

Prayer—Faith and God's Will

This article is from the "Among Friends" section of the Church of God Big Sandy's website, churchofgodbigandy.com. It was posted for the weekend of June 19, 2021.

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BIG SANDY, Texas—One of the greatest lessons in life is for a person to learn how to effectively pray. And one of the greatest services that a friend can provide to other people is to influence them to have a better prayer life.

On June 12, I started a seven-part series about prayer. Today, is part two.

- Part 1—Talking to a Perfect Father
- Part 2—Faith and God's Will

Importance of faith

In his book in the Bible, James made a powerful statement.

James 5:16—"The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much."

The Son of God taught a valuable lesson about the importance of faith.

Mark 9:23—"Jesus said to him, 'If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.' "

Mark 11:22—"So Jesus answered and said to them, 'Have faith in God.' "

Mark 11:23-24—"For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them."

Whatever you ask?

Bible students are aware that Mark 11:23-24 is not the only place where the Son of God uses the word *whatever*.

John 14:13-14—"And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it."

John 15:16—"You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you."

John 16:23—"And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you."

God is not a genie

Children of God are well aware that God is not a genie in a bottle who is required to grant wishes by a believer. God is not required to fulfill all requests or demands of His children—no matter how much the child believes and has faith.

The child does not have jurisdiction over the heavenly Father.

The child does not command the heavenly Father.

The child does not have better judgment than the heavenly Father.

God sometimes says “no”

The book of James gives two reasons why people do not receive answered prayer.

James 4:2—“You do not have because you do not ask.”

James 4:3—“You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.”

God is a parent who is not required to give His children whatever wish, request or demand that they make.

God is a heavenly Father who does what is best for His children. (In a future article, we will look at some of the examples where God said “no.”)

Importance of God’s will

1 John 5:14—“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.”

If you want to read two examples about how faith and God’s will work together, I recommend that you read the following two sections of Scripture. (We will talk about them in upcoming articles.)

- Daniel 3:17-18
- Matthew 26:36-44