

THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

James 5:13
Lesson #24
Pray for What?
08/15/2021

Commonly asked questions about prayer

How can I know God's will and what to pray for?

How can I have more faith in prayer?



Why doesn't God seem to answer my prayers?

1

James Kingdom Living in a Broken World

This is what we should know

Christians are chosen aliens in a broken world.
1:1-18

Transition verse

James 1:19

This is what we should do

"quick to hear"
"Listen up"
1:19-2:13

"slow to speak"
"Shut up"
2:14-3:12

"slow to anger"
"Cool it"
3:13-5:20



How are we to respond to suffering? "Slow to anger" and WHAT?

2

James 5:13

"Is anyone among you **suffering**? Then he must pray.

- Pray

Is anyone **cheerful**? He is to sing praises."

- Sing psalms

"14 Is anyone among you **sick**? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord;"

- Get help

3

In prayer we give attention to:

- **style** (Lord's Prayer, tongues, posture, etc.),
- **time** (Meals, Bedtime, Always, etc.),
- **object** (Father, Son, H.S, Mary, saints),
- **heart** (without doubt, passion, etc.)

... but too little critical attention to:



what we ask of God?

4

1 John 5

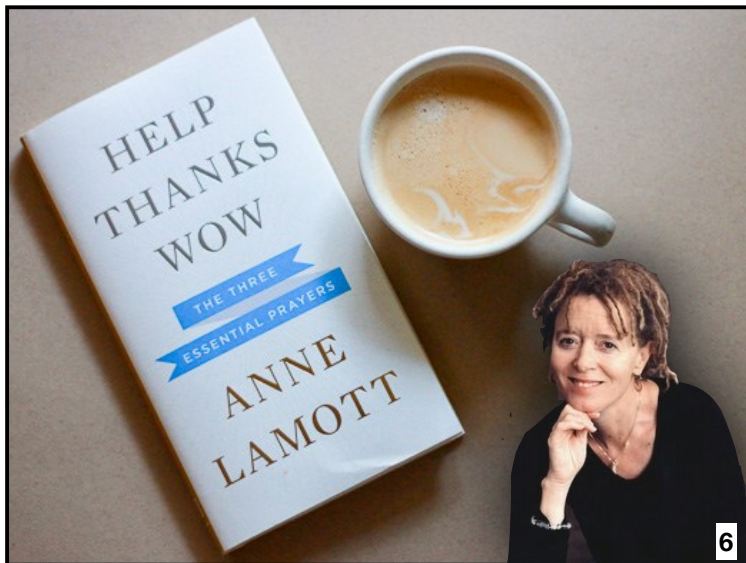
"14 And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask **anything according to His will**, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him."

Does "His will" refer to

- what we ask for?
- the way we pray?



5



“Help”

Our prayers usually start with petition to remove the cause of **fears, pain, or disappointment.**

1 Peter 5:7

“casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.”



7

James 4:3

“You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may **spend it on your pleasures.**”



There are conditions **on and beyond** “our will”.

8

Conditions for answered prayer

“According to His will” 1 Jn.5:14
 “if my words remain in you” Jn.15:7
 “in the name of Jesus” Jn.14:13
 “if we abide in Jesus” Jn.15:7
 “in the Spirit” Eph.6:18
 “obey his commandments” 1 Jn.3:22
 “believing” Mk.11:24
 “right motives” Jas.4:3

• Be in **sync** with kingdom values.

9

Our petitions are not only to reflect our heart

**but also
God’s heart.**

10

Luke 22:42

“Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from me; yet not My will, but Yours be done.”

Even Jesus needed to submit his will to that of the Father.



11

“The difference between you and God is that God never thinks He is you.”

Anne Lamott



12

Romans 8

“26 And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for **we do not know how to pray as we should**, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; 27 and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints **according to the will of God.**”

Do we realize that
“**the mind of the Spirit**”
may differ from our mind?

13

James **begins** his letter addressing prayer about wisdom and **ends** his letter with prayer about suffering.

James 1:5

“But if any of you lacks **wisdom**, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given him.”

James 4

“You ask and do to receive, because you ask with wrong **motives**, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.”

“Is anyone among you suffering? Then he must pray.”

(But what for?)

14

Paul's emphasis on prayer

Text	Thanks	Wisdom	Walk	Faith	Love	EXTERNAL Circumstances
1 Thess.3						?
2 Thess.1						
Phil.1						
Eph.1						
Eph.3						
Eph.6						
Col.1						

15

- Paul models prayer for us three times in Ephesians.

Our wealth in Christ

ch. 1-3

Our walk in Christ

ch. 4-6

- Paul **begins** the letter with two prayers for the brethren and **ends** his letter exhorting them to pray for one another's faithfulness and his courage in ministry.

16

As a Berean, look for Biblical emphasis & context as well as details.

- Note what the Apostles' teachings and prayers **do not emphasize** -
 - World evangelism
 - Secular social reform
 - Removal of hostile circumstances
 - Personal comfort

17

Paul's Prayer List?



18

His concern is that Christians be fully aware of **their hope, inheritance, and power.**

Ephesians 1

“18 I pray that the **eyes of your heart may be enlightened**, so that you may know what is the **hope** of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His **inheritance** in the saints, 19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His **power** toward us who believe. . . .”

19

His concern is that Christians be fully aware of **God's love and their identity & community.**

Ephesians 3

“14 For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be **strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man**; 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in **love**, 18 may be able to **comprehend** with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be **filled up to all the fulness of God.**”

20

His concern is that Christians be fully aware of **God's power in walking the Way of the Cross.**

Ephesians 6

“18 With all prayer and petition pray at all times **in the Spirit**, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, 19 and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to **make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel**, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”

21

Ephesians

Our wealth in Christ

ch. 1-3

Our walk in Christ

ch. 4-6

He is first concerned that we see our

He is then concerned that we see our

He is finally concerned that we encourage

INHERITANCE and HOPE.

FAMILY and LOVE.

PERSEVERANCE and WITNESS.

He prays that we will “get it”

He prays that we will “give it”

22

“PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT”

Paul's “Spirit Sensitive” Prayer List

- Is concerned that disciples are enlightened in **heavenly hope.**
- Is concerned that disciples are grounded in **loving relationships.**
- Is concerned that disciples are **persevering in life's struggles.**
- Is concerned that disciples are **courageous in witness.**

23

Note what is not on Paul's prayer list

- Hopes that are **centered in this life**.
- Agendas that are **"self centered"**.
- Escape from **physical suffering**.
- Escape from **spiritual struggle**.



24

How to pray for others when you don't know what to "petition God for".

- That they would **see** the inheritance, hope, and power they have in Christ.
- That they would **know** and display God's love for His family.
- That they would **persevere** through the trials of life.
- That they would be a **faithful** ambassador for Christ.
- That you might **be a part** of God's answer to your prayers for them.

25

Two things that have changed in my walk with God as I have grown older.

My expectations -

- from my priorities to God's priorities.
- from my "understanding and control of" to my "response to" life's mysteries.

My petitions -

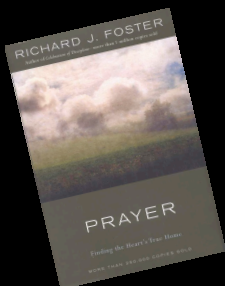
- from "more self discipline" to "more faith",
- from changing outer circumstances and others to changing my inner heart,
- from control to response.

26

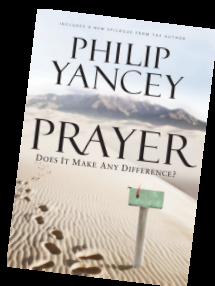
What's on our Prayer List?



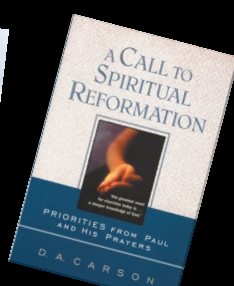
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Richard Foster



Philip Yancey



D.A. Carson

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