

Praying with Confidence—1st John 5:14-15

We sometimes doubt the usefulness of our prayer life, and lack confidence in prayer. Beginning in 1st John 5: **14 This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.** We're going to talk about confidence and boldness in prayer today.

Confidence through righteousness-John gives us a key to answered prayer in this verse by using the word *παρρησία* *parresia* (translated confidence). The word means being bold in straightforward speech that conceals nothing and glosses over nothing we could say outspoken, plainly telling the truth. 1 John 2:28-29 **28 Now, little children, remain in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not draw back from Him in shame at His coming. 29 If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness also has been born of Him.** When we stand before Him, all our thoughts and motivations, and things we've whispered behind closed doors will be open to him, and on display. And so this confidence, *parresia*, describes the openness, concealing nothing that a righteous person will have when standing before Jesus, a judge that can see our very thoughts and heart. We know how we have been living, even if no one else does. And God lets us know that it affects our prayer life. Psalm 66: 18 **If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear;**

James 5:16 encourage you as it proves the power of prayer: **16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. A prayer of a righteous person, when it is brought about, can accomplish much.** "Effective" is translated from the Greek word *energeō*, from which our English word "energy" is derived. God's Word to us promises that there is authority in our prayers. If we put God first, then we will know that we can trust Him to provide for all of our needs. God knows that we have needs, and He wants to provide for them. But we must have our priorities straight. Matthew 6:33 **33 But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided to you.** His Will must be first. Prayer is not about getting our will done in heaven, but about getting God's Will done down here on earth.

According to God's Will-As we pray, we find that the Lord often guides our prayers over time. He leads us into prayers into more and more aligning with His perfect will. And so, our confidence is "that whenever we ask according to His will, He hears us." It's us making the request that limits what happens, not the willingness of God to hear. James 2:2b-3 **You do not have because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask with the wrong motives, so that you may spend what you request on your pleasures.** So, we need to come to God with petitions that our within His Will to grant us, and we will find that He gives us all that we need. "God hears" is not merely that He listens but that He listens favorably. God is going to act on our prayers, and He is going to act on our behalf, as we ask according to God's Will

Confidence through Obedience-Our confidence, our ability to stand before Him in openness, integrity, not in shame has to do with our abiding in God's love through obeying His commandments. we will find it a whole lot easier to put our confidence in God, and His power to answer prayer, if we're not internally doubting and wondering whether we deserve answered prayer. We see this in 1st John 3:20-21 **21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; 22 and whatever we ask, we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.** It's keeping His commandments and doing what's pleasing in His sight that gives us the confidence to ask. When speaking to a person in authority, *parresia* also describes a kind of confidence, courage, boldness, and fearlessness when we come into God's presence with prayer requests. And it comes from abiding in God's love through obeying His commandments. This is similar to Heb 4:16: **"Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."**

Confidence through Faith-Right-living before God allows us to have the confidence to stand on our faith, but if we have been trying to live a double-life, or trying to sit on the fence between giving our lives to Christ, and living for the world, then we're going to find that this hurts our confidence, because we know

how we've been living. James 1:5-8 **5 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6 But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For that person ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, 8 being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.** Our requests of God must be in faith, according to God's Will, without doubt that He has the power to get His Will accomplished. We must stop doubting that God will answer our prayers when we come before the God of creation with petition.

Having a clean conscience is necessary to approach God in sincerity, with an unwavering heart, because we know who we are and what we've done, and we will lack confidence if we know that we're not living in obedience. Hebrews 10:22-23 **22 let's approach God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let's hold firmly to the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; Confidence from vulnerability**-God knows us better than we know ourselves and He can discern our intent. Yet, out of our vulnerability, we can approach Him void of pretention, full of confidence. If you're having problems opening up yourselves in prayer, then realize that there's nothing that you can reveal to God that He doesn't already know. He meets you right where you are, and loves you anyway. We learn that we can trust His intentions for us, and that we can submit our will to His. We have to allow God to work in our hearts to re-align our will to match His Will before we start praying. God promises to help us. Romans 8:26 **Now in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know what to pray for as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words;** As we focus in prayer on who He is, and what He wants, then we will quit questioning the effectiveness of presenting our requests to Him and we will witness the effectiveness of prayer in getting His will done, even if it's not necessarily our will. Remember that there are 3 answers to prayer. Sometimes the answer is yes, sometimes the answer is no, and sometimes the answer is wait. As we prioritize His will, we will be able to accept more and more each of these three answers as answered prayer. Romans 8:28 **28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.** And have confidence in prayer. **15 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.**

Jesus told us in John 14:13-14 **13 And whatever you ask in My name, this I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.** That tells us to pray in Jesus' name, and to remember that everything good that we have from God comes through Jesus. John 15:7 reminds us that it is the abiding relationship with Jesus that results in answered prayer. **7 If you remain in Me, and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.** and again in verse 16 **16 You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.** That confidence is related to a person, God the Father. We have this confidence now, because we have a loving relationship with our Heavenly Father, made possible by Jesus, and we know His character. God hears, even when we don't think that He does. Even when we keep praying and praying, and it doesn't look like something's happening. We are limited in our perception. Perception is not reality. But, God's Word is true--what we have been told by God in His Word is true because God is true and He sees everything as it actually is. There are limitless possibilities open before us to obey God's Will, and let the power of God to answer whatever prayer we ask make sure that His Will is done more perfectly on Earth, as it is in Heaven. We know by faith that we will receive what we ask, in God's way, in God's timing. We can have certainty in the promises of God, and we can know those promises are true before we experience them, in faith. Then God is eager to respond, doing what only He can do.

God has the power to change anything and we have the privilege to approach Him about everything. We would be wise to do so, and to do so with confidence.