

We Should Always Pray “According to His Will”

by Pastor George D. Cutler

Grace Gospel Ministry

Informed prayers are foundationally established on the basis on God’s instructions for such utterances. A proper understanding of God’s directives concerning this subject will offset constant misuse of prayer as it is exhibited in many circles. It is God’s prerogative as our sovereign creator/ redeemer that He has given directives regarding the privilege of prayer. It is fruitless to petition or claim things that are contrary to God’s promises. Philippians 4:19 states, “And my God shall fulfill your every need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.” Here, the focus ultimately rests on what God has determined the need(s) of His people are. The phrase “fulfill your every need” denotes to fill, make full, furnish or supply our every need. This does not infer a convincing statement in the sense of an unqualified promise. Here, the word “need” refers to what is necessary and essential, as was determined independently by God, i.e., “according to His Will.”

Thus, God’s supply of His people’s “need” is not governed by His power or capacity to provide, as “His glorious riches” or “His glorious spiritual wealth” is unlimited in scope. The “need” was previously determined according to (dominated by) what God purposed “in Christ Jesus,” i.e., in the Body of Christ. Confirmation of this is expressed in I John 5:14, “And this is the assurance that we have toward Him; that if anything we may ask according to His will, He hears (receives) us.” The phrase, “the confidence (assurance) that we have in (toward) Him” refers to what relates to affirmatively answered petitions. “Confidence” is the subject or focal point of the verse, thus it is assurance that we seek foremost above all in submitting petitions to God. The sense is that one of the effects of believing on the Lord Jesus (I John 5:13) is that we can have the assurance that our prayers will be affirmatively answered, “according to His Will.”

Again, note that the qualifying statement is: “that if anything we may ask according to His Will, He hears (receives) us.” This is the proper (necessary) limitation in all prayer. God hasn’t promised to grant anything contrary to His predetermined Will nor according to what eternally exists. Eternal enlightenment doesn’t request anything contrary to what God has previously determined as best. No one can hope for better results that esteem one’s own wishes as “better.” God’s Will is the most desirable of all arrangements. ALL blessings requested by prayer should be limited and bounded “according to His Will.”

This exclusive limitation, "according to His Will" engenders the following:

(1) In accordance with what God has "declared" as best to grant. Here, the range is many things documented in Scriptures as accomplished in eternity and thus obviously in accordance with His Will, i.e., the forgiveness of sins, sanctification, election of souls, etc., (I Thessalonians 4:3). There are also directional guideline concerning situations encountered in the course of our journey, i.e., comfort in

trials, supply of necessities, grace in the performance of our ministry, wisdom for direction and guidance, deliverance from evils circumstances, enlightenment of His Word and understanding the effectiveness of eternal salvation. There is an excess of qualifying subjects of petition that may be correctly concentrated on in prayers that are too numerous to delineate in these writings.

(2) The expression, "according to His Will" limits assenting answers in prayer to what God has determined as best according to His plan for each course in life. Solely, God is qualified to determine what is "best" for our lives, as none can ever identify exactly as our Maker. This is verified by the fact that many times, in many things, humankind is totally mistaken. Certainly, we ought not to desire to ask anything, which God has determined not to be "best for our good."

(3) The term, "according to His will," must limit petitions to what is "consistent" for God to bestow upon the petitioner. We should not expect God to work a "miracle" in affirmation requesting blessings in violation of what He has ordained or in any other way than what He has appointed. It is better that the so-called "blessing" is withheld in principle that He decreed, yet, such isn't disregarded. It is proper that we should not have a profitable venture, though we may fervently pray for it, than for God to "change what He predetermined." Such accommodations would be in violation of at least some of, if not all His attributes, i.e., immutability.

(4) The term, "according to His Will" must confine the promise of "blessings" to what is the "good pleasure of His Will" (Ephesians 1:5, 9, 11; Philippians 2:13). God presides over the entire universe in infinite "fullness and perfection." These, as well as all His attributes control the infinite system of His creation. They are in fact the sustaining checks and balances of creation. Regards and/or desires of individual components in His unlimited realm don't necessarily contribute to the interests of the whole. Therefore none of these entries are to be consulted and/or regarded for individual sakes, as it is conceivable that some favor or bestowment would intrude with the operation of or is inconsistent with the good of the whole. Consequently, only what is accommodated in God's perfection should comprise necessary limitations in the range of prayer. In observance of these limitations, it is true beyond question that God hears and answers prayer "according to His good and perfect Will" (Romans 12:2; Hebrews 13:21).

Corroboratively, scriptural documentation certifies presentations of requests formatted according to His instruction. I John 5:15 states, "And if we have known that He hears us, we have known that we have the request that we have requested from Him." This verse begins with the word "and;" linking its thought to the prior verse (14). Thus, the phrase, "we have known" denotes factual perceptions obtained from prior supplied information. Understanding of the facts identified in verse 14 assures us "that He does hear us." In effect, we are assured of these truths, even though we may not "see" immediately that the petition is answered according to our expectation. Thus, there is always the utmost confidence that our eternal interest is accomplished.

Total unconditional commitment and trust in God (faith) entails the confidence that our petition is received and answered as most suitable and adaptable to the best possible solution. Specifically, what has been requested may not be granted (II Corinthians 12:8-9; Luke 22:42) but the petition isn't disregarded as to what is best for our well-being, which is always granted. The confidence stated herein is derived from the faithfulness of God's assurance. Because of His promise that He hears us, it alone is sufficient answer to the petition. "Whatever we may ask, we have known" depicts the "spiritual propriety" of making requests according to what is the "acceptable" Will of God in our petition.

The final phrase of this verse (15): "that we have the request that we have requested from Him" certifies that the petition is answered according to what we already have in enlightened preciseness for which we have prayed. In essence the indication of God's workings having been tailored as "future manifestations" for:

(a) Prayers related to something future, as protection on a journey, a harvest, our restoration to health, the safe return of a love one from military service or even salvation of souls; all of which are "future" rather than granted "simultaneously."

(b) Answers to confident prayers delayed sometimes; then are ultimately granted. There may be reasons why the answer should be deferred, as the promise is not that it shall be immediate. The "delay" may arise from such causes as these:

(1) The development of our faith in the process of growth and maturity.

(2) Its immediate effectuation isn't in the immediate interest of God's purpose in a particular situation.

(3) It might not be consistent with God's divine arrangements to manifestly grant it instantaneously.

(4) Our condition may not be such that it would be best for God to grant it as the affliction or request may be delayed months or years or that it is never removed. In the interim, we have assurance that the prayer is heard and answer reflective in its way and period, as God determined it to be best accommodated.

Accordingly, an informed petitioner submits the petition that conforms to the Will of God. This exhibit eternally in the secret will of predestination rather than the revealed will of manifest perception. We pray by faith in Christ with understanding that exudes obedient and selfless attitude, in assurance that God grants solely what is best, i.e., "according to His Will." This is wholly comprehended in noting that our life is more defined in eternal transcriptions than it is in time influenced transactions. Prayer requires our knowledge of God's Decree and His principles and methodology in having accomplished all things in dictates of His Divine Will, Plan and Purpose, which originated/culminated in eternity. What is evidently misunderstood by many of God's people is that His unlimited power to act, functions in subordination to His immutable sovereignty, **According to His Will!**