

WE LEARN FROM GOD'S WORD TO PRAY AND RECEIVE IN THE NAME OF OUR LORD

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Receiving in the Name of Jesus is a very-important subject for every person to consider. When rightly understood it can open the way for God's power to be manifested in our personal life and family, (and in all other ways). There are only two sources of information in regard to this life-giving subject, and of course only God's written Word will tell us the real Truth of the matter. The devil, however, has always worked hard to convince people that God has changed, and that we can no longer receive answers to prayer from God.

We know from Scripture that God and His Word has not changed, and the Atonement Blood of Christ is just as efficacious today (as it was when Christians believed on it in the first century). Scriptures also clearly reveal that God loves us as much as He loves His only Son, whom He gave up to death for us when we were without strength and ungodly. That is the greatest possible expression of God's love for us, which is a pure, unselfish, and perfect love, ... and we all have a privilege to prove for ourselves the extent of God's love for us.

The Bible also reveals by teaching, and by examples of faith and trust, that God is always willing to hear and answer our prayers, concerning every Scriptural need or desire that we may have in this present life. It is our responsibility (and choice) to turn to God in faith, ... (or we turn to some other source of deliverance or supply of needs). We need to truly understand and believe that we have a God who never changes, also a living Christ whose power is the same yesterday, today, and forever because the Bible says so. (Heb. 13:8).

Therefore, we have a Gospel Message that has never changed, a Holy Spirit who is the same today as in Bible times, (and an Atoning Blood sacrifice that can never lose its power). What this all means, is that the standard of a true Christian life is exactly the same as it was in Bible times (and that the conditions for receiving Eternal Life and of receiving answers to prayer are the same). God, and Christ His Son, have not changed, nor has the Holy Spirit of God and His Son.

Satan, on the other hand, has had one main object for thousands of years, that is, to convince people that God had changed, and that He does not hear and answer our prayers for the things needed in this present life.

The devil is a spiritual being, so he can put thoughts and suggestions in the minds of those who have not fully surrendered their life to God, and thus, still have the old evil nature of the self-life in them. All the devil's thoughts and suggestions to a person's mind, might seem exactly like their own, and seem to be founded on fact; ... but, they are lies direct from the father of lies, Satan himself.

Satan also uses a multitude of so-called religious teachers in the world to be a mouthpiece for him, to confirm the wrong thoughts he puts into people's minds concerning that lie that God has changed. He also uses those false teachers' deceptive written teachings (religious books and opinions), as well as by word of mouth from them.

What could be more wicked, slanderous, and displeasing to God, than for one to paint His character as being opposite to what He really is? A large majority of professing Christians who have accepted that lie from Satan, have been robbed of the blessings that Jesus died to give them in this present life (as well as losing the hope of Eternal Life). To believe the lie of Satan that God no longer answers prayers (for healing, finances, etc.), will effectively hinder a person from living up to God's requirement to "believe on the One whom God has sent" (that one condition of God's Will for saving us).

Instead of believing Satan's suggestions and thoughts to our mind, (that God will not answer our prayers), we need to refer back to God's Word, which tells the real truth of the matter. When God's Word says that the Atonement Blood of Christ provides, protects, delivers, and heals, that is what we must believe (rather, than the devil's lies that God has changed from what He was in Bible times).

We can easily recognize the plan that Satan used to deceive the professed Christians of the third century (the late Pastor said). The early Church (especially when the Roman Empire professed to accept the Christian religion), that church (in general) lost its spirituality; its answers to prayer ceased; and every other manifestation of God's glorious presence and power (as were clearly manifested at the beginning of the Gospel Age), very soon came to an end.

Satan had convinced those fallen (unenlightened) church members that they were still good Christians. And so, naturally the only possible reason for the lack of God's presence and power with them, had to be because God had changed, and was no longer willing to do the things that He had done at the beginning, ... when the early Church had put God's Truth into practice.

That terrible delusion and a most wicked slander of our loving God's true character has continued ever since then. There have only been a handful of people (here and there), who have gotten back to really trusting on God, back to really believing His Word, and back to the real truth concerning God's willingness to hear and answer every scriptural prayer for things in this present life.

The main object of Satan in getting people to believe that God will no longer hear and answer prayer, is to rob them of the great spiritual blessing that will always accompany answered prayer. That sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, is to perfect our Christian character, which results in our spiritual growth and a preparation to meet Jesus Christ when He returns to take true believers with Him.

(Heb.12:12-14), "Therefore strengthen the drooping hands and paralyzed knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put entirely out of joint but may rather be restored. Persistently strive for peace with all men, and for that growth in holiness, apart from which no one will see the Lord."

The devil knows that every time a person will deal with God personally (and they receive a full answer to their prayer), and not telling anyone of their problems and needs, but going to God alone in

a private prayer of faith), that person also receives a great amount of spiritual light, growth and development, a real increase of faith, and most importantly a real step of progress toward their preparation for Eternal Life. Many Bible examples have proven the spiritual value of answered prayer, as people exclaimed faith for victory.

(2 Chron.20:) illustrates how Jehoshaphat's faith was perfected through one encouraging answer to prayer. He went to God in prayer and settled it final to lay aside every human plan and power. He was committed to look to God alone for all his help when three armies came against him and the Israelites. This attitude of absolute faith in God (and not giving in to fear which the devil surely tried to put in his mind), brought an immediate answer to prayer and a great victory over the enemies.

Aside from their victory, they also received a great quantity of supplies. After three days of gathering the spoil of the enemy, they met in the Valley of Berachah (which means happiness), and praised and thanked God for His mercy and love. The 46th Psalm reveals the great spiritual blessing received by Jehoshaphat and the Israelites. It was the perfection of faith, which carries every other spiritual blessing with it. (Vs. 1-3) "God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, Even though the earth be removed, (that kind of spiritual strength and grace is only received through having faith in God),... "And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Though its waters roar and be troubled, Though the mountains shake with its swelling."

Many people believe that those verses refer to events to take place in the end times. True believers whose faith in God has been perfected by Him (through trusting on Him), will not fear those terrifying events to come, while the unfaithful of the world will cry out in fear and try to hide.

These verses reveal that, that answer to prayer received from God, gave Jehoshaphat and the Israelites confidence that they were delivered from any possibility of ever fearing again. [They prove that Jehoshaphat's faith had been perfected by God, as he did not compromise his love for God by turning to some other source of help.]

The Apostle John told us (1 John 4:18), "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love." (For there is something imperfect in his love for God).

As Jehoshaphat and anyone else would endure in the faith (that results from their love for God),...God would also protect them from falling away from faith. (Jude 1:24-25), "To Him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy-- to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

That one answered prayer gave to Jehoshaphat the same thing that God is trying to accomplish in all our lives, that is, a "faith which worketh by love." (Gal.5:6). Paul said, this was the only worth-while

thing in our Christian life (because an uncompromising love for God, inspires an obedient faith in God). (John 14:21), "He who has my commandments and obeys them--he it is who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and will clearly reveal myself to him." (That is Jesus' Promise for us).

That means to have Christ manifested in us through our obedient faith in Him (as Paul explained Gal. 5:5), "For we through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith."

(Matt.8:) gives us an example of the valuable spiritual blessing that came with one answered prayer. A Roman Army captain asked Jesus to heal a servant who was very sick. Jesus said that He would come and heal him. The captain, however, told Jesus that he was not worthy to have Jesus come to his house, but to just speak the Word only, and his servant would be healed. When Jesus heard the man say that, He marveled and said to those following, that He had not found such great faith, no, not even in Israel, (the man was a Gentile).

Jesus then revealed the great spiritual blessing that came as a result of taking that uncompromising attitude to God's Word. (Vs.11-13), "And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. "But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way; and as you have believed, so, let it be done for you." And his servant was healed that same hour."

In saying this, Jesus gave the man a through ticket to Heaven (or the promise and assurance of Eternal Life) (and verifying that Eternal Life is a present possession through faith in Christ). [The man had met the condition of answered prayer, ...a final decision to depend on God alone, and a willingness to accept God's Word as the only evidence that his prayer has been heard and answered. (That is a step of faith that we all need to take on God's written Word.) The man did in fact prefer the Word of the Lord, to actually seeing the healing work done. All the professed children of God who were rejected (from His Kingdom) had taken the opposite attitude to God and His Word.

We first have teaching from the Bible concerning faith for answered prayer, then we have all the examples to illustrate how that teaching is to be applied to circumstances in our life, ... and then, what perfect results always follow when teaching of the Scriptures is applied through faith. This means that if we will apply the teaching about the Truth of God's Word in our life (just as they did), and we get the same results, ...that we have found the real Truth of God, and we have gotten back to God and His Word. It is having faith in the unseen God, by our believing on His written Word, instead of falling to temptation to seek deliverance from a source that can be seen.

Paul describes how our faith in the unseen is to be applied (and how it is meant to work for us, with eternal results). (2 Cor.4:17-18) "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not

look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Romans 8: gives us an excellent revelation of God's willingness to hear and answer prayer for everything we could possibly need or desire (that is within His will for us). (vs.31-32) "What then shall we say to this? If God is on our side, who is there to appear against us? He who did not withhold even His own Son, but gave Him up for all of us, will He not also with Him, freely give us all things?"

When God tells us that He gave us the greatest gift, His only Son,..(when we were without strength and ungodly), that is a fact (and an unanswerable argument). So, how could it be possible that He would not give us every needed thing or Scriptural desires, of which all are of much lesser value than Jesus Christ? This would include everything in this present life (which is to be received from trusting God), and it will also be a step forward in our preparation for Eternal Life, (as well as being a true example for our children, that of trusting (believing) in God's Word for things in this life.

Because he believed God's promise, the Bible says of Abraham (our leader in the faith) (Gen.15:6) "And he believed in the Lord, and God accounted it to him for righteousness." Psalm 103:assures us "But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting On those who fear Him, And His righteousness to children's children, To such as keep His covenant, And to those who remember His commandments to do them."

These promises from Scripture that our believing on God's Word is accounted to us for righteousness,...should make it far more important for us to realize why we must set the example to pray and receive in Jesus Name (and not place trust on other sources of deliverance or supply). "To those who remember His commandments to do them," means to heed God's requirement to "believe on the One whom He has sent."

The fact from Scripture that the righteousness (spiritual blessing) received from believing on God's Word,...is meant to be carried over to our children (and to their children),.. should make us all stop and think when we are tempted to make a wrong decision regarding our place of trust. (Our children are watching and learning from us).(Prov. 22:6 instructs us), "Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it."

If we are tempted to go against the Bible teaching on not keeping company with unbelievers (those outside the faith, or who have turned their back to the Truth), we surely must consider the example that we are setting for our children, of whom we are instructed by God to Atrain up in the way he should go". Aside from our own spiritual condition and preparation for Eternal Life, what can be more important to us than the spiritual condition of our children and grandchildren!

It can be a humbling thought to consider when we are tempted to think that.. "It won't matter!" ... how we decide on an issue where a principle of Truth is involved). Instead, it is a most important decision, ... for where we place our trust... is the true Christian

life summed up in just one phrase. It was accounted to Abraham as a righteousness (that reaches to children's children.)

The Promises that Jesus gave us, should be assurance for us as to where we should place our trust (Matt.7:7-8) "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened."

So, if we are tempted to place our trust on some other plan for deliverance (or a source of supply), we must know that our children are watching and learning from us. It is not only our own preparation for 'Eternal Life' that is involved, (but our children's Eternal Life).

Praying and receiving (in Jesus' Name), is indeed a most important subject for everyone to consider and to fully understand. It opens the way for God's power to be manifested in our personal life, with our children and other family members (and in all other ways). The true value of the spiritual blessing received could not be put into words. The Gospel Message has never changed. The Holy Spirit is the same today as He was in Bible times, and the Atoning Blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ can never lose its power. Therefore, the real standard of a true Christian life is exactly the same as it was in Bible times, and the conditions for receiving Eternal Life, as well as receiving answers to prayer, are exactly the same.

(Jude 1:20-21 is a vivid reminder for all of us), "But you, my dearly-loved friends, building yourselves up on the basis of your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, must keep yourselves safe in the love of God,... waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ which will result in the Life of the Ages."

(Hebr.13:8-9) "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods (teachings) which have not profited those who have been occupied with them. [We must keep our faith centered on the power of the 'Cross of Christ, not on compromised false doctrines and places of trust. It will result in the Life of the Ages for us and our children (God's Word explains).

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THE FIRST CENTURY GOSPEL CHURCH/ PHILADELPHIA

S323R MAIN POINTS:

1. By teaching and example, the Bible refutes the devil's main object to convince people that God has changed and is not the same today, and that He will no longer answer prayers.
2. But the Gospel Message has never changed, the Holy Spirit is still the same today, and the Atoning Blood sacrifice of Christ can never lose its power. (We cannot listen to or heed the devil's lies, nor accept false teaching and wrong doctrine that does not teach steadfast faith on God and His Promises).