

HOW GOD ANSWERS PRAYER

Text: 1 John 5:14-15

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.

C. Zacharias, Luke 1:13.

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

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