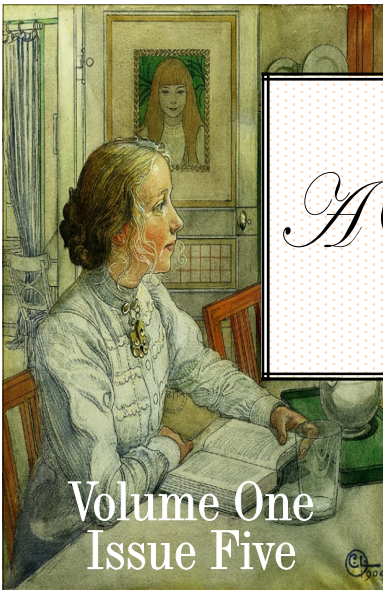


A Woman & Her Walk With God Series

Encouraging Women to Walk With God on the Brighter Side of Life



A Woman's Guide to Getting Her Prayers Answered

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James 5:16b

Last week I taught you how to pray so that God will hear your prayers, and this week I am going to show you what the Bible has to say about what you can do to make sure those prayers get answered by God. Many people think the whole concept of prayer is some kind of spooky mystery, but the truth is, that getting your prayers answered should be expected in the same way you expect God to bless you when you tithe, encourage you when you do right, and chastise you when you do wrong. God is a good and generous God, and we can depend upon Him to hear and answer our prayers WHEN we pray according to the guidelines He has established for us in His holy Word.

In Matthew 6:5-18, we find that Jesus is teaching the disciples some instructions about prayers. Let's turn to this passage and see what we can learn from Him about this subject as well.

1. **ASK GOD IN PRIVATE.** If we want God to answer our prayers, then we must make our request known to God, not just to others. Why do you think this is so important? What often happens when we share our requests with others? Sometimes they feel like they must do something about it (even though God has not asked them to). Or sometimes, they give us advice or opinions that God would not want us to listen to. And other times, our public prayers could be used as an avenue to gossip and talk about things that would make other people look bad. Now, this is not to say that we can never ask for others to pray for us, but we must be careful to make sure that our motives are not to gain THEIR sympathy or assistance.
2. **ASK FOR THE RIGHT THINGS.** (James 4:3; I John 5:14-15) What are the right things to ask about? Things that God would want you to have, not just things that you want. Is there a difference between the two? Yes there is. For instance, God wants you to have a good marriage, and you might want your husband to move to Siberia. If you ask God to ship your husband overseas, He will say no, but if you ask Him to help you have a good marriage, He will say yes. Another example involves material things. God wants to meet your needs, but He is not interested in helping you gain your greed's. If you ask Him for food, a place to live, and clothes to wear, because you NEED them, He will answer favorably and give them to you. But if you ask for steak because you don't like ground beef, a brand new house that you can't afford, because you are bored with your old one, or a new outfit when your closet is busting at the seams with clothes . . . He will answer negatively and give nothing more to you. And it is not because He doesn't love you. It is just that He sees that you have enough, or that you

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wouldn't appreciate what He was going to give you anyway. Sometimes God treats our prayers for our health in the same way. Let's say that we are sick or struggling with some disease, and we pray and ask God to heal us. He might heal us if He thinks we will use that good health to come to church more and serve Him more often, but if He knows that the only reason we want to get better is so that we can do our own things more, like shop, travel, or work outside of our homes, He will usually say no about helping to heal us. The KEY to asking for the right things is asking for the things that would be His will that we have.

3. **ASK FROM A RIGHTEOUS HEART & LIFE. (James 5:16; John 15:7)** What does a righteous heart and life look like? a. Forgiveness: Matthew 6:12 b. Obedience: I John 3:22 c. Humility: II Chronicles 7:14 d. Wholeheartedness: Jeremiah 29:13 When you and I pray for things, God looks at our life to see if we are doing our part. As we pray for our husbands to get right, He looks to see if we are behaving like a good wife. When we pray for our children to be different, He looks to see if we are being the kind of mother His Word says that we should be. When we pray for finances or other material things, He looks to see if we are being honest and faithful with what we have been given. This is a scary thought, isn't it? But the truth is, that if we won't even be faithful to do what we are supposed to, we won't really be thankful when God does what we want Him to do either. How can we develop a righteous heart and life? Obey what you know. Do the things that God has already shown you, whether you want to do it or not. This is what obedience, humility, and wholeheartedness is all about.
4. **ASK FOR IT FERVENTLY. (MATTHEW 15:21-28; GENESIS 18:32; ACTS 12:15)** I love the story about the healing of the Syrophenician Woman's daughter. This was a woman that wasn't even a Jew, but she believed that Jesus was the only one that could heal her daughter. So you know what she did? She bugged Him about it until He finally gave in and did it! I love that, because there are things in my life that I don't want to take no for an answer to either (my father's salvation, my daughter finding a godly mate, our church to reach all of the lost in Lockport, etc.), and it brings me great comfort to know that God will give in to me about these things if I just bug Him about them long enough!
5. **ASK FOR IT DESPERATELY. (Matthew 6:17-18; Matthew 17:14-21)** The Bible makes it so clear that God answers some prayers ONLY after we are willing to fast for them. What does it mean to fast? It means to go without food. Why would God want us to do this? Because this is often the only way He can tell if we want something bad enough. Is there something in your life that you have been praying for and praying for without any light of an answer from God? Then I encourage you to fast once a week for it. Pick a meal or a day of meals and whenever you feel hungry, pray for your request instead. Don't tell anyone that you are doing this, and don't complain about your hunger, and you will be amazed at the miraculous things that you will see God do.

Well, this is all there is to getting your prayers answered. Ask in secret. Ask for the right things. Ask from a righteous heart & life. Ask for it fervently. And when all else fails, ask for it desperately by fasting and praying about it.