INTRO: God's people are admonished to pray without ceasing, 1 Thes 5:17; pray for one another, JS 5:16; for the sick, JS 5:14; for the lost, Rom 10:1; for those in authority, 1 Tim 2:1-2. They are to thank God for blessings given, Eph 5:20; seek those things they need, MT 6:11; ask for health & prosperity, 2 JN 2, & cast all their cares on the Lord, 1 Pet 5:7. They are cautioned against asking amiss, praying to be seen by men & disregarding the will of God, JS 4:3; MT 6:5; 1 JN 5:14.

God's word assures us repeatedly that God hears & answers the prayers of those who hear & heed His will, JN 9:13; 1 Pet 3:12, etc.

It has been said that God answers prayers in 3 ways: Yes, No, and Wait a While.

I. SOMETIMES GOD GIVES US PRECISELY WHAT WE ASK FOR.
   A. Elijah prayed for rain.
      Elijah was a man with a nature like ours & he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; & it did not rain on the land for 3 years & 6 months. And he prayed again, & the heavens gave rain & the earth produced its fruit. (James 5:17-18).

   B. Hanna asked for a son. 1 Sam 1:10-11, 20.

II. SOMETIMES GOD GIVES US THE STRENGTH TO DO WITH-OUT WHAT WE ASK FOR.
   A. Jesus prayed, "Let this cup pass..."
      In the days of His flesh... He offered up prayers & supplications with vehement cries & tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, & was heard... (Heb 5:7). LK 22:41-43.

   B. Paul's thorn in the flesh, 2 Cor 12:7-9.

III. SOMETIMES GOD GIVES US WHAT WE DESIRE, BUT NOT EXACTLY WHAT WE ASK FOR.
A. We do not always know how to pray as we ought, 
Rom 8:26-27.

B. Abraham's intercession for Sodom, Gen 18:20-32 
   1. What he desired: not destroy righteous with wicked. 
   2. What he asked for: spare the city, Gen 18:24 
   3. What he got: righteous not destroyed with wicked. 
      Gen 19:15-16

IV. SUMMATION: GOD ALWAYS GIVES US WHAT IS BEST 
   FOR US REGARDLESS OF WHAT WE ASK FOR.

   A. He knows our needs better than we do, MT 6:8 
   B. Thief on the cross, LK 23:42-43 
   C. Early church prayed for Peter, Acts 12:1-16.

CONCLUSION: Let us pray continually. Let us ask in faith, nothing 
wavering, JS 1:5-6. But let our faith be in the God who will answer 
our prayer & who knows better than we what we really need, & what 
will be best for us in the long run.

Springhill, LA, June 15, 1975
La Porte, TX, May 9, 1976
Exton, PA, April 17, 1988
Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, August 10, 1997