

Answered Prayer

As I grew up as a parent, I used to pray for my children and always finish the prayer with, "Father, I pray this in the Name of your Son, Jesus". We Christians add this or some similar wording to the end of our prayers because of what we think we read in the NT scriptures, not really understanding what the phrase, in the Name of Your Son, means. The words are almost like some incantation which supposedly brings the result we want.

As far as I know, not once did I receive an answer to my specific prayers for my children's health. However, when my children were born, I had verbally given them over into the Father's care. I was reminded of this when my oldest daughter was going to Germany on a Rotary Exchange for a whole year at the end of year 12. I was walking up to the local park in tears before the Lord complaining that **I would not be there to look after her**. Swift was the response in audible words: **Who's been looking after her?** I recognised immediately who was speaking to me and, clutching my hands on my chest, I bent over and uttered: Oh Lord I'm sorry. In an instant I knew the presence of my God and had a peace that knew no bounds. I now knew beyond a shadow of doubt that my daughter was going to be fine on her year long stay away. Such is the graciousness of our God.

Whenever my children were travelling anywhere, I have always asked the Father to send His ministering spirits to go before and aft, to the left and right, and above and below them, and this I came to know He answered, for when I tried to reclaim being the chief carer for them, He showed me He was already doing it. As far as I can remember, I never got an answer to specific prayer relating to their health. This made me wonder if I had got things wrong in my reading of scripture and so I began a study about asking God for specific things. What I found was enlightening.

These first few scriptures, tell us something about where to pray, what to pray, what to pray for, what not to pray for, and perhaps the persistence of our praying.

Matt. 6:6 *But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee.*

Matt. 6:8 *"So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.*

James 4:2-3 *Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and covet, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war; ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend it in your pleasures.*

Matt. 6:9 *After this manner therefore pray ye. Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be your name.... AND **Luke 11:2** And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come....*

Matt. 7:7 *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:...* AND **Luke 11:9** *And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.*

From these verses we see we must not make a show of our praying in front of others. We must not ask for something to spend on our own pleasures. The prayer we were given by our Lord, is not about us, it's about the Father and His wishes.

The next group of scriptures tell us the conditions which must be fulfilled for our asking

prayer to be answered. While most of us think we understand these conditions, I believe we seldom realise they are all talking about the same thing. As I have heard numerous times, people commonly take one of these following scriptures and run with it as if it were the ONLY way to answered prayer. The two most common ones are **Mat. 21:22, ask believing**, and **John 14:14, ask anything in my name**. (See below). Seldom do we search scripture to see what else it has to say about answered prayer. If we did, we would find that **asking believing** (Mat. 21) or **asking in Jesus name**, (John 14) mean much more than our understanding of these words. What does it really mean to believe? What does "in Jesus name" really mean? What does scripture say they mean? To find the fullness of successful asking, we are left with no alternative but to search ALL that scripture has to say about answered prayer.

The following scriptures come out of that search. They tell us the conditions under which asking prayer is answered:

Matt. 18:19 *Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall **agree** on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father who is in heaven.*

Matt. 21:22 *And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, **believing**, ye shall receive.*

Mark 11:24 *Therefore I say unto you, All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, **believe** that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.*

John 14:13 *And whatsoever ye shall **ask in my name**, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*

John 14:14 *If ye shall **ask anything in my name**, that will I do.*

John 15:16 *Ye did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father **in my name**, he may give it you.*

John 16:23 *And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall **ask the Father in my name**, he will give it you.*

John 16:24 *Hitherto have ye asked nothing **in my name: ask**, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.*

1John 5:14-15 *And this is the boldness which we have toward him, that, if we ask anything **according to his will**, he heareth us: and if we know that he heareth us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of him.*

James 1:5-8 *Now if anyone of you is lacking wisdom, let him be requesting it from God, Who is giving to all generously and is not reproaching, and it shall be given to him. Yet let him **be requesting in faith, doubting nothing**, for he who is doubting simulates a surge of the sea, driven by the wind and tossed. For let not that man be surmising that he shall be obtaining anything from the Lord - a double-souled man, turbulent in all his ways.*

James 5:16 *Confess therefore your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The supplication of a **righteous** man availeth much in its working.*

In reading these verses, we realise that agreeing, believing, asking in his name, asking according to His will, requesting in faith, being righteous, keeping His commandments and doing what is pleasing to Him, are all conditions to be fulfilled if we want answers to our prayer. But what do each of these conditions really mean to us? What does it mean to agree, to believe, to ask in His name etc. Do we let scripture define these terms for us or do we run with our own, often ill informed, understanding of these words.

At the very least, we have to conclude that, if all these verses have the same outcome

i.e. answered prayer, then we have to say there must be no real difference in meaning between each of these conditions. Agreeing, believing, being in his name, etc. must all mean the same thing in essence.

So, we must ask ourselves do we fulfil these conditions?

If we keep His commandments and do things pleasing in His sight, then we will be in agreement, we will be believing, we will be in His name, in essence we will be righteous.

However, there is one verse which sums it all up for us.

John 15:7 says: *...If ye **abide in me**, and **my words abide in you**, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you....* This is THE summation of all the above conditions and produces the same outcome as **1John 3:22** *...and whatsoever we ask we receive of him, **because we keep his commandments and do the things that are pleasing in his sight.***

We must come to be IN Christ and Christ must abide IN us, if we are to agree, if we are to believe, if we are to be in His name, if we are to be righteous. There is a distinction between *me being IN CHRIST* and *Christ being IN ME*. We can have one without the other, but we need to progress to having both. Scripture has much to say about each of these *states of being* and tells how they come to their fruition. Perhaps the following article will help the understanding of this.

<https://www.the-logos.net/resources/PDF's/The-Father-and-the-Son-An-Observation.pdf>

At the very least we realise there is much more to receiving answered prayer than we may have previously thought.

One more thing needs to be addressed. There happens to be just one thing in NT scripture we can ask of the Father (and He will answer) for which there are NO attached conditions. Simply asking the Father for this one thing assures us He WILL give it to us. We find this expressed in **Luke 11:13** *...If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give a holy spirit to them that ask him?* Ah! so you noticed that I have changed a single word here. All translations say, *...give THE Holy Spirit...* but that is NOT what the Greek says. Here is the Greek. **Luke 11:13** *ει ουν υμεις πονηροι υπαρχοντες οιδατε δοματα αγαθα διδοναι τοις τεκνοις υμων, ποσω μαλλον ο πατηρ ο εξ ουρανου δωσει **πνευμα αγιον** τοις αιτουσιν αυτον.* There is no definite article anywhere associated with the words **holy spirit** and so we should not add the definite article which changes the meaning completely. We already know there are a number of conditions for receiving **The Holy Spirit**, so this Luke verse can't be talking about The Holy Spirit. It literally says *...shall your heavenly Father give holy spirit to them that ask him?* This is not good English, so we add the **indefinite** article, a, as is done in many places in scripture where there is no **definite** article, so as to make it readable English. We can then see what this scripture is really saying to us: *...how much more shall your heavenly Father give **a holy spirit** to them that ask him?* The receipt of a holy spirit for ourselves is offered simply for the asking. No conditions attached. Why is this so? Simple because the price for it has already been paid for by the shedding of the blood of Christ. **Rom 8:10** tells us what happens when Christ comes in: *...And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; **but the spirit is life because of righteousness.*** This is telling us that when Christ's spirit is in us, our own spirit is given life, i.e. made holy, but do note that my body is still dead because of sin. We can receive Christ's spirit in us just for the asking. No conditions attached. This is what happens to us when we are "born from above".