

HOW TO GET YOUR PRAYERS ANSWERED

Chapter 1 Introduction

Jesus said to His heavenly Father at the tomb of Lazarus *“I know You always hear me”*.

How To Get Your Prayers Answered explains step by step how you too can have this same confidence and boldness in prayer.

There are many of God’s precious people who live in defeat not knowing how to pray, not experiencing the desired answers to prayer and remaining unsure of God’s will for their lives. Have you ever prayed and not received the results you sought? I’m sure we all have at one time or another.

If we pray and don’t receive the answer we seek it can leave us feeling discouraged and disappointed. Instead of building our faith, it saps it. Sometimes it may even seem like our prayers are not getting through to God. Many people pray, but not all prayer produces the desired results. We believe this book will help you to have a more effective prayer life.

Confidence in prayer begins when the truth concerning God’s nature and will is revealed. We cannot afford to lack an intimate knowledge of God that comes from spending time with Him and in His word.

Prayer is our opportunity to spend time in fellowship with God, obtain the wisdom of God and ultimately receive of the promises of God.

Our prayers should not consist solely of making requests of God. In the book of beginnings (Genesis), we find that the Lord came down and fellowshiped (or ‘hung out’ as we would say today), with Adam and Eve in the cool of the day. God has always wanted to have a close personal relationship with us. Prayer should not just be one-sided, where we are continually harping on our needs to God. We should delight to just spend time in His presence, getting to know Him intimately, listening for what He has to say to us and at the same time becoming sensitive to the instruction of His Spirit.

When we spend a lot of time with someone, we begin to know them intimately ie how they think, how they speak, how they react in a given situation. If they telephone us we recognise their voice instantly before they even get the opportunity to tell us who is calling. One of the ways we can spend time with God is by reading and meditating His word. The Holy Spirit is the teacher within and He is always with us wanting to reveal truths from the word of God to us.

Have you heard it said “The truth will set you free”? This is only a part of a statement that Jesus made. If we leave the truth (our Bible) sitting on a bedside cabinet and never apply it to our lives it will have no effect. Jesus told us to abide in His word and then we would know the truth. If we want to have an effective prayer life we need to

allow the Holy Spirit to lead and guide us into all truth and show us things to come. He will do this as we spend time in fellowship with Him and in the word of God. The word of God should affect every area of our lives including our thoughts, prayers, speech and actions.

John 8:31,32

:31 ... “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed,

:32 and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

You shall know the truth” It’s only the truth we know that provides freedom for us. To have faith, trust or confidence we must first have knowledge.

Chapter 2

Learn From the Master

Jesus spent much time in prayer. He often arose long before daylight to spend time in fellowship with His heavenly Father.

The disciples recognised that Jesus had a successful prayer life so they asked Him to teach them to pray.

Luke 11:1 ... “Lord, teach us to pray...”

We need to do the same thing. Ask the Lord to teach us how to pray. The first thing we need to do to become effective in our prayer life, is to remain teachable, to learn from ‘The Master’.

Matthew 6:5

“And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray...”

Jesus said in *Matthew 6:5* “*hypocrites love to pray*”. Just praying is not enough. It’s not enough to go through the motions in some endless monologue. Prayer should be part of a living, vital relationship with God, based on our intimate knowledge of His will and His character.

Matthew 6:9,10

:9 “In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

:10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.....

Jesus instructed His disciples to pray in this manner. This does not mean that we should pray this exact prayer word for word as a daily ritual. As you will see, Jesus emphasises immediately before presenting this pattern for prayer, that we should not use vain repetitions as the heathen or unbelievers do.

Matthew 6:7,8

:7 “But when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.

:8 “Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.

Repetitious praying for something that is already clearly shown in the Bible to be God’s will, does not demonstrate faith and is in complete contradiction to Jesus’ teaching on prayer.

According to the above verses, Jesus said praying the same thing over and over is being like a heathen. They (the heathen) think that God will hear them because of their many and often repeated words.

I once saw a documentary about a country where the people place prayers in special wheels that spin round and round. Round and round and round they go, whether they’ll get an answer, nobody knows. These people could never have an assurance that God has even heard their prayers.

As a parent, there is nothing more irritating than when your children keep nagging you about something that you have already promised them. If your word is good, then of course you will fulfil the promise you made. There is no need to ask over and over for the same thing. God who cannot lie (*Hebrews 6:18*) has already said, “Yes and Amen” in regard to the promises He has made (*2 Corinthians 1:20*). All it takes to receive is to take God at His word.

Asking over and over again for the same thing has its roots in unbelief. Unbelief is the opposite of faith. It renders us powerless to receive. A prayer offered in unbelief may be offered sincerely, but is void of faith, confidence and expectancy. Faith begins where the will of God is known. If we always pray according to God’s will it is possible for us to be able to say to our heavenly Father just as Jesus did:

John 11:42
“And I know that You always hear Me”

We can have confidence in prayer, knowing that God always hears us when we pray. The key to this confidence is found in prayers that line up with the word and the will of God.

1 John 5:14,15
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.

IF GOD KNOWS WHAT WE NEED, WHY DO WE HAVE TO ASK?

Matthew 6:8
“Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.

Prayer is not to inform God of our problem. God is all knowing. He doesn’t need to catch up with what is happening.

Not long after I became a Christian, the Lord asked me to go and minister to another Christian. As I was only a new convert this was rather daunting for me.

The Lord knew how long it would take for me to respond to His request. He spoke to me at the beginning of the week. By Friday, I gathered the courage to telephone this brother and ask if I could come and see Him. We arranged to meet on Saturday. When we met, he shared with me that he had been fervently seeking God in prayer on the Thursday night before our meeting. God had spoken to me several days before this man had even prayed.

The Lord had not only asked me to restore this brother, but also to give him a sum of money. When I handed it to him, he seemed dazed, as though he didn't know what it was for. He called for his wife, who promptly burst into tears and shared that only the night before, she had prayed for that precise sum of money. Our awesome God was working on their behalf days before they had even asked.

Monday the Lord spoke to me.
Thursday the man prayed.
Friday his wife prayed and
Saturday the answer to their prayers manifested.

The Lord was aware of this couple's needs even before they asked. He knew they would ask for help and had already arranged the help they needed before they asked. Yet they still needed to ask. God has given each of us a free will - the right and privilege of being able to make our own decisions. He will not override that right. We need to ask if we want the power of God activated in our lives.

It is always good manners to ask, even though a promise has already been made and just as important to say, "Thank You" once you believe your request has been granted.

God is good!

If we ask according to His will He never says "No".

Jesus said the following:

Matthew 7:7,8

:7 "Ask and it will be given you, seek and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

:8 " For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds and to him who knocks it will be opened.

While Jesus was on the earth, He provided for all the needs of His disciples and their families. Before leaving to go back to His heavenly Father, Jesus taught His disciples how to pray.

John 16:23-24

:23 "And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you.

:24 “Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

Chapter 3

Our God Is Able And He Will

Most people believe in God’s ability. They know that He is able. He can do anything. But is He willing? Will He do it for me?

Mark 1:40,41

:40 Now a leper came to Him, imploring Him, kneeling down to Him, and saying to Him, “If You are willing, you can make me clean.”

:41 Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, “I am willing; be cleansed.”

The leper started his request with ‘If’. He knew that Jesus had the ability, but he was not confident about His willingness to help him. This shows a lack of knowledge concerning the true nature of God. He doesn’t ask if Jesus is able to help. He wants to know if He is willing to help. If God’s willingness to assist us is in question, there can be no faith, trust or confidence.

Jesus realised where the blockage to this man receiving his miracle lay. It was in the area of confidence concerning God’s will. Wherever there is a question mark regarding God’s will, there can be no confidence, trust or faith. There can be no assurance that God has even heard our request.

Jesus immediately set about straightening out this man’s belief system. He said, “*I will*”. In another translation the leper says “*If you want to, you can make me clean*”. Jesus’ reply was “*Of course I want to – be clean!*” Verse 42 tells us that as soon as Jesus had spoken, immediately, the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed.

To have an effective prayer life, we need to take the ‘If’ out of our prayers. When we ask God for something and pray ‘If it be Thy will’, it is usually because we don’t know what God’s will is and therefore cannot make our request with confidence. Faith begins where the will of God is known. Whenever possible, it is better to wait until we’re sure that what we desire is God’s will, before we pray.

If we don’t know the truth about God’s will, doubt creeps in, doubt that God is willing to help us, doubt that He has heard our prayer, doubt that He is a generous giver, doubt that He will have mercy on us.

Picture the following scene. The Miser, Scrooge is sitting down at a table piled high with the money he is counting. Someone enters the room and immediately Scrooge huddles over the money with his arms wrapped around it protesting “It’s mine, all mine, you can’t have any, it’s mine, all mine”.

Without realising it, some people have this same impression about God. They think He is up there in Heaven with all this stuff, eg: healing, blessings etc. The only problem is finding out how we get Him to turn loose of it?

This concept shows lack of knowledge concerning the true nature of God. The Bible shows us that God is a liberal giver. He gave us the air we breathe and the water we drink. He gave us life. He created everything. He even gave His own Son to die on our behalf.

John 3:16

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

God so loved that he gave. He is a giver not a withholder.

Jesus used the following parable to show us what God is really like and to reveal how much He wants to meet our need.

Luke 11:5-13

:5 And He said to them, “Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves;

:6 ‘for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him’;

:7 “And he will answer from within and say, ‘Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you’?

:8 “I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs.

:9 “And I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

:10 “For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

:11 “If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish?

:12 “Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

:13 “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”

Jesus starts this parable by asking, “which of you shall have a friend?” In other words “Would your friend act this way?” This parable uses the example of a man going to his friend’s house in the middle of the night to ask for some bread.

Traditionally, emphasis has been placed on the asker’s persistence, rather than on our heavenly Father’s benevolence. The implication is often made, that when we approach God in prayer, we need to persistently beg, plead and nag until the Lord has no option but to give us what we want to keep us quiet.

Amazingly there is a great deal of ‘spiritual dyslexia’ in the body of Christ as people read something into the text that is opposite to what the Scripture is actually saying. It is often inferred that we need to ask and keep on asking, knock and keep on knocking even though the Scripture does not say this. *Verses 9 and 10* say, ‘ask, and it will be given to you’ and ‘everyone who asks receives’. These profound statements were made by Jesus, the greatest person to have ever walked the earth. He was perfect in

understanding and in communication with the Father. We do not see any resistance or reluctance from God to meet our need in these verses.

In *verse 8* the word ‘persistence’ is used in the New King James translation of the Bible. The Old King James translates this word as ‘importunity’. When we read this passage in context, we find that these two words convey a totally different impression to what Jesus was actually illustrating with this parable. This word in the original Greek manuscripts is the word ‘anadeia’ and it implies the idea of impudence, boldness, forwardness and shamelessness. It does not refer to nagging, begging or pleading over and over again for the same thing. In other words it is because of the friend’s impudence, boldness, forwardness and shamelessness that his friend will rise and give him what he needs. If you have a good friend then you would naturally believe that because of his loving concern for you he would help you in time of need.

Begging and persistent nagging are totally opposite to assurance, boldness and forwardness. The context in which this story is presented is totally different from the idea of persistence implied by some translators. The implication that we have to beg or nag God gives the impression that He has a total lack of willingness to help us and will only come to our aid begrudgingly after much begging.

Hebrews 4:16

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

A good definition of God’s grace is His willingness to help us even though we don’t deserve it. God doesn’t help us because we deserve it, but because He is gracious and merciful.

The above verse tells us that we are to come boldly to the throne of grace to receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. We cannot do this if we are not convinced of God’s willingness to help us when we need Him.

This parable is not about praying the same thing over and over until we get our answer. Repetition, nagging or begging when making request of God, do not exhibit a confidence that the Lord has heard or said “Yes.” That’s not believing and receiving, but begging and pleading. It is exactly what Jesus told us not to do – use vain repetitions (*Matthew 6:7*). Persistence in prayer should be a tenacity that keeps our faith applied and doesn’t quit believing or give up until the answer manifests. It does not mean asking for the same thing over and over again. This parable shows us God’s willingness to give us good things when we ask.

Jesus shows us three different types of relationship in this parable:

1. A reluctant friend
2. A natural father
3. Our heavenly Father

Jesus asks the question, “Who would have a friend that would treat you like the one in the parable?” Most true friends would be happy to rise in the middle of the night to

help their friend if it was in their power to do so, otherwise what sort of friend would they be?

It's interesting that we once asked the question amongst a group of Christians "Would you be happy to get out of your nice warm, cosy bed to help a friend if they asked you for help late at night?" Every single person said they would be happy to help.

We then asked the question "How many of you would telephone a friend late at night and ask for help if you needed it?" Most said they would not. They felt they would be imposing. Often there is that same mindset when it comes to asking something of God. Many do not want to be 'God Botherers' so they try to 'tuff it out' themselves. Yet God has told us to come boldly to the throne of grace when we need help.

We see also in the above parable that the natural father provides for his child. There isn't any begging or pleading here. Then Jesus goes on to say, "*How much more will your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!*" How much more, not much less, is our heavenly Father willing to meet our need? In Matthew's account of this story he quotes Jesus as saying,

Matthew 7:11

"If you then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in Heaven give good things to those who ask Him!"

Persistently asking for the same thing over and over, (especially when it is something that has already been promised in God's word), does not have its roots in faith but in unbelief.

Unbelief keeps on asking for something that God has already provided without ever recognising it has to be received.

Jesus is not telling us to approach our Heavenly Father with a begging, pleading, desperate type of prayer. On the contrary, He is explaining that we should be bold, confident that God has already provided for us, just as any good father does for His child.

Did you ever have to beg bread from your parents when you were a child and they had a plenteous supply? Of course not, bread is one of the most basic food elements we have. Any responsible parent provides for their child. Jesus referred to healing as the '*children's bread*' (*Matthew 15:26*). Just as a natural father would not give his child a stone instead of bread, our heavenly Father will not withhold healing or any good thing from us.

The Bible tells us that our heavenly Father knows our needs even before we ask Him. Ask and receive that your joy may be full. All you have to do is ask in faith, believing God and trusting in His goodness and willingness to help. One of the most common hindrances to prayer is a lack of confidence that God is willing to meet our need.

King David was able to say at the end of his life:

Psalm 37:25

***I have been young, and now am old; Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken,
Nor his descendants begging bread.***

Another parable where Jesus explains the willingness of our heavenly Father to answer our prayers is:

Luke 18:1-8

:1 Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart,

:2 saying: “There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man.

:3 “Now there was a widow in that city: and she came to him, saying, ‘Avenge me of my adversary.’

:4 “And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, ‘Though I do not fear God nor regard man,

:5 yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.’”

:6 Then the Lord said, “Hear what the unjust judge said.

:7 “And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?

:8 “I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?”

Once again Jesus is reinforcing the fact that God is not unjust. He is our loving, heavenly Father and He wants to meet our needs. He is not like the unjust judge. God is just and He will meet His children’s needs speedily. Jesus is making a contrast here between the actions of the unrighteous judge who is a type of Satan and our righteous God. Although the unjust judge does not fear God or man, he does fear the widow who is a type of the New Testament believer. Jesus said in this parable not to lose heart or faint (KJV).

When are we likely to faint? When the storms of life try to overwhelm us.

Proverbs 24:10 If you faint in the day of adversity, Your strength is small.

Once we have prayed we need to use our God given authority and demand our rights. This is not demanding of God but rather telling the enemy to back off.

Jesus then goes on to say in verse eight “*Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he really find faith on the earth?*” In context He’s talking about prayer and specifically asking if, on His return, there will be those who are able to pray in faith, believing that God is willing to meet their need? At the time of Jesus’ return, will there be anyone who can still pray in faith and operate in the believer’s authority, knowing that God is not just able, but willing to grant our requests. When Jesus returns will he find beggars or receivers?

Any glitches with our prayer life can never be at God’s end. He is already perfect and He doesn’t need to change. There are always two sides to every coin. In our walk with the Lord there is the God side and the man side. The God side is: ...*with God all*

things are possible (Matthew 19:26b). The man side is: ... “If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes (Mark 9:23). There is a responsibility on our part to believe.

If our prayers are not bearing fruit, then we are the ones who need to make changes to the way we have been praying. Our whole Christian walk is a learning experience and there are going to be times that we all need to make ‘in flight adjustments’.

If we always do what we’ve always done, we’ll always get what we’ve always gotten. This applies to our prayer life. If we want better results in the future, we can’t keep doing the same things over and over and expect a different outcome.

Chapter 4

Faith Begins when The Will of God Is Known

The way to find out God’s will is from His Word.

Man left on his own with limited resources and understanding would probably never arrive at the truth concerning prayer. Without revelation knowledge from God’s word we are left floundering in religious tradition which leaves us doing things that produce nothing but frustration. Sometimes we need God to upset our man-made traditions and jolt us out of unproductive works rooted in unbelief.

Mark 7:13

“making the word of God of no effect through your tradition...”

Hosea 4:6

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

The Hebrew word for destroyed in *Hosea 4:6* is ‘damah’ which means to be dumb or silent; hence to fail or perish. Because of lack of knowledge, God’s people do not know what belongs to them, what to speak or how to pray. They become dumb or silent and because of this, they then fail or perish. This is not God’s will for us. In *John 10:10* Jesus tells us that the thief comes to steal, kill and destroy. Jesus came that we might have life and have it more abundantly.

God’s people are destroyed because of a lack of knowledge. Why doesn’t this verse say, a lack of faith? Bible faith is preceded by Bible knowledge. Those being destroyed haven’t come to the knowledge of the truth yet and faith has not arisen in their hearts. Some have a lack of knowledge while others have rejected the truth or perhaps have heard the truth but are not acting on what they have heard.

Romans 10:17

So then faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God

When we hear the Word of God we decide to either accept it by faith and act upon it, or reject it.

In business dealings over the years, I have learned, ‘If it isn’t in writing, it doesn’t exist’. It would be considered foolish today, to partner in business with anyone

without entering into a written contract. By putting the terms in writing, we leave no room for confusion or misunderstanding. In the same way, God has left us His word in writing (the Bible). He has given us exceedingly great and precious promises that are ours to claim by faith (*2Peter 1:2-4*). Instead of waiting passively for God to do something, we need to reach out in faith and take those things that have already been promised to us in God's Word.

Faith begins when the will of God is known.

Have you ever heard someone say, "Prayer changes things?" This is not necessarily true. The main point Jesus is making in the two parables we have already studied, is that we need to pray in faith, confident that God is not just able, but willing to answer our prayers.

Prayer does not work without faith. We need to be able to believe we receive when we pray. Remember the God side and the man side. Faith is usually the missing, but vital ingredient in our prayers. To have this confidence in prayer, we must know that we are praying according to God's will.

How many times have you heard someone start a prayer with the phrase 'If it be Thy will'? Usually they are requesting something that Jesus has already paid the price for them to have, yet they are praying with no assurance that God has heard or responded to their prayer.

FIND OUT WHAT BELONGS TO YOU

Lack of confidence in prayer is directly related to a lack of knowledge concerning the will of God. 'If' is a very small word, but it reveals the conditions attached to our prayers being answered. God only promises to hear us, if we pray according to His will (His word).

1 John 5:14

And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us:

As heirs of God and joint heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ (*Romans 8:17*) we have a responsibility to find out what belongs to us.

Before a person dies, they usually make out their last Will and Testament. This is a written document stating a person's will in regard to the distribution of their assets after their death. How many family feuds have been started over the distribution of some departed relatives possessions? Yet, usually everything is settled once the Will is read and the express wishes of the departed person are revealed.

The New Testament is the last Will and Testament of the Lord Jesus Christ and it contains our inheritance as heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus. Usually an inheritance becomes available when the Testator dies, in this case, the Lord Jesus Christ. He has already died, risen from the dead and is the Executor of His own Will. The inheritance is available to us today. We don't have to wait until we die to be given our inheritance. It belongs to us now. It became ours when Jesus died.

2 Peter 1:2-4

:2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

:3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,

:4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises...

This verse says that God has (past tense) given us all things necessary for life and godliness. It is His desire that we live an abundant life. Everything pertaining to life and godliness has been provided for us. Why do some people then, still lack in areas of their life? It's certainly not because God hasn't provided for them. Everything we need comes through the knowledge of Him. This word knowledge in the original Greek text implies precise, correct, experiential knowledge. Knowledge of what belongs to you as a child of God and how to receive all the promises God has already provided.

God has given us exceedingly great and precious promises. He has left us an inheritance, but it is up to us to take Him up on those promises. We have to appropriate them by faith. Yet, the only way to find out what belongs to us is to read His Will, the Bible.

We need to read 'The Will' before we can appropriate the promises.

2 Corinthians 1:20

For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.

All the promises of God are available to us upon request. God is always going to say "Yes, or Amen" (so be it). However, it would be presumptuous to expect to receive something that has not been promised.

DON'T ASSUME ANYTHING

If someone had promised to deposit a hundred dollars into your bank account, it would be foolish for you to go and tell everyone around you, that they are going to give you a million. They didn't promise you a million dollars. They promised you a hundred. You certainly wouldn't have confidence about receiving a million dollars from them, but on the other hand you could be very confident and excited about the hundred dollars they've promised you. If that person is as good as their word, then all you have to do is withdraw (receive) it, because it has already been promised and has been deposited in your account, available on request.

In this book we are primarily endeavouring to help you to receive with faith, confidence and boldness, those things, that are already promised to you by God in His word. When requesting those things promised and provided for us by God we should not have an 'If' attached to our prayer.

Hebrews 4:16

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

You can only come boldly to the throne of grace when you know that what you are requesting is God's will.

The number one key in making request to God in prayer is to pray according to God's will.

Sometimes there may not be a promise in the word of God to cover our situation. We may have to pray about what to pray about first. Seek the Lord's will first. Then we can approach the Lord with confidence knowing that He hears us, and that His answer is "Yes".

The Bible is very specific about God's will in our lives concerning eternal life, abundance, health, financial provision, peace, joy etc. Remember Jesus said in *John 10:10* *I have come that they might have life and that they may have it more abundantly.* God wants all of His children to be healthy, blessed and to have their needs met (*3 John:2*).

The Bible is not however, as specific about other areas, such as: Whom should I marry? What kind of job should I have? What city should I live in? These are things we should be seeking God's wisdom about, before we make our decisions.

WISDOM IS THE PRINCIPAL THING

Imagine if you decided to purchase a small sedan, but several weeks later your circumstances changed dramatically and you urgently needed the use of a van. You could only afford one vehicle, so as a result you then have to sell the sedan at a financial loss to purchase the van. This kind of inconvenience can be avoided if we pray for God's wisdom before making decisions. Father knows best. We need to take the time to pray and ask our heavenly Father's advice. He knows the future and is more than willing to advise us, just as any good Dad would. The Bible instructs us to ask God for wisdom when we need it.

James 1:5

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.

1 John 5:14,15:

:14 Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

:15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

There are three things we have to know:

1. God's will
2. He hears

3. We have

We can know 100% of the time that God has heard us and that our request has been granted. Our loving and caring Father says, “Yes, it’s yours”. We can say just as Jesus did, “Thank you Father, that you always hear Me”.

Chapter 5 **Be Fully Persuaded**

Have you ever seen a woman in love, pulling the petals off a flower and saying? “He loves me. He loves me not”?

Sometimes we can be that way when praying eg “God’s heard us, He heard us not...” or “We’ve got it, We’ve got it not”.

James 1:6-8

:6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave on the sea driven and tossed by the wind.

:7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord:

:8 He is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

These verses make it crystal clear, if we don’t ask in faith we can’t expect to receive anything from God. He is not withholding from us. God is not the problem. We are the ones vacillating between faith and unbelief.

If we are double minded and wavering because we haven’t settled in our hearts what we really believe, we are not fully convinced.

Abraham who is widely acknowledged as the ‘Father of Faith’ was totally convinced, fully persuaded that what God had promised He would perform in his life. Even though all the circumstances were against him, Abraham had an expectation on the inside of him that what God had promised was on its way. He took hold of the promise with the tenacity of a bulldog and would not let go of it.

Romans 4:19-21

:19 And being not weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah’s womb.

:20 He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God,

:21 and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.

God is not a withholder. He is a liberal giver. If He has promised us something then we can have it. It has been made available for us.

1 Timothy 6:17b

...the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.

Romans 8:32

He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

It's up to us to receive what belongs to us. The enemy would try to fill us with doubts and fears. He would try to persuade us that we're not good enough to receive anything, or that it's not God's will to meet our needs. Thank God, His blessings are not based on our efforts or our holiness, but upon His love and grace.

We can not just sit around passively like a 'bump on a log' and not do anything. The blessings of God, while available for all of us, don't just drop on us 'like cherries off a tree'. There is a thief out there and he is trying to steal our blessings. We have to aggressively reach out in faith and take what belongs to us.

Did you ever play Hide and Seek as a child? "97, 98, 99, 100 coming ready or not!"

Jesus said in

John 10:10

"The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly,

The thief is coming whether we are ready or not. We need to be prepared to stand up for ourselves in times of adversity and fight the good fight of faith. A good fight is the one we win.

Jesus also said,

Matthew 11:12

"... The kingdom of heaven suffers violence [abuse, mistreatment, injustice and oppression] and the violent [the energetic or aggressive ones] take it by force."

Vines expository dictionary of New Testament words explains that this verse refers to the antagonism of the enemies of the kingdom and those who press in against all opposition. We have to press in against all opposition and take hold of the promises of God by faith not letting anyone or anything talk us out of them.

Chapter 6 Win or Lose – You Choose

Deuteronomy 30:19

"I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live;

God's will for us is blessing and life. If blessing and life were automatic, why would the Lord recommend that we choose them? Knowledge of the truth equips us to pray effectively and make decisions that will propel us on to victory. God's will does not automatically come to pass unless we cooperate with Him by acting upon His word and receiving the promises. He allows us to make those choices.

Some people say, “Well if God wants me to be healed, I’ll be healed”. This is not necessarily so. God’s will does not always automatically come to pass.

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

1 Timothy 2:4

Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

God’s will is that none should perish but that all would be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. Just look around you. Are people perishing and ending up in Hell? Are there people who are still not walking in the abundant life Jesus said we might have? The answer is “Yes”.

God’s will is that every man woman and child be saved, healed, delivered and experience abundant life. When a tragedy occurs, some think it is part of God’s master plan. They believe everything that happens must be God’s will. If it’s happening, they reason, then it must be God’s will, or at least God is allowing or permitting it to happen. This doctrine does not line up with the character of God as shown by Jesus in His earthly Ministry. Jesus was very adamant that it was the thief who comes to steal, kill and destroy. If it is killing, stealing or destroying you can be sure the enemy is behind it.

It is not God’s will that any should perish yet people are still dropping into Hell. Therefore God’s will does not automatically come to pass. It is not His will that any should perish. God does not want us to be like robots with no will of our own. He has given us the right and the privilege of determining our own future. Each one of us determines our own eternal destiny. With accurate knowledge we are able to make the right choices. Without accurate knowledge the Bible says God’s people perish.

WHOSE TURN IS IT ANYWAY?

Like playing a game of checkers where each player has a turn, many pray in a passive manner with the attitude, “I’ve prayed about it, and now I’m just waiting on God”. It’s His turn. I’m leaving the responsibility up to Him to do something, as if His is the next move in the Game of Life.

The Bible shows us that God has already done all He needed to do two thousand years ago when Jesus wrought a total victory for us. The provision was made for salvation, healing, deliverance and abundant life. Now we have to accept it. It is not God’s turn. He does not need another turn. Jesus said, “It is finished”. It is a ‘done deal’. It’s now our turn to receive the benefits of our redemption, to take what belongs to us by faith.

Have you ever heard someone testifying about how they waited years before God would heal them? In regard to the things that God has already provided for us through Jesus’ atoning work on the cross, we are never waiting on God. He has been waiting for us to get into faith and receive.

Chapter 7

Believe and Receive

We need to pray in faith - believing and receiving.

Romans 10:9-10

:9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

:10 For with the heart one believes to righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation.

The above verse tells us we have to confess with our mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in our heart that God has raised Him from the dead and we will be saved. The price was paid by Jesus two thousand years ago, but the benefits don't become ours until we receive them by faith.

Do we receive salvation before or after we believe? Think about it. Are we saved before or after we believe? Could anyone receive salvation before they believe? No, absolutely not.

Jesus has already paid the price for our salvation, but it does not become ours until we receive it by faith. If we could be saved before we put our trust in what Jesus has already done, we would have no need of a saviour. We receive salvation when we believe, not before.

We believe and receive then salvation becomes ours. This can be a stumbling block for those who are waiting to see if something happens before they will believe it.

The Greek words for 'saved' or 'salvation' encompass healing, preservation and deliverance. Yet many people are on a terrible treadmill of asking over and over for God to heal them, with no assurance of God's provision for their deliverance.

There needs to be a point in time where we cross over the line from "We want or desire it" to "We have it". We have a responsibility to take it by faith, moving from 'asker' to 'receiver'. If you were to ask a number of people, "When will you believe you're healed?" The majority would probably answer, "When I feel healed". They would only believe after all their symptoms had disappeared.

Faith believes before it experiences a manifestation.

Mark 11:24

"Therefore I say to you whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.

We have to believe we receive when we pray (now) and we shall have (future). The manifestation may take seconds, minutes, hours or days. The Bible says in *Mark 16:18* that believers shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover. The prayer and

‘laying on’ of hands comes first and recovery follows. From the instant we pray we should believe we have received. We are expecting to see a change.

Hebrews 6:12

...but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

The promises come after the first two steps of faith and patience. *Matthew 13, Mark 4 and Luke 8* all record Jesus’ teaching on the parable of the sower. He explained in this parable that the whole kingdom of God operates on the system of seedtime and harvest. I don’t believe this is comprised of just two steps but three.

1. ***Seed***
2. ***Time***
3. ***Harvest***

or as *Hebrews 6:12* explains:

1. ***Faith***
2. ***Patience***
3. ***Promises***

Luke 8:15

“But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.

The fruit comes after the seed is planted and kept planted until it produces a harvest.

Do we receive salvation before or after we believe? The answer is after we believe. Are we healed before or after we believe? The answer is the same. It is after we believe. Our healing will manifest after we believe.

We have to believe we receive before we ever see, feel, taste or touch it. Confidence in prayer is based on the belief that God has heard and answered our prayer, even though we may not see an instant manifestation. We are expecting a change to take place.

Hebrews 10:35-36

Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:

We should never let go of the promise after we have sown our seed in faith. What can we do during the waiting period between the ‘Amen’ and ‘Here it is’ to water and nurture our seed? Spend time in thanksgiving, reminding ourselves of the promises of God and His faithfulness towards us. Like Abraham, be strengthened in faith giving glory to God and being fully convinced that what God has promised in His word, He is able to perform. Stay in faith, keep on believing until the promise manifests.

If we really believe we received when we prayed, we would act as though we have the things we desired. A genuine attitude of gratitude will water the seed we have sown.

Anyone who believes they received when they prayed is automatically going to be thankful.

Philippians 4:4,6

:4 Rejoice in the Lord always Again I will say, rejoice!

: 6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

The apostle Paul tells us not to be anxious (don't fret) about anything, but rejoice. Why is this? God has already made provision for us. Our Dad loves us and wants us to receive all of His blessings.

If we maintain a state of expectancy with an attitude of gratitude it won't be long before the thing for which we've prayed manifests. When someone gives you something, what do you do as a matter of courtesy? You say "Thank You", and mean it.

Colossians 2:6,7

:6 As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,

:7 rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

Once we have established what we believe and planted our seed we begin to expect a harvest. If we truly believed we received when we prayed we couldn't be anything but thankful.

Chapter 8

Take It

Mark 11:24

Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.

In the above verse Jesus said, "*Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.*" The word 'receive' in the Greek text is the word: 'lambano', which means 'to take' in a literal sense and figuratively 'to get hold of'.

An example of this would be when you ask someone for an item and they hand it to you. Normally the person would not forcibly press the requested item into your hand. They would expect you to reach out and take what is offered.

Faith takes from the hand of God. God has many blessings available for us but He never forces them upon us. He expects us to reach out in faith and receive (take them).

Look at some key words in *Mark 11:24*

Things – Those things that God has already made available for us.

Pray - Making your request. You are doing the asking.

- Believe** - The next essential step is moving from asker to believer.
- Receive** - To take, grab hold of. We take it now by faith (present tense). It's ours even though we may not see it or feel it.
- Will have** - Future tense, expecting those things we prayed for to manifest. How long will we have to wait?" Until they appear.

The greater the belief or trust in God the greater expectancy we will have.

Faith is not passive. Faith is aggressive. We take the promises of God by faith. We believe when we pray that they are ours, that God has said yes. We may not see the results immediately, but *Mark 11:24* says and you will have them (future tense). We can rejoice knowing that the answer is ours. The thing for which we prayed is on its way. If we really believe that we receive when we pray our actions will show it. Faith must be accompanied by corresponding actions.

James 2:17

Thus faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

How many times do we need to pray and ask in faith for something that is already promised to us?

Only once, to pray or ask again means we didn't believe we received anything when we prayed the first time. To ask again is like pulling up a seed and replanting it over and over again. Surely we couldn't expect a harvest if we did that.

To have a successful prayer life we have to plant the seed of the word of God, in faith and keep it planted until it bears fruit.

Luke 8:15

...keep it and bear fruit with patience

Several years ago whilst overseas, I saw a belt buckle that I really liked. Even though I liked the one I saw, it took me a while to decide to purchase one for myself. By this time we had moved on from that town, so I asked some people we had met there, to order one on my behalf and forward it to me. When I returned home I told my friends about my new belt buckle.

Now, if someone had asked, "Can I see your new buckle?" What would I say? "I don't have one". No, I am already the owner of that buckle. It has been bought and paid for.

Do I have it? The answer is "Yes", although I don't have it with me at the moment. They may then have asked, "When can I see it?" The answer is "Soon". The buckle was on its way to me. I was so expectant about the arrival of my new purchase that I checked my mailbox regularly until it arrived. I never had to beg, plead, or nag anyone for it to arrive. I was waiting for when it would arrive, not to see if it would arrive.

God has provided us with everything we need to experience an abundant life. All we have to do is receive it. Jesus has paid the price in full. He said on the cross, “*It is finished.*”

Chapter 9

What Do You Expect?

The Bible word for hope means ‘an earnest expectation’ usually of something pleasurable. Once we make our request to God for something that He has already promised in His Word we should be expecting to see a change. Not looking to see ‘if’ it happens but ‘when’. That is expectancy. Many people today confuse the Bible word ‘hope’ with our modern terminology.

Today, if we were to say that we are hoping for something, the connotation would be that we desire it or wish for it but have no confidence about receiving it. Bible hope expects to see results from prayer and is closely aligned with faith as seen in:

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for [earnestly expected], the evidence of things not seen.

Psalms 130:5-6

***:5 I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,
And in His word I do hope.***

***:6 My soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning-
Yes more than those who watch for the morning.***

Anyone, who is waiting for sunrise, is not waiting to see if the sun comes up, but when the sun comes up. Of course the sun will come up. It is not a question of if. Believing the Word of God and acting upon it causes us to hope ie; expect more than those waiting for sunrise.

Over many years, I’ve found that people everywhere have the same needs, reactions and responses to the things of God. It is easy to tell whether or not people have received from the Lord when they pray. With some, expectancy and thanksgiving overflow immediately. With these recipients we have ignition-contact, while others remain in a state of “We’ll wait and see if anything happens.” With many it never does, they didn’t believe they received anything when they prayed. A conversion needs to take place in the recipient from ‘wishing and hoping’ to ‘believing and receiving’.

Sometimes the story of Elijah breaking a drought is used as justification for asking the Lord for the same thing over and over again. Let’s have a look at what this passage of Scripture actually says:

1 Kings 18:42-44

:42 So Ahab went up to eat and drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; then he bowed down on the ground, and put his face between his knees,

:43 and said to his servant, “Go up now, look toward the sea.” So he went up and looked, and said “There is nothing.” And seven times he said, “Go again.”

:44 Then it came to pass the seventh time, that he said, “There is a cloud as small as a man’s hand, rising out of the sea!” So he said, “Go up, say to Ahab, “Prepare your chariot, and go down before the rain stops you.”

Elijah is doing as God instructs him. The latter part of *verse 36 of 1 Kings 18* says, *“I have done all these things at Your word”*. Elijah is simply obeying God’s instructions. Initially the Lord had Elijah pray for it not to rain and then after three years and six months He had him pray again for the drought to be broken.

James 5:17 says that Elijah prayed earnestly that it would not rain. The original Greek reads this way: *And with prayer, he prayed for it not to rain*. Elijah got his orders from headquarters, and then prayed according to God’s will. God decided when the drought should be broken and had Elijah pray once in faith.

Notice the Bible text does not say that Elijah asked for the same thing seven times or bowed down and put his face between his knees seven times. The text does say that he told his servant to go again and look seven times.

Why would Elijah need to pray seven times if he believed the Lord answered his prayer the first time? Is God hard of hearing? It’s purely assumption to think that Elijah asks/prays seven times for rain. I submit to you, that he bowed down and prayed once in faith. From then on he expected something to happen, for a change to take place. Why else would he keep sending his servant to look?

Let’s check the score.

Bowing down praying - once.

Servant going again to look - seven times.

The only repetition seen here is that of the servant obeying the Prophet. We don’t see Elijah badgering God. After making his initial request Elijah maintained an attitude of expectancy. He was expecting to see a change.

The Bible says that through faith and patience we inherit the promises. Sometimes a period of time can elapse between the ‘Amen’ and the ‘Here It Is’. Why would Elijah send his servant to look again and again if he didn’t expect any sign of rain? Having expectancy is a sure sign that you believe you received when you prayed.

Chapter 10

Overcoming Adversity

Matthew 7:24-27

:24 “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:

:25 “and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

:26 “Now everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand:

:27 “and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”

In the above parable we see two men with exactly the same information and opportunity for success, but their lives have totally different outcomes. Both men's houses were under attack. The house is representative of their quality of life. There are many believers who love God with all their hearts but they are still being overwhelmed by the storms of life.

This parable is about taking hold of God's promises and doing the sayings of Jesus, building them into us, so that we have a sure foundation in our lives to prevent the storms of life from overwhelming us. If we hear the Word and don't apply it to our lives we cannot expect to have supernatural results. When we apply the word of God to our lives and release our faith through words, tremendous power is released into the realm of the spirit. There is victory in Jesus, provided we do our part by taking the word of God and using it to resist the enemy's onslaught.

When a storm came against Jesus He stood against it and spoke to the wind and waves commanding them to be still, yet many of God's people passively accept the adverse circumstances that come against them in life. They are just being programmed by the world's system. What you meditate on and fill your heart with, is what is going to come out of our mouth when the pressure is on. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak (*Matthew 12:34*).

Many years ago the Lord spoke to me about how passively His people react to bad news. Most Christians would sit and watch the news on television night after night and the only response they would make would be to agree how bad the situation was and then tell their friends. The Lord told me that if we hear about a crime that's been committed, we should pray that there is nothing hidden that won't be revealed and that the police will get all the evidence they need to convict the offender (*Mark 4:22*).

Since that time we have told many other people about this prayer and the testimonies that have come back to us have been outstanding.

Several years ago our home was broken into. The first thing we prayed was “There will not be anything hidden that will not be revealed or covered that won't be uncovered in Jesus' name”. Within a few hours, we discovered some of our stolen property hidden next to a neighbouring house. While our children stayed in the area to keep watch, the thieves returned to retrieve their stolen goods. We were then able to report their vehicle registration to the police who knew exactly who they were. They were already under suspicion for other break-ins in the area.

At the same time, another Christian reported to us that his home had been broken into. He said, “The police never catch them. Even if you get the registration number of the vehicle it's always a stolen car and you never get your stuff back”. This person got exactly what they had believed and spoken. They had just passively accepted that their property wouldn't be returned to them and that is exactly what happened.

The Bible tells us clearly that we will have what we believe and speak (*Mark 11:23*). Many Christians live defeated lives because all they do is agree with the negative circumstances that surround them. Let us agree with God and His Word and begin to experience victory in our lives. Jesus told us that we can have what we say, but many of God's people are saying what they already have, agreeing with negative circumstances and reinforcing them instead of speaking what they desire.

Acts 16:25,26

:25 But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.

:26 Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed.

Paul and Silas had been preaching and demonstrating the power of God. This resulted in a demon possessed woman being freed. This upset her masters who then caused a great disturbance. The Magistrates then commanded Paul and Silas to be beaten with rods and thrown into jail. This is not talking about your modern jail with colour television, three square meals a day and your own bathroom. This jail is a dirty, damp, rat infested place and Paul and Silas are chained in the deepest, darkest place. What if they had been grumbling and complaining? Paul saying, "I should never have become a preacher" and Silas responding with, "My back is killing me". I'm so glad they didn't act this way. We do not know exactly what they prayed but we do know they also sang hymns loudly enough for the other prisoner's to hear them. What a great attitude to have in an adverse situation. Their actions matched up with their faith.

Verse 26 says "Suddenly". I like that. Suddenly there was a great earthquake, the foundations of the prison were shaken, and all of the prison doors opened and everyone's chains were loosed. God gave that whole situation a good shake and what the devil had meant for evil God turned around for good. As a result the jailer and his whole household were saved. Paul and Silas prayed in faith and this resulted in such expectation of deliverance that it caused them to sing. We all love to sing, shout and get excited when everything is going well for us, even worldly people react that way. But how do we react when the storms of life hit?

Chapter 11 Hindrances to Prayer

A subtle trick of the enemy is to have us praying ineffective and misdirected prayers. Sincerity does not make up for ignorance. The Bible makes it clear that we should be diligent to study God's word so that we can rightly divide the word of truth (*2 Timothy 2:15*). If the word of God can be rightly divided then obviously it can also be wrongly divided. This can cause us to pray incorrectly, resulting in an ineffective prayer life.

For example: There is a huge difference between the way we should interpret things before and after Jesus' triumph over the forces of darkness. We are now under grace. We have an open heaven – unlimited access to the throne of God. God is not holding men's sins against them. God's wrath was totally appeased by the sacrifice of His

Son, Jesus. Whilst all Scripture is profitable for doctrine, it needs to be looked at under the light of the new and better covenant.

It has become popular at the moment for people to pray “the Jabez prayer” (*1 Chronicles 4:9 -10*). The mother of Jabez had a difficult time delivering her son and literally called him ‘a pain’. That is not a good way to start life with a name like that. Jabez prayed for God to bless, increase and be with him so that he could be a blessing. This was a great prayer with an excellent outcome in those circumstances.

However, New Testament believers praying this prayer as a request for themselves would show ignorance of God’s word, or failure to rightly divide the word of truth. Praying this Old Covenant prayer today would have its roots in unbelief. If we are asking for God to bless us as a New Testament believer we are basically saying God has not provided it.

We are now on the other side of the cross. Many of the Old Testament prayers no longer apply to us. It is up to us to find out what belongs to us as our inheritance and receive it into our lives. It is up to us to believe, receive and walk in it. To keep on asking for the same thing over and over puts us into the ‘waiting on God’ category, thinking it must be God’s turn, when in reality it is our turn to act upon what has already been provided. The ‘Jabez prayer’ was a great prayer for Jabez in his own personal situation, but we now have a new and better covenant established on better promises. A New Testament believer could however use elements of the Jabez prayer as a guide, bringing it into line with a New Testament prayer of thanksgiving eg

I thank you Father that You have blessed me so I can be a blessing, You never leave me or forsake me. You bless the work of my hands and cause me to increase and grow in the knowledge of You. Because I am born of God, the evil one has no power over me in Jesus’ name, amen.

This takes us out of asking mode and into receiving by faith mode.

Have you ever heard a Christian say to another “The Lord be with you” and they respond back “and with you”? Jesus said “*I will never leave you or forsake you*” (*Hebrews 13:5*). Whenever I hear a Christian say “Lord be with me” I am always tempted to say, “You need to get saved then and God will be with you”. Either they are not really saved, ignorant of the Scriptures, or in total unbelief.

There is a HUGE difference between asking for something that’s already ours and thanking God that we already have it. It is important we understand this. The former is not yet walking in the promise whilst the latter has entered into the reward. It’s one thing to talk about the promise and another to take ownership of it.

Ephesians 1:3 tells us that God has already blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. *2Peter 1:3* also says that God has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the true knowledge of Him. Both of these Scriptures tell us that Jesus has already paid the price for us to live an abundant life.

You may be thinking “But, I asked and I didn’t receive.”

Did you ask according to his will?

Did you ask in faith?

Did you stay in faith until it manifested, rejoicing that your need had been met?

Jesus said that everyone who asks receives. *Matthew 7:8* God has already made provision for us. Asking and receiving are our responsibility. God does His part and we do ours. Faith receives from the hand of God. We believe and we receive. Any blockage to having our prayers answered is never at God's end. Many are waiting on God to do something, when in reality He is waiting on us to receive.

Possibly one of the greatest hindrances to prayer is in relation to 'God's timing'. Over the years, I have heard many preachers say, "The reason you are not healed is because it may not be "God's timing yet". Jesus never told anyone who came to Him with a request for healing "It's not God's timing. Come back later".

When it comes to those things paid for at Calvary eg salvation, healing or deliverance they are already available. We just have to receive. It is God's will for all to be saved, healed and delivered now.

I remember talking to a man who was healed of a leg injury due to a truck accident. He would always say that he waited for eight years for God to heal him. The day he was healed God told him to run. As he was running his healing manifested. On several occasions, I pointed out to him that he would have received his healing sooner if he had acted in faith earlier. The eight years of waiting were not God's will. God was waiting on him to act on the Word and appropriate what belonged to him.

James 2:26

For as the body without the spirit is dead so faith without works is dead also.

2 Corinthians 6:2b

Behold, now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation.

God's timing is always now when it comes to the elements of our salvation. Faith does not stall in unbelief waiting on God to do something. Those who are waiting on God have not moved from being passive askers to taking what belongs to them.

God's timing can come into account if our prayer is in relation to God's specific plan for our life and ministry. It may not be God's will for certain things to happen yet. It does take time for a person to be prepared for service. Often experience has to be gained and attitudes or pride dealt with. Other considerations may come into play eg the need to meet certain people or for certain events to take place first. If we seek promotion before the right time, we are not praying in line with the will of God and cannot be certain that God heard us or answered our prayer.

WHAT'S THE HOLD UP THEN?

There may be other factors that are delaying the manifestation of our answer to prayer. For example, in the area of finances, God may have spoken to someone to supply the need but they are a little slow to respond to His prompting, or perhaps their own circumstances need to change first. Maybe they are being disobedient to the Lord's leading. God may then have to seek out another person who is willing and obedient. The money is not in Heaven, but on earth and in the hands of people. In these situations there is a third party to be considered.

Once the Lord spoke to me to sow a sum of money into a particular ministry. My response was "Sure Lord. That's easy". The Lord then asked me to double it. A little shocked I asked Him, "How come?" He replied that He had asked someone else but they were not willing to give.

We may have prayed to sell something. God is not into robbery. If we list the item at an exorbitant price we cannot use our faith for its sale. More than once we have prayed and asked God what price to put on a property. Each time the property sold for the exact price the Lord told us and in a very short period of time. If we are greedy, our heart is not right and our prayers will be hindered. The Bible says that our God shall supply all of our need. It does not say all of our greed.

The same thing applies if we are seeking employment. Some people are trying to believe God for jobs they are not qualified for. We can believe for favour with prospective employers but we still have to put legs to our faith by applying for jobs and upgrading our qualifications if necessary. Sometimes it may take a while for the Lord to arrange the right employment for us as other people's lives are involved.

Chapter 12

The Instant Response

God, who cannot lie, has promised to hear and grant our requests provided they are according to His will. We call. He answers. When we call God always responds instantly ie He says, "Yes". There may not however always be an instant manifestation.

This is where many loose their grip on faith. They think that if God does something it will always manifest instantly. This is a misconception.

When Moses stretched out his rod over the Red Sea, the sea didn't instantly part in the way it has often been portrayed in the movies. The Bible says that God caused a strong east wind to blow all night before the children of Israel could cross over to the other side.

When the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary to announce that she would bear a son, she didn't instantly hold her baby in her arms. As supernatural as Jesus' conception was, Mary still had a normal full term pregnancy. She was expecting, but she couldn't see that baby or hold it in her arms. The Bible tells us in *John 1:14* that the word became flesh. God spoke the word. Mary received the word and the word became flesh. It took time before the child was born, but conception took place when Mary first received the Word.

In *Daniel Chapter 9:4-19* we see the record of a prayer that Daniel prayed. His prayer took just a few minutes. While he was still praying an angel appeared in answer to his prayer. This was before he had even finished praying. I'm sure that all of us would like to have such quick results. The angel then made this amazing statement which is recorded in *verse 23* saying, "*At the beginning of your supplications the command went out*". What command was the angel talking about? It was the command for the answer to be sent to Daniel. Although we may call this an instant manifestation, there was still a slight delay from the start of the prayer until the angel appeared. How many seconds or minutes did it take? We can't be absolutely sure, but there was a short delay before the manifestation.

In *Daniel Chapter 10* we see another account of Daniel praying. This time he was praying and fasting for twenty-one days before anything seemed to happen. Once again an angel came, but this time it had taken twenty-one days before he appeared. He then explained to Daniel that he had come because of the words first spoken when he prayed (*verse 12*).

Why was there such a long delay? Did Daniel have less faith when praying this time? I don't believe so. I'm sure he would have been greatly encouraged by his previous success. Could it be that God answers one prayer and not another or sometimes says, "Wait"? Could God be the problem?

No! A thousand times no. The promises of God are yes and amen, not yes, no or wait (*2 Corinthians 1:20*).

The angel explained to Daniel that he had experienced some demonic opposition and that Michael the archangel had come to his assistance (*see verse 13*).

God heard and responded instantly to both prayers. This however, did not guarantee an instant manifestation in both cases. Daniel stood in faith, believing God, until the answer was manifested. What if he had given up on the twentieth day instead of waiting for the twenty-first? Perhaps he would never have seen the answer.

Hebrews 10:23

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.

Chapter 13 **Spiritual Warfare**

Can demonic forces hinder the prayers of a New Testament believer? Only if we allow them to. We need to know our rights in Christ and exercise our authority over the enemy.

Daniel was operating under the Old Testament before the enemy was defeated. Thank God the Bible tells us that Jesus overcame the devil on our behalf and that He has given us authority over all the works of the enemy in Jesus' name.

Luke 10:19

“Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

James 4:7

Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

When we passively accept every problem that comes our way in life, we are not resisting the devil but assisting him. We should not just passively accept his lying and bullying tactics. The only weapon the enemy has to use against us today is deception. If we maintain a teachable attitude and remain submitted to the word of God, then even when the enemy does his utmost to oppose us, we can stand up strong in our God-given authority and resist him. When we use the name of Jesus and the Word of God ie “It is written!” resisting him steadfast in the faith, the Bible says that he will flee from us. We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us *Romans 8:37* and we are able to reign in this life through Jesus Christ (*Romans 5:17*).

It is in the name of Jesus that we have access to God and authority over the enemy and his works (*Mark 16:17-18, Philippians 2:9-11*).

As a New Testament believer we have authority in the Name of Jesus over an eternally defeated foe. The enemy may hate you, but don’t worry about it. Don’t take it personally. He hates all of mankind regardless of race, colour or creed, Christian or non-Christian. Why? Because we were created in God’s own image and we have been given authority on the earth.

God gave man authority on the earth.

Genesis 1:26

Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

Psalm 8:4-6

:4 What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him?

:5 For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honour.

:6 You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands: You have put all things under his feet,

Adam yielded his God given authority to the devil (*Genesis 3*). Man now had a terrible new master. Instead of having a loving heavenly Father, he had Satan as ruler and master. Satan was originally Lucifer, the anointed cherub, an angel (*Isaiah 14:12-15, Ezekiel 38:12-19*). Lucifer became lifted up in pride and wanted to exalt himself above God. He was cast out of heaven to the earth (*Revelation 12:7-12*).

Satan hates God. The only way he could attempt to get even with God or hurt Him in any way was to attack God’s greatest treasure - mankind. If the devil can’t get at God personally, then he will settle for the next best thing. The devil and his evil forces

want to cause as much torment, suffering and destruction to the human race as possible. To express themselves fully, evil spirits need a physical body to operate through and prefer human beings. The Gadarene demoniac was demon possessed. When Jesus was about to cast the spirits out of him, they (the evil spirits), asked if they could go into the swine. They wanted a body to inhabit. Even the pigs had enough sense to not be used by the devil and fled into the sea. The devil and his cohorts have a fuller expression if they can use a body especially a human body. They want to inflict the most damage possible.

Luke 4:6

And the devil said to Him, “All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.

Satan tried to bargain with Jesus by offering him authority. Notice that Jesus did not say, “You’re a liar Devil. You don’t have any authority”. Adam had yielded his authority to the devil.

Jesus came legally into the earth, born in the likeness of man, with a human body and totally defeated the devil. He regained Adam’s lost authority and after being raised from the dead He delegated that regained authority to His body, the Church.

Matthew 28:18,19

:18 Then Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

:19 “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Ephesians 1:22,23

:22 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church,

:23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

The devil especially hates those who are part of the body of Christ. He realises that if believers ever find out who they are in Christ and the awesome power available to us in the name of Jesus, we would be able to render him powerless against us. The enemy wants to blind us and ‘keep us in the dark’ so that he is able to continue to control the world system.

2 Corinthians 4:4

:4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

Because of the total victory Jesus won over the enemy, we have an open heaven. We have free access to our wonderful, heavenly Father. We are to take the sword of the spirit (the word of God) and in Jesus’ name resist the devil and put him to flight. Yes, we wrestle against principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this world and spiritual wickedness in high places, but it is not a physical fight. It is a faith fight. We are not fighting the devil, but enforcing his defeat. Jesus has already defeated him for us.

One way in which Christians have gotten off track in recent times, is in focusing their efforts, time, money and resources on trying to pull down strongholds over entire cities. They hire planes and fly over a whole region, trying to bind the unclean spirits in San Francisco or the gambling spirits in Las Vegas. If this were going to work it would have by now. There is just as much immorality now as there ever was.

While all this demon chasing is going on, notice where the focus is not. Instead of focusing on reaching the lost, these people have become sidetracked. The main thing is no longer the main thing. I admit that there could be a lot of unclean spirits in one area, but if all the immoral people there got born again and were on fire for God, it would be as if those evil spirits never even existed. No one would be acknowledging or empowering them.

God is not bound in the heavenlies. Jesus defeated the enemy once and for all (*Colossians 2:15*). Deception is the only weapon he has left. If the enemy can get our eyes off God and His word and on to himself he has succeeded in getting us off track.

The major battlefield is in our mind. The mind is part of our control centre. Whoever controls the mind wins.

2 Corinthians 10:4-6

:4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,

:5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

:6 and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

Jesus said in *Matthew 6:31* “Take no thought, saying” (KJV), “Do not worry, saying” (NKJV). It’s the old faith, verses unbelief fight. If we think on the wrong things we will ultimately speak them out and plant seeds of doubt and unbelief. Fear that God won’t come through for us or believing that He is withholding from us hinders our prayer life. This was the basic problem in the Garden of Eden. The serpent began to plant thoughts of doubt and unbelief. “Has God indeed said?” and “In the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God” hissed the serpent. He tried to persuade Adam and Eve that God was withholding from them. Seeds of doubt and discontent were planted, grew and produced fruit. There was really nothing to gain except the knowledge of evil and that was no great prize. Yet Adam and Eve fell into the enemy’s trap.

The devil and his evil forces had always been around that garden. That’s why God told Adam ‘to keep’ or literally ‘to guard’ the garden. Yet until Adam and Eve yielded to the enemy, it would have been as though the evil entities didn’t exist.

Let’s not be deceived by the same enemy. We need to demand our rights. We are not demanding of God. He is not the one who is withholding from us. He has provided for us and wants us to have our needs meet. We are demanding of the enemy who is trying to stop the blessings. The strongholds that we are to take authority over are not over countries or cities but in our minds. They are like great fortresses built stone upon stone over the years through negative thinking.

We have a responsibility to use our God-given authority to break the blindness off those who don't believe. To offer them the opportunity for a change of heart which only comes through hearing the gospel, to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light, from the influence of Satan to God. Let's use our prayers to become more effective as witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ. The disciples in the early church prayed that with all boldness they would speak forth God's word and that He would stretch forth His hand to heal and that signs and wonders would be done through His son, Jesus (*Acts 4:29-31*).

Chapter 14

Check Your Attitude

The prayer of faith in *Mark 11:24* is not a blank cheque for us to get God to provide anything that we decide we would like.

Mark 11:24

“Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.

Some people misuse this verse for selfish gain. We've already seen from the Bible that to have confidence, we must pray according to God's will. Our desires must line up with God's desires before we can have confidence that God has heard and answered our prayer.

James 4:3

You ask, and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.

Psalms 37:4

Delight yourself also in the Lord; and He shall give you the desires of your heart.

God wants to give you the desires of your heart, not the lusts of your flesh. Just because you think you need it, desire it or want it, does not obligate God to give it to you.

I have heard of individuals who used 'the prayer of faith' to claim a particular marriage partner, yet overlooked the fact, that the person being claimed, was already happily married to someone else. Others have tried to pray and believe for God to give them someone else's property. The Bible tells us not to covet our neighbour's wife or property (*Exodus 20:17*) and that faith works by love (*Galatians 5:6*). There is nothing wrong with seeking a wife. The Bible says that he who finds a wife finds a good thing (*Proverbs 18:22*). Just make sure it isn't someone else's wife.

Faith works by love and if we are not walking in love our prayers will be hindered. Strife between a husband and wife can also cause prayers to be hindered.

1 Peter 3:7

Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honour to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

We should be striving for peace in every area of our lives.

Galatians 5:6

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.

The New English translation of *Galatians 5:6* says “*faith active in love*”. I’m sure none of us want our faith to be rendered inactive.

Mark 11:25

“And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.

God is not going to honour fleshly, selfish prayers and especially if they are to the detriment of other people. We need to walk in the light of the whole word of God and not just the sections that appeal to us.

Chapter 15 Different Types of Prayer

Ephesians 6:18

praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.

One translation says, ‘use every kind of prayer or entreaty’ and another ‘all manner of prayer’. Here the Bible talks about different kinds of prayer, prayed in different ways.

In this book we have primarily looked at prayers of petition. There are however many other kinds of prayer such as the prayer of agreement, corporate prayer, intercession, thanksgiving and supplication. No matter what kind of prayer we use, God’s will should always be our primary consideration.

Think of all the different ball sports eg. Soccer, baseball, football, netball, cricket etc. they each have a different set of rules that governs them. What utter confusion there would be if you mixed all the rules or had no rules at all. Chaos and frustration would abound. In the same way each type of prayer has a different application and methodology that pertains to it.

THE PRAYER OF CONSECRATION OR DEDICATION

Jesus ministered to thousands of people, yet only once in the Bible do we see Jesus praying “*If it be Thy will*” (*Luke 22:42*). This was in the Garden of Gethsemane when He was about to lay down His life. The suffering that He was about to endure was not something that anyone would look forward to, yet Jesus was willing to submit His will and His desires to His heavenly Father’s. In this case He was praying a prayer of consecration or dedication.

This type of prayer can be prayed as often as we like. The Bible tells us in *Romans 12:1* to present our bodies as a living sacrifice. The only problem with a living

sacrifice is that it may try to get off the altar if it gets too hot. We can be hot or cold for God. It's our choice. There may be many times during our lifetime that we feel the need to pray to the Lord, "Not my will, but Your will be done".

Remember if we ask anything according to His will He hears us. When Jesus prayed His prayers of consecration and dedication He demonstrated that He wanted His will to be in line with His Father's.

INTERCESSORY PRAYER

Intercession is another type of prayer we see in the Bible. Intercession means standing in the gap for someone else.

Ezekiel 22:30

"So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land; that I should not destroy it; but I found no one.

When this Scripture was written, there was nobody who was willing to be a mediator between God and the people. God eventually sent His own Son Jesus, Who provided salvation and righteousness for all those who put their trust in Him.

Isaiah 59:16

He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor; Therefore His own arm brought salvation for Him; And His own righteousness it sustained Him.

After Jesus provided eternal redemption for us, He ascended to the right hand of the Father as our great High priest. Now He ever lives to make intercession for those who come to God through Him. He is our great intercessor.

Hebrews 7:25

Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

Early in 1996 the Lord warned me that the enemy was going to try to kill me. Now that was not the best news I had ever heard. I didn't share this information with anyone. I didn't want to sow any bad seed though speaking out such a thing (although my wife picked up in her spirit that God had spoken something serious to me).

Several months later we went interstate to a conference and I became very ill, so ill that I was unable to attend the meetings. Upon returning home that Saturday night, we had to call an After Hours Medical Service for assistance as my right leg had swollen badly. The doctor wanted to have me admitted to hospital immediately. I replied, "No way, I have to work tomorrow".

Monday morning my own Doctor called to inform me that he had booked me into a local hospital to have some tests. They believed I had a staphylococcal infection in my blood that is usually fatal. By this time ulcers had also appeared on my ankles and legs. This happened over a period of about two weeks. My lightning fast mind

realised this was the attack that the Lord had warned me about. The Doctors were very concerned and this caused me too to become a little anxious.

When it seems that our prayers are taking an unusually long time to manifest, or trouble has broken out and we don't understand what is happening, we can start seeking God for wisdom about where there may be a blockage.

James 1:5

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.

When we are told to ask for wisdom, the Greek word used in the above verse is 'sophia' and means insight. Sometimes we need insight into what is happening and how to pray. We may find however, that it is not the enemy hindering our prayer but simply a lack of trust on our part. We can't blame the enemy for everything. He's not that efficient, we have a responsibility to believe and receive.

I had planted my seed of faith the instant the symptoms attacked my body, but because of the seriousness of my condition, I sought the Lord for some assurance of deliverance. The Lord is faithful and He spoke these words to me, "I have prayed for you that your faith won't fail".

When the results of the tests came back they couldn't find anything wrong. My leg went back to normal size and the ulcers that had been on my legs disappeared. It was a great comfort to me that Jesus had been praying for me. Who could have done a better job of praying? I had used those words spoken to me as a lifeline to hold on to. What was amazing to me was that the Lord hadn't given me a Scripture that would normally refer to healing.

Several months later my wife pointed out to me that the word the Lord had given to me was the same as He spoke to Peter when He told him that Satan desired to sift him like wheat. Looking back at that incident I don't hold my faith up as some great trophy saying, "Hey look what I did with my faith". Instead it is, "Look what the Lord has done. I am forever grateful Lord. Thank you for praying for me. Your prayer has saved me".

Thank God for the present day ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. He prays for us and helps us to pray for others who can't pray for themselves.

Intercessory prayer is of great benefit when we use it to produce fruit for the kingdom of God. Let us direct our prayers like a skilled archer and hit the correct target. We need not plead for God to move and save the lost. God demonstrated His desire for them to be saved in giving His Son (*John 3:16*). The 'I prayed them in' type of attitude does not account for the many other factors involved when someone comes to the Lord. What about Jesus the one who died for them, the Holy Spirit who brought conviction to them or the other labourers who had sown seed into their life over the years? Don't forget about the person who brought them to the meeting or the preacher who shared the good news of the gospel with them.

Pride can cause us to put the emphasis on what we are doing, rather than on what God has already done for us through Jesus. Pride brings deception and the power of deception is that the person who is deceived is the last one to find out.

Obadiah 3

The pride of your heart has deceived you...

Pride can be likened to bad breath. We smell it on others but not on ourselves. A prideful attitude in intercession can be very dangerous in a local church. Intercessors can sometimes think they are the ones making everything happen, to the point where they are hearing from God better than the Pastor. God is not the author of confusion. He has placed a system of authority in the local church. Intercessory prayer meetings should be supervised by the leaders in the church as they can have a tendency to get off track. Intercession can become focused on the wrong thing eg trying to change the Pastor, or other congregation members. This is nothing short of manipulation.

When we are interceding for others, it is important that we seek God about what to pray and then follow His leadings. Intercessory prayer should never be used to manipulate someone into doing what we think. God will not force anyone to conform. It is not His will that any should perish, but He gives all of us the right to make our own choices. We determine our ultimate destiny.

Once when I visited a church in another city my attention was drawn to a young woman who was a member of the music team. After I returned home I was praying in the spirit (in other tongues) and her face would continually come to mind even though I had never met her. For about two weeks this happened and sometimes while praying I would sense a great urgency. I was not sure why I had been praying for her but on my next visit I was talking to one of the Church Leaders, when suddenly I noticed this same girl. I asked the leader about her and then told them that I had been praying for this young woman during the last fortnight. They were amazed and said that during that time the young woman had been depressed and even suicidal.

One of the greatest things about praying in tongues is that we can pray for the 'unknown'. The Lord can have us 'standing in the gap' for someone else without having to inform us of every detail. If you sense a great urgency to pray, then time is of the essence. Pray in the spirit until you feel a 'release' or the burden lifts. God doesn't have to tell us every detail about someone else's business. All we have to do is obey His leadings.

Here are some examples of what not to do.

Several years ago I was praying for someone for a spouse. I believed that this person must be lonely and really needed to have a mate. After some time however, this person shared with me that the Lord had shown them that they didn't need a spouse, they just needed to develop a closer relationship with Him. On another occasion, I believed it would be good to pray for a certain man to get a different job where he didn't have to work Sundays and miss church. His wife however, informed me that he liked working on Sundays as he got paid double time. We cannot use our prayers to try to make someone do something they do not want to do.

Intercession is never to manipulate people into doing what we think they should do. If in doubt, pray in the spirit. Praying in the spirit (in other tongues) is always praying in the perfect will of God. When we pray in the spirit the Holy Spirit gives us the words to speak.

PRAYING FOR THE LOST

No one in a right frame of mind would choose to go to Hell. Nor would anyone continue driving down the road if they had been warned that the bridge a few hundred metres down the road had been washed away. They would have to be mesmerised, blinded or in some sort of drunken stupor.

Intercession can be effective in binding and breaking the power of the evil influences that cause spiritual blindness. We are the ones given authority over evil spirits and we should be using our authority to help those who are unable to help themselves.

2 Corinthians 4:3-4

:3 But if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,

:4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

Many of us are concerned about unsaved friends or relations. Jesus actually told us how we should pray for them.

Matthew 9:37,38

:37 Then He said to His disciples, The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few.

:38 'Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.'

1 Corinthians 1:21

For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

It is through the foolishness of preaching that men are saved. We cannot just pray and ask God to save a person. Jesus has already paid the price for their salvation two thousand years ago. All they need to do is call on the name of the Lord and they can't do that until they have heard the gospel. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation.

Romans 1:16

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes...

God has given us all a free will and the right to choose where we spend eternity. How is the unsaved person going to call unless someone is sent to tell them who they need to call upon? The Lord knows the right people to send to minister the gospel to your loved ones, but He has told us in His word to pray for those labourers into the harvest.

In praying for the lost it is important that we move from asker to believer. We must get into faith and hold fast to the confession of our faith..

When praying for my father-in-law's salvation, my wife and I prayed for labourers to come across his path and share the good news with him. We also took authority over any blindness from the enemy or influences that could hinder him from believing. For nineteen years, there was no visible change in his attitude concerning God. We continued to thank God that He was working in my father-in-law's life and prayed in tongues regularly. He had been very ill for years. The Doctors had basically written him off fourteen years before he actually passed away.

About three weeks before he died my wife asked if she could pray for him whilst he was having an attack. He said, " Yes, I need all the help I can get." This was the first time he had agreed for someone to pray. This was encouraging. A few days after recovering from that turn, he was very clear in pointing out to us that he hadn't changed his mind about God even though he had allowed her to pray for him. At that time my wife asked him, "Dad, have you made peace with God yet?" he said, "No".

What did we do? Worry? Panic? No. Did we start all over again by asking God to send labourers across his path? No, No, No, we kept the switch of faith turned on and left the same seed in the ground that we had planted nineteen years ago. We watered it with, " Thank you Father, that you're working in _____ life" and prayed in tongues. We didn't pull up our seed and plant a new one, nor did we beg or plead with God to do something.

If we had prayed again that would have meant we didn't believe that God had heard and answered our prayer the first time we asked. This is where people often miss it. They stay in the asking mode, pleading over and over for God to do something, instead of believing that their prayer has been answered. What are believers supposed to do? Believe. When we do not believe, all we are is 'askers' not 'believers'.

Ask yourself this question. Do I really trust the Lord? Remember He loves that lost one much more than we do. He sent His son to die for them. He is always responding to us when our hearts cry out for the lost.

About twelve months before all this happened, My father-in-law read a little book that our ministry had published entitled 'How to get to Heaven'. He had all the information he needed to receive salvation but had not acted upon it. He took another turn for the worse and was once again hospitalised. The doctors were at a loss as to how to further assist him. Things were looking quite bleak.

Then suddenly, my wife had a phone call from her mother saying "Your father was praying last night and wants to talk to you." Promptly she headed for the hospital.

Upon her arrival, her father asked her, " Did you have any telepathic thoughts about me last night at 10pm? Apparently he had suffered a really serious turn at 9:30pm which was so bad that this had prompted him to pray. My wife asked, "What happened?" He replied, " I prayed to the Lord last night and He helped me". Probing a little further she asked, "Have you made peace with God, Dad?" "Yes" he said. One more question she needed to ask him "Have you made Jesus Lord?" he said "Yes".

Immediately she informed him that healing was made available for him through what Jesus had done for him at Calvary, or alternatively if he wished he could go on to heaven. She also told him “to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord”. It was his choice. He replied “ I also asked to go, when I prayed last night.”

Fifty-one hours and thirty-five minutes later he was freed from that disease riddled body and walking the streets of gold in Heaven. What a great place to be, safe in the arms of Jesus.

While we miss him we are rejoicing that he made Heaven his home. He has gone out of our present and into our future. Never quit, never give up, hold fast to your faith, stay in faith until you see the answer. God is faithful.

PRAYING FOR REVIVAL

Today we have a great body of believers praying for revival or for God to move, for God to do something. Meanwhile the unsaved are dropping into Hell because those praying have not realised they need to become labourers themselves. Every believer is called to the ministry of reconciliation. Jesus said, “the labourers are few”. We should not confuse activity with effectiveness and fruitfulness. Even after all this time there is still a shortage of labourers.

An Old Testament passage used as a basis for prayer for revival has often been taken out of the context in which it was written.

2 Chronicles 7:14

“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and forgive their sin and heal their land.

The Lord appeared to Solomon to tell him how to prevent drought, pestilence etc. in the land.

When you look at this verse in its proper setting it shows that the land needed healing because of the sin of the people. As this was under the Mosaic Law period the people’s actions caused the judgement of God to fall upon them.

God was not the problem, but sin. Today sin is not stopping God’s grace from flowing to mankind. We who are on the other side of the cross are not under judgement for our sins. Even those who have not yet received salvation are under the ‘Age of Grace’ and God is not holding their sins against them. It is the goodness of God that brings men to repentance, not preaching Old Testament Law or the judgement of God, but preaching the good news of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The fact that God is not angry any longer. Jesus has paid the price once and for all time.

God is not causing drought, pestilence, crop failure etc. today and the Lord is not withholding revival because man is so sinful. God wants revival more than we do.

1 Timothy 2:3,4

:3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour,

:4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

He has called us to be fishers of men. When anyone goes fishing they usually try to go where there are fish. To have good success you need the right bait. As believers we know where the fish are (the lost), but we also need the right bait (the good news). The message of ‘turn or burn’ is not appealing to the lost. Screaming out in tongues at homosexuals at a Gay Mardi Gras and yelling at them, “You’re all going to hell ” will not produce a great influx of new people into church on Sunday. The good news is not telling sinners how bad they are, but how good God is. God loves every man, woman and child and Jesus has provided the way back to God. We all are called to the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18-19).

We do not need to petition God to bring revival or motivate Him into saving the lost.

There is a huge difference between when 2 Chronicles 7:14 was written under law, wrath and judgement and the age we now live in. Jesus has broken down the barriers between God and mankind giving us direct access to God.

Revival comes when we get out of our prayer closets, get hungry for God and start telling people about the goodness of God, preaching the word of God with boldness and allowing the Holy Spirit to confirm the gospel with signs and wonders. We are the ones who institute revival.

We must move from being passive askers to active labourers. There is no need to plead with God to give us revival. He has given us a pattern that was implemented in the early church (Acts 4:29-31 and Mark 16:20). We are co-labourers together with Him. He has done His part, now we need to do ours. It’s our turn to do something.

PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT

Praying in the spirit (in other tongues) should be an important part of our prayer life and especially intercession.

Romans 8:26-28

:26 Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

:27 Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

We see in the above verses that there are times when we don’t know how to pray as we ought and we need the Holy Spirit’s help. He will give us the words to speak and then all things will work together for the good.

Many people quote *verse 28* out of context, saying “All things work together for the good of those who love God”, with the idea that even evil things are designed to cause good to come about. The devil is not working for God. Jesus said that the thief comes to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10). In any situation where there is killing, stealing

or destroying it is not coming from God, but is the enemy coming to try and rip someone off.

If we read the above verses in context, we realise that it is only when we are praying in the Spirit that all things work together for the good. When we allow the Holy Spirit to give us the words to speak. When we pray in the spirit ie in other tongues, we always pray according to the will of God. God is always there to bring good out of every situation but we need to pray. God's legal right of approach into the earth is through us - those who have been given authority as the body of Christ. Isn't it awesome to know that we never have to be stuck for something to pray, because the Holy Spirit is always ready to help us and when He does, all things work together for our good?

Chapter 16

Closing Thoughts on Prayer

Prayer is meant to be dialogue with God, ascertaining His will and bringing it to pass on the earth. It would be sad if the only time we have for God is to give Him our shopping list ie I want, I need, I must have, type of requests. If we were 'on fire' for God and seeking the kingdom of God first, He would add the necessary things we often strive for. God is aware we all need things, but we need to seek Him first. When we put God and His purposes first place in our lives He will automatically meet all of our needs.

Matthew 6:33

"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."

God is interested in people. Possessions, while necessary for life, are only temporary. Prayer was never to be used just to obtain things. Our prayer life should primarily be focused on fellowship with the Lord and praying His will into the Earth. That was the reason God created man in the first place. The Lord would come down in the cool of the day to spend some time with Adam and Eve. God wants relationship not religion. All of our good works should flow out of our intimacy with the Lord.

Following are some helpful hints for prayer. Please do not use these as a formula, but be open for the Holy Spirit to breathe life into your prayers.

1. Pray according to God's will.
2. Ask the Father in the name of Jesus.
3. Pray in faith believing you have received when you prayed.
4. Remain in a state of expectancy until the manifestation
5. Maintain an attitude of gratitude, thanking God for the answer.

1John 5:4

For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that overcomes the world – our faith.

When our prayers are born of God they overcome.

Remember it's not just any old prayer that changes things, but prayer offered up in faith according to the will of God.

Every time we have our prayers answered God is glorified and we become more fruitful.

John 15:7-8

:7 "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.

:8 "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

WHERE WILL YOU SPEND ETERNITY?

The most important prayer that anyone can pray is the prayer of salvation. If you haven't already done so, say this prayer today and commit to it with your whole heart. Make a confession of your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.

God in Heaven, I realise that it is impossible for me to save myself and I now accept your free gift of the Saviour, Jesus Christ. I believe that Jesus died for me, that He paid the price for me and suffered the judgment for my sin. I believe that He arose again from the dead for me, so that I could have newness of life, eternal life.

Jesus, I make you my Lord and I receive you as my saviour. I thank you for saving me. I thank you that all my sins are forgiven and I have a brand new start with You as my Heavenly Father. I now have eternal life and I will be with you in Heaven when I die.

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