

SOME PRINCIPLES OF PRAYER

I John 5:14-17

**As John continues the closing comments of his epistle
he encourages us to discover some principles
for the practice of prayer.**

I. SPEAK FREELY (14a)

A. OUR CONFIDENCE

1. We currently have the ability to speak to God freely without hesitation, reservation or embarrassment.
2. Consider our access to God - Matthew 11:28-30
3. Note that He invites us to draw near amid our needs - Heb. 4:16
4. We are assured that God will not scold us when we come seeking His wisdom - James 1:5
5. We have fellowship with God - I John 1:3

B. OUR CONDITION

1. Facing God
2. Respecting God
 - See Genesis. 18:20-33

C. OUR COMMUNICATION

1. We ask
 - a. A humble recognition that we don't know everything or have all the answers.
 - b. Speaking specifically
2. We do not make demands
 - a. There is great danger in demanding things from God
 - b. See Psalm 106:15

II. SUBMIT COMPLETELY (14b-15)

A. OUR RESPONSIBILITY (14b)

1. Ask anything
 - See James 4:2
2. Ask according to His will
 - Note Christ's instruction in Matt. 6:10 and example in Matt. 26:39

B. OUR REALIZATION (14c)

1. God hears us
2. God acts favorably
 - a. "Answers to prayer do not depend on a right diagnosis or analysis of the problem by us as we pray, but on a childlike submission to the Father, knowing that He will give what is best according to His will." [David Jackman, *The Message of John's Letters*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), p. 161 - Cited in D. E. Hiebert, p. 225.]
 - b. However, we do not always get what we ask for - Note II Cor. 12:7-10

C. OUR REASSURANCE (15)

1. We have the right requests
 - We can now relax and watch God work - Phil. 4:6
2. He answers us

III. INTERCEDE PASSIONATELY (16-17)

A. YOUR DISCOVERY (16a)

1. A personal discovery
2. A problem discovered

B. YOUR DUTY (16b)

1. Ask God to revive them
2. Don't overanalyze the situation
3. Get involved in the rescue as their advocate or sponsor
 - a. They may have become so calloused by their sin that they can no longer see it or pray about it
 - b. See James 5:14-15, Ex. 32:7-14, Neh. 1:6-8 and Jude 21-23 for intercessor examples

C. YOUR DECISION

1. You are not required to pray for the one who has committed a sin leading to death, though it is not forbidden
2. The definition of such a sin is missing here
3. It could be a saint whose serious sin causes death
 - Examples of this are found in Acts 5:1-11 and I Cor. 11:30
4. It could refer to a sinner's conscious rejection of God's salvation
5. Not all sin leads to death, therefore it is not hopeless or unhelpful to intercede

CONCLUSION:

How is your prayer life?

1. Are you confidently approaching God?
2. Do you submit to His will?
3. have you interceded for the sinning?

Let us practice these principles of prayer.