

# “Philippians 4:13—Part 1”

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 Feb. 10, 2024.

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BIG SANDY, Texas—At our Bible study on Wednesday night, I began a series about Philippians 4:13. This was part 1.

Philippians 4:13—“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

## **Reasons for choosing**

Why would a pastor give a Bible-study series about the words found in Philippians 4:13?

Here are four of my thoughts.

- I believe that a merciful Heavenly Father readily answers prayers.
- But I do not believe in the “name it, claim it” approach—where people can push God to do what they want Him to do and cause Him to submit to them.
- Our loving Father gives us so much—every need and many of our wants.
- One of the greatest gifts a dad gives to his children is a can-do, positive attitude, and the perfect Heavenly Father does the same—He helps us to succeed in times of adversity.

## **God answered prayers**

There are many examples in the Bible where our Heavenly Father has answered prayers of people.

Let me give you two examples. Both examples are extremely relatable in our current world.

- 2 Kings 20:1-6—When King Hezekiah was sick and approached the Lord about healing, the Lord gave him 15 additional years.
- Esther 4:15-16—When the Jewish people were under threat of annihilation and they turned to God with prayer and fasting, He answered their prayers.

## **Faithful requests**

While I personally do not believe the “name it, claim it” approach to prayer, I do understand how some disciples come to that conclusion. For the record, they use scriptures in the Bible.

At this time, let me show you some of the scriptures that people use to believe the “name it, claim it” approach. (Remember that my understanding their reasoning does not mean that I accept their final conclusion.)

- Matthew 7:7-8—“Everyone” who asks receives.”
- Luke 11:9-10—“Everyone” who asks receives.”
- Matthew 17:20—Nothing will be impossible for you.
- Mark 9:23—If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.”
- Matthew 21:21—If you have faith (and do not doubt), it will be done.
- Matthew 21:22—“Whatever” things you ask in prayer (believing), you will receive.
- Mark 11:23—He will have “whatever” he says.
- Mark 11:24—“Whatever” things you ask when you pray, believe that you will receive them and you will have them.
- John 14:13—“Whatever you ask in My name, that I will do.”
- John 14:14—“If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.”
- John 15:7—“You will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.”
- John 15:16—“Whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give you.”
- John 16:23—“Whatever you ask the Father in My name, He will give you.”
- John 16:24—“Until now, you have asked nothing in My name. Ask [in My name] and you will receive.”

Wow.

Those scriptures are truly amazing and encouraging. Those are wonderful scriptures about the promises of the Father and the Son.

Those scriptures are great reminders to have a positive approach of faith and hope toward the Father and the Son.

So why do I hesitate about the “name it, claim it” approach?

### **From the Son of God**

Following are scriptures from the Son of God that add an important key to those wonderful scriptures mentioned above.

- John 5:30—“I do not seek My own will, but the will of the Father who sent Me.”
- John 6:38—“I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”
- Matthew 7:21—“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.”
- Matthew 26:37-42—When the Son of God was sorrowful and distressed, He had earnest communication with the Father.

- Matthew 26:39—"Not as I will, but as You will."
- Matthew 26:42—"Your will be done."

### Eye-opening example

Is our Heavenly Father bound by the faithful requests (strong proclamations or demands) of His children?

Let's notice an example when a faithful servant requested deliverance from a trial, and the Son of God (on behalf of the Father) said "no."

The example of Paul is illuminating.

- 2 Corinthians 12:1—Paul mentioned the blessing of having visions and revelations.
- 2 Corinthians 12:7—Paul mentioned how the Lord wanted to keep Paul humble (and a useful tool), so the Lord allowed him to have a "thorn in the flesh."
- 2 Corinthians 12:8—Paul mentioned how he asked three times for the Lord to remove the thorn in the flesh.
- 2 Corinthians 12:9—Paul repeated the Lord's response: "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."
- 2 Corinthians 12:9-11—Paul accepted the Lord's answer (saying "no" or "not now"), and Paul continued to receive strength from Him.

Bible students understand that this rejected request was an example of God's will in the life of Paul and the people he served.

### Next study

For the next Bible study, I invite you to consider the following three concepts.

1. I believe that God (as a perfect Father) will supply our personal needs—because He is trustworthy and because He loves us.
2. I believe that God will often give us the desires of our heart—because He loves us.
3. I believe that God sometimes says "no" to our requests (often the desires of our heart)—because He loves us.