

## *Believer's Prayers*

### *1 John 3:22-24*

I have no clue as to how many books have been written over the years that deal with exactly HOW we are to be successful in getting our prayers answered. I believe that I could safely say that an entire library could be amassed on this single subject. But when we think about the topic, why wouldn't there be numerous books written about answered prayer? If I have ever met anyone that prayed actively that DIDN'T want their prayers answered, I don't know who that person would be. We pray because we (others) have a need and we want that prayer answered so that the need disappears in the shadows of provision. Paul encouraged the Church at Philippi with one of the Bibles most famous verses, "*But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus*" (Philippians 4:19). So, it is completely safe to say that believers have a strong longing to have their prayers heard and answered. Here in John's letter he gives us a clue as to why prayers are answered in verse 22; 'because'. "Because" of what? It's because of love. Look back up quickly at verse 19 and we see the word 'and'. The word 'and' is a conjunction and conjunctions tie words, thoughts, sentences, or themes together. So, basically if we love like Jesus loved and we pray like Jesus prayed (Matthew 6:9-15) we can have a confident heart when we bow our knees to pray. There are three keys ("and", if you will) that unlock the doors of faith that allows our prayers to be heard by God and answered by grace.

### **I. KEY #1; OBEDIENCE** Vs. 22

(a) **Translated**: In John's words he says 'ask' and 'receive'. In translation that means that there is a reason why your prayers are heard and then answered and he offers two clicks to the tumblers on the lock on the doorknob of prayer.

1. The first clicks of the tumblers are turned 'because' "*we obey His commandments*". It has always been a mystery to me that this is a mystery to God's people; like it is some thought formed by an extraterrestrial being from Mars. This is a COMMON PRACTICE daily on this planet Earth; obedience.

a. Obedient Christians daily prepare themselves to be the recipients of the Father's blessings by knowing that no matter how painful it may be, we must obey because obedience is part of the key that unlocks answered prayer.

Illustration: Author Sheryl 'C. S.' Johnson shares this family lesson: "My son, Michael, was four years old the night I found him sobbing uncontrollably in the hallway. Concerned, I knelt next to him and drew him close.

" 'What's the matter, sweetheart? Are you hurt?' He shook his head and turned to me, but I was unprepared for his response.

" 'Daddy said a bad word to me!' he sobbed. I almost laughed out loud. I had known my husband 12 years and had rarely heard him raise his voice. But Michael had heard him say something, and I was curious enough to want to know what it was.

" 'Honey, what bad word did Daddy say?' And seeing a chance for sympathy, my sensitive four-year-old stopped crying and blurted out—'Obey!'

"I never think of that incident now without asking my Heavenly Father to keep me from believing, as my son did, that 'obey' is a bad word."

b. Obedient Christians give themselves wholly to obedience. It's hard for us to admit that sometimes God will hold back an answer to prayer because we are holding back a part of us from Him. Our minds, hearts, spirits and bodies must obey.

Illustration: When Presbyterian evangelist J. Wilbur Chapman was in London, he had an opportunity to meet General William Booth, who at that time was past 80 years of age. Dr. Chapman listened reverently as the old general spoke of the trials and the conflicts and the victories he had experienced.

The American evangelist then asked the general if he would disclose his secret for success. "He hesitated a second," Dr. Chapman said, "and I saw the tears come into his eyes and steal down his cheeks," and then he said, "I will tell you the secret. God has had all there was of me. There have been men with greater brains than I, men with greater opportunities; but from the day I got the poor of London on my heart, and a vision of what Jesus Christ could do with the poor of London, I made up my mind that He would have all of William

Booth there was. And if there is anything of power in the Salvation Army today, it is because God has all the adoration of my heart, all the power of my will, and all the influence of my life.”

Dr. Chapman said he went away from that meeting with General Booth knowing “that the greatness of a man’s power is the measure of his surrender.”

*1 Samuel 15:22 And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.*

2. The second click of the rolling tumblers sound when we “...(and) do those things that are pleasing in His sight.” Frankly we could stay here all night long! But for the sake of time, turn with me to Hebrews 11 and the great acts of faith that these godly examples set for us.

a. Every one of the people named in that chapter had their failures. Every one of them had done things that caused pain and shame. But their obedience led them to action and Paul tells us that their faithful actions pleased God (Hebrews 11:5d-6).

## II. KEY #2; BELIEF

Vs. 23

(a) **The Key to the Son**: In 1994, John Michael Montgomery sang a song called “*Rope the Moon*”. The song tells the story of the love that a daughter has for her dad and her belief that he could do anything; including roping the moon. That depth of love for a daughter is breathtaking, but the love for the One that made the moon and belief in Jesus is life changing!

*Romans 5:8-10 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. 10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*

1. Notice also what John says, “**AND** this is His commandment...”

a. ...**AND** (*that we should*) *love one another*. God's commandments can only be obeyed to the fulness if we abide by love. Belief is accomplished through love of God because of what Christ did for us on the cross. This concept is extremely simple so if it's ever complicated then know this; we made it complicated; not the Lord.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 *Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; <sup>5</sup> does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; <sup>6</sup> does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; <sup>7</sup> bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things...<sup>13</sup> And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.*

1) "...as *He gave us commandment.*" Having been in the military I quickly recognize an order. For the service member, orders in hand are to be obeyed expeditiously and completely. Our "Commander-in-Chief", Jesus Christ, has issued us an order to love one another and through that love we are to believe in Him through love no matter how bad things may seem on the surface.

### III. KEY #3; FELLOWSHIP

Vs. 24

(a) **A Review**: Let's go back to the beginning to chapter 1. (Read 1:5-7)

1. Dwelling in Him, He in us, Jesus dwelling in God and God dwelling with Him all point to the necessity of fellowship through the blood of Jesus Christ.

a. While it is true that one need not always feel 'spiritual' to have new life in Christ, our emotions do have a part in that process. Both Paul in Romans 8:16 and John here in verse 24 remind us that we can experience the inner peace and joy of the Holy Ghost in our hearts and spirits. Our love for one another and fellowship through the blood makes us a part of one another both physically (you're here watching tonight) and spiritually (you're in Him if you've been born again).

Romans 8:26-27 *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what [is] the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to [the will of] God.*

- Paul experienced this as he shared with believers scattered throughout the Empire
- John experienced this as he shared this with the Churches of Asia Minor
- They want us to experience the fellowship and joy of the Spirit because He abides in us today and we in Him!