

Can I Ask God?

This came to be one of my favorite verses when I lived in California five miles from the main branch of the San Andreas fault.

Psalm 46:1-3 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we won't be afraid, though the earth changes, though the mountains are shaken into the heart of the seas; though its waters roar and are troubled, though the mountains tremble with their swelling. Selah.

Who is God?

There is only one God, Jehovah, our creator.

Isaiah 45:18 For thus says the LORD who created the heavens, the God who formed the earth and made it, who established it and didn't create it a waste, who formed it to be inhabited: "I am the LORD; and there is no other.

God is everywhere. He cares about us and what we do.

Proverbs 15:3 The LORD's eyes are everywhere, keeping watch on the evil and the good.

Psalm 33:13-15 The LORD looks from heaven. He sees all the sons of men. From the place of his habitation he looks out on all the inhabitants of the earth, he who fashions all of their hearts; and he considers all of their works.

Psalm 33:18-19 Behold, the LORD's eye is on those who fear him, on those who hope in his loving kindness; to deliver their soul from death, to keep them alive in famine.

What does God like?

The prayer of the righteous pleases God.

Proverbs 15:8 The sacrifice made by the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but the prayer of the upright is his delight.

God helps the righteous.

Psalm 34:15-16 The LORD's eyes are toward the righteous. His ears listen to their cry.

The LORD's face is against those who do evil, to cut off their memory from the earth.

If you want God to hear your prayers, you need to become righteous.

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

Confess your sins and pray for forgiveness and healing. Prayer is very powerful.

James 5:16-18 Confess your offenses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The insistent prayer of a righteous person is powerfully effective. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it didn't rain on the earth for three years and six months. He prayed again, and the sky gave rain, and the earth brought forth its fruit.

If they repent the wicked can pray to God and be heard. Repent means not just being sorry, it means to stop doing evil and to try to repair the damage that you have done.

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.

When you are in trouble pray to God, then when help comes be thankful.

Psalm 50:14-15 Offer to God the sacrifice of thanksgiving. Pay your vows to the Most High. Call on me in the day of trouble. I will deliver you, and you will honor me."

God loves us and wants us to call on him. Ask, Seek, Knock.

Matthew 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!

When we seek God with our whole heart, we can find him.

Jeremiah 29:11-13 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you hope and a future. You shall call on me, and you shall go and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You shall seek me, and find me, when you shall search for me with all your heart.

What will prevent our prayers from being answered.

Wrong motives will block your prayers.

James 4:1-3 Where do wars and fightings among you come from? Don't they come from your pleasures that war in your members? 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.

Iniquity will keep your prayers from being heard.

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.

Cherishing sin in your heart will keep your prayers from being heard. There are some books, shows, places, songs, web sites, etc. that we need to avoid.

Psalms 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.

To have God ignore your prayers, be mean to your wife.

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.

Walking with one foot in the world and one foot in the kingdom won't work.

God delights in kindness, justice and righteousness.

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.

If Christ's spirit and his words remain in us, God will answer our prayers.

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.

Do we delight in his Law and meditate on it?

Psalms 1:1-3 Blessed is the man who doesn't walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the LORD's law. On his law he meditates day and night. He will be like a tree planted by the streams of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also does not wither. Whatever he does shall prosper.

We must bear fruit and keep his commandment to love one another.

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.

Be humble when you pray; don't worry, trust God.

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.

If we keep his commandments, believe in Jesus and love one another, we can pray confidently.

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.

Jesus sympathizes with us, he was human too.

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.

HOW TO PRAY

When asked to teach his disciples how to pray Jesus gave a sample prayer which we 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)

Don't pray to impress people.

Matthew 6:5 "When you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Most certainly, I tell you, they have received their reward.

Pray secretly.

Matthew 6:6 But you, when you pray, enter into your inner room, and having shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

Don't use vain repetitions.

Matthew 6:7-8 In praying, don't use vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their much speaking. Therefore don't be like them, for your Father knows what things you need, before you ask him.

The Future

God has appointed a day of judgment.

Acts 17:29-31 Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold, or silver, or stone, engraved by art and design of man. The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked. But now he commands that all people everywhere should repent, because he has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he has ordained; of which he has given assurance to all men, in that he has raised him from the dead."

Everyone will be judged.

Hebrews 9:27-28 Inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once, and after this, judgment, so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, without sin, to those who are eagerly waiting for him for salvation.

God does not want anyone to be lost.

Matthew 18:12-14 "What do you think? If a man has one hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, doesn't he leave the ninety-nine, go to the mountains, and seek that which has gone astray? If he finds it, most certainly I tell you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine which have not gone astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

So he sent his son to save us.

John 3:16-17 For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God didn't send his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through him.

There is joy in heaven when a sinner repents.

Luke 15:7 I tell you that even so there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance.

Be patient, God is giving us time to repent.

2 Peter 3:8-9 But don't forget this one thing, beloved, that one day is with the

Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow concerning his promise, as some count slowness; but is patient with us, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Answers to prayer

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 gives us exactly what we ask for.

3B. Sometimes God has something much better planned.

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.

In order to fulfill the scriptures It was necessary for Jesus to suffer and die for our sins.

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?

The Apostle Paul was given a thorn in the flesh to keep him humble.

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.

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.

Prayer is one of the Christian's best defense and offense against evil.

Ephesians 6:17-18 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; with all prayer and requests, praying at all times in the Spirit, and being watchful to this end in all perseverance and requests for all the saints:

Praying and giving thanks is one of the best things you can do.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In everything

give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus toward you.

Always be ready to humbly explain why you believe.

1 Peter 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts; and always be ready to give an answer to everyone who asks you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, with humility and fear:

Conclusion

We can tell if we have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us by our words, deeds and actions.

God hears the humble prayers of repentant sinners who are seeking to change.