

**THE PROMISE OF ANSWERED PRAYER**

1 John 5:14-15

**Intro:** These two verses which we come to today in our study of 1 John, have long been favorites of mine. I don't remember when I first committed them to memory, but it was many years ago. I love to read it. I love to repeat it and to think about it. And I love to talk about it as I have planned to do with you this morning.

All of us who know the Lord pray, but we are dependent upon the Bible to teach us to pray. Prayer means talking to God. It is our means of fellowship with God. I am sure that the Apostle John had prayer in mind when he wrote in the first chapter of this epistle, and the third verse, "our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. God does not speak audibly to us today, as He has spoken many times in the past, but He speaks to us through the Word of God, the Bible, and in a special way He speaks to us "in His Son," according to Hebrews 1:2. But it is as He speaks to us in His Word about what has been written about the Lord Jesus Christ, in both the Old Testament and in the New Testament.

The Bible contains many prayers of godly men and women. Prayer is so important that the Apostle Paul has told us in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 that we are to "pray without ceasing." In Ephesians 6 where the Apostle Paul was speaking about the spiritual warfare we are involved in with the unseen evil forces of the Devil, that, in addition to the whole armor of God, we are to "take the sword of the Spirit," which is the Word of God," but then he added, "Praying always with all prayer [all kinds of prayer] and supplication in the Spirit."

In the book of Acts in the Bible where we read about the early days of the Church, the number of Christians was multiplying so fast that the Apostles could not take care of the people properly, and so they asked the people of God to give them help by appointing men to help them. Then the Apostles said, "But we will give ourselves to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word."

As the few followers of the ascended Lord met in Jerusalem waiting for the promised gift of the Holy Spirit, we are told that they "all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication" (Acts 1:14).

There are many prayers of godly men and women recorded for us in the

Bible. The Psalms that the people sang were primarily prayers. There are different kinds of prayer. Some prayers are totally worship. Most prayers contain requests of various kinds. People confessed their sins to God in prayer, and they thanked the Lord for His many blessings in prayer. We are told that while the Lord was here on earth, His disciples asked the Lord Jesus to teach them to pray. See Luke 11:1. When you read the Gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John – you see how important prayer was to our Lord while He was here on earth. He often spent whole nights in prayer. And, as many before me have said, “If the Lord needed to pray as much as He did, how much more do we need to pray!

The Bible is the greatest book that was ever written on prayer. If you know the Lord as your Savior, you know that you can’t read your Bible very long before you find yourself talking to the Lord in prayer. The Bible and prayer go hand in hand, and are two identifying marks of a true child of God.

But this morning we want to talk about promises that God has given to us in His word that *He will answer, and that He does answer prayer.*

Our text in 1 John 5 gives us a good example of a promise of answered prayer. Now, if you are not familiar with the Bible, yes, it was produced by human beings, but those human beings, like the Apostle John, were led by the Spirit of God in what they wrote. And this is what makes the promises timeless. The Bible has been preserved for us even though there have been many times when men have attempted to destroy it. But they have failed. And no one will ever be able to destroy it. It is God’s Word and He is protecting it.

(Read 1 John 5:14-15.)

Now you should remember that we had another wonderful prayer promise given to us by the Apostle John in 1 John 3:22, (Read it with verse 21.)

Now I am quite sure that as the Apostle John wrote these words, the Holy Spirit caused him to remember what the Lord Jesus told His disciples about prayer the last time He was with them before His crucifixion. Because at that time the Lord gave some wonderful promises concerning prayer.

For example, look at John 15:7. And then look down to verse 16 for

another verse on prayer. In chapter 16, verses 23 and 24 the Lord was preparing them for the time when He would no longer be with them. Then they could ask the Father, God the Father, in the Name of the Lord Jesus.

These are just a few of the illustrations that we have in the Bible of not only encouragements to pray, *but assurances that prayer would be answered*. I believe that we all have some very important lessons to learn regarding prayer and their answers.

I am sure that most of us, probably all of us, would have to say that we have had more of our prayers not answered than have been answered. But if we have known the Lord for any time at all, we also have to say that God has answered many prayers for us. Often the Lord answers the desires of our hearts before we have expressed them in prayer to Him.

But what was the Apostle John teaching here in 1 John 5:14 and 15, and what help can we get from the verse in chapter 3, verse 23? I want all of us to see this morning that there is an inseparable relationship between prayer and the Word of God, and that our relationship with the Word is not just one of knowledge, but of obedience. (Repeat.)

Now remember what I have emphasized throughout our study regarding the Apostle John. He was writing under the same guidance by the Holy Spirit that Moses wrote, or that David wrote, or that Peter wrote, or that Paul wrote, or that any of the other writers of the books of the Bible have written, but we have the advantage of all of the years of his life when the truth of the Word was confirmed to him again and again in his own walk with the Lord.

Notice in 1 John 5:14 the words “confidence that we have in Him.” What does the word “confidence” mean? It is a word which means assurance, but it means out-spoken frankness. It is to the point of being blunt. It is a point on which the Lord wants us to be perfectly clear, which would also imply that this is an extremely important point that he was making.

What was the point that the Apostle John was making, a point that the Spirit of God was making through him? It was that “if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us.” The Lord’s ear is open when we come to Him recognizing the importance of His will. What we ask is usually our will, but is it God’s will?

Well, this leads us to ask, Where are we going to find God's will? There is one place where God has made clear what His will is, and that is in His Word.

So to be people who know the will of the Lord, we must be people who seek to be as thoroughly acquainted with the truth of God's Word as we can. Prayer and the Word go together.

But we don't read and study the Word just so we can pray. We read and study the Word so that we can know the truth, and see how God worked and guided and provided for His people in past days.

Reading the Word also affects us; it changes us. The other day I read I think it was three chapters in Proverbs, and Solomon emphasized many things that apply to the kind of people we need to be. Two things stood out in my reading that day. One was that the Lord wants us to be a humble people, and He wants us to be righteous. Now there many other things in those chapters, but on that particular day, what impressed me was the need to be humble and to be righteous. The Word not only informs us, but it transforms us – and it all takes time.

So reading the Word teaches us what the will of God is concerning what the Lord wants me to be as well as what is right for me to do, or not do!

What I think that the Apostle John was saying here is that I really can't ask according to the will of God unless I am seeking to live according to His will, to please Him in all things and in my relationship with all people.

Now let us look over to 1 John 3:22 to see if we can find some confirmation of this point regarding the will of God. What did John say in that verse that we can say has to do with the will of God. Let's read the verse again. But I want to point out to you that in verse 21 the Apostle John used the same word for "confidence" that he used in our text in 1 John 5:14.

But in verse 22 what is the condition for answered prayer? "Because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His [God's] sight." Both "keep" and "do" are expressed in a tense to indicate that they are not just to be done when I pray, but that this is the way that we are to live.

Let me express a point here which I believe the Apostle John was making many years ago when he wrote this epistle. I think that in both of these verses he was saying that the main reason we don't see more answers to our prayers is because we are not careful in making sure that day by day we are seeking to please God.

So we may be faithful in reading our Bibles in the morning, and then spending time in prayer, but how would we grade ourselves in the light of the way we live. Do we seek to please the Lord first? Am I praying for guidance when I know that there are things in my life that are not pleasing to God. Dr. Charles Fuller of the Old Fashioned Revival Hour used to talk about "being on praying ground." Dear old Dr. T.J. Bach, who preferred being called "Brother Bach" instead of "Dr. Bach," couldn't make it one year to Multnomah's missionary conference, but he sent word by another missionary to tell the faculty and students that "Brother Bach was on the in's with God, and on the out's with no man." And you could tell it when he prayed.

Men, have you tried to have fellowship with the Lord when you were on the out's with your wife? Or wives, let me ask you the same question about you and the Lord when things are not right in your heart toward your husband. And young people, and even children, don't talk about fellowship with the Lord when you are mad at your parents.

In verse 23 of 1 John 3 the Apostle John mentioned two commandments for us to check ourselves by. (Read 1 John 3:23.)

Oh, how careful we need to be about our hearts, even our thought about other people. What right do we have to ask the Lord to do something for us when we are not doing what we know would be pleasing to the Lord.

There is not a word in the Bible for every situation we face, or every need which we have, or which someone else has, but if we are faithfully reading the Word, and applying it to our lives, then when we need to know the will of God, the Spirit of God in His own way will make God's will clear to us, and answer our prayers.

Let me say again that probably the reason that we don't see more answers to our prayers, is not because we are asking the wrong things, but because there are things in our lives that are not pleasing to the Lord. I am not saying that we have to be perfect. We all fail, and have to go to the Lord

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confessing our sin, or sins, when we fail. But we know if our main purpose in life is to please the Lord by being obedient to His Word. That is what the Lord wants, and that is the way to have true fellowship with the Lord, and to see more answers to our prayers. God does not always answer when we pray. We may have to wait long. But being in God's will in our hearts, we confidently await the Lord's time, knowing that He will be faithful.

What we want to know according to 1 John 5;15 is that God has heard us, because we know that if He hears us, that we have the petitions that we desired of Him. When our hearts are right, then we pray the prayer that God hears.