

GETTING PRAYERS ANSWERED



Why do some people get their prayers answered—and I don't? Have you ever wondered that? Have you ever wished that you could have a closer touch with God? When you have a problem, you may talk with some special Christian about it. "Pray for me," you ask. If anyone can get an answer from God, you figure that person can.

But there's no reason why all Christians can't have the power with God that the Scriptures promise. For the Lord certainly loves every one of His children for whom He paid the supreme sacrifice. If you are His child through faith in Christ, that includes you.

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What conditions does God's Word set down for answered prayer? Let's look at them.

REPENTANCE IS NECESSARY.

Second Chronicles 7:14 says, "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land."

Obviously, sin keeps prayers from getting answered. But did you know that bitterness, resentment, bad temper, anger, and harsh words can come between us and God? The Bible says such things grieve the Holy Spirit. How can we make things right? First John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." When we are cleansed, we can look for answered prayers.

RIGHTEOUSNESS IS NECESSARY.

James 5:16-b says, "The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." Following this statement, God gave us an example of Elijah, whose prayer was answered. Elijah prayed it wouldn't rain, and it didn't rain for over three years! When he prayed for rain, down it came.

Righteousness refers to a daily, steady walk with the Lord. We try not to let anything come between us and Him. God had first place in Elijah's heart, as He probably does in the hearts of those we ask for prayer. In their lives we see Christ; when others see Him in us, they'll be asking us for prayer.

OBEDIENCE IS NECESSARY.

We read in First John 3:22, "...And [we] receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him."

Obedience is the trademark of a righteous person. And obedience entails more than just conforming to a nice little set of cut-and-dried rules. It is part of being turned into the Holy Spirit. That's where doing "those things that are pleasing in his sight" comes in.

God's two great commandments call for love, and they cover every relationship and every circumstance: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind....Love your neighbour as yourself" (Matthew 22:37-39).

God's command also lie in principles His Word sets forth, such as "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Obedience to God isn't hard when we truly love Him and others.

SINCERITY IS NECESSARY.

Jeremiah 29:13 says, "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."

Agreement is helpful.

Jesus said, "Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven."

PERSISTENCE IS HELPFUL.

Ephesians 6:18 says, "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests". With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all saints.

FAITH IS NECESSARY.

Hebrews 11:6 says, "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."

When I'm praying, I often claim the promise that Jesus gave His followers: "Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours" (Mark 11:24).

Do you really believe God can work in the lives of unsaved and backslidden loved one's life in answer to your prayers? Do you believe God can help you work out your problems, help you get a job, pays the bills, get along with cantankerous relatives, co-workers, or neighbours?

Then stand back and watch God work as you pray! It will thrill you!

And here's a great promise you might like to memorize: "Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD, and he will do this" (Psalm 37:4-5).