

R.T. Kendall: Why You Should Keep Praying and Never Give Up

Does God always answer our prayers? Jesus said, “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks, it will be opened” (Matt. 7:7-8). He even promised, “If you ask anything in My name, I will do it” (John 14:14). Jesus also gave a parable that had as its purpose that we should keep on praying and never give up (Luke 18:1-8).

The reason we should keep praying and never give up is because God doesn't always answer our prayers immediately. What is more, we get to know God and His ways by spending more time with Him. One reason I believe God does not answer our prayers immediately is because He likes our company; if He answered all requests straightaway, we might not pray as much! But the implication in Jesus' parable is that if we don't give up, God will eventually come to our rescue.

There are those who would say, “God has not answered my prayer at all.” To which I would respond: *So far as you can tell at the moment.* I myself can testify: There are literally a dozen or more requests I have put to the throne of grace that have not been answered. There are also promises given to me—I believe from the Lord—that have not been fulfilled. And I am 82 as I write these lines.

But what about the Enochs, Noahs, Abrahams, Isaacs and Jacobs of this world? All those stalwarts in Hebrews 11—heaven's hall of fame—could testify that it was not merely unanswered prayers in their situations; it was a case of God *apparently* not even keeping all His promises! Think about this

verse—quoted above: “None of them received what had been promised” (Heb. 11:39b, NIV). Think about that verse for a moment. *None of them received what had been promised.* Yet they kept believing. But why? Were they dumb? Stupid? Whyever didn’t they give up?

It must be said at this stage we do not know *all* that was promised to each of them. We know vaguely and generally what was promised to some of them. But we don’t know everything. Based upon Hebrews 11:39, I would conclude that there were things promised to them that were not mentioned in the Old Testament books—as in Genesis, Exodus, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings, for example. If we knew everything that had been promised to them, Hebrews 11:39 would make even more sense. But as this verse stands, we may safely conclude that all those described in Hebrews 11 had the following in common:

1. They did not receive everything that was promised to them.
2. What was promised to them was not so much for them after all, but “for us” so that “together with us” the promises they received would be perfected or fulfilled.

We might immediately think of Abraham, who was looking for a “city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God” (Heb. 11:10b). He did not see that city. We have not seen it either! But it is the new Jerusalem, which together we may all look forward to (Rev. 21 and 22)!

The people described in Hebrews 11 were not popular on earth. Many of them were hated. And they all had to suffer incalculable disappointment along the way. But during the whole time of their preparation and accomplishments—and lack of fulfillment, “none of them received what had been promised”—they were popular in heaven. They also had in common that they chose a road less traveled.

If it’s your heart’s desire to be popular in heaven, and I

hope it is, I must caution you: God will not knock you down to make it happen! It is going to be true with you if you make a conscious decision to be popular in heaven. This does not mean you will be favored over the saints there; it is not like being popular in school when you are good-looking or excel in sports. It means that you are a beautiful fragrance that ascends to the place of the saints and the angels; that your choices on planet Earth cohere with the holy will of God being carried out in heaven. Right choices on earth fit well with the saints there.

It is like the petition in the Lord's Prayer: "Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10b, MEV). In heaven, the will of God is being carried out perfectly; there is no rebellion, no rivalry among the saints or grumbling there. So when we make decisions on earth that fit in with what is pleasing to God, we are not only *praying* that the will of God be done in our lives but actually *carrying out* His will as it is in heaven. This makes us popular in the heavenlies!

✖ Adapted from *Popular in Heaven, Famous in Hell* by R.T. Kendall (Charisma House, 2018). *Your thoughts and behaviors can bring so much glory to God that you become a threat to evil, bringing glory to God and terrifying the enemy. This book helps you see how you can value your reputation with God above that with people. It's a must-have for your life's journey. To order your copy, click on this link.*

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This article is adapted from Popular in Heaven, Famous in Hell (Charisma House, 2018) by R.T. Kendall. Kendall was the pastor of Westminster Chapel in London, England, for 25 years. Born in Ashland, Kentucky, he was educated at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (.) and Oxford University (.). Kendall is the author of many books, including Total Forgiveness, Holy Fire, It Ain't Over Till It's Over, Prepare Your Heart for the

Midnight Cry *and* Whatever Happened to the Gospel?