



Wednesday Night Bible Study Notes, September 22, 2010

Praying with Confidence

For the past three weeks we've been talking about prayer. I wanted to continue that tonight and discuss about praying with confidence.

I wanted to begin with a question: Are you certain your prayers are effective and powerful? You can be. In this study we will discover the secrets to dynamic, confident prayer.

Three points to confident prayer:

1. The Importance of a Close Relationship with God

Prayer is the means by which we develop intimacy with the Father. Through it, we worship Him, confess our sins, express thankfulness for blessings, and lay our requests before Him.

- a. What makes it possible for us to approach God with our needs (John 14:6)?
- b. Why should we expect Him to answer our prayers (Rom. 8:32)?

A life of rebellion and indifference short-circuits our boldness in prayer. The apostle John writes that "if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God" (1 John 3:21).

- c. Are you holding on to any sin that cheats you out of confidence and faith in prayer?

One caution: Although sin hinders our prayers, living righteously does not guarantee that our prayers will be answered in the way we hope.

2. The Importance of God's Will

Biblically speaking, the *Lord's will* determines whether or not He answers a prayer.

1 John 5:14-15 says:

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.

- a. According to this passage, how can we be sure our prayers will be answered?
- b. The fact that God answers only those prayers that are within His will can seem discouraging. Why is this limitation actually a blessing?

3. Practical Ways to Know God's Will

Knowing the will of God is critical to effective prayer. What are the primary ways He reveals His purposes and plans?

The Bible explains the Father's ***general will*** (Psalm 119:105). God's Word sets guidelines for our lives that can direct our prayers. For example, we may confidently ask the Lord for peace despite our circumstances. (Isa. 41:10). Remember 9/8 Bible Study?

The Holy Spirit reveals the ***specific will*** of the Lord. Especially in important decisions—such as which college to attend, whom to marry, or when to switch jobs—we should discover and follow God's unique plans for our lives.

- a. Describe the work of the Holy Spirit in each passage:

John 16:13

1 Corinthians 2:10-12

The Holy Spirit takes the general revelation of God and applies it to our situation so that we know the Lord's will. When you aren't sure what God has in mind for you, ask Him to speak to your heart, and trust that the Spirit will reveal His plans in time.

Will we always know God's will? No. Paul asked three times for his "thorn" to be removed before God revealed its purpose in his life (2 Cor. 12:7-10). It's fine to share our wants and desires in prayer, especially in similar situations.

Sometimes we know the will of the Father quickly. Other times, God waits to reveal His point of view. Either way, if the Lord doesn't grant our request, we should remember that although what we asked for *appeared* ideal, it was not His best for our lives. Remember Last Wednesday Night's Bible Study, Unanswered Prayers?