

## The Promise of Answered Prayer (1 John 5:14-15)

- Prayer is such an amazing resource God has blessed His children with. There is no burden, problem, challenge, sin or circumstance that prayer cannot address.
    - It's always available ("pray at all times..." – Eph. 6:18)
    - It's always applicable ("in everything by prayer and supplication..." – Phil. 4:6)
    - It's always accessible ("let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace..." – Heb. 4:16)
  - Our Lord modeled the key ingredient in prayer: the will of God. He said, "My food is to do the will of God who sent Me..." (John 4:34) and during one of the most intense periods of His life He prayed this way: "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will." (Matt. 26:39).
  - God's will is what God will do and what He wants to do, but it's helpful to understand the nuances of His will (we examined in 2 Peter 3:9)
    - God's will of decree is His sovereign will (Eph. 1:11) which will always be accomplished and no one can stop it.
    - God's will of demand is what He has commanded or prohibited in our lives (His moral will). This can be freely followed or not.
    - God's will of desire expresses wished for us (like compassion on the unsaved to be saved – 2 Pet 3:9; Ezek 18:23; 33:11)
  - There is a mystery to prayer which triggers questions like: Does prayer really make a difference? If God is sovereign and He knows everything, do we really need to pray?
  - The apostle John teaches us three things about God's will and the promise of answered prayer
1. **God's will is the confidence you have for answered prayer (1 John 5:14a: "This is the confidence which we have before Him...")**
    - The word "confidence" is all about outspokenness or frankness. It was a political term about the freedom to speak open and freely.
    - We should not be outspoken about our self-serving desires, but pray as Jesus directed ("Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" – Matt. 6:10)
    - The purpose of prayer is not to get your will done in heaven, but to get God's will done on earth.
  2. **God's will is the criteria you need for answered prayer (1 John 5:14b: "This is the confidence which we have before Him, that if you ask anything according to His will, He hears you")**

- a. **Criteria #1:** The promise of prayer is for God's children, not everyone. The "we" John identifies are true followers of Christ.
- b. **Criteria #2:** The promise of prayer is for those who pray. God wants to "hear" our prayers and desire to know and do His will which is "good, acceptable and perfect" (Rom. 12:2). If you truly understand God and believe His will is always the best for you, then your greatest joy will be to pray for, know and do God's will.

3. **God's will is the certainty He insures for answered prayer (1 John 5:15)**

- John communicates two words two times ("we know") to highlight the guarantee of answered prayer.
- God will respond to your prayers: He "hears" you which assumes listening and responding. There is no such thing as unanswered prayer as the Lord responds in four ways (Go = His yes; No = always for your best; Slow = yes, but not now; Grow = Yes, but you need to be stretched and answered in a way you wouldn't expect)
- God will always answer what is best for you, even if it's not what you asked for, preferred and thought you needed.