

# Praying With Confidence And Compassion

**1 John 5:14-17**

**Study #18**

**(Not entirely original with me)**

## **INTRODUCTION:**

Every Christian prays but does every Christian pray with confidence that his/her prayer will be heard and answered? Does every Christian pray with compassion or is the prayer just something repeated from memory? Why do Christians pray? What kind of results come from most prayers? Does God hear? What does it take to get God to hear one's prayer? How does one pray and get the results asked for?

## **I. PRAYING WITH CONFIDENCE (14-15)**

### **A. REQUIRES ASKING ACCORDING TO GOD'S WILL...**

1. This is the point emphasized in **1 Jn 5:14-15**
2. Confidence in prayer is not based upon some assumption that we have "carte blanche" in regards to prayer...
  - a. Some may improperly conclude that we do from Jesus' statements in **Jn 14:13-14**
  - b. But even Jesus' own example illustrates that answer to prayer depends upon whether or not it is in harmony with God's will - e.g., **Mt 26:39,42**
  - c. Paul learned this when he prayed about his "thorn in the flesh" - cf. **2 Co 12:7-9**
3. However, the more we learn God's revealed will (i.e., the Word of God)...
  - a. The more likely we will pray according to His will
  - b. The greater confidence we can have that our prayers will be answered accordingly

### **B. REQUIRES KEEPING GOD'S COMMANDMENTS...**

1. This was stressed in **1 Jn 3:22**
2. Even if we are asking something that would normally be within God's will for us...
  - a. If we are not keeping His commandments...
  - b. ...can we really expect God to favorably answer our prayers?
3. As Peter quoted from the Proverbs: *"For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And his ears are open to their prayers..."* - **1 Pe 3:12**
4. The righteous are those who "do those things that are pleasing in His sight" - cf. **1 Jn 3:22b**
5. Especially in regard to believing in Jesus and loving the brethren, two commandments given to us - **1 Jn 3:23**

## C. REQUIRES ABIDING IN JESUS, AND HIS WORDS ABIDING IN US...

1. This was taught by Jesus Himself, and recorded by John in **Jn 15:7**
2. This should also help to clarify any misunderstanding from taking **Jn 14:13-14** in isolation from its context
3. These words of Jesus actually summarize what we have already seen John to say...
  - a. Confidence in prayer depends upon keeping the commandments, but keeping the commandments is the key to abiding in Jesus! - cf. **1 Jn 3:24a**
  - b. Confidence in prayer depends upon asking according to God's Will, but if Jesus' words abide in us, won't that help us know God's will, and what is proper to ask of Him?

(Therefore, if we learn the words of Jesus, keep His commandments and thereby abide in Him, we will know what is in harmony with God's will and pray accordingly. In this way we can have the "confidence in prayer" of which John writes!)

## II. PRAYING WITH COMPASSION (16-17)

### A. FOR A BROTHER...

1. This epistle of John has been one in which John has stressed "brotherly love"
2. He has told us that we "ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" - **1 Jn 3:16**
3. He has said that if "one sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?" - **1 Jn 3:17**
4. Certainly, then, we should be willing and ready to pray for our brethren, especially when we see them...

### B. SINNING A SIN NOT UNTO DEATH...

1. This is a difficult passage, one that raises several questions...
  - a. Does the present tense of the verb "sinning" necessarily imply that the brother is still engaged in the sin when we are to pray for him?
  - b. What is the "sin not unto death" versus the "sin unto death"?
  - c. What is meant that "He will give him life"?

( Whatever conclusions we draw should be in harmony with the rest of the scriptures, and with other principles revealed therein, just as we do not draw conclusions about praying with confidence based upon **Jn 14:13-14** alone)

2. While open to further consideration, an understanding of this passage is this:
  - a. The present tense of the verb does not demand that the brother is still engaged in the sin when we are to pray for him...
    - 1) Present tense in the Greek can describe action that is either linear or punctiliar
    - 2) That is, John could just as easily be saying "If anyone sees his brother **sin** (not **sinning**) a sin..."

- 3) And thus the asking in his behalf is after the fact, i.e., in the future after the sin has been committed (note, “he **will** ask”, suggesting in the future)
- b. The difference between “a sin which does not lead to death” and “a sin leading to death”...
  - 1) John says in **1 Jn 5:17a**, “all unrighteousness is sin”, therefore any sin is not to be taken lightly
  - 2) But there is sin “not leading to death”
    - a) That is, sin which does not progress to the point in which one experiences separation from God
    - b) As indicated by James, sin does not produce “death” until it is “full grown” - **Ja1:15**
    - c) Sin which does not produce (lead to) death would therefore be sin **repented of**
  - 3) Sin “leading to death”, producing death and separation from God would be sin **unrepented of**
    - a) We cannot expect God to forgive one who refuses to repent
    - b) As John writes with some understatement: “I do not say that he should pray about that” - **1 Jn 5:16d**

### C. GOD WILL GIVE HIM LIFE...

1. If the death in this passage is “spiritual death”, it is natural to assume the life is “spiritual life”
  - a. The “life” which God will grant our penitent brother in answer to our prayers could also be described as “forgiveness”
  - b. Which is a crucial element of the “eternal life” to which John has referred throughout this epistle
2. Thus the promise offered in **1 Jn 1:9** to the child of God who penitently confesses his own sin in prayer is offered in **1 Jn 5:16** to the penitent brother when prayer is made on his behalf by another member of the family of God
  - a. One might ask, “Why bother to pray for a penitent brother if his sins will be forgiven anyway as taught in **1 Jn 1:9**?”
  - b. One answer might be found in **Ja 5:16**, where we are taught to pray for one another: *“The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”*

### CONCLUSION:

1. The privilege of prayer is a wonderful blessing, especially when we do so with...
  - a. Confidence
  - b. Compassion
2. Are we fulfilling the requirements to be able to pray with confidence?
  - a. Abiding in Jesus, and letting His words abide in us?
  - b. Keeping His commandments and doing the things pleasing in His sight?
  - c. Asking according to God’s Will?
3. Are we praying with compassion?
  - a. Praying not only for ourselves, but for our brethren in need?
  - b. Praying for brethren overtaken by sin, but who have demonstrated that their sin is not one leading to death?

As we all need the fullness of God's blessings in our lives, let's encourage one another to do whatever we can to be able to pray with both confidence and compassion!

(Material from Mark A. Copeland)