

Prayer That Gets Results

✖ Genuine, authentic faith must be definite and free from doubt. It is not general in character or a mere belief in the being, goodness and power of God. It is a faith that believes that the things that “he says will be done” (Mark 11:23).

As faith is specific, so the answer will also be definite. “He will have whatever he says” (v. 23). Faith and prayer select the things, and God pledges Himself to do the very things that faith and persistent prayer name and ask Him to accomplish.

We might also translate Mark 11:24 this way: “All things whatsoever you pray and ask for, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them.” Perfect faith always has in its keeping what perfect prayer asks for. How large and unqualified this area of operation is—“all things whatsoever”! How definite and specific the promise is—“you shall have them”!

Our major concern is our faith. A faith that holds onto the very things it asks for, without wavering, doubt or fear—that is the faith we need. We need faith in the process and practice of prayer.

Our faith must be definite and specific. It must be an unqualified, unmistakable request for the things asked for—not a vague, indefinite, shadowy thing. It must be something more than an ideal belief in God’s willingness and ability to do something for us. It should be a definite, specific asking for and expecting the things for which we ask. Note Mark 11:23: “not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.”

Just as the faith and the request is definite, so the answer will be definite. The giving is not something other than the things prayed for but the actual things sought and named. “He

will have whatever he says." It is a certainty: "He will have." The granting is unlimited both in quality and quantity.

Faith is not an abstract belief in the Word of God or a mere mental belief. It is not a simple agreement of the understanding and will or a passive belief in facts.

Faith is an operation of God, a divine illumination, a holy energy planted by the Word of God and the Spirit in the human soul. It is a spiritual, divine principle that takes from the supernatural and makes it an understandable thing by the faculties of time and sense.

God is the great objective of faith, for faith rests its whole weight on His Word. Faith is not an aimless act of the soul but a looking to God and a resting on His promises. Just as love and hope always have an objective, so also has faith. Faith is not believing just anything. It is believing God, resting in Him and trusting His Word.

Faith gives birth to prayer. It grows stronger, strikes deeper and rises higher in the struggles and wrestling of mighty petitioning. Faith is the substance of things hoped for (see Heb. 11:1), the confidence and reality of the inheritance of the saints.

Faith, too, is humble and persistent. It is the one great condition of prayer. The lack of it lies at the root of all poor, feeble, little, unanswered praying.

If we could only produce a race of saints with mighty faith and wonderful praying, what a glorious period of achievements would begin for the church and the world! The church does not need the intellectually great. The times do not demand wealthy men. It is not people of great social influence who are required.

Above everybody and everything else, the church and the whole wide world of humanity need men of faith and mighty prayer. We

need men and women like the saints and heroes counted in Hebrews 11 who "obtained a good report through faith."

Today, many men obtain a good report because of their monetary donations and their great mental gifts and talents. But there are few who obtain a good report because of their great faith in God or because of the wonderful things that come about through their great praying.

Today, as much as at any time, we need men of great faith and men who are great in prayer. These are the two chief virtues that make men great in the eyes of God. These two things create conditions of real spiritual success in the life and work of the church. It is our main concern to see that we keep this kind of quality faith before God. This kind of faith grasps and holds in its keeping the things for which it asks without doubt and fear.

Doubt and fear are the twin enemies of faith. Sometimes they actually take the place of faith, and, although we pray, it is a restless, disquieted, uneasy, complaining prayer that we offer.

Our eyes should be taken off ourselves. They should be removed from our own weakness and allowed to rest totally on God's strength. "Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward" (Heb. 10:35).

A simple, confiding faith, living day by day, will drive fear away. A faith that casts its burden on the Lord, each hour of the day, will drive away misgiving and deliver from doubt.

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God" (Phil. 4:6). That is the divine cure for all fear, anxiety and excessive concern for the soul.

We need to guard against unbelief as we would against an

enemy. Faith needs to be cultivated. We need to keep on praying, "Lord, increase our faith" (see Luke 17:5).

Faith is increased by exercise, by use. It is nourished by painful trials (see 1 Pet. 1:6-7). It also grows by reading and meditating on the Word of God. Most of all, faith thrives in an atmosphere of prayer.

Prayer introduces us to a life of faith. Paul declared that the life he lived, he lived by faith in the Son of God, who loved him and gave Himself for him (see Gal. 2:20)—that he walked by faith and not by sight (see 2 Cor. 5:7).

Prayer is absolutely dependent on faith. It has virtually no existence apart from it and accomplishes nothing unless it is faith's inseparable companion. Faith makes prayer effective and, in a certain important sense, must precede it, for "without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (Heb. 11:6).

This is the primary step in praying. In this regard, though faith does not bring the blessing, it puts prayer in a position to ask for it. It leads to another step of understanding by helping the petitioner believe that God is able and willing to bless.

Yet faith is narrowed down to one particular thing. It does not believe that God will reward everybody. It does not believe that He is a rewarder of all who pray but that He is a rewarder of those who "diligently seek Him" (Heb. 11:6).

Faith rests its case on diligent prayer. It gives assurance and encouragement to diligent seekers after God, for it is they alone who are richly rewarded when they pray.

Faith is the final, essential condition of true praying. James put this truth very plainly: "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without

reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord" (James 1:5-7).

Great incentives to pray are furnished in Scripture. Our Lord closes His teaching about prayer with the assurance and promise of heaven.

The presence of Jesus in heaven and the preparation He is making there for His saints help the weariness of praying. The assurance that He will come again to receive the saints strengthens and sweetens its difficult work! These things are the star of hope to prayer. They are the wiping away of its tears and the putting of the sweet odor of heaven into the bitterness of its cry.

The spirit of a pilgrim makes praying easier. An earthbound, earth-satisfied spirit cannot pray. The flame of spiritual desire in such a heart has either gone out or is smoldering in a faint glow. The wings of its faith are clipped, its eyes are filmed, its tongue is silenced.

But they who, in immovable faith and unceasing prayer, wait continually upon the Lord do renew their strength, do mount up with wings as eagles, do run and are not weary, do walk and not faint (see Is. 40:31).

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