

ASSURANCE OF ANSWERED PRAYER

Sometimes we all wonder if God really hears us when we pray. Satan wants us to think that God has forsaken us when problems come along and things get worse instead of better . . . but nothing could be further from the truth. God hears and answers prayer. In fact, God is both **ABLE** and **ANXIOUS** to answer our prayers:

“Call unto Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things which you do not know.” Jeremiah 33:3

WHY PRAYER? Prayer is more than getting God to do something or give us something. **God established prayer because He desires to have FELLOWSHIP with His people.** In fact, God reached out to mankind when He sent His Son Jesus into this world. The perfect God-man was sent to us for at least three reasons:

1. God became a man in order to reveal the glory of the Father to all mankind: *“**And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we behold His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.**” John 1:14*
2. Jesus became a man in order to die as the sacrifice for our sins so that we could be forgiven and receive the gift of eternal life: *“**But God showed His love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.**” Romans 5:8*
3. God also became a man and will be the perfect God-man for all eternity so that we could have fellowship with Him: *“**That which we have seen and heard we declare unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.**” 1 John 1:3*

TAKE THE QUIZ!

#1 What does Satan want us to think about prayer? (2)

ANSWERS: GOD DOESN'T REALLY CARE WHAT YOU ARE GOING THROUGH, and GOD DOESN'T ANSWER OUR PRAYERS.

#2 Why did God establish prayer?

ANSWER: GOD WANTS TO HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH HIS CHILDREN.

#3 Why did God send Jesus into the world? (3)

ANSWERS: SO JESUS COULD REVEAL THE GLORY OF THE FATHER, SO JESUS COULD DIE FOR US ON THE CROSS, and SO JESUS COULD DEFEAT SIN, SATAN, AND DEATH.

OUR FIRST PRAYER: You may have seen the Christmas classic *“It's A Wonderful Life”* starring Jimmy Stewart. The broken-down banker George Bailey that Stewart played, frantically cried out to God – *“Dear Father in Heaven, I'm not a praying man, but if You're up there, and You can hear me, show me the way. I'm at the end of my rope.”* The actor's eyes filled with tears and his words

weren't part of the script . . . but he was filled with emotion when he realized that many people feel the desperate pain of loneliness and hopelessness when they have nowhere to turn. **God hears that kind of broken-hearted prayer.** For many, it's the starting point of learning who God is, and learning to trust Him as Savior and Lord.

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." Psalm 51:17

None of us can really have fellowship with God until we have been spiritually born into His eternal family. Jesus told a religious leader by the name of Nicodemus that ***"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."*** John 3:3

The very first prayer that God can hear from us is the sincere prayer of repentance as we believe in and receive Christ as our Savior: ***"But as many as received Him, to them gave He power (the right) to become children of God, even to those who believe on His Name."*** John 1:12

If you have never prayed to receive Christ as your Savior, now would be the perfect time to pray in your own words and confess that you know you are a sinner and that you do not deserve to be forgiven and live in Heaven but that you believe that Jesus died on the cross in full payment for all you sins. Ask the Lord to save you and to come into your life as your Savior. He has never turned anyone away that calls upon His Name – ***"For whosoever will call upon the Name of the Lord will be saved."*** Romans 10:13

CONDITIONS FOR ANSWERED PRAYER:

The Bible tells us that people often ask God for things with wrong motives and those prayers are not answered: ***" . . . you have not because you ask not. You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts."*** James 4:3(b)-4

Some people think that if they ask God over and over with a memorized prayer, surely God will hear and respond. However, God wants us to ask sincerely from our hearts as we draw close to Him in faith and fellowship. Jesus said: ***"But when you pray, use not vain repetitions, as the pagans do; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking."*** Matthew 6:7

QUIZ (continued):

#4 What did Jesus tell a very religious man he had to do to see the Kingdom of God?

ANSWER: JESUS TOLD NICODEMAS "YOU MUST BE BORN-AGAIN"

#5 What is the first prayer we can really pray that is heard by God?

ANSWER: TO RECEIVE CHRIST AS OUR SAVIOR.

#6 Some people don't get their prayers answered because THEY PRAY WITH WRONG MOTIVES, and THEY HAVE BEEN PRAYING WITH SELFISH MOTIVES.

#7 Why doesn't God want us to pray with "vain repetitions?" (2)

ANSWER: HE WANTS US TO PRAY SINCERELY FROM OUR HEARTS, and HE WANTS US TO COME TO HIM FOR REAL FELLOWSHIP.

So what are the conditions for answered prayer?

- 1. ABIDE in Christ and His Word:** The Lord's purpose for prayer is to have fellowship with His people. Jesus told His disciples: ***"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 15:8** To abide in Christ means that you are walking in unbroken fellowship with Him and you are seeking Him by reading His Word, the Bible. God speaks to us from His Word and through His Spirit, and we speak to God through prayer: ***"The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."*** **Romans 8:16**
- 2. SEEK the face of the Lord, not what is in His hands:** I used to have a wonderful little dog by the name of Princess and she was really good at begging. Whenever we were eating, her eyes would follow my hand . . . she was more interested in what I was eating than me! We often act the same with God as we seek what is in His hands rather than Him! The Lord wants us to seek Him with hungry hearts as we read in **Matthew 6:33 – *"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."***
- 3. CONFESS your sins:** Unconfessed sin breaks our fellowship with the Lord and it is important to be honest in confessing our sins to Him. Ask Him to reveal any sins that you may not have confessed.

"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." **Psalms 66:18**

"He that covers his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy." **Proverbs 28:13**

Remember that God is anxious to forgive us our sins so that we can walk in fellowship with Him:

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." **1 John 1:9**

QUIZ (continued):

#8 What does it mean to "ABIDE in Christ and His Word?" (3)

ANSWERS: WALKING IN FELLOWSHIP BY CONFESSING OUR SINS, READING GOD'S WORD AND LISTEN AS HE SPEAKS TO US FROM THE SCRIPTURES, and SPEAKING TO GOD FROM OUR HEART AND NOT JUST SAYING A MEMORIZED PRAYER.

#9 Seek the Lord and not His hand means to SEEK TO KNOW THE LORD and SEEK TO WALK IN FELLOWSHIP WITH THE LORD / TALK TO HIM AS A FRIEND.

#10 What if we refuse to confess our sins to the Lord? (2)

ANSWERS: GOD WILL NOT HEAR US WHEN WE TRY TO PRAY, and NOTHING IN LIFE WILL REALLY PROSPER

4. Pray in JESUS' NAME: Jesus told His disciples: *"Hitherto have you asked nothing in My Name; ask and you shall receive that your joy may be full."* John 16:24

Jesus also told His followers: *"And whatever you shall ask in My Name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you shall ask anything in My Name, I will do it."* John 14:13-14

That may sound like a blank check that people will abuse, but the fact is, when we pray in His blessed Name, we are asking for things that will bring glory to the Lord Jesus Christ and the Father, and not for selfish things that will make us happy. Notice the phrase *"... that the Father may be glorified in the Son."* The glory of God should be the motivation for our prayers!

5. Pray with THANKSGIVING: Praying with a thankful heart is a real expression of faith!

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication WITH THANKSGIVING, let your request be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6-7

6. Pray in FAITH: Praying in faith is often one of our greatest challenges but the Bible tells us that *"whatever is not of faith is sin."* Romans 14:23

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Hebrews 11:6

When we pray, we need to pray in faith. We need to take God at His Word. He is the One Who made the following promises:

"And all things, whatever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive." Matthew 21:22

The Old Testament Prophet Elijah prayed in faith that the Lord would stop the rain until the people of Israel repented from their sin. His faith was so great that he is used as an example for us about how to pray:

*"Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he **PRAYED EARNESTLY** that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit."*

QUESTION: How could Elijah pray in faith that the rain would stop for 3 ½ years? The answer below may surprise you:

7. Pray according to GOD'S REVEALED WILL: Elijah didn't just come up with the idea to pray for the rain to stop. He had read in the Scriptures that God would bless the land when the people lived in obedience but that He would curse the land when the people rebelled and began to live in idolatry, immorality, and perversion:

"But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God . . . all these curses shall come upon thee and overtake thee . . . and the heaven that is

over thy head shall be bronze, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron.”
Deuteronomy 28:1 and 23

Elijah prayed according to the **GOD'S REVEALED WILL** found on the pages of Scripture.

We can pray with the same faith as we come to understand His declared will and claim the Word of God – *“And 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 desired of Him.”* 1 John 5:14-15

BACK TO THE QUIZ!

#11 Why did Jesus tell His disciple to pray in His Name? *John 16:24*

ANSWER: THAT THEIR JOY MIGHT BE FULL!

#12 When we pray in Jesus' Name, Who gets the glory?

ANSWER: THE FATHER IN HEAVEN.

#13 Praying with thanksgiving is an express of FAITH, and CONFIDENCE THAT GOD ANSWERS PRAYER.

#14 Without faith is IMPOSSIBLE to please God. Hebrews 11:6

#15 Elijah prayed in faith that THE RAIN WOULD STOP FOR 3 /12 YEARS, and THAT THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL WOULD REPENT.

#16 How did Elijah know what to pray for?

ANSWER: HE KNEW WHAT GOD SAID IN THE SCRIPTURES.

#17 1 John 2:15 declares that we can pray with absolute CONFIDENCE if we know the WILL of God.

WHAT IS GOD'S REVEALED WILL?

Commented [CA1]:

- a) **God is NOT WILLING THAT ANY SHOULD PERISH:** (2 Peter 3:9) When you pray for the lost, pray in faith that God will open the eyes of unbelievers to the truth of the gospel. The Lord has made His desires known very clearly – *“I exhort first of all (as the highest priority) that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men . . . For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God, our Savior, Who will have all men to be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth.”* 1 Timothy 2:1,3-4
- b) **God wants His people to be SANCTIFIED:** God wants every one of us who know Jesus as Savior to be transformed into a brand new person like the Son of God – *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God and are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son . . .”* Romans 8:28-29

The Lord wants you, your friends, and children to be transformed into the image and likeness of Christ. He wants us all to be free from the power of sin, so we should pray for one another in faith!

“For this is the will of God, even your sanctification that you should abstain from fornication;” 1 Thessalonians 4:3

- c) The will of God is also revealed in His many Names. Each name is a **DESCRIPTION** of His character . . . but it is also a **DECLARATION of His commitment** to His people.

Don't take His Name in vain by failing to pray in faith in each of the following Names of the Lord:

Jehovah Jireh is the Lord Who PROVIDES

Jehovah Sabaoth is the Lord of HOSTS Who fights our battles for us.

Jehovah Nissi is the Lord of VICTORY

Jehovah Shalom is the Lord of PEACE

Jehovah Rophi is the Lord our SHEPHERD Who guides and provides

Jehovah Rapha is the Lord Who HEALS

Learn to pray in those blessed Names . . . praise Him and give Him thanks.

Our God DOES everything that His Names DECLARE! Pray in faith without doubt!

FINAL QUIZ QUESTIONS!

#18 What is God's desire for the unsaved people of the world?

ANSWERS: GOD IS NOT WILLING THAT ANY SHOULD PERISH, and GOD WANTS ALL MEN TO COME TO A KNOWLEDGE OF SALVATION.

#19 What is God's desire for every person that believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? (2)

ANSWERS: GOD WANT EVERY BELIEVER TO BE SANCTIFIED (MADE HOLY) and GOD WANTS US TO BE TRANSFORMED INTO THE IMAGE OF CHRIST.

#20 God's Name is a DESCRIPTION of His character.

#21 God's Name is a DECLARATION of His commitment to all His children.

#22 What is the Name of the Lord Who Provides? JEHOVAH JIREH

#23 What is the Name of the Lord of Hosts or the armies of Heaven? JEHOVAH SABAOTH

#24 What is the Name of the Lord of Victory? JEHOVAH NISSI

#25 What is the Name of the Lord of Peace? JEHOVAH SHALOM

#26 What is the Name of the Lord our Shepherd? JEHOVAH ROHI

#27 What is the Name of the Lord Who Heals? JEHOVAH RAPHA

SPECIAL NOTE: This was another LONG study . . . but there is so much to learn about prayer and God's promises to hear His children. **GOD ANSWERS PRAYER . . . but his answers are not always to our liking.** Sometime His answer is **WAIT** . . . other times it may be **NO** . . . but let's remember that God's wisdom and ways are far above ours and He is always a God of grace and goodness. As the songs says – **"God is GOOD . . . ALL THE TIME."**

"Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His way are past finding out." Romans 11:33

I have found great comfort in an Old Testament verse written by David, the Shepherd King of Israel. David's life was anything but easy and he spent years in hiding from those who wanted to kill him (including his own son). David shouted from the hilltops: ***"This I know, that God is for me!" Psalm 56:9***

May we lift up our voices in thankful praise to the God Who also declared: ***"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28***

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