

Can I Ask God?

Christians have the privilege to approach God and ask Him for grace, mercy and help. This FAQ covers how to ask God as well as how not to ask and what to ask for. If we are on good terms with God, we can pray with confidence. This FAQ will include some dos and some do-nots of asking God (prayer).

Hebrews 4:15-16 For we don't have a high priest who can't be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but one who has been in all points tempted like we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with boldness to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace for help in time of need.

We are all God's children. Some are obedient and good children and some aren't. God, gives good gifts to all his children. He causes it to rain on the just and on the unjust. But he gives especially good things to those who humbly seek Him and ask.

Matt. 7:7-11 Ask, and it will be given you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives. He who seeks finds. To him who knocks it will be opened. Or who is there among you, who, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, who will give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

If you have a good relationship with the LORD, it is a wonderful thing, a thing to be proud of. As God's children we should be just, merciful, kind and righteous like our Father in Heaven is. Like any parent, God really likes it when his children exhibit his characteristics.

Jeremiah 9:23-24 Thus says the LORD, Don't let the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, don't let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he has understanding, and knows me, that I am the LORD who exercises loving kindness, justice, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, says the LORD.

To ask God for anything and receive a favorable answer, you must ask with the right motives and you must ask humbly and you must be on His side. Walking with one foot in the world and one foot in the kingdom, won't work.

James 4:2-6 You lust, and don't have. You kill, covet, and can't obtain. You fight and make war. You don't have, because you don't ask. You ask, and don't receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend

it for your pleasures. You adulterers and adulteresses, don't you know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, The Spirit who lives in us yearns jealously? But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

The Psalms say that if you cherish sin in your heart, God won't help you. Cherish means that you can't let sin dwell there. We all slip sometimes, but need to use self control and not meditate on evil. This means that there are some books shows, places, songs, web sites, etc. that we need to avoid.

Psalm 66:18-20 If I cherished sin in my heart, the Lord wouldn't have listened. But most certainly, God has listened. He has heard the voice of my prayer. Blessed be God, who has not turned away my prayer, nor his loving kindness from me.

If you let yourself look at and think about things you shouldn't, not only will God not hear your prayers, the penalty may be very severe.

Proverbs 6:25-27 Don't lust after her beauty in your heart, neither let her captivate you with her eyelids. For a prostitute reduces you to a piece of bread. The adulteress hunts for your precious life. Can a man scoop fire into his lap, and his clothes not be burned?

Young or old, wise or foolish, rich or poor, man woman or child, anyone can ask God for help. Remember, God cares for you. He is a loving parent who wants to bless you, but your pride and sin can get in the way. Don't presume on your relationship with him and foolishly try to order God to do anything. He is God. You aren't. (Neither am I.) So when you pray be humble and try to be good. None of us can really be good, that's what grace is for, it enables Him to overlook our shortcomings. All we have to do is try, His grace makes us holy. So pray and stop worrying. God loves you and He can and will help you.

1 Peter 5:5b-7 --- for God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time; casting all your worries on him, because he cares for you.

My human nature wants God to vaporize my enemies and I might even ask for God to do it. God could, if he wanted to, but He doesn't want to kill people, he wants bad people to repent and become good. So unless they are wicked and completely beyond redemption, God probably will not answer such a prayer. If God's spirit and his word dwell in you, you will desire what He wants too and you will ask for good things to happen, not destruction.

John 15:5-7 I am the vine. You are the branches. He who remains in me, and I in him, the same bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If a man doesn't remain in me, he is thrown out as a branch, and is withered; and they gather them, throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you remain in me, and my words remain in you, you will ask whatever you desire, and it will be done for you.

If Christ's spirit and his words dwell in us, and we keep his commandment to love one another, God will answer your prayers. Christ told the disciples to pray for more workers to help convert people, so we should pray more workers and for His help and guidance in spreading the Word and for the Kingdom to grow.

John 15:16-17 You didn't choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain; that whatever you will ask of the Father in my name, he may give it to you. I command these things to you, that you may love one another.

Ask God boldly. If we have His Spirit dwelling in us and if we keep his commandments (especially believe in Jesus and love one another) we can ask confidently. We can tell if we have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us by our words, deeds and actions. Some people are so nice and pleasant to be around, they are easy to love, some aren't. Do I really love my enemies?

1 John 3:21-24 Beloved, if our hearts don't condemn us, we have boldness toward God; and whatever we ask, we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do the things that are pleasing in his sight. This is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, even as he commanded. He who keeps his commandments remains in him, and he in him. By this we know that he remains in us, by the Spirit which he gave us.

The wicked can pray to God, if they repent and ask for forgiveness. Repent means not just being sorry, but stopping doing evil and trying to repair the damage that has been done. God hears the prayers of repentant sinners who are seeking to change and do right, but God doesn't help the wicked. If we choose to persist in doing evil our prayers will be ignored.

Isaiah 59:1-3 Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it can't save; neither his ear heavy, that it can't hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue mutters wickedness.

If you want God to hear your prayers, you need to repent and turn to him and become righteous through Jesus sacrifice for you.

Proverbs 15:29 The LORD is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayer of the righteous.

You don't have to be what the world calls wicked to have God refuse to listen to your prayers. All you have to do is to be mean to your wife. A husband is supposed to cherish his wife, to treat her gently and protect her. He should put her needs above his own treating her as the weaker vessel and if necessary even die for her. That is a tall order, but if a husband doesn't treat his wife as he ought, his prayers won't get past the roof.

1 Peter 3:7 You husbands, in the same way, live with your wives according to knowledge, giving honor to the woman, as to the weaker vessel, as being also joint heirs of the grace of life; that your prayers may not be hindered.

Here is what God said for people to do to have their prayers heard.

2 Chronicles 7:14 if my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

In the sermon on the mount Jesus said to not do our prayers to be heard by men and to not use vain repetitions. Then he gave us a sample prayer which we often call the Lord's Prayer.

Matthew 6:9b-13 Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 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.(KJV)

Even "Good" People May Not Get What they Pray For.

Even "good" people may not get what they ask God for in fervent prayer. If people who were very close to God didn't get what they asked, why should I expect to?

Jesus didn't want to die, he asked to have the cup of death removed from him, but he was willing to die to save us. He humbled himself to death, even death on a cross

Luke 22:41-42 He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and he

knelt down and prayed, saying, Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.

It was necessary for Jesus to suffer and die for our sins to fulfill the scriptures. Fulfilled prophecy is one of the strongest evidences for Christianity. Here is what Jesus said to the disciples when the Jews and Romans came to arrest him.

Matthew 26:53 Or do you think that I couldn't ask my Father, and he would even now send me more than twelve legions of angels? How then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that it must be so?

Another person who did not get what he prayed for is the Apostle Paul, who was given a thorn to keep him humble and remind him to depend on the power of Christ, not wisdom or education or position as a special apostle to the gentiles. If he were always healthy and strong, Paul would not have seen Christ's Spirit working to help him. When he was weak and needed help was when Christ's power and love would really show up.

2 Corinthians 12:7-9 By reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelations, that I should not be exalted excessively, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, that I should not be exalted excessively. Concerning this thing, I begged the Lord three times that it might depart from me. He has said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Most gladly therefore I will rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest on me.

Conclusion

When we pray there are 3 possible answers that we may receive.

- 1 Wait - The time may not be right.
- 2 No.
- 3 Yes (but there are two kinds of "Yes")
 - 3A. Sometimes God may give us exactly what we ask for.
 - 3B. Sometimes He may have something much better planned.

Here is part of Paul's prayer for the Ephesians. May we all have a spirit of wisdom and be full of the knowledge of God and of his Word and come to know the riches of our inheritance in Christ.

Ephesians 1:17-18 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of his calling, and what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

Here Paul talks about the wonderful future for those of us who follow Christ.

Romans 8:18-21 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which will be revealed toward us. For the creation waits with eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of decay into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.

We conclude with a poem describing how God may choose to answer our prayers.

How God Answers Prayer

***I asked God for strength, that I might achieve.
I was made weak, that I might learn to humbly obey.
I asked God for help that I might do greater things.
I was given infirmity, that I might do better things.
I asked for riches, that I might be happy.
I was given poverty, that I might be wise.
I got nothing I asked for, but everything I had hoped for.
Despite myself, my prayers were answered.
I am, among all men, most richly blessed.***

An anonymous soldier of the confederacy.

Make God your choice!