

When we pray according to God's will, He tells us we can have confidence that He will hear and answer.

I John 5:14 and 15

And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

We cannot expect God to answer our prayers if they are at cross purposes with His will. However, we can have great assurance that He will hear and answer if we pray in alignment with His will. Sometimes we are not certain what the will of God is in a particular situation. In such cases, our first action should be to search the Word of God for insight. If clarity is not gained from our study, we can ask God for wisdom which He promises to give liberally according to James 1:5.

Many of the things we want to pray for, the Scriptures do not tell us to pray for. For example, Matthew 6 specifically speaks about the basic physical needs we have such as food, clothing, and shelter. The instruction is not to pray, but to seek the Kingdom of God.

Matthew 6:32 and 33

(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that

ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

The things or matters that God wants us to pray for are not left to our imagination or guessing. They are written in His Word. The Bible contains the Word of God which makes known the will of God. Many prayers are written for us to pray. We can read these prayers and, with absolute trust, pray (because God authored them for us to read and use). We know without any doubt whatsoever that God will hear and respond. He said He would!

In the Church Epistles the Apostle Paul is held up as an example for us to follow. Consider how often and intensely he prayed for others: Romans 1:9 and 10, "without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;" I Corinthians 1:4 and 5, "I thank my God always on your behalf;" Ephesians 1:16, "Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;" Philippians 1:3-5, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you;" and, "Always in every prayer of mine for you all;" I Thessalonians 1:2, "We give thanks to God always for you all."

Prayer for others is often called intercessory prayer. What are the specific prayers of intercession that Paul offered up to God? They are written for us to read and use in prayer for ourselves as well as others. Consider some of these examples:

Ephesians 1:16-19

Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

We may not know many things about the needs of the people we pray for. We can, however, be well assured that everyone has the need for wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God and for their eyes to be enlightened to know His calling, His inheritance, and the exceeding greatness of His power.

Ephesians 3:14-21

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what *is* the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Ignorance regarding the specific challenges others have each day is indeed common, but we have no reason not to have something of vital importance to pray according to God's will. Who does not need to be strengthened with might? Who in our prayers is not lacking for help with having Christ dwell in their minds? Does anyone need help from God to be rooted and grounded in love? These are the things God is concerned with and wants us to pray for. Some people wonder why God does not answer their

prayers. Perhaps it is because their prayers are a reflection of personal desire and not God's will. If the people we pray for had just these prayers in Ephesians answered, would not all the other concerns of life be considered petty and insignificant?

Colossians 1:9-12

For this cause we also, since the day we heard *it*, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

So often we hear people talk about learning to be more patient and controlling their anger. Yet, how often have we heard someone pray this prayer or one similar? We can pray for God to strengthen us according to His glorious power unto PATIENCE (patience with situations and things) and LONGSUFFERING (patience with people).

Often I have heard people express that they do not know what to pray for. Yet the Word of God gives us so much to pray that, when we apply ourselves, we no longer will be perplexed with what to pray but rather with having enough time to pray.

The prayer our Lord gave as an example is also our great prayer of intercession for it says, "give US this day OUR daily bread, and forgive US OUR trespasses as WE...." Other prayers to consider in the Epistles are Philippians 1:9-11; I Thessalonians 3:12 and 13; I Thessalonians 5:23 and 24; and II Thessalonians 3:5. The Book of Psalms is full of prayers relating to many different subjects.

Praying with the Word of God as our standard assures us that God will hear. If He hears, we know that we have the petitions we desire of Him.