

## Prayer and the Will of God

### Introduction

- A. The Christian is one who can speak to God! All believers realize, due to our sinfulness, that we are not worthy of the most fleeting thought by God. In sharp contrast, however, God sent His Son to die for us and has brought us, through grace and faith, into a living relationship with Himself. Now - we can pray!
- B. The Bible reminds us that prayer includes worship, praise, thanksgiving, commitments of faith, intercession and the presenting of requests. In this lesson we wish to answer the question, "What requests may I present to God?"

### I. The Promise Regarding Prayer, I John 5:14.

And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will. He heareth us.

Observation: This is a great promise. We are instructed to get our eyes off ourselves and put our faith in God. Our confidence concerning the prayer life is to revolve around Him. We are assured that when we ask anything according to His will - He will hear us.

### II. The Example Regarding Prayer, Colossians 4:12.

Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

Observation: Here Epaphras is commended and presented to us as an example of how to pray. He is not only held up as an example of compassion and hard work - but in particular for the content of his prayer - the will of God. If we are to succeed we must learn to pray like this.

### III. The Reminder Regarding Prayer, I Peter 2:5.

Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

Observation: The Christian is a priest. We have the office, with all the rights and privileges, so that we can pray. We can represent God to man and in particular, we can represent man to God. It is important that the believer assume this responsible position and pray.

### IV. The Directives Regarding Prayer.

- A. It is the will of God that believers cooperate in spiritual ministry, II Cor. 8:5.

And this they did, not (merely) as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.

Observation: Paul is here commending the Christians in Macedonia. He was taking up a collection of money for the saints in Palestine. These Christians responded to the need by a deliberate banding together under God to meet this need. We should daily pray that this aspect of the will of God would come true in our lives and those for whom we intercede.

B. It is the will of God that believers be delivered from the world, Gal. 1:4.

Who (Jesus Christ) gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.

Observation: This is more than a statement regarding the truth of getting to heaven. It is God's will that we live separated from the influence of the sinful world system. The world is described in I John 2:15,16 as essentially a selfish way of living. We should daily pray that we may understand the sinfulness of living for ourselves and more and more learn how to live for God and His glory. This is a request we may present to God for others as well.

C. It is the will of God that believers be sanctified, I Thess. 4:3.

For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication.

Observation: By use of the word "sanctification" the Apostle Paul is referring to holiness of daily life. In particular the emphasis in the context has to do with freedom from sexual sins. However, it would also be correct to apply the passage to the godliness of life that would keep one from all immoral practices. This facet of the will of God is particularly needed today.

D. It is the will of God that believers rejoice, pray and give thanks, I Thess. 5:16-18.

Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

Observation: These three areas, rejoicing, praying, and the giving of thanks are presented as absolutely necessary for the Christian who wants to live in the will of God. Our natural tendency is to accept discouragement, to be lazy in praying and to be unthankful. When we do this it often results in coveting. We may not permit this. We must pray for illumination, conviction and expressing of faith in this area for ourselves and those we represent.

E. It is the will of God that believers have a good testimony, I Peter 2:15.

For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.

Observation: The Biblical way for the Gospel to be spread is not only by all forms of communication but also by the testimony of daily life. God has promised that He will use the godly Christian to stop the argument of the non-Christian. We all know the devastation that has been caused by a believer living an inconsistent life! This should constantly be a matter of prayer – that we would live a consistent life and that those for whom we are concerned should also so honor God.

Conclusion: Now that we have seen these expressions of the will of God we can also add to our prayer list the commandments of God (Matt. 28:16-20), the promises (Phil. 4:19), the exhortations of the Bible (**Hebrews 4:1-3**) and those prayers which are given as examples of intercession (Eph. 1:17-23; 3:14-21). God expects us to pray – and to do so with confidence and faith.

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