



THEN the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, ² Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? ³ Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.⁴ Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. ⁵ Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? ⁶ Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; ⁷ When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? ⁸ Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb? ⁹ When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddlingband for it, ¹⁰ And brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors, ¹¹ And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed? (Job 38:1-11)

It is true that God answers the petitions in prayer of His people – but not always with a YES. We are God’s children regardless our age in years. When we appeal to our Father for things hurtful to us, He will refuse the appeal. God, contrary to popular opinion, does not hear or answer all prayers. Prayers offered up out of pride, doubt, unbelief, or intentional sin are neither heard, nor answered, by God. “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:” (Psalm 66:18) – if we are living a rebellious life of sin, God will pay no heed to our prayers. “Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.” (James 4:3) – if we ask for things outside the will of God to grant, we will not receive. In order to insure every prayer is answered, always pray with the Mind of Christ!

Please note the model communal prayer of Matthew 6:

AFTER this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. ¹⁰ Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread. ¹² And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. ¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. (Matthew 6:9-13)

Notice that the only requests made in this prayer are four-fold:

- 1) Let YOUR (i.e. God's) WILL be done both on earth and in Heaven;
- 2) Give us nourishment for this day only;
- 3) Forgive us our debts just as we forgive others their debts;
- 4) Give us the right spirit to avoid temptation and to overcome it.

Simple and succinct – nothing about fine clothes, riches, or personal success. The Lord's Prayer is offered after that principle announced by our Lord: "*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*" (Matthew 6:33) All our needs, not all our wants, will be provided by the Father who knows what is best for our lives.

One of the most egregious shortcomings of those who pray is the failure to seek diligently for the Lord's answer to prayer. Our Father in Heaven is not a Genie to whom we address our dreams, but a loving Father who is both interested in our faithfulness in praying, but also eager to give counsel regarding our petitions to Him. Even before offering prayer, should we not consider how our prayers will line up with Holy Scripture? Should we not make our approach in prayer with humility and high honor for the Sovereign to whom we seek succor?

If we pray in the proper spirit requesting the leading of the Lord in any matter, should we not pause to hear the Lord's answer? It may be that, like His only Begotten Son (Jesus Christ), God may answer our petition with a question of His own as in Luke 10: "*And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, *What is written in the law? how readest thou?**" (Luke 10:25-26) Before we ask a question of our science professor, should we not have sought out the answer in our textbook first? If we seek counsel of God, should we not have inquired first of His counsel as laid out in Holy Scripture? Our Father may sometimes inquire of us to reveal to us that we have not properly thought through our request to see if it aligns with the Word of God.

"I am the creature of a day, passing through life as an arrow through the air. I am a spirit come from God and returning to God; just hovering over the great gulf; till a few moments hence I am no more seen; I drop into an unchangeable eternity! I want to know one thing, the way to heaven; how to land safe on that happy shore. God Himself has condescended to teach the way; for this end He came from heaven. He has hath written it down in a book. give me that book! At any price give me the Book of God! Lord, is it not Thy word – "'If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God? Thou givest liberally, and upbraidest not. Thou hast said, if any be willing to do Thy will he shall know. I am willing to do; let me know Thy will.'" from EM Bounds, On Prayer

To the casual reader, the counsel of Job's friends seemed reasonable and Godly; however, the Lord took umbrage at them. So, He demands an answer to a multitude of questions, none of which neither Job nor his friends could have answered. So why did God ask these questions of Job? It was to reveal, not only to Job, but to his three friends, that they could not scratch the surface in knowing the mysteries of God. It revealed the great glory of God compared with the gossamer understanding of man. It follows the presumption of prideful scientists who forecast the end of life on earth in coming decades due to Global Warming while they cannot forecast with certainty the weather for the next week; or those scientist who claim to know all that is to be known about life and how it came to be on earth, yet, they cannot even create a small gnat that lives. They have all of the ingredients necessary, but cannot put the one millisecond of life into their creation. "*O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane*

and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen.” (1 Timothy 6:20-21)

In what ways does God demand answers from us in prayer. Quite often, it is by a stunning silence, a feeling that we may have gone a bit far in our requests, an awareness of conscientious presumption.. Remember the Canaanite woman who came out of the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, and her prayer? To begin with, there was nothing wrong with her prayer of faith, but Christ seemed to make a gentle rebuke. The rebuke was not made for the amendment of the woman’s prayer, but for the edification of faith in the eyes of the disciples – many of whom did not possess such mighty faith: “22 *And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. 23 But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. 24 But he answered and said, *I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.* 25 Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. 26 But he answered and said, *It is not meet to take the children’s bread, and to cast it to dogs.* 27 And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table. 28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, *O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.*” (Matthew 15:22-28)*

Perhaps you have prayed with a heavy heart, but the canopy of Heaven seems to be covered with brass. Hopefully, you made an acceptable request out of a faithful heart. But no answer was forthcoming – neither YEA nor NAY.. But, by the grace of God, you did not give up on making your repeated petitions to the Majesty on High. In the process of time and repetition, the Lord answers your prayer fully. Why the delay? It just may have been for the same purpose that our Lord Jesus Christ did not answer the Canaanite woman at the first appeal. Perhaps your constancy in prayer was a source of interest to your friends and neighbors. Perhaps their lack of faith led them to believe that your prayers fell on the deaf ears of God. Perhaps later when your prayers were profoundly answered, it caused a spark of faith to grow in the hearts of those friends and neighbors who knew her to be an ardent lady of faith – and her persistence proved her faith.

Never be discouraged when making a Godly appeal in faith. Never give up for it is the Lord’s will to grant every faithful plea. But also do not fail to listen to God to determine what answer He will demand of you.