

Conditions for Answered Prayer

Teaching Notes

1. **Purity of Heart is Essential:** Prayer is a matter of the heart. It is speaking to God from our heart not our head; heart to heart communion with the Lord. We must honestly examine ourselves before God in the light of His Word and confess any know sin. He sees into our hearts and knows our ways.... Both good and bad. We need to keep our communication free from any hindrances.

- As David says in Psalm 139: 23, 24 Search me, O God... Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.
- Ps 66:18 If I had not confessed the sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. But God did listen! He paid attention to my prayer.

If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear (Ps 66:18)

- 1 John 3:21-22 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.

The Amplified Bible says: If our consciences (our hearts) do not accuse us - if they do not make us feel guilty and condemn us, we have confidence - complete assurance and boldness before God. And we receive from Him whatever we ask, because we watchfully obey His orders and habitually practice what is pleasing to Him. (1 John 3:21,22)

What we see here is that if our conscious is clear from sin we are able to bear our heart to the Lord without timidity, but with open boldness and courage. But this confident boldness before God is not what is rewarded; it is a life that is free from known and habitual sin. It is a life that obeys His commands and pleases Him. (1 John 3: 21-22)

A Heart that maintains purity (freedom from known sin) before God is in a position to receive the answer to prayer. Any know sin must be confessed and done away with.

- 1 John 3:23 Goes on to say: And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.

Love for One Another

Please notice that not only faith but a love for one another is a foundation for answered prayer. Faith and love go hand in hand.

The relationship between husband and wife; as well as other family members must be guarded closely. Satan desires to destroy unity and wreck the peace and love within a home. 1 Peter 3: 7 Husbands dwell with them (wives) with understanding, giving honor to the wife.... That your prayers may not be hindered!

- Gal 5:6 As far as our relationship to Christ Jesus is concerned, it doesn't matter whether we are circumcised or not. But what matters is a faith that expresses itself through love.
- Proverbs 21:13 "If a man shuts his ears to the cry of the poor, he too will cry out and not be answered." - Love is an action word. It is demonstrated by what we do.
- 1 John 3:16-17 By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?
- Abiding in Love is Abiding in God and this is a foundation to answered prayer.

Forgiveness: Probably one of our biggest challenges is holding on to unforgiveness and resentment. Unforgiveness puts us in prison and delivers us over to the tormentors! (Matt 18:21-35) This certainly hinders our communion with the Lord, and will stop the blessings of God from freely flowing into our life until we confess and deal with our sin.

- Mark 11:25-26 "And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."

Forgiveness: In the New Testament the most commonly used word for forgiveness is "aphesis". The meaning is "Letting Go Freely"; "To let go from one's power"; "Set at liberty"; "Sending away"; "Dismiss". We are to not hold on to the offense - keeping it in our heart, but release and let it go. God will take care of it and of us. God alone is the Judge and one day we will all stand before Him and give account for the life we have lived. (Romans 14:12-13) Trust God in the matter.

- Forgiveness is perfectly complete when we are able to pray and take positive actions (do good) to the one who willfully and recklessly sinned against us. (When at all possible) Only by God's help and grace are we able to overcome in this area.
- 1 Peter 3:10-12 He who would love life and see good days... Let him turn away from evil and do good... For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers...

2. Abiding in Christ: John 15:7-8 if you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

1 John 3: 24 tells us what abiding in Christ is: All who keep His commandments abide in Him, and He in them.

The word love is used 7 times in this particular passage in John. (John 15:8-12) If we abide in Him and His Word abides in us we will abide in Love. We must purposely walk the love walk and not just talk the Christian talk. John 15:12 This is my commandment: that you love one another just as I have loved you. Faith and love go hand in hand once again. We must be doers of the Word and not hearers only.

3. Praying the Will of God: 1 John 5:14, now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

Praying God's Word or praying according to what is in the Scriptures is praying according to God's will. His Word and His Will are one and the same.

Example from Psalm 103: Bless the Lord, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy Name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems (delivers) your life from destruction, Who crowns you with Loving-kindness and tender mercies, Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your Youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Praying that God forgives us, heals us, redeems us, has mercy on us, satisfies us with His good, and renews our youth according to Psalm 103 is praying God's will for we are praying His Holy Word.

In other areas that are unknown, such as: who to marry, what job to take, where to live, what career to pursue... we are to be confident that God will reveal his will to us and guide us in the way we should go.

4. Prayer Must Be Made in Faith: (Gr. Wd. pistis) A firm persuasion, belief or confidence in God (Jesus Christ) and His Word with the predominate idea of Trust.

- First, in prayer we must have "faith in God" ... Confident trust, dependence and reliance upon God... Mark 11:22 - And Jesus, replying, said to them, Have faith in God (constantly). Our faith must rest upon the One whom we believe in; the One who has promised to answer our prayer.
- Hebrews: 11:6 But without faith (in God) it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.
- Matthew 7: 9-11: Or what man is there of you, if his son asks him for a loaf of bread, will hand him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will hand him a serpent? If you then, evil as you are, know how to give good and advantageous gifts to your children, how much more will your Father Who is in heaven (perfect as He is) give good and advantageous things to those who keep on asking Him!
- Matthew 21:22 And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."
- Mark 9: 19-23 He answered him and said, "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Then the boy's father says... But if You (Jesus) can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes. Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!"

Unbelief and Doubt will rob us of God's best. Unbelief is a condition of the heart that really doesn't expect God to do anything. We pray, but really do not believe God for the answer. Doubt is just not sure or is uncertain if God will respond... to

doubt is to think it is probably unlikely to happen... Maybe God will, maybe He won't answer.

Whereas, Faith is a confident expectation and firm belief that our Father will come through and answer as He has promised to do. The proper response then is a heart of "Thankfulness". Praise and thanksgiving is an appropriate response to the believing prayer of faith.

James 1:5-8 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

- Mark 11:22-24 So Jesus answered and said to them, Have faith in God. ... Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.

Thank you Father that in Christ I already have been given all that is needed for my good. I have the answer already at hand. I thank you for my heavenly bank account. For I know that I have already been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. (Eph. 1:3) It is presently an unseen spiritual reality but by faith I receive it and thank you and praise you for it!

Acts 12: 6-17 Shows us how even though the answer has been granted that unbelief and doubt can hinder us from receiving what has already been given. Peter has been miraculously released from prison and death. He is standing at the door knocking and wanting to enter where a prayer meeting is being held for his release. When the servant girl, Rhoda, sees him at the door she runs to tell those who are in prayer that Peter is at the door. They said to her, "You are crazy!" When Rhoda insisted that it was Peter at the door they said, "It is his angel!" They were praying without expectancy which made it hard for them to receive their answer... UNBELIEF!

5. Perseverance in Prayer: To persevere in prayer is to continue in faith to believe God and give thanks for the answer in spite of difficulties, setbacks and obstacles! If our prayer agrees with God's Word and is led by the Spirit we are not to give up. Don't let delay deceive you into believing that your answer is denied. It is faith in God that will provide the answer in time. Keep praising and thanking Him all the way to the final victory!

Andrew Murray: Prayer must often be “heaped up” until God sees that its measure is full. Then the answer comes. Just as each of ten thousand seeds is a part of the final harvest, frequently repeated, persevering prayer is necessary to acquire a desired blessing. Every single believing prayer has its influence. It is stored up toward an answer which comes in due time to whomever perseveres to the end.

- Matthew 7: 7,8,11 Keep on asking and it will be given; you; keep on seeking and you will find; keep on knocking (reverently) and (the door) will be opened. ...
- Luke 18:1-8 Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and never give up... (Not lose heart)...The point is clear: If the widows persistent plea would get results from a Godless and selfish judge who had no concern for the needs and rights of others, HOW MUCH MORE can children of God get results from persevering in prayer. This parable teaches supplication on our own behalf.

Commentary from Dake's Bible: Not to lose heart - Do not give in to doubt, fear, unbelief, discouragement, or use excuses for unbelief when prayer is not answered immediately. Rebuke and resist all opposition to the answer and all suggestions of a failure. It is a divine, blood bought right to get an answer, so do not lose heart.

1 Thessalonians 5:17 Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Col 4:2 ...Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.

George Muller: A great man of faith who is estimated to have “prayed in” 4 million dollars during his lifetime to support orphans - “When once I am persuaded that a thing is right, I go on praying for it till the end comes. I never give up! Thousands of souls have been saved in answer to my prayers... the great point is never to give up until the answer comes... the great fault of the children of God is, they do not continue in prayer; they do not go on praying; they do not persevere. If they desire anything for God’s glory, they should pray until they get it.”

6. Praying In the Name of Jesus: John 14:13-14 and whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.

We must understand that praying “In the Name of Jesus” is not a punctuation we put at the end of our request to the Father. Praying in the Name of Jesus is praying that kind of prayer which will represent Jesus nature or divine character. It is a prayer that is motivated by the Holy Spirit. We are standing as a representative for Jesus Christ when we pray in His Name. The “whatever” you

ask being granted is contingent upon “In My Name”. This always will glorify and extol the Father.

7. Come to God with Pure Motives: Selfishness is not a virtue in the kingdom of God and is not rewarded by God. Could I be praying for something because I will get the glory and praise for it? Could my request be for selfish ambition with no consideration for the good of others or the glory of God? We need to check our motives in prayer.

- James 4:2-3You are jealous of what others have, but you can't get it, so you fight and wage war to take it away from them. Yet you don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it. And even when you ask, you don't get it because your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure.

Andrew Murray: "Each time, before you intercede, be quiet first, and worship God in His glory. Think of what He can do, and how He delights to hear the prayers of His redeemed people. Think of your place and privilege in Christ, and expect great things!"