



## God's Resources for Life and Healing

### Part 4C: Prayer

In our study of the resource of prayer that God has given us, His beloved children, to enhance the quality of our lives, we have been examining various criteria that impact its effectiveness. We have looked at what praying "in Jesus' name" really means and the kinds of requests that bring glory to the Father. In this issue we will continue to look at further issues affecting the success of our prayers.

For instance, we must always remember the cosmic spiritual battle we are continually caught in as both God and Satan vie for our devotion. Satan tugs at our flesh and the desires for self-gratification which he has planted in it while God woos us through our spirit, desiring us to enter fully into the reciprocal love relationship with Himself for which He created us. For this reason, God will never answer requests that arise from our fleshly nature or that would draw us closer to the world system, which is also under Satan's control (James 4:3-5; 1 John 2:15-17; 5:19).

According to Daniel 10 this spiritual battle also extends into the realm of prayer. We see clearly in this passage the role that angels play in delivering God's answers to prayer and the opposition that Satan and his forces can pose to hinder them. The more that God's answers would serve to advance His Kingdom or to bring glory to Him, the more Satan is undoubtedly invested in blocking them. Having our spiritual armor intact, and even fasting, when praying for such things seems to be important in ensuring the successful delivery of God's answers (Dan. 10:1-14; Mat. 6:16-18; Luke 2:37; Acts 14:23; Eph. 6:10-20; Heb. 1:14).

Faith is another element that is critical in prayer (Mark 11:24). Faith should never be considered just an inert acquiescence of the mind. It is a powerful catalyst that accomplishes major feats in the spiritual realm, including transferring us out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God (Col. 1:13). Faith can heal the sick, raise the dead, and halt the intents of the enemy, including his efforts to block the answers to our prayers (Mat. 9:22; 29-30; 15:28; Luke 8:41-42, 49-56; Eph. 6:15). Expectedly anticipating God to answer the requests we make of Him can be the deciding factor as to whether they will be granted or not (James 1:6-7). Hebrews 1:6 tells us that we cannot possibly please God if we don't have faith and don't believe that He will reward those who diligently seek Him. Having faith in what He can do honors and pleases Him. It is a means of delighting in Him, and when we do this, He is thrilled to give us the desires of our hearts (Ps. 37:4).

Another factor to remember when we are praying is that God will never violate anyone's free will, so we cannot expect Him to answer requests that would require Him to do this. We can, however, pray that God will bring the people, circumstances, and resources into the lives of others that would open their eyes to truth, help to change the "soil" of their hearts (Mat. 13:3-8; 18-23), or motivate them to respond in a desired way.

Persistence in prayer is also important, not only because of the spiritual battle involved but also to demonstrate the earnestness of our hearts (Mat. 15:21-28; Heb. 1:6). As a good Father, God has promised to provide for our basic physical needs as long as we are seeking Him and His righteousness as the highest priority in our lives (Mat. 6:25-33). He has also invited us to come freely to Him with any other need that we have (Heb. 4:16; James 4:2). We can even ask Him for things that go beyond our needs, and in these cases, as in any parent-child relationship, the more persistent we are in our requests, the more likely they are to be granted, if the Father feels they are in line with our well-being (Ps. 84:11; Mat. 7:7-10).

When we please Him, what God is willing to do in response to our prayers can go far beyond what we might even think or imagine. (Eph. 3:20). What a Father! Praise His holy name!