



PRAYER

*“And whatsoever you shall ask in my name, that will I do,
that the Father may be glorified in the Son.”*

John 14:13

The Christian Scriptures make it clear that it is a part of the Divine Plan of God to include prayer as a part of the relationship between man and God. (I Thessalonians 5:17; Romans 12:12)

However, prayer is not mere “busy work” which God has given mankind to do, because “*God is not the author of confusion, but of prosperity.*” (Ecclesiastes 3:1-3; Romans 8:28; I Corinthians 14:33,40) Prayer is one of the many functions designed by God for the purpose of providing avenues and opportunities through which mankind may use his freewill to participate in the Plan of God in a positive manner. By taking advantage of such grace given features as prayer, mankind has been given the opportunity to qualify for receiving the highest and best that God can pour out in blessing.

The Scriptural description of the purpose of God for mankind clearly indicates that God conditions certain of His own actions on prayer. Otherwise, the command to pray and the rules laid out in the Scriptures for the proper execution of prayer become meaningless.

However, the very idea of mankind entering into communication with God and asking for something with a view that God will respond positively to that request, presents a problem in that the divine and human wills must coincide in such a way so as **to reflect the precise divine purpose and will of God**. God cannot change His will and desire so as to conform to the will and desire of man. No matter what man needs or asks for, no matter how sincerely he pleads, no matter what he sacrifices in order to get God’s attention, God is eternal and cannot change His attributes in order to accommodate man’s prayerful utterances. Prayer does not change God so that He changes His eternal plan and begins to conform to man’s requests, desires and plans. Rather, man must change and conform to the divine will and purpose — the divine desire.

God being eternal -- “*the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow*” -- means that He cannot change His will and objectives in history; He is absolutely immutable — unchangeable. God cannot bend, twist, change, or break any of His eternal plan or character just so as to accommodate even an honest and sincere request from a member of the human race.

This means that prayer does not and cannot change the eternal being, purpose and will of God. Since God is unchangeable, the only way the divine will and the human will can become as one, is for the

human will to be changed in such a manner so as to begin to be in agreement with the divine will. Human will can and must change. **When the human will conforms to the unchangeable divine will, then there is the potential for that individual to ask for something which will be done by God.**

While great, transforming things are brought about by prayer, only those prayers uttered which agree with the eternal will and purpose of God will come about. Therefore, it is an absolute must, if an individual expects his prayers to be answered in a positive manner, that he become acquainted with the divine will and desire of God for history and for all individuals therein. **If an individual prays in ignorance of the perfect will and desire of God, he will inevitably ask for something which is entirely foreign to the purposes of God.** Such a prayer cannot and will not be answered in a positive manner.

Therefore, the function of prayer becomes an example of the importance of Bible Doctrine in the life of a Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Bible Doctrine is the revealed Divine Viewpoint of the will and purpose of God written down in the Bible — the Word of God. As is true for the proper function in any facet of the Christian Way of Life, a full knowledge of Bible Doctrine is an absolute must before one may expect to pray anything which will be answered in a positive manner.

The Scripture clearly states, “... *If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you.*” (John 15:7) The principle of praying “according to His will” is that the individual’s request must be for that which God wants to do anyway. Such a request must be based upon the application of Bible Doctrine resident in his soul.

• BIBLICAL MECHANICS OF ANSWERED PRAYER •

1. Prayer must be addressed to God the Father. (John 17:1; Matthew 6:9; Ephesians 5:20; I Peter 1:17) This means that prayer is never to be addressed to the Lord Jesus Christ or to God the Holy Spirit.
2. Prayer must be made in the name of God the Son. (John 14:13; 15:7)
3. Prayer must be made under the “Filling of the Holy Spirit.” (Ephesians 5:18)
The “influence” of the Spirit enables the Believer to exhale Bible Doctrine without producing “works of the flesh.” (Romans 12:1-3 SEE: Doctrine of the Filling of the Holy Spirit.)

• BIBLICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ANSWERED PRAYER •

1. The unbeliever in Christ is limited to “the prayer of faith” by which he believes on the Lord Jesus Christ for Eternal Salvation. John 3:36
2. The Believer in Christ is limited to the degree that he is ignorant of the will of God because of an absence of Bible Doctrine in his/her soul. John 15:7
3. BASIC LANGUAGE OF PRAYER: Traditional phrases, clichés, epigrams, stereotyped expressions, or even quoting Scripture, does not make a prayer more answerable. No special kind of language is required.

“...You have made the Word of God null and void for the sake of your tradition.”
Matthew 15:6

4. **BASIC PERSONAL PRAYER:** The primary need of the Believer is Bible Doctrine in the soul so that, as a result, he is brought to a full knowledge of the will and purpose of God in His plan.

“...Be on guard lest, being carried away by the error of unprincipled men, you fall from your steadfastness. But grow in Grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ “
II Peter 3:17-18

“If any one of you has received a deficiency of wisdom, let him ask from God Who gives continuously...”
James 1:5

5. **BASIC PRAYER FOR OTHER BELIEVERS:** The command is to be praying for “open doors of communication” so that all who are positive to a knowledge of the Divine Will may have the opportunity to learn Bible Doctrine.

“At the same time, be praying on behalf of us (communicators of Bible Doctrine) that God the Father might open for the advantage of us communicators a door of admission for the communication of the mystery belonging to Christ, because of which mystery, I am in chains. For the purpose that I might make known by teaching that same mystery doctrine as it is necessary for me to communicate.”
Colossians 4:3-4

6. **BASIC TIME TO PRAY:** No specific time is specified in Scripture as being better than another. It does command regular and consistent usage of Prayer.

“Pray regularly and consistently.”
I Thessalonians 5:17

7. **BASIC HINDRANCE TO PRAYER: Ignorance of the Divine Will of God because of ignorance of Bible Doctrine is the primary hindrance to answered prayer.**

“You keep on asking, but you keep on not receiving because you keep on asking wrongly...”
James 4:3

SUMMARY: The very fact that prayer is included as a feature of the Christian Way of Life is indicative of the fact that certain things in history and in the course of one’s personal life are contingent upon his requesting those things in prayer. *However, it is also clear that God cannot fulfill a request when that request asks for something which is contrary to His own will and desire.* Therefore, the basic requirement for “answered” prayer is that the believer must know what God wants to do. The only possible way for a believer to know what God wants to do is to have Bible Doctrine — The Divine Viewpoint — in his soul. Then he must use that doctrine to address his request to God by the proper mechanics and with content that matches the eternal desire of God.

“Be constantly waiting in readiness in the field of prayer, constantly being alert as to what and how you are praying by means of that same function of prayer in the sphere of grace orientation to the Plan of God”
Colossians 4:3

FOUR POTENTIAL ANSWERS TO PRAYER

PETITION

(content of “what” is asked)

1. GRANTED I Samuel 5:8-20
(Wanted to have a king)
2. DENIED Genesis 17:18-23
(Wanted Ishmael to be heir to the line of the Seed)
3. GRANTED I Kings 18:36-37
(Elijah asked for fire to consume the offering)
4. DENIED

DESIRE

(“motivation” behind what is asked)

1. DENIED
(Desired to be like other nations)
2. GRANTED
(Desired that Ishmael might live and be prosperous)
3. GRANTED
(God was demonstrated as being the only true God)
4. DENIED

Examples of reasons why both sides will be denied:

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| a. Deficient Resident Bible Doctrine in the soul resulting in asking for something which is contrary to the will and the unity of the attributes of God. James 1:8; 4:3a | Desire things with the view of satisfaction of one’s own desires rather than the fulfillment of the Trilateral Divine Purpose. James 4:3b |
| b. Failure to accept the authority of the content of Bible Doctrine resulting in asking for things which reflect a mental attitude of “disputing & quarreling” with its directives and constrictions. James 1:7a | Desire to have one’s own way, designing one’s own lifestyle according to the temporal “winds that blow.” James 1:7b |
| c. Inconsistency between what one knows in the soul and the application that he/she makes to the Cosmos resulted in a “freelance” attempt at secure prosperity. James 1:8 | Desire to have one’s secure prosperity by vacillating back and forth between the influence of Bible Doctrine and Evil. James 1:8 |

PRAYER LIST

THE FOLLOWING IS A PRAYER LIST DEDICATED TO THE PRINCIPLE THAT ALL SECURE PROSPERITY IS RELATED TO THE GRACE PROCESSES OF THE ASSIMILATION, DISCERNMENT, AND APPLICATION OF BIBLE DOCTRINE TO HISTORY.

SUGGESTED MATTERS TO MAKE MENTION OF THROUGH PRAYER INCLUDE:

• OPEN DOORS OF COMMUNICATION •

Includes the priority of requesting the Pastor-Teacher's freedom to study and teach advanced Bible Doctrine under the principle that if the "ox is muzzled" then no one gets bread. Colossians 4:18a cf., 4:3-4 cf., 1 Corinthians 9:9

• GRACE METHOD OF PRESENTATION OF BIBLE DOCTRINE •

Includes the priority of requesting that one's local assembly and Pastor-Teacher proceed in presentation of Bible Doctrine according to the principles of Grace by including in PUBLIC WORSHIP and in the CHRISTIAN WAY OF LIFE only those things which are specifically required by Scripture; not drifting off the course into human traditions and methods. 11 Peter 3:18

• AUTHORITATIVE METHOD OF PASTORAL LEADERSHIP •

Includes the priority of requesting that the "rulership" of the Gift of Pastor-Teacher be exercised in a proper manner, resulting in his own freedom to study and teach, and, in turn, in the congregation's freedom to assimilate OR not assimilate advanced Bible Doctrine into the soul. Titus 1:9,13,14; Hebrews 13:7,17

• ACCEPTING NOTHING FROM THE GENTILES •

Includes the priority of requesting that the Pastor-Teacher and leadership of the congregation in no way compromise with human tradition or "Madison Avenue" gimmicks in an attempt to attract people or money into the church. 111 John 5-8