

SEVEN STEPS TO ANSWERED PRAYER

James 4:3

Introduction: One of the greatest sins of all Christians today is the sin of prayerlessness. The reason we do not enjoy more of God's blessings is that we do not pray for them. That is exactly what James meant when he said, *"...ye have not because ye ask not..."*

Why is it that we do not pray enough? The main reason is because we do not feel that our prayers are answered anyway. It is true that many of our prayers go unanswered as we want but the reason is *"Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss..."* We ask wrongly. It is important to learn to pray rightly. Here are some helpful steps to getting prayers answered.

I. PERSONAL SIN MUST BE DEALT WITH

1. *"Isaiah 59:1-2; Psalm 66:18. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me..."*
2. We must face the sin question in our own lives.
 - As long as we do not face the sins in our lives, God will not hear our prayer.
 - It may be the sin of not praying or Bible neglect, or unfaithfulness to our Church or an un-Christian attitude, unholy motives, an unforgiving spirit and many more.
 - One thing is for sure - God will not hear us and answer our prayer unless we are willing for God to create in us a new heart.

II. WE MUST MAKE MUCH OF GOD'S BOOK

1. *"He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be an abomination." (Proverbs 28:9)*
2. How much do you read your Bible? How much do you study it? How often do you meditate upon the truths therein? Have you ever stopped to think that when you neglect God's Word, you are an abomination to God?
3. Many Christians cannot get answered prayers because of their neglect of God's word. *"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it will be done unto you."*
4. It makes no difference how much one attends church or gives to the church. It is clear that if one does not read the word of God, His ears will be closed to our prayers.

III. WE MUST BE RIGHTLY RELATED TO OUR FELLOWMAN

1. *Matthew 5:23-24*
2. If one's attitude of the heart toward a fellow human being is wrong, prayer will go unanswered.
 - Holding grudges.
 - Not attempting to make things right with those who are holding something against you.

3. How can one be on speaking terms with God when not on speaking terms with a neighbor?

IV. WE MUST KEEP GOD'S COMMANDMENTS

1. *"And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."*
2. Our prayers will be answered because:
 - We keep God's commandments.
 - We do those things pleasing to God.
3. How can we know what pleases God?
 - By reading and studying God's Word.
 - When finding what pleases God, go out and do it.
4. A Christian who sincerely and earnestly tries to keep the commandments of God and tries to do the things that please God, can rest assured that God hears his/her prayer.

V. WE MUST PRAY ACCORDING TO GOD'S WILL

1. *1 John 5:14-15*
2. The prayers that God answers are the prayers He hears.
3. How can one know the will of God?
 - Through the bible.
 - Through the quiet, still, small voice of the Holy Spirit.
4. When one knows the will of God, he/she can rest assured that his/her prayers will be answered.

VI. WE MUST PRAY UNSELFISHLY

1. *"Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye consume it upon your lusts."*
2. We must always pray in the name of Jesus and for His sake.
3. It is one thing to ask in His name and another to mean what you ask for.
4. Do not ask for your own sake, for your own selfish person, for your own desires as James states.

VII. WE MUST CONTINUE IN PRAYER UNTIL THE ANSWER COMES

1. *Luke 11:5-8*

2. Many times our prayers are unanswered because we are not willing to WAIT upon the Lord.
 - God wants us to be willing to be persistent, to be determined, to refuse to be turned away.
 - Many have had no answered prayer because he/she was not willing to wait.
3. If your prayer is right in that you have met all of God's requirements for answered prayers, then you have the perfect right and are even encouraged by God, Himself, to continue in prayer until the answer comes.

CONCLUSION:

1. Only God Himself knows the blessings that we are missing because we do not study His word or because we fail in one place or another to meet the requirements set for by God for answered prayers.
2. If we take the necessary steps that lead to answered prayers, then our prayers will be heard and they will be answered.
3. Do you really want God to answer your prayers? Then follow God's instructions on how to pray!