

Prayer

**Gulf Coast Dispensational Church
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There is no chance that we would ever understand God without His help. His thoughts and ways are so much higher than ours, He has to give us understanding through His word, the Bible.

Isaiah 55:8-9

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

He has also given us the opportunity to talk to Him about His word in our lives. We have access to the God who created the universe 24/7, no appointment necessary! It is called prayer, and it can be done anytime and anywhere you are.

We have been given promises about prayer by Jesus Christ, through our apostle Paul. It is important that you know these promises, and that you do not get them mixed up with promises about prayer that Jesus made to His disciples.

Jesus told His disciples that if 2 of them agreed on anything, God the Father would do it for them. If 2 or 3 of them were gathered together, Jesus was in the midst of them. We know Jesus was talking to His disciples because of an earlier verse in the passage.

Matthew 18:1, 19-20

¹At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

¹⁹Again I say unto you, That **if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father** which is in heaven. For **where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.**

You may know people today who try to claim Jesus' promises to His disciples, for themselves. You may have even tried to claim them for yourself! It probably led to disappointment and confusion. You may have even wondered if God was angry with you.

God is not angry with you. Jesus did not make these promises about prayer to you. He made them to His apostles, for the future, and for a very good reason. Jesus Christ was telling them that when He comes back to earth as king, to set up His kingdom of Heaven on the earth, His apostles will be part of His government.

Matthew 19:27-28

Then answered **Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.**

But we, in the Church, the Body of Christ, have a private audience with God, the Holy Ghost, and with Jesus Christ, every day, all day. We do not need anyone else to agree with us or to meet with us in order to have an audience with God.

The reason is because our bodies are no longer ours, but they are God's temple, because the Holy Ghost resides in our hearts.

1 Corinthians 6:19

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

The Holy Ghost (along with God the Father and Jesus Christ, Himself) raised Christ from the dead, and He quickens—makes alive—our mortal bodies, because He is living in them.

Romans 8:11

But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead **shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.**

Even with the Holy Ghost living in our hearts, Paul tells us that we still do not know how to pray. It is the job of the Holy Ghost to intercede with God for us. He prays our prayers for us according to the will of God, so they can be answered in God's perfect will.

Romans 8:26-27

²⁶**Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us** with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because **he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.**

So we in the Church, the Body of Christ, have an open invitation, with the Holy Ghost interceding on our behalf, from God Almighty. And we know that God is on our side! We don't have to convince Him of anything! He works all things for good, for those of us who love Him, even the things that do not appear to be good!

Romans 8:28

²⁸**And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.**

And God is an indulgent Father. He sacrificed His own Son to save us. Paul says He will freely give

us all things. No one is able to condemn us, because God is on our side.

Romans 8:31-34

³¹What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? **He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?** Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? **It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.**

When we know that the Holy Ghost, and Jesus Christ, intercede with God for us, and that God freely gives us all things, we know that every prayer we pray is answered in God's perfect will. We just have to look for it!

God has already given us all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. But, for now, while we are still in the flesh, it is difficult for us to fully realize that. Most of us are looking for blessings on this earth.

Ephesians 1:1-3

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be **the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:**

We are already seated in Heaven with Christ.

Ephesians 2:4-7

But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) **And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:** That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

Paul tells us our conversation is in Heaven! You can only have conversations about things that you know about! Our corruptible, mortal bodies are keeping us here on this earth.

Philippians 3:20-21

For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Right now, we cannot see these things clearly, but we have the promise that we will know everything when we get there!

1 Corinthians 13:12

For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

One note of caution, since God's thoughts and our thoughts are so much different, it can be that our prayers, and God's answers, are totally different! Our prayers are answered in God's will, not ours

While there is no "right way" or "wrong way" to pray (because the Holy Spirit prays every prayer the "right way" for us,) we are going to look at

some approaches to prayer that can cause frustration and anger for believers who continue to try—unsuccessfully—to get the answers, the way they want, from God.

Some people think of God as Santa Claus. They pray for things from God, thinking that if they are good enough, God will grant their requests. But, there is no one who is good.

Romans 3:12

They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; **there is none that doeth good, no, not one.**

If believers do not understand that their prayers are answered in God's perfect will, they may not recognize the answers to their prayers, and somehow feel that God is ignoring or even punishing them. This is especially difficult if the prayers involve a crisis that was not resolved like the person wanted it to be.

There are many churches who will tell these people that they have unconfessed sin! They believe that God will not answer the prayers of

believers who have not confessed every sin to their priest or pastor.

Of course, we know that all of our sins are known to God (even the ones we have not yet committed,) and have been forgiven in full, by the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ! There is no such thing as an unconfessed, or unforgiven, sin! Our sins have been forgiven, it is already done.

Ephesians 4:31-32

Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, **even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.**

Others believe that there is a “secret formula” to asking God for something. Jesus told His disciples about people who pray repetitiously, repeating the same vain requests over and over again. It sounds a lot like nagging God into doing what they want Him to do.

Matthew 6:7-8

But when ye pray, **use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.** Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

Some people act like the game show host Monte Hall and play “Let’s Make a Deal” with God. They may tell God that they will do something for Him if He will grant their prayers. There were examples in the Old Testament of people bargaining with God.

There is the famous story of Abraham who bargained with God not to destroy Sodom if there were any righteous people found in the city.

Genesis 18:22-26

And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: **but Abraham stood yet before the LORD. And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?** Peradventure there be fifty

righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? **That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked,** that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? **And the LORD said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.**

Abraham went all the way down to 10 righteous, but God did destroy the city of Sodom. So we know that there were not even 10 righteous people in entire city!

Hezekiah famously bargained with God. God told Hezekiah that he was going to die. Hezekiah wept and prayed to the Lord. God gave Hezekiah 15 more years.

Isaiah 38:1-5

In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came unto him, and said unto him, **Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live. Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the**

wall, and prayed unto the LORD, And said, Remember now, O LORD, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore. Then came the word of the LORD to Isaiah, saying, Go, and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, **I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years.**

People read these stories and believe that they can change God's mind with prayer. Those 2 examples were Old Testament stories for Old Testament saints, not for us today.

There are people who try to get as many other people as possible to pray their requests with them. They believe somehow that the more people who are praying, the more likely it is that their prayers will be answered. But you know that every prayer is answered perfectly, and you know that it does not require even 2 or 3 people to agree. It is nice to have the support of other believers when you pray, but it does not increase

your chances of success, which are already 100%!!

Still others try to claim the promises made to others in the Bible. When you study the Bible dispensationally, you know that God gave information to different people at different times. Not everything in the Bible applies to us today. (If you use Noah as an example, you will never be told to build an ark to save mankind from judgement. God has promised never again to destroy the earth with a flood.)

For example, following are prayers that specific people were given to pray. Here is the “Prayer of Jabez.” It is exactly that, a prayer for Jabez. It has nothing to do with the Church the Body of Christ, yet, a few years ago, there were books written about it for our use.

1 Chronicles 4:10

And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it

may not grieve me! **And God granted him that which he requested.**

Here is a prayer for King Solomon. You may have heard people trying to say that the United States needs to pray this prayer to get back into God's favor. But this prayer was specific to the nation Israel.

2 Chronicles 7:14

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

Another example is the information James wrote for the Jews going through the Tribulation in the future. James is writing to Jews in the future, when the antichrist is ruling the world and trying to kill all of the Jews. He will force everyone to take his mark if they want to buy or sell anything.

Revelation 13:16-17

And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their

right hand, or in their foreheads: **And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.**

Many people try to claim the healing prayer below for themselves. It is not for us today, but during the Tribulation, when faithful Jews will be unable to get any health services without the mark, you can see why is it important that the elders of the church will be able to heal the sick by praying over someone and anointing them.

James 5:13-15

Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: **And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.**

You can see that if you believe that you can heal someone by praying and anointing them, you will be wondering what you did wrong when it

doesn't work! Yet, you have probably seen many preachers on television doing this very thing to heal the sick who come to them. Some of these preachers are deceived, but some are doing the deceiving!

Here is another commonly known Bible story. If you have faith as a small mustard seed, you will be able to speak and a mountain will move. Upon closer examination, we see, again, that Jesus is telling this to His disciples, not the Church, the Body of Christ. This is not something that has been promised to us.

Matthew 17:19-20

Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

Our apostle Paul tells us what we will receive when we pray with thanksgiving. We will receive

the peace of God that passes all understanding!
What a gift that is!

Philippians 4:6-7

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Our sin nature causes most of us to pray to try to change God and have things our way. Praying God's way changes us, and that's the best thing about it.