



7 Conditions to Answered Prayer

Our Most Basic Need

Everywhere we see LIFE, MOTION, REALITY! Here it is, close and real -- and LIVING! And most wonderful of all is your own self -- the marvelous mechanism of your body, and still more wonderful, your mind -- performing all its functions. And about you is EVERY NEED to keep you fed, breathing and living.

But there are many OTHER things you need! How about the need of wisdom and guidance when important decisions which may alter your whole life are at stake? How about needing a Great Power that can, and will if you are in contact and ask it, give you favor in the eyes of another when disfavor could cause you great trouble? How about the need of an all-powerful Friend to deliver you from real or threatened calamity or loss? How about One to turn to when you are about to lose a loved one, or in time of grief? How about the need of One who is both able and willing to prosper you, cause things to turn out right for you, guide you and protect you through life? How about the NEED of One who has inherent immortality and is able and willing to impart ETERNAL LIFE to you as His gift?

Yes, there are OTHER things you NEED! You stand in greater NEED than you probably ever stopped to realize! And the One who sends the rain -- AND the sunshine -- upon the just and unjust alike -- who provides food, and air, and other basic necessities for all, is more REAL than what He provides -- and JUST AS ABLE AND WILLING to establish PERSONAL CONTACT and continuously supply your EVERY OTHER NEED as well -- including deliverance from every trouble, wisdom, guidance, faith in place of worry, assurance in place of doubt, security in place of uncertainty, favor in the sight of others, healing when sick -- all these and countless other needs HE STANDS COMMITTED TO SUPPLY, because HE HAS PROMISED -- upon condition you become His, establish and maintain contact, trust Him and obey Him!

Why Does God Seem So Unreal?

God is more REAL than you or I -- or any of the things about us. Why then, does He seem so far away, until it seems He has faded in the distance? Why does He seem mysterious and unreal? Why do the objects with which you come in daily contact, your friends, your pleasures, seem more real -- when actually they are less so?

You may say, "Because I can SEE, FEEL, and HEAR these things or people." But that is not really the reason at all. You don't see the air you breathe, but it seems very REAL to you. You cannot see, or hear, or feel the power of gravity, yet it seems very REAL to you, and you know that if you slip it will pull you down in a fall that might hurt you.

Perhaps you say, well, these things are real to me because they are close to me. But that is not the reason. GOD is as close as any of these -- He, too, is REAL, and He is CLOSE! Yet He seems unreal and far away! Now let's consider the REAL REASON. If you are away from a childhood chum for 35 or 40 years, never hear from or about that person in all that time are totally out of contact with him -- he finally seems like a faint, dim, far-off dream or figment of the imagination. He doesn't seem REAL any more.

But, if there is another childhood chum you also have not seen in the same 35 or 40 years, but with whom you have kept constantly in touch all these years -- constantly corresponded, even talked over long distance telephone frequently, heard about from mutual friends who have been WITH this old chum -- then that friend, even though you have not seen him, will still seem REAL, and CLOSE.

God seems unreal and far away ONLY TO THOSE WHO HAVE NOT ESTABLISHED, AND ARE NOT ACTIVELY MAINTAINING CLOSE PERSONAL CONTACT!

It is not a matter of distance or visibility -- it is a matter of CONTACT. Even though you read the Bible, and pray -- if you have not established personal CONTACT with God, you just won't understand much of the Bible or be much interested in it, and your prayers will not seem to go as high as the ceiling! You can't KEEP UP a contact which has never yet been ESTABLISHED!

Finding God

If you WANT to find God -- be a Christian -- YOU CAN -- and here's how: First, you'll have to REPENT -- TURN FROM the old life of sinning, and surrender your SELF wholly to God -- give your life to Him, to serve Him and to live by His perfect laws and right ways that will bring you only blessings. You'll have to be IN EARNEST, for no one can deceive God. Then, ACCEPT JESUS CHRIST as your personal Saviour. Don't put it off. Don't say, "I don't know how," but DO IT NOW! Take the "bull by the horns" and DO IT -- you know you ought to, so exercise your WILL and DO IT! Just go to a room ALONE -- close the door -- and with no one else around, except just you and God alone -- GIVE YOURSELF TO HIM, ask Him to FORGIVE all your past sins -- confess them to Him.

Everything may be HARD, until you ADMIT YOUR SINS -- but the minute you acknowledge them, the unseen power that has caused you to hesitate, and put it off, and has made it seem so difficult (the power of the devil), will let loose, and YOU'LL BE FREE -- you'll know you are now GOD'S -- the contact will be ESTABLISHED! You can talk to Him, and HE WILL HEAR! You can pour out your heart to Him, and He will LISTEN -- and comfort, and come close and give you what you NEED.

Jesus Christ came into this world and died to reconcile YOU to God the Father -- to join you to Him -- to ESTABLISH CONTACT for you!

Accept this, and know the GREAT PEACE that will come over your soul! Then you must be baptized -- not into any religious denomination or organization, but into CHRIST JESUS.

Then God PROMISES to put His spirit in you -- to give you, and radiate from you, a LOVE you never had, a new FAITH, PATIENCE, UNDERSTANDING. Through His Spirit you will be given power for self-mastery. Power to UNDERSTAND the Bible.

What Is Answered Prayer?

Is prayer only a religious "peace of mind" pill to make one FEEL BETTER? Not at all! Real answered prayer is not "kidding" yourself into believing that God has answered because you can think "positive" thoughts. Real answered prayer is NOT the mere "working out" of events by themselves. Answered prayer is NOT psychologically "adjusting" YOURSELF INTO BELIEVING your prayer was answered if your prayer was never HEARD in the first places!

Real ANSWERED PRAYER is a divine, supernatural and completely MIRACULOUS intervention -- a DIRECT ANSWER from Almighty God Himself! It is the result of being OBEDIENT to God's laws, asking ACCORDING TO HIS WILL and then BELIEVING IN FAITH until the answer comes! IT IS RELYING ON THE ALMIGHTY GOD HIMSELF!

Many of you have longed for, but never yet experienced this kind of prayerful contact with God. And because you haven't, you don't really KNOW GOD EXISTS. Many employ ceremonial prayers, chants and responsive readings in church services. But when they are at home ALONE they feel unable to communicate with their Creator --- the Eternal INVISIBLE God. They are used to PEOPLE, PICTURES, CANDLES and STATUES being around them when they pray. The invisible God seems far off -- UNREAL.

God heard the fervent, moving, heartfelt prayers of Abraham, Moses and Elijah. He heard the prayers of David, Samuel and Hezekiah. He heard the prayers of Jesus, the apostles and ALL His servants.

But does God similarly answer YOUR PRAYERS? Prayer can change the course of HISTORY. It can effect MIRACLES! But so often it doesn't! WHY?

What about YOUR prayers -- IF YOU pray at all? The prayers of most people lack real power and effectiveness for a very simple reason they really DON'T KNOW HOW TO PRAY! The Bible reveals SEVEN BASIC CONDITIONS which you should fulfil to be certain of ANSWERED PRAYERS. Let's notice what they are.

7 Conditions to answered prayer

(1) Know God's Will

1. Does the apostle James show that the children of this world -- fighting and warring as they do -- FAIL to receive help because they often neglect to ASK for God's help? James 4:1-2. And when they DO ask, is it only for their own SELFISH ends? Verse 3.

COMMENT: To ask God for something for purely SELFISH reasons -- to consume it on our own desires -- is to "ask amiss." Some have the well-known prayer "disease" called the "GIMMEES"! This is the wrong attitude to have in prayer, and you can expect no answer from God to such a prayer.

2. To get answers to our prayers, what EXAMPLE did Jesus set that we should follow? John 5:30, last part. Are we to UNDERSTAND the WILL of God? Eph. 5:17. How can we get to KNOW God's will? II Tim. 2:15. COMMENT: BY STUDYING God's will, which is revealed in the Bible, you will begin to think more as God thinks. You will come to KNOW what God's will is in every circumstance.

If you believe and know that God is LOVE, that His will is for OUR GOOD, then you will want to pray according to God's WILL.

You need not always have a specific promise in the Bible to know that something is God's will. Through experience and God's guidance, you will learn how to apply the PRINCIPLES of God's revealed will to any situation which may arise.

3. If we pray according to GOD'S will, can we KNOW that God will answer our prayers? I John 5:14-15. COMMENT: Asking according to God's will is the overall FUNDAMENTAL CONDITION to answered prayer. All other conditions could be grouped under this one because they are the SPECIFIC POINTS of GOD'S WILL in regard to prayer. The following six, together with and magnifying this first condition, will insure ANSWERED prayers!

(2) Believe God

Most people do not realize that a LACK OF FAITH is simply DISBELIEF that God will keep His promises or back up His Word. Have you ever thought of it that way?

1. If we DOUBT any of God's many promises to do certain things for us, if we will just ASK Him, are we actually making a LIAR out of God? I John 5:10. COMMENT: Real faith, is not an "emotional feeling" that you generate by thinking certain thoughts over and over. You don't "talk yourself into," or "think yourself into" real, believing faith. Godly faith is simply your willingness -- through the help of God's Holy Spirit -- to quietly and patiently TRUST God to perform His Word. Abraham had that kind of faith.

2. What did the apostle Paul say about Abraham and the faith he had in God? Rom. 4:20-21. COMMENT: Abraham relied COMPLETELY on God to perform His promises. Do you? If you lack real FAITH, ask God to give it to you. For as you know, faith is one of the "FRUITS" OF God's Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22).

3. Is faith an absolute prerequisite to receiving answers to our prayers? James 1:5:7.

COMMENT: A man who **WAVERS** will not receive an answer to his prayer. "For let not **THAT** man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord" (verse 7).

God has made hundreds of promises in His Word which we can claim. Do you **COMPLETELY TRUST** God to keep His promises, regardless of what they may be, or do you **DOUBT** God's ability to perform His promises, and thereby label God a **LIAR**?

4. Are we also told that faith alone -- without any works, or actions, on **OUR PART** -- **IS** worthless -- "**DEAD**"? James 2:20.

COMMENT: To have answered prayers, you must have **FAITH**. But you must also **ACT** on that faith by **OBEYING** God! Your faith must be **ACTIVE, LIVING FAITH!**

(3) Obey God

Another condition of answered prayer is one which is neglected and violated consistently by most professing "Christians." This hinges directly on the before-mentioned fact that very few people today really **KNOW** the true God.

People do not look to God as the **AUTHORITY** in their lives. Instead, they make a "god" out of this world's society and its customs, traditions and religious practices.

1. Does it really make a difference **WHO** or **WHAT** we serve and obey? Rom. 6:16.

COMMENT: If you obey the ways of sin practiced in this world, you are putting this society and its pagan customs **IN PLACE OF** the **TRUE** God! But God wants more than "lip service." He requires actual **OBEDIENCE!**

2. What does God label the person who says he "knows God," and yet does NOT KEEP His commandments? I John 2:4.

COMMENT: If you haven't learned to fear the true God and accept His Word as the AUTHORITY in your life, then you don't even really KNOW God!

3. Can those who PERSISTENTLY refuse to keep God's commandments really expect Him to answer their prayers? I Pet. 3:12. What is "doing evil" -- what is SIN? I John 3:4. Does sin CUT YOU OFF from God? Isa. 59:1-2.

COMMENT: Here is one of the major reasons why so many prayers are NOT answered. God will not listen to a person who rebels and DISOBEYS His Word! God will not listen to the prayers of someone CONTINUALLY LIVING IN SIN!

4. But does God promise to HEAR the prayers of one who searches his own life, PUTS AWAY SIN, and turns to God in heartfelt REPENTANCE and OBEDIENCE? John 9:31 and Daniel 10:12.

COMMENT: First, there must be REPENTANCE! Sin must be put away. Idols -- anything which separates us from God, anything we tend to put BEFORE God -- must be crushed, absolutely SHATTERED!

Are you truly SEEKING God's way? Are you daily repenting of SIN, and putting it out of your life? Have you really surrendered your life and whole being to God?

And yet, does God SOMETIMES even hear the earnest prayers of the unconverted? Yes, in certain instances He does. God Himself has blinded the eyes of the many at this time (Rom. 11:7-8). It is HIS RESPONSIBILITY that they don't know the truth yet. So God does sometimes hear and answer the prayers of those who, in ignorance of the full intent of His law, are not conscious of their sins, but OBEY HIM AS FAR AS THEY KNOW.

The lepers and cripples who came to Jesus to be healed didn't know all of God's truth. But they did realize that Jesus was sent from God and could heal. And **THEY ACTED ON WHAT THEY KNEW.**

So it is a matter of your **HEART** or **ATTITUDE**. If you come to God in a humble, repentant spirit and are determined to obey **HIM TO THE BEST OF YOUR KNOWLEDGE AND ABILITY**, He will hear your prayers! But this is **NO EXCUSE** for anyone who **KNOWS** the truth to **DISOBEY** God!

5. Can true Christians have a special confidence that God **WILL ANSWER** their prayers **IF** they are **OBEDIENT**? I John 3:22.

(4) Fear and Humility

Modern man has a cocksure, self-sufficient attitude and thinks he can get along fine without God. He neither fears God nor respects God's Word as the **AUTHORITY** in his life. He is vain, egotistical, self-important. Is it any wonder that God fails to answer the prayers of such men?

1. What is the **FIRST** prerequisite to a knowledge of God? Ps.111:10 and 112:1.

COMMENT: We need to **FEAR** God, realizing that our lives are in His hands. We must be humble, realizing that the life God gave us is but "a vapor" (James 4:14). Carnal man needs to realize that he is only dust and shall return to dust unless and until he receives the Spirit of God, which is the begetting of eternal life.

Eternal life is a **GIFT** from God (Rom. 6:23), not something we already have. We should also realize that any talents we may have are ours **BECAUSE GOD GAVE THEM TO US!**

When we can approach our Creator in **THAT ATTITUDE** --respecting His power and authority over our lives -- then He will hear our prayers.

2. When Christ was a fleshly, mortal man, did He FEAR God? Heb. 5:7. COMMENT: When we fully realize our own utter helplessness and complete dependence upon God, then we will cry out to God as Jesus did.

3. What did Peter say we should be clothed with? I Peter 5:5-6. Did the SELF-RIGHTEOUS Pharisee of Luke 18:10-12 pray with humility? How did the publican pray? Verse 13. WHO was heard of God? Verse 14. COMMENT: The Pharisee's prayer did not ascend to God. He was merely praying "with himself." God will not hear haughty, proud, SELF-RIGHTEOUS prayers! God does not answer if you pray in a conceited, proud, "holier-than-thou" attitude!

Rather, when we approach God's throne, we must be conscious of our own utter UNworthiness -- we must enter God's presence with an attitude of HUMILITY! God HEARD the prayer of the publican who would not even so much as lift his eyes to heaven; but the prayer of the strutting Pharisee went unheeded.

(5) Be Fervent

It is common today for parents to teach their children memorized prayers. The father often mumbles a hurried, routine prayer of thanks at the dinner table. The minister either reads or recites from memory an eloquent prayer which SOUNDS very impressive.

But is God impressed?

The "fruits" show that God rarely hears such prayers, for they are usually NOT ANSWERED.

1. Does God reveal HIS ATTITUDE toward such prayers? Hosea 7:13-14. COMMENT: Notice the rendering of these verses in the Moffatt translation, "though it was I who redeemed them, they have lied to me; THEY NEVER PUT THEIR HEART INTO THEIR PRAYERS."

They don't "cry out" to God with their WHOLE BEING as the ancient prophets did -- and as Christ did when He prayed.

2. How fervent was Jesus in His prayers? Heb. 5:7.

COMMENT: When Jesus Christ prayed to the Father, He MEANT it! He did not approach God merely to "pass the time." His prayers had deep MEANING. He FELT them. He was deeply MOVED on many occasions when He communed with God. He was EMOTIONALLY affected by the urgency of the situation.

3. How fervently and earnestly did Christ pray on the evening before His crucifixion? Luke 22:44.

COMMENT: Jesus needed strength from God for the coming ordeal. He needed to get really close to God. He knelt down and began to pray that GOD'S will, not His own, would be done.

Christ prayed FERVENTLY! He prayed EARNESTLY -- with all His heart! Are your prayers meaningful -- to you? If not, then how do you expect them to be moving to God?

David was another who was often moved deeply when He prayed to God. Many of the Psalms reveal his depth of emotion and deep feeling. You ought to study them.

4. What are some examples of David's heartfelt, sincere prayers to God? Ps. 4:1 and 6:2-4. Was David often moved to TEARS when he cried out to God in fervent prayer? Verse 6.

COMMENT: Have YOU ever prayed with such depth of emotion and feeling? Have you ever prayed with such a sense of URGENCY?

Have you ever really WHOLEHEARTEDLY called upon God? This kind of prayer achieves real RESULTS! This is the kind of prayer which is WELL-PLEASING in God's sight. God is deeply moved by such earnest, sincere HEARTFELT prayer!

5. What does God say to those who have never prayed this way? Joel 2:12-13.

COMMENT: In James 5:16, we read, "the effectual FERVENT prayer of a RIGHTEOUS man vilest much." We have to pray FERVENTLY, EARNESTLY, ZEALOUSLY, if we expect God to hear. Put your WHOLE HEART into your prayers and see the amazing results!

(6) Be Persistent

Some, if God doesn't answer right away, begin to lose faith and GIVE UP praying. They forget that, although God promises to answer when we ask according to His will, He NOWHERE promises to answer RIGHT AWAY! God does not tell us exactly HOW or precisely WHEN the answer will come.

1. Is this why Jesus gave the parable of the importunate widow? Luke 18:1.

COMMENT: The Goodspeed translation correctly renders the words "not to faint" as "NOT GIVE UP"!

Jesus gave this parable to show that even an unrighteous judge would finally hear the pleas of a widow who KEPT COMING TO HIM. So we should KEEP PRAYING to God, EVEN THOUGH HE SOMETIMES DOESN'T ANSWER RIGHT AWAY.

2. Is God building PATIENT FAITH into our characters if we have to wait on Him to answer a prayer? Jas. 1:3-4.

COMMENT: WAITING on God, in PATIENT faith, seems to be one of the hardest things for humans to do!

How many of us are willing to be PERSISTENT in prayer, until God answers? How many are willing to WAIT on God to send the answer? How many are PATIENT? If God doesn't answer your prayers immediately, exercise patience and KEEP PRAYING until He does answer. But don't NAG at God! He has supreme wisdom to know WHEN and HOW would be best to answer your prayers.

7) Use Christ's Name

The seventh condition of answered prayer is the correct use of Christ's NAME. This is a greatly misunderstood subject, and the use of Christ's name is often abused.

1. After Jesus had been with His disciples for over three years, and had taught them GOD'S WILL and how to obey it, what did He instruct them concerning the use of His name in their prayers? John 16:23-24. COMMENT: These verses give us the privilege of employing Christ's name -- asking by His AUTHORITY -- when we pray to God the Father. But most people misunderstand HOW we can ask "in Jesus' name."

But just rattling off words "in Jesus' name" to a prayer that is CONTRARY to God's will and Christ's will is of NO AVAIL WHATSOEVER! YOU need to STUDY Christ's Word to know more about the principles of His will so you may ask BY HIS AUTHORITY.

2. Do those who ABIDE in Christ have the privilege of praying in Christ's name? John 15:7. How does one ABIDE in Christ? Rom. 8:9. And does God give His Holy Spirit only to them that OBEY Him? Acts 5:32. COMMENT: Yes, Jesus WORDS must abide in you. You must ask according to HIS WILL. And you must abide in Him -- BELONG TO HIM by having His Holy Spirit dwell within you! So to pray "in Jesus' name," you must at the same time be YIELDING to His will to the best of your knowledge. Praying in Jesus' name is a great privilege. Use Jesus' name CORRECTLY, and your prayers will be ANSWERED because of the AUTHORITY conferred through Him!

3. Does praying "in Jesus' name," which means BY HIS AUTHORITY, also mean that you are praying THROUGH Him as your High Priest? Heb. 4:14-16.

COMMENT: Jesus Christ -- our "High Priest -- was tempted in all points like we are. He understands our weaknesses.

It is His revealed will to help us in time of need and to help us live a more abundant life (John 10:10).

Praying in Jesus' name is a great privilege. Use Jesus' name CORRECTLY, and your prayers will be ANSWERED because of the AUTHORITY conferred through Him!

If you faithfully conform to these seven CONDITIONS OF ANSWERED PRAYER with God's help, you may then have ABSOLUTE CONFIDENCE that God will hear and answer your prayers. You will be changing, growing closer to God each day. You will be actively seeking and doing His will.

Results Will Follow

This INTIMATE CONTACT with the Creator of Heaven and Earth will give you a peace of mind and quiet confidence that NOTHING can destroy. But your confidence will not be in SELF, but in the greatest POWER there is! In EVERY trial and problem, you have the right to call on the Supreme Power of the universe -- the active, living God who reveals Himself in the Bible.

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