

## ***Prayer in the Book of James***

The writer of the book of James has provided us with a great deal of information about prayer.

### **"Ask In Faith" – James 1:6**

Praying in faith may well imply several things. First, it may imply that what we ask must be in harmony with what God has revealed to us in the faith. The faith is the gospel -- the will of Jesus Christ. It is in this sense that we pray in the name of Jesus Christ, i.e. we pray in accordance with His expressed authority. In no other way can we pray in His name.

Second, it may imply that we must pray with full confidence both in God's ability and in His willingness to grant that which we seek. Certainly we could not intelligently pray with such confidence for those things, which God has not instructed us to pray for in His Word, or for those things that we know are in opposition to His Word.

Third, it may imply that our faith in God must be strong enough that we are willing to leave to His judgment the determination of that which is best for us. This verse tells us that we are not to doubt. This does not mean that we are never to ask for anything, which we are not positive is in our best interest. It means that we are never to doubt God's ability to do for us that which we ask, or his judgment as to what is best for us. It is in this area that we must remember the words of Jesus: ". . . nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39).

### **Pray With a Willingness to Work – James 2:15,16**

"If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what cloth it profit?"

We must never lose sight of the fact that God wills that we work to accomplish that which we are able to accomplish, and ask Him for help in accomplishing that which we can not do for ourselves. It is not right to ask God to do for our brethren that which we are capable of doing for them. Neither is it right for us to ask God to do for us that which we are able to do for ourselves. I am confident that God is deeply touched by the prayers of those who have made great effort to provide for themselves.

Often we hear prayers offered up to God in behalf of the souls of men who have not heard the gospel, God's power to save. These prayers ask for additional time to be granted unto those outside the fold of God. Yet, many times those who offer up such prayers are the very ones who never make any effort to teach those for whom they so piously pray. Let us ever pray, but let us ever be willing and anxious to work for the accomplishment of that for which we pray.

### **Ask Not for Personal Pleasure – James 4:3**

"Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." There is a difference in asking for things, which we actually have need of and things, which we might enjoy for the sake of enjoyment. We may pray for the necessities of life, as Jesus instructed His disciples to do in Matthew 6. We may pray for these because we actually have need of them, and God is deeply interested in our needs. However, if we pray only for the satisfaction of our lusts, God will not grant what we seek.

### **Pray for Others – James 5:16**

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." There is no place in prayer for selfishness. As members of the family of God we must be characterized by an interest in our brethren. As a part of God's creation we must be interested in every creature. In humbleness I must seek from God the satisfaction of my needs. Likewise I must seek from God the satisfaction of the needs of others. Every child of God should earnestly desire the prayers of his brethren. Each should be willing and anxious to pray for others.

### **Forget Not Righteousness – James 5:16**

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." There is power in prayer. It is this fact that compels man to believe in the providence of God. Prayer is not simply a means of

relieving our burden by telling our problems to someone else. Many people believe that the only value in prayer is in "getting the burden off your shoulders." They contend the only benefit is like that which a person may receive from telling his troubles to a friend in whom he has great confidence. There is much more to prayer than this. God's ears are open to the prayers of the righteous. If we are striving to do His will, willing to work to the limit of our ability, God is ever concerned with our deficiencies, and in His own way will answer our petitions.

Let us never forget that an effective prayer, one that "availeth much," is one that falls from the lips of a righteous man. Therefore by faithful service to God we must prepare ourselves to pray.

- by **Bryan Vinson, Jr.**

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### ***'For The Show'***

Theatrical performances require lots of preparation in order to be successful. Efforts to 'set the stage' are needed to make a play, skit, or musical production effective. Much work is done 'for the show.'

Unfortunately, many religious folks also like to make a show -- of their good works. There is a determined effort on their part to make sure others will be aware of what they have done, are doing, or are planning to do. But here is where Jesus urged us to actually avoid things that would draw attention to our actions. In the Sermon the Mount, He repeatedly warned about doing our deeds to 'be seen of men' (Matthew 6:1ff). We must carefully heed His warning.

The next time you have an opportunity to serve, help, or encourage someone else, do it without any concern that others will know and commend you for what you have done. Know that God is always aware and will bless you for your work. Proverbs 15:3 says that "*the eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.*" We often use this verse to warn that no sin is hidden from God. But notice that no good deed goes unnoticed by Him either. So, don't worry that He won't see and know what you have done in His service.

Of course, frequently our good deeds will be noticed by others. This is not because we sought such attention, but simply because others learn of these things in a natural, unannounced manner. When this is the case, our desire should be to direct all the glory and honor to the Father. Also in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus also said: "*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven*" (Matthew 5:16).

Let us do nothing 'for the show' with a desire to direct attention to ourselves. Let us to everything to point others to Him. Think!

- by **Greg Gwin**