

Praying in God's Will; at the Throne in confidence

❖ Knowing God and being prepared

- *Knowing God in Salvation, Scripture, and Person*

❖ Obedience in service

- *We bring issues on our hearts before Him*
- *We are obedient to what He expects of us*
- *We are well equipped*
- *We are to be servants like Jesus*

❖ Faith in His response

- *Without faith we are just speaking into the air*
- *Prayer thrives or fails on the basis of God's Will*
- *Confidence before the Throne belongs to those who know what to expect*

<General overview of successfully praying in His Will>

A main purpose of prayer is that we learn obedience. We grow in obedience through learning what God expects, and then serving Him under those expectations. When God answers prayer, it is because we are operating under the truth, or Will, of God. And, because we have carried an issue to God that He desires to be dealt with, in line with the truth of His Will, He responds. (yes/no/wait...) We have learned and conformed to His truth, He is glorified, and, still another issue is brought into alignment with His Will. In this, we have not forced His hand or brought anything before Him that He wasn't aware of. Instead, we have recognized what He already knew, and we have served as priests in bringing it to Him for His response, in His provision.

Jesus is the perfect example of praying in the Will of the Father. He lived a sinless life among us, and has always remained obedient to the Father's Will. His requests, always in alignment with the Father's Will, are always honored. Even as the Father denied His request to 'let the cup pass', Jesus was still in obedience to the Father by praying 'yet Your will, not mine'.

So, we can see that good prayer, in relation to God's Will, will always include:

- *Knowing God and being prepared* – that we know his commandments and His 'personality', and we are prepared accordingly
- *Obedience in Service* – that we bring an issue on our heart before Him, confident that this is what He expects (A sense of our duty, humility and worship, familiarity and compassion over the issue, diligence in prayer and service, choosing faith in His expectations and His response)

- ***Faith in His response*** – that He has responded according to His Will or truth, in His best interests over Creation (**His provision, desire, loving attention, commands, declarations, mercy, faithfulness, and Glory**)

Knowing God and being prepared

Knowing God in Salvation, Scripture, and Person

We will only know God through Jesus' Salvation. Salvation includes the Father's adoption of us, and all of the rights associated with our new rank. Without Salvation, we have no right, nor any way, to approach God the Father. Once Saved, we possess the Teacher, the Holy Spirit. He conveys the truth of God to us through the Scriptures, and in the course of our diligent study, we grow in our maturity of understanding God.

Knowing God's Will always begins with knowing God Himself, because God's Will is who He is. Think of someone you are close to, someone you know well. Now, thinking of that person in a particular situation, ask yourself 'How would I expect him to respond to something like this?' If you really know that person's heart, you should be able to come to a reasonable conclusion of how he would react. This is because you know that person through study and experience. In comparison, God is perfect and without sin, He has given us the Word and His Spirit to know Him, and so we can grow in understanding what to expect. God's Will corresponds to His whole 'personality'. Knowing Him, knowing what He has to say about issues, and knowing how He reacts leads to knowing how He will respond to us.

Rom 12.2

Obedience in service

We bring issues on our hearts before Him

God Saves people and enlists them into service as priests, or those who can relate to Him. We have been Saved to serve God, and He makes many resources available to us to carry out His expectations. One of our most important resources is our 'heart', and how we use it. Our heart is the center of who we are personally. God's goal is our heart to be soft and humble, 'with His law written upon it'. A heart like this serves in prayer by coming before the Throne of Grace, sensitive and overflowing with issues God cares about. These issues are spilled out before Him through this healthy heart, and He answers. As His priests, we are to cultivate and maintain this heart He creates in us, and we are to be aware of issues and carry them to Him for His response.

We are obedient to what He expects of us

An unfortunate mistake we can make is in believing that God is OK with whatever our response is to His expectations. We might think that He has just made suggestions to us, and if we don't follow through, that Jesus will simply forgive us and release us from our obligation.

This way of thinking is actually sinful abuse of Jesus' grace, and willful disobedience to God the Father. His grace is not for getting us out of the obligations we now have to Him. Instead, His grace is employed in His patience as He trains us to become just like Jesus.

A foundation of good prayer is in living and serving God obediently. Jesus' perfect obedience to God's Will ensures His requests to the Father are always honored. To be like Jesus, we too must know God's Will through His Word, and obey His instructions. When we are careful to follow His expectations, and serve Him as He commands, we too can have confidence in our prayer, just like Jesus does – because we are following through with what He already intends.

We are well equipped

Many Christians make a severe mistake in believing that God's rescuing them is the end of the story. They might believe that He has been glorified in that act of mercy and that they only need to concentrate on worshipping Him and staying out of trouble until it is time to go Home. *Ephesians 2.8-9* states that only God forges our Salvation, but *2.10* tells the rest of the truth - that He has done so because He is drafting us into service. We are here to learn God now, in this time between being Saved and meeting the Lord in person. In Saving us, He has equipped each believer with the tools and resources needed to serve Him. So then, through obedient service to Him, we learn how He works, we are good stewards of what He has given us, and He is pleased and glorified in our faithful response to Him.

We are called to 'reasonable service'

In Romans 12:1, Paul calls for our "reasonable service" to God. 'Service' is in reference to the duty we are held to as His children, and 'reasonable' is the measure of our response in relation to what God has given us. In this, the word 'reasonable' can seem almost irrational, because what else could we possibly hope for in Jesus? We who are Saved owe more than our very lives to Him. In fact, He has not only given us the benefits we experience now, but we will spend all of eternity with Him, not to mention the punishment He rescues us from. As humans, we are destined to always be slaves to one master. It is a fact that cannot be avoided. In our Salvation, we are removed from under our slavery to sin and the demands of Satan, and we are placed under the Lordship of our loving Shepherd. How could our situation possibly get any better? It is in light of these truths that we need to consider Paul's call to our service to the Lord.

We are to be servants like Jesus

Jesus models many qualities for us in His service to the Father. Good prayer rests upon these same things – a sense of *duty*, *humility*, *worship*, *familiarity* and *compassion* over the issue, *diligence*, and *faith*. These are attributes Jesus has, and they are what God wants us to learn as well. Prayer is done well when we exercise our use of these things

Our sense of *duty* is rooted in realizing Who we belong to, owe our life to, and labor for. *Humility* is in seeing His mighty perfection and how we fit into the order of things. *Worship* is our outward expression of reverence towards Him. *Familiarity* and *compassion* for issues is taking the time to understand and truly take them to heart. *Diligence* is an unswerving, steady

march forward towards the goal, despite how we feel, but instead according to what God has said. And *faith* is taking God at His word and believing Him regardless of anything else. These are the things that Jesus is, and we are to be like Him, too.

Faith in His response - that He has responded according to His Will or truth, in His best interests over Creation (His provision, desire, loving attention, commands, declarations, mercy, faithfulness, and Glory)

Without faith we are just speaking into the air

If we go to God the Father in prayer, we must be doing it in the belief that that He is listening and willing to respond. The truth is, that without this faith, we are just speaking into the air at no one. That would be a pretty foolish thing to do, and God doesn't expect us to have to do it that way. Instead, He wants us to learn, recognize, and believe in Him, so that among other things we can approach Him in prayer, through faith that it is real. Faith in God is ultimately *the* essential in our relationship with Him. Without faith, without believing Him at His Word, we know no God. It is impossible. (2 Cor 4.18, Heb 11.1, 3, 6)

Prayer relies upon this same economy. We must not only approach God through faith in Christ's Salvation, but also in faith of His provision, desire, loving attention, commands, declarations, Holiness, mercy, faithfulness, and Glory. Strong, correct faith is the **bulwark** of effective prayer. And strong, correct faith is always rooted in the truth. And so, God's Will, expressed in His truth of the Word, displayed in the reality of His works, must be the objects of our faith. If this is so, as we appeal to God through faith in the basis of His truth, our prayers are then surely answered.

The Father's response, His Provision, is welled up in an endless reservoir, ready for distribution through us, his priests under Jesus. All that stands in the way of our being founts of blessing to the arena around us is our obedient understanding and application of His Will. The Father intends His royal priesthood to be stewards over Creation. In rescuing us from sin's grip, and in equipping us with the best resources of God Himself, He is creating and training us to participate in His stewardship over Creation.

Prayer thrives or fails on the basis of God's Will

God only answers prayers in agreement with His Will; Prayer not in His Will won't be answered

So then, what is God's Will in the situation you would pray about? A good place to begin would be in assessing the issue for both it's overall theme as well as the issues specific to it. Consider it well; take it to heart – on a heart that is soft and not calloused because of sin. See the pieces of the puzzle that especially strike you, and ask, 'why?' Consider how God would respond to these heart issues of yours, and reflect on how they compare to God and His Person. Knowing what you do about Him, would He be glad? Then rejoice with Him and praise Him

for a good thing. Would He be offended? Then consider further how His standard compares to the issue, and ask Him to have mercy and see it change to become something He would be pleased with.

Confidence before the Throne belongs to those who know what to expect

Through Jesus, we possess the unique right to approach the terrible Throne of God Almighty Himself and be heard as His children

Know that our growth in prayer is in learning and becoming comfortable with our huge privileges as His children