things.)

Praying according to God's will involves not only making a request based on God's Word, goodness, and wisdom, but also based on God's timing.

God does answer with either a "Yes" "No" or "Wait"

"Oswald Chambers understood that waiting is part of prayer. About the verse, "Men always ought to pray and not lose heart" (Lk. 18:1), he wrote, "Jesus taught His disciples the prayer of patience. If you are right with God and God delays the answer to your prayer, don't misjudge Him. Don't think of Him as an unkind friend, or an unnatural father, or an unjust judge, but keep at it. Your prayer will certainly be answered, for 'everyone who asks receives.' Pray and do not cave in. Your heavenly Father will explain it all one day. He cannot just yet because He is developing your character. 'Forget the character,' you say, 'I want Him to grant my requests.' And He says, 'What I am doing far exceeds what you can see or know. Trust Me'." ." (DeHaan, p. 25).

They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.

We need the persistence of the woman Jesus told about who kept coming to the Judge.

Illustration: I prayed for my dad's salvation for 25 years before God answered!

Conclusion:

Are your requests in harmony with God's will?

If not, why not?

Have you neglected His Word?
Have you doubted His goodness?
Have you failed to trust His wisdom?

Have you been too impatient to wait?