

**AGAPE HOUSE OF WORSHIP
WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY**

Study Series: Foundation for an Effective Prayer Life
Part 3: The Right Prayer

Wednesday, January 17, 2024
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Introduction

Last week we looked at one of the two major factors that makes our prayer effective. We looked at the issue of “the praying person being right”. We concluded that the most important element of effective prayer is the person doing the prayer itself. If the person is not right, the prayer cannot be right.

Today we are going to look at the second factor, which is “the prayer being right”. Most believers would agree that prayer must be the will of God to be answered. Prayer is not arm-twisting God to do our selfish will; it is aligning and partnering with God to fulfil His will in our lives and around us. James tells us why many of our prayers do not get answered:

James 4:2-5 “You want what you don’t have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous of what others have, but you can’t get it, so you fight and wage war to take it away from them. Yet you don’t have what you want because you don’t ask God for it. 3 And even when you ask, you don’t get it because your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure. (NLT)”

Question: *What are the reasons James gave us here why some prayers don’t get answered?*

The scripture tells us that asking according to God’s will is a guaranteed way to ensure our prayers are answered by God.

1 John 5:14-15 “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.”

This then brings us to the \$64,000 question; how do we know the will of God and how do we know that what we are praying for is the will of God? Before we go into this, let’s look at the fundamental weakness the Bible says we all have when it comes to prayer:

Romans 8:26-27 “Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

- As humans, we have a fundamental weakness when it comes to prayer; we do not know what we should pray for and how we should pray.
- The Holy Spirit helps this weakness by praying for us using a method other than intelligible words called “groanings.”
- Because God and the Holy Spirit are one, the prayers that originate from the Holy Spirit are always according to the will of God.

Question: *What do you think the bible means by the phrase “groanings which cannot be uttered??”*

How does the Holy Spirit pray for us?

- **Groanings That Cannot Be Expressed in Words: Romans 8:26** *“And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don’t know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. 27 And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God’s own will.”*

- **Praying with my spirit without my understanding: 1 Corinthians 14:14-15** “For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. 15 What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.” (NIV)
- **Utter mysteries by the Spirit: 1 Corinthians 14:2** “For anyone who speaks in a tongue[a] does not speak to people but to God. Indeed, no one understands them; they utter mysteries by the Spirit.” (NIV)
- **Pray in the Spirit: Ephesians 6:18** “And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.” (NIV)
- **Praying In the Holy Spirit: Jude 1:20** “But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit.”

How do we pray in understanding according to the will of God?

Lesson from the prayer of Jesus:

Matthew 26:37-45 “And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. 38 Then He said to them, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.” 39 He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.” 40 Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, “What! Could you not watch with Me one hour? 41 Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

What Can We Learn from this Prayer?

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How to ensure you pray according to the will of God:

- Ask for the help of the Holy Spirit before you pray on any matter. Listen and follow His promptings.
- When you are unsure, pray like Jesus, “not as I will, but as You will.”
- In all your prayers, pray in the spirit first and then in understanding – **1 Corinthians 14:15** “What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding.” **Ephesians 6:18** “And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.”
- As much as possible, pray the Spirit-inspired prayers: Ephesians 1:17-19, Ephesians 3:16-19, Philippians 1:9-11, Colossians 1:9b-12.
- Become kingdom minded; renew your mind and align your heart with God:

Psalms 37:4 “Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.”

Romans 12:2 “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. The more your heart is aligned with God, the more your desire will align with Him.

- Remove every idol from your heart. **Ezekiel 14:4** “Therefore speak to them and tell them, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: When any of the Israelites set up idols in their hearts and put a wicked stumbling block before their faces and then go to a prophet, I the LORD will answer them myself in keeping with their great idolatry.’”