

## STEPS TO ANSWERED PRAYER

Matthew 7:7-8; James 4:3

(Not entirely original with me)

**Introduction:** Most who pray don't always get what they pray for, even though they pray with the thought in mind of what Jesus said about "asking and it shall be given, etc.." Some are disappointed, some get angry, some decide not to pray anymore and some blame God for not really caring for them. Most expect their prayers to be answered literally, forgetting that God often answers prayer according to the "spirit" and not exactly as one words his/her prayer. Paul prayed much that God would remove the "thorn" in his flesh but God never did. Then there are certain conditions upon which God answers prayer. God does indeed hear prayers and there is a kind of prayer God stands ready to answer. *"...Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God; and whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight..." (1 John 3:21-22).* Here are ten conditions that will bring answered prayers:

### 1. A clear conscience.

- A conscience empty of offense.
- A conscience clear of any act that would condemn him/her in God's sight.
- *"...If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me..." (Psalm 66:18)*

### 2. The rejection of outward and inward sins.

- If there is any selfishness in one's heart, any self-seeking desire in one's heart, God will not hear.

### 3. A spirit of overall obedience.

- There is a willingness to obey God, to turn a listening ear to Him.
- There is no pretense in obeying God, there is a desire to do whatever God requires.

### 4. Abiding in the Lord Jesus Christ.

- *"...If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you..." (John 15:7)*
- A person who does not abide, remain in the Lord Jesus cannot expect to be in a state of mind to prevail with God in prayer.
- One who is united to the Lord by faith is regarded by God to be "one" in Christ and will receive things for Christ's sake.
- One who is "in Christ" will ask only for that which the Lord Jesus has in mind for that person.
- If one is really in Christ and abide in Him and His words abide in that person, are led to pray for things which God will grant.
- If one is not in the Lord Jesus Christ then he/she cannot expect any answer to his/her prayers.

### 5. A sincere, deep desire in what one asks.

- It is one thing to say words in a prayer, but it is quite another to be speaking from one's heart's deepest desire.
- If one doesn't remember what he/she prayed for moments later, then that prayer certainly won't be considered by God.
- To pray in the spirit of prayer, is to pray with a strong desire.

### 6. A willingness to have one's prayer answered as God sees fit.

- Often prayer is made outlining exactly how God must answer that prayer.
- Unless one is willing for God to answer his/her prayer in God's own way, time, etc., then that prayer will not be heard or answered by God.

- In seeking things from God, one must be willing to submit the way, the manner of answering that prayer entirely to God, for God to use His own method and time.
- Some say they want to be made useful to God, but only in certain ways, not taking away certain things and adding certain things, unwilling to give up that which God might require.
- Some pray for things which they certainly need, but give certain conditions in which God must meet in order to grant their prayer.
- Some pray that they might become Christians, yet are unwilling to be a Christian when they realize what is required of a Christian.
- One must be willing to receive God's means, manner, definition and time in answering his/her prayer.

#### **7. A right desire for what one prays for.**

- Praying for something to bring one pleasure, his/her own benefit, selfish request.
- Prayer in line with God's motives, plans and designs asking for God's blessings.
- Any selfish petition will have no influence on God.
- To pray for holiness, impowerment of the Holy Spirit, must be in line with God's ways.
- To hide what God blesses one with is not giving God proper recognition.
- To be willing to give up, pay the cost of whatever consequence may follow IF God answers one's prayer.
- To pray for others, one must have the right motive.
  - Who does the prayer really benefit? The ones being prayed for or for the one praying the prayer?
- To pray to have something to use it, to consume it upon one's own wants/desires won't work.

#### **8. Faith is necessary.**

- To pray when in doubt that God will hear and answer will not bring answered prayer.
- Faith is essential to answered prayer.

#### **9. Pray in the name of Jesus Christ.**

- Just adding "in the Name of Jesus" doesn't always bring answered prayer.
- If used as Jesus intended, it brings answered prayer.
- Jesus is "lending" His name to His own and His own are to use His name as if it were Jesus doing the praying.
- To use the name of Jesus Christ in one's prayer, the prayer must be one which Jesus, Himself, would pray.

#### **10. Persistence brings answered prayer.**

- One's spirit should not be disheartened if no answer comes, but be persistent with his/her requests.
- Jacob prayed over and over, pleading with God all through one night and finally God answered his prayer.
  - He had much to confess and much to promise.
  - God changed Jacob's name from Jacob to Israel.
- Moses argued with God, was persistent in determination to stand in the gap between God and the people.
  - Moses was determined to be of help to God's very own people.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

1. There are reasons one's prayers are not answered. If your prayers are not being answered, take a look at your "style" of prayer.
2. There are things one must do and be in order to have answered prayer.
3. There are things one must give up and change in order to have answered prayer.