

GOD ANSWERS PRAYER

Text - 1 John 5:14-15

Introduction: There cannot be too much emphasis on the importance of prayer. Prayer is a necessity in our life. It has been well said, "No prayer, no power." James said "ye have not, because ye ask not" (James 4:2). We cannot expect God to bless unless we pray. Understanding this, we must treat prayer as a priority.

Prayer is also a privilege. We do not have to bear the burdens of life alone, but have the privilege of bringing every need of life to God in prayer.

The Apostle John tells us that *God answers prayer*. The Bible says much about prayer, but in my opinion, verses 14-15 of First John 5, are some of the most instructive and inspiring in all the Word of God.

1. THE CONFIDENCE OF OUR APPROACH

A) *In Our Access*

B) *In Our Asking*

2. THE CONDITION OF OUR ASKING

A) *Guides What We Request*

B) *Governs What We Receive*

3. THE CERTAINTY OF OUR ANSWERS

A) *What We Know*

B) *What We Get*

Yes, God answers prayer! When was the last time you asked God for something and you received an answer from Him? Let me repeat, God answers prayer. He can answer your prayers with a YES, a NO, or a WAIT. If He has not answered your prayer, it may be that you have not been praying according to His will. Seek God's will in prayer and get in on the answers God has for you.

As I prepared this message, I was reminded of so many prayer truths that I have heard through the years. God has used them again and again to stir me to pray.

- "All of our failures are prayer failures." – John R. Rice
- "If I could hear Jesus praying for me in the next room, I would not fear a thousand enemies. Yet the distance makes no difference. He is praying for me." – Robert Murray McCheyne
- "If ever there was a time to pray, it's when you don't feel like praying."
- "You can do more than pray after you've prayed, but you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed." – John Bunyan
- "Those who have left the deepest impression on this sin-cursed earth have been men and women of prayer." – D.L. Moody

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Introduction: Prayer is both a priority and privilege for the Christian.

There cannot be too much emphasis on the importance of prayer. Prayer is a necessity in our life. It has been well said, "No prayer, no power." James said "ye have not, because ye ask not" (James 4:2). We cannot expect God to bless unless we pray. Understanding this, we must treat prayer as a priority.

Prayer is also a privilege. Through prayer we can bring our needs and requests to God. We do not have to bear the burdens of life alone, but have the privilege of bring every need of life to God in prayer.

Joseph Scriven reminds us in his great hymn:

What a friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
Ev'rything to God in prayer!
Ev'rything to God in prayer!

Oh, what peace we often forfeit,
Oh, what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
Ev'rything to God in prayer!

I have always enjoyed the poem by Eliza M. Hickok:

I know not by what methods rare,
But this I know, God answers prayer.
I know that He has given us His Word,
Which tells me prayer is always heard
And will be answered, soon or late.
And so I pray and calmly wait.

In much the same way, John tells us that God answers prayer. The Bible says much about prayer, but in my opinion, verses 14-15 of 1 John 5, are some of the most instructive and inspiring in all the Bible.

1. THE CONFIDENCE OF OUR APPROACH

John has already reminded us that we can be confident Christians. Three times previously John has spoken of how we can have confidence. John has spoken of how we can have confidence at the return of the Lord Jesus. We read in 1 John 2:28, **“And now little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.”**

He has also spoken of how we have confidence in our relationship with God. We read in 1 John 3:21, **“Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then we have confidence toward God.”**

He has also spoken of how we can be confident in the day of judgment. We read in 1 John 4:17, **“Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness (confidence) in the day of judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world.”**

Now he speaks to us of the confidence we can have as we approach God in prayer. He says in verse 14, **“And this is the confidence that we have in Him,”** or the “confidence we have before Him.” In our earlier studies we have seen that the word “confidence” means that we do not have to shrink from God in fear or embarrassment. Wiersbe defines the meaning of the word as “freedom of speech.” Being confident in our approach means that:

A) In Our Access

We read in Ephesians 3:12, **“In Whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him”** The writer of Hebrews said, **“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need”** (Heb. 4:16).

There are times when I ask my secretary to block out my calls. She knows that when I ask her to do so, it is because I want to study and pray without interruption. However, if my wife or one of the boys calls she is to always to put them through. They have access to me at any time.

If you are saved, you are God’s child. He is ever available to His children. We never have to fear that He will not want to talk to us or listen to what we have to say. We have constant access to the Lord. We do not have to set up an appointment to talk with God. We can be confidence in our access. Furthermore, it means that:

B) In Our Asking

Here is one thing you can be absolutely certain about and that is you can never ask something from God that is beyond His ability. Paul declared in Ephesians 3:20, **“Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.”** We cannot ask or even think of something that is beyond His ability. Therefore, we come boldly with our petitions.

A Sunday school teacher once asked one of his students, “If you can tell me something God can do, I’ll give you an apple.” The little fellow replied, “If you can tell me something He can’t do, I’ll give you a bushel of apples.”

John described prayer by the words “ask” (Vs. 14) and “petition” (Vs.15). The word “ask” is a word that was commonly used of an inferior addressing a superior. The word speaks of asking for something to be given. Prayer is man asking God for things. The word “desired” in verse 15 is the same word. Prayer is coming to God with certain desires and asking Him to meet those desires.

The word “petition” speaks of asking for a particular thing. Prayer involves coming to God with particular requests. The Bible teaches us that we are to pray continually, fervently, patiently, and as well, specifically.

Because we know that God is able, we can be confident in prayer. We can come to Him with the confidence that He is able to answer our prayer. We can bring our desires and our petitions to Him with the utmost confidence.

We not only see the confidence of our approach, but we also see:

2. THE CONDITION OF OUR ASKING

The question is never can He, but will He. John tells us that we can approach God with confidence, but also reminds us that there are conditions to God answering prayer. Someone has said, “Nothing lies outside the reach of prayer, except that which lies outside the will of God.” John tells us that a condition in God answering prayer is God’s will. He says, **“And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us”** (1 John 5:14).

As we consider these words we see that the will of God:

A) Guides What We Request

Jesus taught us to pray, **“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven”** (Matt. 6:10). He also taught us by example when He prayed, **“O, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt”** (Matt. 26:39).

Jesus by lesson and example taught us that when we pray we should always seek His will in prayer. Robert Law said, "Prayer is a mighty instrument, not for getting man's will done in heaven, but for getting God's will done on earth."

We have our desires and we bring our petitions to God in prayer. However, we must do so asking that God's will be done. All our praying should include, if not in words, the attitude, "Thy will be done."

As well, we are reminded that God's will:

B) Governs What We Receive

There are times in the Bible when we find people praying prayers that God did not answer. There is Elijah under the juniper tree requesting God to take his life. In a similar fashion, we see Jonah telling God that it would be better for him to die. God answered neither prayer. Why? It was not His will that either one of them die.

God will never do anything outside or contrary to His will. When it comes to answering prayer, His will governs what prayers He answers and how He answers prayer.

For example, we often pray for God to heal people. If you listen to some, they would have you to believe that it is God's will to always heal people. I do believe God can heal people and have known of many cases where there was no doubt that God intervened on behalf of someone that had a physical need. However, I have known many that He did not heal. In many cases, some of the most dedicated Christians I have known were the ones that He did not heal. Why would he heal one and not the other? That is one of the mysteries of life. Although there is often many questions in what He does, or does not do; we can be certain that He worked according to His will.

In Acts 12 we find James being killed by the sword and Peter being delivered from death. Why did God allow James to be killed and intervene to keep Peter from being killed? There is only one answer on which our faith can find firm footing. It was His will! God's will must guide our praying for it will govern our praying.

3. THE CERTAINTY OF OUR ANSWERS

James says that if what we ask for is God's will, He will hear our prayer. If God hears our prayer, then we have this assurance: **"And if we know that He hear us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we**

desired of Him" (Vs. 15). James tells us that God answers prayer! If the conditions of prayer are met, He will answer our prayer.

A) What We Know

Twice John says "we know." What do we know? We know He will answer our prayer. It is a promise that God will answer our prayer. If we ask for something that is God's will, we can have the assurance that our prayer will be answered. On many occasion the Bible promises us that if we meet certain conditions, God answers!

B) What We Get

We are given the assurance that God will answer prayer. When it comes to answering prayer, there are various ways in which God may answer prayer.

It is possible that there will be a **direct** answer to prayer. The answer may come quickly or immediately.

It is also possible there will be a **delayed** answer to prayer. Even though assurance is given that God will answer the prayer, it may be sometime before the prayer is answered.

As well, it is possible that there will be a **different** answer. God may not answer the prayer just as we asked. He can answer the prayer, but in a way that is according to His will.

Yes, God answers prayer! When was the last time you asked God for something and you received an answer from God? Let me repeat, God answers prayer. He can answers your prayers. If He has not answered your prayer, John tells us that you have not been praying according to His will. Seek God's will in prayer and get in on the answers God has for you.