**We Can Know God Answers Our Prayers**

When the apostle John wrote the letter that we refer to as 1 John, he was forced to refute false doctrines being disseminated by men claiming to know things no one else knew (Gnostics). At the same time John set the record straight about the nature of the Christ, he outlined some things we can truly know by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. We noticed in our first article that we can know that there are false teachers among us and how to identify them. In our second article, we saw that we can know that we are right. In this study, John tells us that we can have confidence in the fact that God hears and answers our prayers.

In 1 John 5:14-15, John said by inspiration, “This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.” The key phrase in this passage is “according to His will”. If we understand God’s will by studying His word, we will know not to ask for our daily bread without working to earn our living, for example.

Christians should keep in mind that God is determined always to do what is in our best interest (Romans 8:28). Sometimes we ask for things we think, at the time, are good for us. If we knew everything God knows, we would thank Him for saying “No”.

It is a sobering truth that this promise does not apply everyone who may be reading this article. John is offering this assurance to a specific group of people and, frankly, not everyone is included. 1 John 3:22 says, “Whatever we ask we receive from Him because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.” The principle taught here is clear: God will not listen to a person who refuses to listen to Him. Hollywood wants you to believe that people can fall to their knees in times of trouble to appeal for help from the God they generally ignore. The Holy Spirit is telling us that simply isn’t true.

Answered prayer is a gift and a blessing from a loving Father to His devoted children. If you haven’t been reconciled to Him through faith in His Son and obedience to His will, the only prayers that make it past your ceiling are a search for His truth (Matthew 7:7; Acts 10:31). In the end, if you are not in a right relationship with your Creator, unanswered prayers are the least of your problems.

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