



## Daily Devotionals

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### 1 JOHN 5:13-15 EFFECTIVE PRAYER

*<sup>13</sup> I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.*

*<sup>14</sup> This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. <sup>15</sup> And if we know that he hears us-whatever we ask-we know that we have what we asked of him.*

The secret to an effective prayer life is to know to whom you are praying. The only way we can have confidence in any conversation is to be in a trusting relationship with the other person. The more trust we have the greater our feeling of security about the intentions of the other person and a good outcome from our request. This is even more important when there is a gap in status, influence or power between us and when our conversation partner is superior in one or more of those areas. Obviously, that gap is vast indeed when it comes to our prayers to God.

The problem of unanswered prayer is not the deafness of God or that he is any way capricious. The problem resides on our side of the conversation. God has revealed himself as a loving and giving God who wants the best for us. He has also revealed that our best comes only in the context of a reconciled relationship with him. Therefore, he is not going to give us anything that would be harmful to us or would cause us to be separated from him - even if that answer is good by nature. Likewise, he is not going to give us something that he may intend to ultimately give us at a time when it would not be good for us to receive it. It may be a matter of our lacking the spiritual maturity to be able to receive and use the answer in a righteous manner or perhaps the timing might present a situation where the answer might result in a negative outcome under the current circumstances.

As elsewhere in Scripture, St. John tells us that prayer prayed and things asked according to the will of God will not be ignored by God. But the only way we can pray according to God's will is to know what God's will is. It follows that the only way we can know what God's will is is to know God. How can we know God? We are able to know God because he has revealed himself to us in his Word - both written and incarnate. But he has not even left us to our own devices there. He has given us the Spirit of Truth to guide our thinking and our understanding. God's will is found in our obedience to his command to love him and our neighbors. If we love with the self-giving love of God, that love will control our prayers and we will pray according to the will of God. If we trust God enough to obey him we have the faith that manifests itself in absolute confidence in his desire to answer our prayers. It is not a matter of arrogantly demanding or assuming that God will answer according to what we desire, but the loving and joyful submission of accepting the answer as the best for the kingdom of God, for that should be the motivation behind all our prayers.

**May my faith in you, O God, be articulated in the prayers of my life. Deliver me from all sinful and selfish desires and the arrogance of expecting you to deliver on them. Through your Spirit mold my mind and my heart into a proper vessel of your love so that my only desire is to further your kingdom and make the truth about you known through my life. May my focus be on you and not my requests. Amen.**

Chuck+