

# Stop Limiting God

by Dan Augsburger

---

*Dan Augsburger's sermon encourages believers to stop limiting God by praying with faith and expectation based on biblical promises.*

**Duration:** 1:29:24

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:9

**Topics:** "Prayer Power", "Gods Sovereignty"

---

## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of prayer and surrendering to God's will, seeking His guidance and blessings. It shares personal experiences of divine intervention and the need to trust in God's promises. The speaker acknowledges the power of prayer to move heaven and bring about unity and divine power in our lives.

---

## Transcript

Father in Heaven, it is a privilege to be here with the Gateway Church. Father, I'm grateful for the good work that you have done. It's obvious that prayers have been going up.

And I don't pretend to come in and know you better than anyone else. I'm only going to share what you shared with me. Father, they've come because they want to learn from you.

They want to learn from the Bible. I pray that you would empty me of myself. That you would forgive me of my sins.

That you would cover me with your righteousness. That you would place the Holy Spirit in me so that what they hear would be coming as prompted by you. Otherwise, Father, their time will be wasted.

Make me nothing. Make yourself everything. Bless each person.

Help them to hear what you want them to hear as it applies to their particular situation. I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

One of the greatest revivalists that ever lived was a man by the name of Charles Finney. Charles Finney lived in the northeast of the United States in New York State. And in his younger days, he was rather wild.

He trained as a lawyer. Many great Christians have trained as lawyers. John Calvin was another lawyer that became a Christian.

They have an ability to express these succinctly and directly. And he had been trained as a lawyer, but he had inklings towards Christianity. And he went to a church one Wednesday evening to a prayer meeting.

And the people recognized that Charles Finney did not have much of a close walk with God. And therefore, they offered to pray for Charles Finney. But Finney was not interested.

You can read of it in the first handout called The Possibilities of Prayer. We've printed some handouts for you that have some quotations. I'll use some of these, not all.

But at least you'll have something in your hands as a result of our time together. The second line, I told them no because I did not see that God answered their prayers. He said, they wanted to pray for me.

But he said, no, I don't think so because I do not see that God is answering your prayers. How would you like it if someone came to your prayer group and you said, we want to pray for you. And they said, you can't show me that God is answering your prayers.

Why would I want you to pray for me? We continue. I am conscious that I'm a sinner, but I do not see that it will do any good for you to pray for me. For you are continually asking, but do not receive.

Anyone identify with that? Do you identify with that, asking and not receiving? That definitely happens. You have prayed enough to have prayed the devil out of his town if there is any virtue in your prayers. I don't want to read further right now.

When Charles Finney left that church, his question was not about the spiritual walk of the people attending. He wasn't concerned about whether what they were praying about was according to God's will. His question was, is the Bible really true? The Bible says, ask and it shall be given.

Seek and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened. He says, if the Bible says that but they're not getting answers, maybe the Bible is full of lies.

He began to question God. Eventually, as he thought and as he studied, he came to the conclusion, we're going to read right now. He says, on further reading of my Bible, it struck me that the reason their prayers were not answered was because they did not comply with the revealed conditions upon which God had promised to answer prayer, that they did not pray in faith in the sense of expecting God to give them the things that they asked for.

He said there were two problems. They weren't praying according to what the Bible taught, and secondly, they were not praying with any expectation of getting answers. That is still the problem in our day.

There are many who are praying, but they're praying without having really bothered to learn about prayer. And then secondly, because they haven't gotten answers to prayer, they don't bother to pray much and therefore don't obtain answers. I'd suggest that there are kind of three things that happen.

There's a continuum of experience. There are those who don't expect, they don't pray, and therefore they receive no results. There are those who pray because they believe, but they still don't get results because they're not praying according to what the Bible teaches.

Then there are those who pray but do get results because they're praying in an intelligent way. We want to move you to the point that you believe in the power of prayer and that you also pray according to what the Bible teaches and therefore get answers to prayer. That's what we're going to do while we're together.

Now, the Bible is full of amazing promises, and I know that all of you are praying, so I want you to turn to someone close to you and for just a minute or two, talk together about what your experience has been when you've prayed. Okay? Turn to another person, just share together for just a few brief moments what your experience has been with this matter of prayer. Just a few moments.

So what's been your experience? Just one or two people. What have you learned? Janelle. We can thank Roy later.

I like that. And what about Janelle's experience? Okay. Anyone else? Any other volunteer? What has prayer meant to you? Anyone that's ever struggled at all with prayer? I was going to say, how many honest people are there tonight? We all struggle some, don't we? That's a given.

That's a given. But I can assure you that God is answering prayers. Someone said that we should approach the promises of the Bible the same way we would if we got a letter from an attorney saying... The same way that we would say that we would respond to an envelope from the attorney of a rich relative who says, you know, please read this carefully because you're included in the will that's included in the envelope.

You know, if you got a letter and you knew that you're included in the will, if you knew that your name was on a will, would you study that will carefully? Or would you say, ah, it doesn't matter, I'm just going to put it away, I'll come to it someday? No, you would read it carefully, wouldn't you? Because you would want to know what it said. I'd like to suggest that the promises of the Bible are like a mention of the will. Those are yours to claim.

Those are for you. Do you know that? What? Absolutely. And let's look at some of them.

Look at Matthew chapter 7, actually, 7 to 11. It's the most basic of all the promises regarding prayer. The most basic.

It says, ask and it may be given. Seek and some of the time you'll find knock. And if you're lucky and you persist long enough and it's the right day and God is in a good mood, he'll answer, right? It doesn't say that, but there's a lot of people that that's their attitude towards prayer.

How can I count on God? But I seem to pray, but he doesn't hear. It says, ask and it will, right? Seek and you will find, knock and it will be opened unto you. For everyone who asks receives, he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

There is no question based on that promise of what God is going to do. Now notice the last verse. It says, if you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much less, is that what it says? How much more will your Father in Heaven give bad things? No, good things to those who read their Bibles.

What does it say? To those who ask him, it is God's plan to grant an answer to the prayer of faith that which he would not grant if we did not ask. Great Controversy 525. Let me repeat that.

It is God's plan to grant an answer to the prayer of faith that which he would not grant if we did not ask. Great Controversy 525. Notice Psalms 2 verse 8. Psalms chapter 2 verse 8. It is actually on the handout.

Do you mind if we read it from the handout? Okay. It says, ask of me and I will give you the nations for your inheritance and the ends of the earth for your possession. That is a good promise that you can claim right here at Gateway for the city of Melbourne.

If God will give us the ends of the earth, he'll give us the ends of the city. What do you think? I love Jeremiah 33 verse 3. Call to me and I will answer you and I will show you great and mighty things which you do not know. Call to me and I will answer you.

I believe it's Psalms 81.10 that says, open your mouth wide and I will fill it. That was the favorite promise of George Mueller. He felt impressed that he should open his mouth wide, not physically but in terms of being willing to ask God of great things and he fully expected that God would come through.

In 1874, he said this year, without asking anyone directly for money, I fed every day 2,100 people. Tina, how would you like to have 2,100 guests every day, not only every day but for breakfast, for lunch and for supper, and the next day the same and the next day. Would that be a lot of people to take care of? That's a lot of money being spent.

He said, in addition to that, I supported 189 missionaries overseas. That's in the 1870s, 1874. I sent 10,000 pounds overseas.

I paid the school fees for 9,000 children. I published 4 million tracts, thousands of Bibles, all by asking God. God impressed him, open your mouth wide and I will fill it.

You see, there's no limit to God's giving. The only limit is our asking. Did you hear me? There's no limit to God's giving, only a limit to our asking.

I know that personally. I remember a time in my life when I didn't know how to pay the bills. I was in my business, as Johnny shared, as an executive recruiter.

It was a Friday morning, and in my business, the assignments sometimes took a great deal of time. They would call and ask me if I'd work for them. Then I had to write a job description, which had to be approved.

Then I would look for that needle in a haystack. Then I would coach the people so that they would interview well. Then I would follow up.

I remember one person I worked with. They interviewed with 40 different people before they got the job. How would you like to interview with 40 different people? It was a very politically sensitive role.

They wanted to make sure that this person would fit into the organization. It took a long time sometimes to get the work done. This particular occasion, though, I hadn't been paid by anyone for a long time.

I just barely started with three clients, one of which was Cigna Insurance. I was working, but there was no money coming. I told my girls on a Friday morning, girls, unless God comes through, I don't know what we're going to do, but we're going to pray because we need the money.

Even if I had placed someone, they had to give notice, which was usually a month. Then they'd start the job. Then two months later, I would get paid.

It was at least three or four months away. I didn't know, but I needed money. I was paying a mortgage because of the divorce, child support, alimony, and everything else.

It's very expensive. I was burning more money than I'd ever thought of burning. We prayed Friday morning.

Friday afternoon, there was a call from my client, Cigna Insurance. They said, Dan, we need to call off the search. We're not prepared to fill the position.

It was a handshake relationship. I wasn't going to blow them off and say, hey, how could you do that to me? They didn't owe me one dime. They said, no, you've done your part.

We've not done our part. We're going to send you a portion of what we would have paid you had you completed the work. The check is already in the mail.

On Tuesday, I found in the mail a check for \$16,000, a gift from an insurance company. I had no idea where the money was coming from, but I'd read in my Bible somewhere where it said, asking will be given, seeking you'll find. And I prayed that prayer.

I've never gotten quite a dramatic financial answer to prayer quite like that since then, but I haven't been begging. And I've seen amazing, amazing answers to prayer. And you know what I often ask people? Why aren't we praying more? How many blessings are going missing if it's true that it's God's plan to grant an answer to prayer, that which he would not grant if we did not pray? That's a good question, isn't it? Truly a good question.

So it says, call to me and I will answer you in Jeremiah 33, and I will show you great and mighty things which you do not know. It says, think about me. No, call to me and I will answer you and show you great and mighty things which you do not know.

That's what God says. Matthew 18 and 19, it's on the list there. If two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.

If you study what the Bible says on united prayer, the instances, we looked at the book of Acts the other night with one of the prayer meetings. Well, we found that every time they were praying together, miracles happened. Be it the day of Pentecost, be it God giving them boldness, be it Peter being set free from prison.

They weren't sitting on their hands saying, what shall we do? They were on their knees praying. Many of you, some of you anyway, come from China. I've mentioned to the group that one of the great missionaries that went to China, Hudson Taylor, he told his group, he said, if you go forward, you will go forward on your knees.

And he was probably the one that had more to do with the implementation of the house church movement in China than any other person. He said, if you go forward, you will go forward on your knees. If you succeed at Melbourne, you will do so on your knees.

I cannot stress that enough. If you would turn the page to the top of the next page, this comes from a book called The Kneeling Christian. It's a wonderful book.

I recommend it highly to you. This individual says the following. Prayer is the key that unlocks the door of God's treasure house.

It is taught too much to say that all real growth in the spiritual life, all victory over temptation, all confidence and peace in the presence of difficulties and dangers, all repose of spirit in times of great disappointment or loss, all habitual communion with God depends upon the practice of secret prayer. Your spiritual life, your ability to touch the lives of other people, your financial and physical well-being, all should be blessed by your prayers. Prayer is the key.

Prayer is the key that unlocks the door of God's treasure house. Notice further, it can be easily shown that all want of success and all failure in the spiritual life and in Christian work is due to defective or insufficient prayer. Are you not succeeding as much as you wish in this church? The author suggests it's due to insufficient or defective prayer.

The greatest thing, he says, that we can do for God or for man is to pray, for we can accomplish far more by our prayers than by our work. Prayer is omnipotent. It can do anything that God can do.

When we pray, God works. If you look at the history of revival, it is always initiated by prayer. Someone said, you look at revival, it starts with prayer and it continues as long as prayers are continuing.

When the prayers stopped, the revival stopped as well. What do you think then prayer might be a good idea for this group? Absolutely. It is one of the most important things that you can do.

From Ian Bounds, how many of you have read any of the books on prayer by Ian Bounds? The Necessity of Prayer, Prevailing Prayer, Power of Prayer. He actually wrote, I think, either eight or nine books on prayer. It's interesting that he lived during the era of the Civil War.

He was taken captive, the Civil War referring to the battle between the North and the South in the United States. He was captured by the Confederate Army. He was put in prison in a little town called Franklin, Tennessee.

After he got out, he had a burden for the town where he had been in prison. There was a pastor there and there he began to pray. I do not pray like Ian Bounds, but he would pray every morning from 4 o'clock in the morning until, I believe, 7 o'clock every day, no matter where he was, no matter what was going on.

Once a week he met with his church members. As a result of those prayers, a revival came that swept through the entire town. He was a man who was working with God on his knees.

He was also a very busy worker for God, but he knew that he would have no success unless he was praying. He knew he would have no success if he wasn't praying. Let's read just a few lines.

How vast are the possibilities of prayer, how wide is its reach. What great things are accomplished by this divinely appointed means of grace. It lays its hand on Almighty God and moves him to do, notice, what he would not do otherwise, what he would not otherwise do if prayer was not offered.

It brings to pass things which would never otherwise occur. The story of prayer is the story of great achievements. Prayer is a wonderful power placed by the Almighty God in the hands of his saints which may be used to accomplish great purposes and achieve unusual results.

The only limits to prayer are the promises of God and his ability to fulfill those promises. Open your mouth wide and I will fill it. Ian Bound said, you know, it is prayer that makes possible what would otherwise not occur.

Did you hear me? Did you really hear me? Okay. How many of you that are going to go home and say, God, if it's true that I can receive blessings as a result of praying, I'm going to start doing my best to have a consistent prayer life because I don't want to miss any blessings, not only for my life, but think of the people around you who are not being blessed because you're not praying for them. You know, one of the best things you can do? All of you should have a prayer partner.

How many have a prayer partner to pray with? Some of you do. All of you should find a person that you can pray with and keep you accountable to be praying. I don't know what your problem is.

I know I've heard about prayer journals or something from Dan Viz, but there's something about praying with another person that is very, very helpful. I personally love to pray with other people, and I would wish that for you. It will bring a great strength and a consistency into your prayer.

Notice on the next page Mary Slessor. She was a missionary to Calabar in Africa. She said, My life is one long, daily, hourly record of answered prayer for physical health, for mental overstrain, for guidance given marvelously, for errors and dangers averted, for enmity to the gospel subdued, for food provided at the exact hour needed.

Notice that. Food provided at the exact hour. For everything that goes to make up life in my poor service, I can testify with a full and often wonder-stricken awe that I believe God answers prayer.

I know, she says, God answers prayer. We're in the middle fold on the right-hand side. She said, As a result of prayer, God would deliver food at just the right time.

Well, George Mueller had the same experience. One day he came down to the breakfast table, and he came to the dining hall where they would feed hundreds of children. He actually had five buildings, so they weren't all together in the same building.

The table was set, but there was no food on the table. There was a little girl at his side, and she tugged his arm and said, Father Mueller, what are we going to eat? And he responded and said, We're going to thank God for the food that he will most surely provide. Now, notice.

They had done their part. They had set the table because they expected God would take care of them. They had done their part.

There's always a work for us to do. They'd done their part. They prayed, and while they were knocking, while they were praying, there was a knock at the door, and it was the baker in town who said, During the night, God impressed me to get up and bake bread for you.

I said, Do you need bread? And George Mueller said, We would be happy to accept it. He came into the room and said, Look, children, not only has God provided bread, but he's provided fresh bread for our breakfast. And they were rejoicing, and there was another knock at the door, and this time it was the milkman who said, I was going down the street, and my wagon, something happened with the wheel, and I have to unload the milk.

Can I leave the milk with you? Can I give you the milk? And they accepted the milk. God provided the food needed for that breakfast. He believed in the power of prayer.

And you learn something from George Mueller. You learn that God is not always early, but he's never late. I often say I have the most faith when I have the most money in the bank, but when you have money in the bank, you're really not exercising faith at all.

Faith is when you have no money, and you say God will provide. And from what I see on the economic surroundings around us on the horizon, I think all of us are going to be learning to pray in a much more serious way when we don't see a lot of resources, okay? It's not a bad thing. God can provide food in the desert.

The children of Israel had it every single day, right? Miracle keeping. Miracle keeping. And God will provide for us in, as I said, the same way.

I'd like to share just a little bit about, well, one other story from George Mueller maybe, and then I'll share a little bit about my story. George Mueller was once crossing the ocean from England to Montreal, Canada, or Quebec, I think he was going to Quebec, and as he was off the coast of Newfoundland, the ship came into a bank of fog. And the captain was a cautious man.

It was a day when they depended on sails, and because of the fog they couldn't see the potential rocks. They were afraid of being blown into the rocks, and he told the sailors, you know, adjust the sails so that we will not be pushed into the rocks. Mueller said, I've not been late once in over 50 years.

We can't stop. We've got to go. And the captain said, this ship is not going to go anywhere.

And Mueller said, can we pray? The captain was a nominal Christian. He was willing. They went downstairs to pray together.

Mueller started the prayer. He said, God, Father in Heaven, you know that you've called me to go to Canada to preach. I know you have.

You know when the meeting is starting. You know that I've never been late. And he said, in over 50 years, and I don't believe that you're willing for me to be late now, would you please remove the fog in five minutes? Then he thanked the Lord.

It was a very short prayer, very specific. Would you agree that's a specific prayer? God responded, and he said, Amen. The captain began to pray, and Mueller tapped him on the arm and said, you don't need to.

Number one, you don't believe. And number two, God has removed the fog. They went upstairs, and the fog was gone.

And the man who repeated the story after the fact was a captain who had come to believe in the power of prayer. The same story is told, by the way, about Hudson Taylor. When he was sailing to China for the first time, they, too, were close to Ashen Island, where there were cannibals, and they were in the doldrums.

There was no wind blowing at all, and they were being blown into shore. And he speaks of how they could see the cannibals building a fire on the beach, and they knew what it was all about. It wasn't to welcome and warn them in the kind of warning they were wanting, OK? And the captain was upset.

Everyone was upset, and Hudson Taylor said, let's go down and pray. There's four of us that are Christians. We will pray and ask God to blow the ship off into the sea again.

And everyone went down, and Hudson Taylor came up and met the first mate and told the first mate, you need to adjust the sail. The wind is coming. The first mate said, I'm not going to.

But Hudson Taylor was insistent, and there was a bit of a wind in the sails. He put it up, and sure enough, a wind came and blew them back off. And Hudson Taylor believed with all his heart it was in response to prayer.

Great Christians, right? Had a great walk with God. But God answers prayer for all of us. I'd like to share just a few things about my story of answered prayer.

I'm a slow learner. I'm a challenged learner like all of you. I like what's familiar.

And sometimes when God wants to get my attention, he puts me through various Sunday trials. And the ones that seem to get my attention the best are the financial ones. When I was in the executive search business, I did very well.

I placed once an international director of quality, and they paid me over \$60,000 just to find the one person. That's a lot of money for just placing one person. You fill a few of those jobs, you have a great year.

But I hadn't been paid for a long time. I told you about that, and I was quite concerned about it. And it got to the point where I was really desperate for money just to pay insurance.

That's a pretty common everyday thing. Didn't know what to do. And I'd been reading a book that I would recommend to you highly called With Christ in the School of Prayer by Andrew Murray.

I don't know if anyone's read that, but it's a book that's very instructive. 31 short chapters. It's a great book for your devotions.

If you want to be inspired to pray and learn how to pray, that's a good book to read. Well, in that book, I'd read that when we ask, we should expect an answer. So I put an ad in the paper, asked God to bless, but wasn't seeing anything.

And I remember on a Friday morning that I prayed and told God, you know, I've learned that when I ask, I should get an answer to prayer. I'm not getting anything. Please have someone come.

Maybe it was a Thursday. I prayed, and I was pleased that someone actually called that day and said, Dan, you know, we'd like to come and look at this thing that you're selling. I was trying to sell an antique hutch.

I invited them to come. I wanted to get \$800 from this hutch. They were only prepared to offer me \$795, and I'm ashamed to admit that over \$5, I sent them packing.

You know, I thought when I prayed, I got what I wanted. That's how many people feel about prayer. I prayed, you know.

I've used the word, you know, the power of God's word, and, you know, I asked for \$800. Give me the \$800. They said no.

They drove away. As they drove down the driveway, God began speaking to them. He said, there's something wrong with the picture here.

You asked me to send someone to buy your hutch, and over \$5, you actually sent them away? Well, I quickly repented. I quickly repented. I said, God, I'm sorry.

I've made a mistake. I waited until I thought they were home. I called up.

I said, you know, I've changed my mind. If you want to buy the hutch for \$795, it's yours. But they answered and said, we've changed our mind.

We have no interest. Then God got really serious with me and said, when you are serious with me, I'll be serious with you. You know, when you really want me to answer, you need to be prepared to accept my answer.

Now that's a very important point. I'm sharing some very important principles about prayer and speaking because often God's answers are delivered, listen carefully, in rough packing cases. They don't look like maybe the wonderful things they are, but the reality is they are just the things that we need because we've asked God.

You see, I didn't recognize that the answer in the \$795. Well, I went to bed that night. I think it must have been a Friday.

I went to church the next morning. I had a blessing. The church came home and it was cold.

It was during the winter. In Pennsylvania, it gets really cold in the winter. There are times when you have a storm come in.

It's called the Northeaster. You might get three feet or four feet of snow on the ground. You literally can't go out.

You can't drive anywhere. There's way too much snow. It's illegal to go out on the road because they don't want to have cars in the way of the snow plows that are trying to remove all the snow.

You've got a two- or three-day vacation because there's so much snow around. We were in the middle of winter. There was lots of cold.

I came home from church and the house was cold. I ran down to the basement thinking maybe it was a break or something. I discovered that a fan belt had broken off the heater.

I said, after Sabbath, I'll run to the hardware store and I'll replace it. After Sabbath, I rushed down to the auto parts store. As I approached the door, I was within two feet, and someone inside locked the door and pointed me to the sign that said, Close, with a big smile.

I'd been trying to learn how to say thank you no matter what went on, so I said, Thank you, God. But I was not happy. In fact, I was quite angry with God.

I'm living proof that you can. We sing the song, Give thanks with a grateful heart. I was giving thanks but did not have a grateful heart.

It's possible. It's possible to have an ungrateful heart when we sing, when we are living with Jesus. Well, I came home not happy, and I happened to be reading the biography of George Mueller, where he talks about how when his wife died, he wanted to have a sermon, and his sermon was, God gave and blessed in giving, but God took, and God blessed when he took her as well.

I said, Man, if he has that kind of faith, who am I to be upset with God? I told God, You own the cattle on a thousand hills. You know what you're doing. I'm going to trust you.

Sunday morning, I got up, and I was inspired. I remember that the antique dealer said, Dan, bring it back, and we'll be happy to buy it from you if you ever want. It had been modified.

So it really wasn't the same antique, but I took it. I put it in the back of my car. It was a hutch, an armoire that could be split down into individual pieces.

I took it there, reminded the lady, said, Oh, yes, yes, I want your antique. Her son came out and said, Shouldn't we set it up to see that it's the same? She said, No, I want this one. Well, I wasn't going to argue with her.

It was fine. She led me back to her office, and she pulled out eight \$100 bills. It was almost like God said, You didn't learn the first time, but now I'll give what you need.

Anyway, I knew from what was going on that God was doing something. F.B. Meyer, a great preacher from England, said, You can always count on the man of falling if you're living under the cloud. You can always count on the man of falling if you're living under the cloud.

And the man of wasn't falling in my life. It was like, God, what are you trying to do? And I sensed that maybe God was going to be moving me, and I thought to myself, You ought to sell your house so that if God chooses to move you, you'll be ready to move. Now, I'd tried to sell it twice before, but to no success.

I'd used really good realtors. But I thought to myself, I need the money more than the realtor, and I'm going to sell it myself. I'll just put a little notice in the paper, and I'll put a sign at the door at the end of the road, and we'll see what happens.

And I prayed and said, God, please have this sell in such a way that there will be no mistaking that you're the one that sold this house. Well, the ad appeared Sunday morning. By Sunday night, this house that I'd never been able to even get one person to look at, a beautiful house, you know, several hectares with a creek running through it, Sunday evening it was sold at full price, and the next day someone else wanted it.

They were arguing between themselves over who would get it. It was like when God was in charge, things happen really quick. Well, I praise the Lord for that.

I praise the Lord for that. Well, I was reading through this book by Andrew Murray, and whatever I read, I kind of followed because it was very biblical, and one of the things that he mentioned in the book that I read was, you shouldn't waste time with God asking for something that he doesn't want to answer. And I was living at the time in Pennsylvania, and for many years, I've been praying about a project having to do

with Berrien Springs, Michigan, where my folks live.

Has anyone ever heard of the program, Your Story Hour? Is that familiar to you at all? It's a children's program. Uncle Dan was a good friend of mine. He was a prayer partner of mine while he was still alive.

Anyway, we had dreamed together of a special program, and so I'd been praying about it, but hadn't seen anything come of it. I hadn't been in contact with the organization for a year and a half, two years, and so this morning, I got up and said, God, I've just learned from Andrew Murray that I shouldn't waste your time praying for something that won't come through. So unless you tell me otherwise, I'm going to stop praying about this.

No contact, but that night, I had a call on my answering machine from the chairman of the board, saying, Dan, we need your help. Whatever happened to the dream? Well, prayed in the morning. There was the answer in the evening.

About ten days later, I got a letter in the mail, an envelope in the mail, from someone I'd written about a year and a half, two years before as well. I had written them regarding this project, and the letter said, Dan, as I was cleaning my desk this morning, I came across your letter where you asked for my help with this project, and realized I'd never responded. If you ever want to work on it, please, please ask me.

Now, was that an answer to prayer? Absolutely. It was unequivocal. It was almost like when I got serious with God, God was getting really serious with me.

So, you know, I looked at that and said, well, maybe, just maybe God is telling me that I should come home to Michigan where my folks live, and work on this project. I had a fleece with God. I said, God, if that's true, I have to make money.

The business which hadn't been going needed to make money so I could have the money to move. Number two, the people who bought my house needed to sell their house in order to buy my house, so they needed to sell their house. And number three, my folks owned two houses side by side, one of which was rented and one of which they lived in.

I said, God, have the renters move out so that I can live next to them. If those two things happen, I'll know I need to move. It's interesting, almost immediately, two clients called me, retained me with serious money, and my financial problems were gone.

Now, God is a really kind God because God knew that had the money come in before the house sold, I might have said, maybe God wants me to stay. Now, he allowed me to walk out on the plank, cut off the plank, you know, so I couldn't stay. And he said, now that I know you're going to move because you can't stay there anymore, now I'll get the business going again.

It's interesting that just out of the blue, one day I get an email from my dad. Dan, the renters are moving. Have you ever thought of moving back to Berrien? That's interesting.

All I said was, that's interesting, I'll keep that in mind. You know, I'm not sure because I had three things that I didn't want to buy. I didn't want my parents praying for me, you know, begging God to do anything else.

I just wanted God to work. But I kind of knew what was going on. Don't you think God was kind of showing something? Well, soon the people called and said, Dan, we sold our house.

We want to take possession in 30 days. But I'd been convicted, I had been convicted that I should stay there a little longer so that my daughters could say goodbye. So, I talked to God.

I said, God, I'm not sure where to move. I think I need to stay in York. And I'd been reading Andrew Murray.

And Andrew Murray said, it's good to write down your request, listen carefully, so you recognize the answer when it comes. So, I wrote it down. I said, God, I think I need a condo.

Now, in the United States, when we refer to a condo, that means an apartment that's on two levels as opposed to one that's flat. It has a little more space than a normal, but it's not a whole block of apartments, just an individual residence. I said, God, I need a condo.

I need one with enough bedrooms for my girls. I have two girls. I need a quiet place to work.

I want a garage to put my stuff in because I know I'm going to move. I don't want to move everything into the house. I want to store it in the garage.

And I'd like to pay \$600 a month for rent. Now, is that a specific request? Pretty good, isn't it? Well, I was at a store. And at that store was a brand-new church member.

Her husband was a pilot with Continental Airlines. And we got to talking. She asked what was going on in my life.

I said, I'm looking for a place to live. But that's all I said, nothing more. And she said, really? She said, we have a condo.

We'd love to have you live there. I said, what do you mean? She said, we're going to move. And we're looking for someone to live in our condo.

Really? Tell me about it. She said, well, there's plenty of bedrooms for the girls. She said, the basement is poured concrete, plenty of room, and a quiet spot for you to work.

And there's a garage. You can put your car in the garage. Well, needless to say, the antenna was going up faster and faster, like, what's going on here? And I asked her, I said, what would be the rent? And there was this long, thought-filled, pregnant pause.

And these were her exact words. How would \$600 a month sound? And I know there's a smile on my face. And I said, that sounds pretty good.

The point that I'm trying to make is that God was answering prayers in amazing, specific ways. A lot of people don't think God answers that way. But it's been my experience that he answers in absolutely specific ways.

So I knew where I was going to move. The lady was very helpful. She said, Dan, I can give you a buddy pass.

Probably Johnny knows what a buddy pass is. That's what they give to airline employees so they can bring their friends for cheap. But you're kind of behind the pilot on duty, the steward on duty, the off-duty pilot, the off-duty attendants, and their family members.

And if there's still room, then the friends get to go. And I called day after day, hoping to find a seat for my daughter. But nothing was working.

And finally, they said one day, she can come on a Thursday, but have her dressed nicely because it'll probably be first class. And Leslie was all excited. And I called her up and said, it'll be 7 o'clock in the morning from Portland, Oregon.

I'm flying to Baltimore. Well, I got up early that morning just to make sure the seat was still there. And they said, oh, we've not only oversold, but we're overcapacity, too.

In other words, we sold all of our seats, and we sold all the seats for the no-shows. There's no way she can get on the airline, on that airplane. So I called Leslie up, and I said, Leslie, you can't come on that airplane.

I'm sorry about that. But I'd been praying, and I was convinced God wanted her to come. And when you're convinced and you believe in the power of prayer, what should you do? Get on your knees to pray.

So I prayed. I said, God, I've got a problem. I know you want me to bring Leslie home.

What do you want me to do? And immediately, the words United Airlines came into my mind, immediately. And I thought to myself, I have frequent flyer miles, but I didn't want to waste all those expensive miles, so to speak, when I had a cheap buddy pass. Furthermore, they wouldn't have room if Continental's full.

Why should I think that United would have seats? But when you pray and you hear, you call, right? I called, talked to the lady, and she said, well, what day? I said, how about looking to see if there's any seats today? She said, oh, yeah, we have a seat at 7.30 this morning. I said, I have to put you on hold. And I called my daughter and said, Leslie, don't get undressed.

You're coming, just a different airline. Once again, a dramatic answer to prayer. Why? Because I prayed.

Well, she was coming across the country. And I thought to myself, I don't want to spend all my time on the phone working. I want to spend time with her.

And I thought to myself, I need an employee. But at that point, I didn't have any employees. But I prayed and said, God, I need an employee for the summer because I need someone else to answer my phone calls.

But I don't know how to train them. I don't know where to find someone. But could you bring someone? It was more than an hour when there was a ring, a phone call.

And it was from a former employee. And the call went like this. Dan, I'm home for the summer from law school.

I'm sure you don't need an employee, but I thought I should call. Well, when can you start? I can start tomorrow. You're hired.

OK? Prayed, and there was the answer. It was like everything I prayed about, I saw the response. Well, we had a wonderful summer together, an amazing summer.

We were in the country together. We went, say, to the Chesapeake. We went up to King Ed's, Rhode Island, where Ann of Green Gable, they filmed all of that.

We went up to Avonlea and all, not Avonlea, but all of those, Charlottetown and all that stuff. Leslie was young then. She was into that.

So we did that. At the end of the summer, just before Leslie left, something happened that was kind of sad. It had to do with my dog.

I had a little Springer Spaniel. All of her life, at least for 10 years, she'd been free. She had a problem.

Every time she fell asleep, her bladder would relax, and she'd wake up in a puddle of urine, and that's not the typical behavior of a dog. Dogs don't sleep in their own urine. So we had gone to the vet.

The vet had looked at her carefully to see how she was doing. They had tested her, but nothing seemed to change her wetting problem when she fell asleep. So we put her outside.

But when I moved into the condo, she'd been inside no problem. I mean, she'd been moved to the home of this airline pilot and his wife. One evening, they called me and said, Dan, please come quickly.

Your dog is chained up, but she's been attacked by a larger dog, and she's really messed up. Please come and help her. And when I got there, that other dog was still circling my dog, Callie.

One fang was hanging out of her mouth. A leg was dragging behind her, and she was just covered with blood because she hadn't been able to get away from this dog. So I shooed the dog away, wrapped her in a towel.

I took her to the vet's hospital. And there they worked on her for a couple of days. Then they brought her home.

I brought her back to my house. She had tubes coming out of both ends and other places too, and she was still under anesthesia. And so she just laid on some towel near the front door.

Now, all of her life, when she laid down, she'd had a problem with, remember, wetting when she slept. So we'd put her outside so she had a problem, but it was always outside. It didn't bother us.

And I worried, was this problem going to continue here in the condo? I worried about it. One morning, I went to check on her, and sure enough, her bowels were beginning to work again, and she was lying in a puddle of urine. And I still remember saying, God, this is not going to work.

This can't work. You've got to change this. The next morning, it happened again.

That time, I got on my knees, and I said, God, this is a really silly prayer. I've never prayed like this before, but I'm here because you sent me here. Callie's been attacked.

If I put her outside, she's too vulnerable, she's too weak, she's going to be killed. If I keep her inside, she's going to ruin the condo, and I'm not willing to put her down. I'm not willing to put her to sleep.

Would you please heal her of this wetting problem? I'm happy to say she never wet from that problem again the rest of her life. So I discovered that God could even heal my dog. Now, some people get upset when I share this story because they say, Dan, I prayed for my parent.

God didn't answer my prayer. I can't answer that, okay? I've seen people healed. I've seen other people that I've prayed for not healed.

You've probably seen the same thing. I only know that I saw that in answer to believing prayer, God was even willing to intervene so far as the pet went. I no longer make fun of other churches that are having the blessing of the pets.

I know that actually God will bless those animals because I saw it on my behalf. The point that I'm trying to make this evening to all of you is we serve a God who answers prayer. He answers prayer in major ways.

Would you agree? Who am I? I'm a nobody, okay? I'm not a great Christian. That was when I was learning about prayer. You know, I wasn't a George Miller.

I'm still not a George Miller. If God could do it for me, I'd like to suggest he can do it for you. And the reason I share this story is not just to tell you a good story but to convince you that prayers are being answered today so that you will pray.

Now, I'd like you to turn to someone close by and talk together about some of the things that you'd like to see God answer in your life, okay? For just a few moments, what are some of the burdens that you have that you wish God would intervene with? And if you have a pen, maybe take a few notes. You can write it on the handout if you want. What are some of the things that you'd like to see God answer prayers in your life on? Okay, we'll take just a few minutes.

We want to make this practical. Okay. The people on the front row here, I appreciate your conversation.

But I get to pull rank. I get to pull rank. Let me just say what I have in mind with this, if you're all listening to me.

And that is, I think too many of us don't think, you know, we're kind of vague. And I have learned there's something to be said for praying specifically, you know, expectantly. And we may not feel comfortable, you know, sharing that with another person.

That's not a problem. But you know, you'll find. I think of Stanley Hill, my friend who was the founder of Your Story Hour.

He prayed about everything. If his refrigerator was malfunctioning, he prayed and asked God to fix his refrigerator. And you know, it's amazing how it worked.

He told me one day, he called me. This is a true story. He said, Dan, today I prayed three prayers of confession for Your Story Hour.

And at the end of the prayer, God told me, by the end of the month, \$100,000 is coming to Your Story Hour. And by the end of the month, \$100,000 had come to that ministry. He's a man of prayer.

If God did it for him, why can't he do it for us today? Another time he called me. He said, Dan, I'm getting married. He was in his 80s.

I told him, you're crazy. I told him, you're crazy. He said, I read this letter and I feel impressed that I'm going to marry this woman.

And lo and behold, he did. Not real long after that. God was in charge.

God was in charge. We're not going to get off on the merit or lack of merit of getting married at the age of 80. But the amazing thing is that God spoke to him.

God was working his life. And I would like to suggest that God means for all of us to have that kind of relationship with him. But let me tell you something.

Stanley always knew that his life belonged to God. He wasn't in charge of his own life. His life belonged to God.

How he ever got started in the ministry was they had this simple story hour. A little bit of blessing. And someone said, we should start a children's ministry.

And someone said, we should do it full time. And Stanley made a deal with God. He said, I'm going to go fundraising.

And if this one family gives me enough money to live for one month, I will take that as your call to serve you in this ministry for the rest of my life. Did you hear me? He said, if you'll give me enough money for one month, I'll take that as your call for the rest of my life. And he went, told me.

He said, before I got to the house, I got out of the car. I knelt on my knees and said, God, remember, this is about the rest of my life. The people invited him in.

And they told him to stay the night. While they prayed about it in the morning, they gave him enough for two months. They didn't know about his fleece with God.

And God answered in a dramatic way. And so today, your story hour is all over the world, in English, in Russian, in Spanish, because the one man had faith in God. A huge ministry that's impacting thousands and thousands of children.

Wonderful thing. So he believed in prayer. He was open to God using him.

And as I saw him later in life, he prayed about everything. Now notice on the back of that first one, and then we're going to look at some other handouts, it says, prayer is a heaven-ordained means of success. Prayer is a heaven-ordained means of success, appeals petitions and treaties between man and man, move men and act a part in controlling the affairs of nations.

But prayer does what? Prayer moves heaven. That power alone that comes in answer to prayer will make when wise in the wisdom of heaven, enable them to work in the unity of the spirit, joined together by the bonds of peace. Prayer, faith, confidence in God bring a divine power that sets human calculations at their real worth, nothingness.

He who places himself where God can enlighten him advances as it were from the partial obscurity of dawn to the full radiance of noonday. It is prayer that moves heaven. The next quotation.

These words are all sufficient evidence that God desires us to receive great blessings. His promises are so clearly stated that there is no cause for uncertainty. He desires us to take him at his word.

Over and over again he has given evidence that he is a prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God. He fulfills his promises in far greater measure than we expect to receive help. We must ask, though, and we must ask specifically.

Now if you would take the one that says number four. I'm doing these slightly out of order. And I'm not going to read all these quotations, but it's so that you can have something to take home to remind you and for you to read.

What does James 4 verse 2 say? It says you do not have because you do not what? Ask. Now later it says you do not have because you ask. You ask and do not have because of what? You ask amiss to spend it on your own pleasure.

So there are two things. One, we can not receive blessings because we're not asking. Or two, we can ask but ask amiss and therefore not receive blessings.

You do not have because you do not ask. I was in Michigan. I shared this with the prayer meeting group, but I want to share it again.

I had encouraged the church to believe in the power of prayer. And it was two weeks after my being there that on a Sunday I was called by the pastor. He was all excited.

He said, Dan, prayer really works. I said, what do you mean? He said, Dan, remember when you were there, you told us to pray and expect answers. Well, he said it was one week after the series ended on a Sunday that I was praying and I told God I needed to pay off a medical bill of \$1,200 and I had no idea where the money would come.

And I told God, Dan told us to pray. Those were the words. And that kind of scared me.

You want to know that? That's a little frightening when people tell God, Dan said, okay? But that's okay. He told God, Dan said. So he prayed.

He said it wasn't more than three, four hours later there was a knock at my door. It was a neighbor. No connection with the church except his granddaughter attended the church school.

He said, today, John, as I was praying, God impressed me that I was to say thank you to him by helping pastors financially who are making a difference in my life. And because of what your school does for my granddaughter, I'm here to help you financially. John didn't know what to expect.

I mean, he prayed in the morning. Here was this man. He invited the man in and they talked together.

Finally the man got up to go. He said, remember why I came? Yes, I remember. He pulled out of his coat a check for \$1,000.

The pastor told me I began to cry. I was not expecting such a quick and such a dramatic answer. Thanked the man profusely.

Thank you, thank you. Didn't hardly know what to say, hardly know what to do. The man left.

He went inside. He got on his knees to thank God. But then he did something.

He said, God, I asked for \$1,200 and you're short. OK? You send \$1,000 and you're short \$200. Please send the rest.

We were told to pray specifically. He said on Thursday, an envelope arrived in the mail, a strange return address. It was an auditing company.

Inside was a letter explaining that a company had been auditing a firm that my wife had been working for. And it said in the course of that audit, they discovered she'd been shorted about \$200. And in that letter was a check for \$200.

First \$1,000 delivered on Sunday, the remainder delivered on Thursday. I say this to convince you that there's a power that comes when we pray. Now, I'm not preaching the prosperity gospel, OK? I'm not preaching that.

OK? We need to be willing to live as paupers, if that's what God calls us to. We need to be willing to live however God wants. OK? It's when we surrender our lives to God and we're trying to work for God, that God responds to our prayers.

Not if we pray and say, God, I'd like a fancy BMW and I want to live in a big house. That's not what prayer is about, OK? Why would God not answer those prayers? Because if we got those, we would get very selfish and we'd think that prayer is all about me, me, me. Right? No.

When God answered all of my prayers, it was when I was seeking to know and do His will and I was completely open to whatever He wanted. That's when God answers prayers the most quickly. Too often we give conditions to God and God says, you need to give me an open blank sheet to fill in the lines.

And that only happens when we're willing to guide His self. OK? We talked about that, the need to guide His self a little this morning. We're going to continue with the next part of the session we're having in the morning.

Anyway, so here's my friend. He received the \$200. Now here's just a few verses.

We already read the first one, James 4, verse 2. You do not have because you do not ask. I believe with all my heart that it's when we ask that we receive. No doubt about it.

Notice the quotation from Andrew Murray. It says, God wills a great deal of blessings to His people which never comes to them. And let me point out, for those of you that might be wondering, when I made this handout originally, all the authors were put in alphabetically, just so you know.

OK? God wills a great deal of blessings to His people which never comes to them. He wills it most earnestly, but they do not will it, and it cannot come to them. This is the great mystery of man's creation, with a free will and also the renewal of his will and redemption, that God has made the execution of His will in many things dependent on the will of man.

Apparently it's not in everything, but in some things God depends on us asking. And if you ask me why, I don't have an answer, but I can tell you when we can find out, when we get to heaven, OK? We can speculate, but it's hard to understand. But notice, of God's will revealed in His promises, as much will be fulfilled as our faith accepts.

Prayer is the power by which that comes to pass which otherwise would not take place. Prayer is the power. God has left it to prayer to say where the blessing is to bring the living water to the desert places.

The will of God to bless is dependent upon the will of man to say where the blessing must descend. Such honor have His saints. And I can't explain how God works or why He works, but I can tell you stories of great missionary endeavors where there was someone back in England praying with others saying, God, would you start a revival? Would you begin winning people in such and such a place? As a result of those prayers, miracles began to happen.

OK? When we pray, God works, OK? That's why they have that acronym. You know PUSH? Know what it stands for? Pray until something happens, OK? PUSH. It's a good one.

We need to PUSH with God. Notice the next one. It is God's plan, and I've already read it, now you have it in writing, to grant us an answer to the prayer of faith that which He would not bestow did we not thus ask.

OK? The next one. We must ask specifically. Mark 10, 51.

So Jesus answered and said to him, What do you want me to do for you? I think it is God's joy to answer our prayers specifically. Going to Roslyn Goforth, she was a missionary to China with her husband, Jonathan. She said, I learned that prayer was the secret which overcame every obstacle, the key that unlocked every closed door.

I felt like a child learning a new and wonderful lesson as I saw benches, tables, chairs, stove, fuel, lamps, oil, even an organ coming in answer to definite prayer for these things. But the best side of all was when men and women deep in sin were converted and changed into workers for God in answer to prayer. That last one is the most important kind of prayer that we can pray.

She said, I saw things, but I also saw people converted, not only converted but transformed into workers as a result of prayer. That's the best reason to pray. Let me share a story with you.

I feel like the stories encourage you. I have a friend who is underemployed. She'd like to have more work, but she's been struggling.

She was good friends with another person who was not employed at all, and they were talking together on the telephone. And person number two had been looking around all over the place to find a job and finally was hired by a company, but she was going to have to, what do you say, relocate or move? But you don't use that word. You use another word down here.

I forget it right now. Shift, thank you. She was going to shift.

And she called her friend and said, I need you to come and help me with shifting. And my friend said, you know, I really don't have any money to pay for the gas. You live seven hours away.

But she said, I'll pray about it. She felt strongly convicted that she should go. So she told God, you're going to have to help me.

She told me how she went and she filled up her gas tank, was when gas in the United States, which I know to you seems probably cheap, but it was \$4 a gallon. For us, that's a lot of money. For you, it's probably cheap.

If I know what prices are down here. But it was very expensive. And she said, I didn't really have much more money.

So she said, I drove carefully. I drove the speed limit. I would look for a place to exercise.

I kind of kept an eye where I'd go get gas. But she said, I drove seven hours. And the tank only went down one quarter of a tank.

Only used a quarter of a tank in seven hours. Now, that's a good prayer, isn't it? And she said, when I returned, I had the same experience. It took another quarter of a tank to get home.

There was someone who was praying, seeking to obey God. And God worked in a supernatural way. There was another woman by the name of Helen Rosevere.

I don't know if you've heard of Helen Rosevere on my website. By the way, I have a website called [pathtoprayer.com](http://pathtoprayer.com). And there are four sermons by her that are wonderful. She talks about how she was in Africa.

She was working. And one day, in working with a young mother that was pregnant, the mother died, but the baby survived. And the kind of weather was cold at night and got warmer during the day.

And Helen Rosevere told her assistants to run quick and get a hot water bottle to put next to the baby to kind of maintain the body heat. Well, the assistant ran, heated up water. But in putting the water, as sometimes happens, the rubber must have been kind of fragile because it split.

And there's no hot water bottle. So Helen Rosevere said, hold the baby close to you. Children, there was an orphanage.

Let's get together. Let's pray for the baby. And so they prayed.

And one little girl prayed and said, Lord, please send a hot water bottle today. And please send a dolly, too, so that she'll know that you love her. Helen Rosevere thought to herself, this is an impossible prayer.

God has no time to bring a hot water bottle. Who would send a hot water bottle to hot Africa? This was in the, I think, probably the early 1900s, maybe 1930s, 1940s. But that afternoon, for the first time, a big box arrived.

She called the children together. She thought it would be closed. She was pulling out clothes.

And lo and behold, partway down, the box was a hot water bottle. And upon seeing that, the little girl that had prayed came rushing forward, dug everything out. And in the bottom was the doll that she'd prayed for, too.

Now, this was at a time when there wasn't Federal Express or DHL. That box had been sent months ahead of time. God knew, but the little girl prayed, and somehow it arrived.

She talks about how she hired a cook. The man had leprosy. She was a little bit concerned about that.

She thought to herself, what would my mother say? It's funny how mothers sometimes play a factor when we're thinking about what we're doing. And she told herself, mother doesn't need to know about this. So this man was working for her, but he kept working on her to open a leprosy clinic.

So she did. Had to buy a lot of medicine, and all the bills came. And she looked at the bills, and she said, I never want the leprosy clinic.

It's more work than I have time for. And she put the bill in the Bible and said, God, it's your problem, not mine. A little while later, an envelope came.

Interesting. Had come from funds from Canada, Ireland, and England. I believe that's what it was.

Gone through all the exchanges. When she pulled out the tithe, it was to the penny what it cost for the medicines. You see, she was a praying woman who was following God.

And when we pray, we can see great things happen for God's work if we are asking. We have the right to ask specifically. We must ask as well in faith.

Ask expectantly. Mark 11.24. You can find where I am. I'm on the inside fold on the right, number four.

We must ask in faith. Mark 11.24. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them. Mark 9.23. If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.

Matthew 17.20. If you have faith as a mustard seed, there's a typo there. I apologize. You will say to this mountain, move from here, and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.

Now, we're going to talk a little bit about that story on Sabbath. But it says if we have the faith as tiny as a mustard seed, and I'll add a bit there, and it was God's will, we could tell that mountain to move, and it would move. Notice what James Frazier says there.

I have come to see that in past years I have wasted much time praying in a way that was not effective prayer at all. Praying without faith is like trying to cut with a blunt knife, much labor expended to little purpose. For the work accomplished by labor and prayer depends on our faith.

According to your faith, not labor be it unto you. I've been impressed lately with the thought that people fail in praying the prayer of faith because they do not believe that God has answered, but only that He will answer their petitions. They rise from their knees feeling that God will answer sometime or other, but not that He has already answered.

This is not the faith that makes prayer effective. True faith glories in the present tense and does not trouble itself about the future. God's promises are in the present tense and are quite secure enough to set our hearts at rest.

Their full outworking is often the future, but God's word is as good as His bond, and we need have no anxiety. Sometimes He gives at once what we ask, but more often He just gives us His promise. James Fraser said, when we pray, we need to believe that God has answered our prayers.

And I would like to suggest, if you want to have a living, authentic prayer experience, when you finish your prayer, say, God, I thank you that you heard my prayer. Angels on their way. The answers are coming already.

According to your will, in your time, in the best way. If you just say, God, I hope you'll answer, you're going to wonder if your prayers got anywhere. But if you say, God, I know you have heard.

If you seek God's will to be done, I can assure you that every prayer is heard. You can pray with a confidence and a joy and with an expectation, because it's based on God's word. If you ask believing, you will receive.

Look at D.L. Moody. Great man. I believe sees something in God's hand and says, I cannot get it.

Faith sees it and says, I will have it. Faith sees it and says, I will have it. Let's go to another handout.

Look at the next one, which would be number three. We're going through this quite quickly. But it's good to look at all of these.

We must pray in Jesus' name. Look at John chapter 16, verses 23 and 24. It says, And in that day you will ask me nothing.

Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in my name, he will give you. Until now you've asked nothing in my name. Ask and you will receive, that your joy will be full.

Jesus said, As a result of asking in my name, it will be the Father's joy to grant your request. Look down towards the bottom of that page at George Mueller. It says, On the ground of our own goodness, we cannot expect to have our prayers answered.

But Jesus is worthy, and for his sake, we have our prayers answered. If we trust him, if we hide in him, if we put him forward in ourselves, in the background, depend on him and plead in his name, we may expect to have our prayers answered. When we pray in Jesus' name, we have every right to believe that our prayers are answered.

Why? Why do you suppose that God answers our prayers when we pray in Jesus' name? Is it because there's a magic in using certain words? What's the point? And I'm an easy teacher. You can all respond. Don't worry.

When you pray in Jesus' name, you're praying, obviously, to glorify God. You're praying, OK? You're praying on the basis of the merit of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is always acceptable to God.

We, in ourselves, are never acceptable. And when we pray in Jesus' name, we're in effect saying, Father, for Jesus' sake, answer my prayer. And Jesus hears us say that, and Jesus says, Father, for my sake, would you please do that for them? And you know what the Father says? I want to.

I want to. I don't think I have the quotation here, but George Miller makes the statement that in his life, he saw many, many prayers being answered, but never once did he pray without praying in Jesus' name, because every time, though he was a great prayer warrior, he always believed they were answered as a result of what God was doing. OK? We must pray in Jesus' name.

Look at the left-hand side where it says he explained. It says he explained that the secret of their success would be in asking for strength and grace in his name. He would be present before the Father to make requests for them.

The prayer of the humble petitioner he presents is his own desire in that soul's behalf. OK? I like the next one, too. It speaks of how praying in Jesus' name is our passport to the heart of the Father.

OK? It's important to pray in Jesus' name. The other ABC that's critically important is to pray that God's will be done. OK? Down just a little further where it says we must seek for God's will to be done.

1 John 5, 14 and 15 says, now this is the confidence that we have in him, we've already read this, that if we ask anything according to what? His will, he hears us, and if we know that he hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we've asked of him. Notice Numbers 9, verse 18. Numbers 9, verse 18.

There's actually a group of verses there that are important. Numbers 9, verse 18. This is where it's speaking of the children of Israel and how they would follow the cloud.

We're going to start in verse 15. It says, now on the day that the tabernacle was raised up, the cloud covered the tabernacle, the tent of the testimony, from evening until morning it was above the tabernacle like the appearance of fire. So it was always the cloud covered it by day and the appearance of fire by night.

Whenever the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle, after that, the children of Israel would journey and in the place where the cloud settled, the children of Israel would pitch their tents. In other words, whenever the cloud moved, they moved. If it moved during the day, they moved.

If it moved at night, they moved whenever it moved. Notice this. It says in verse 19, even when the cloud continued long many days above the tabernacle, the children of Israel kept the charge of the Lord and did not journey.

So if the cloud stayed there a long time, they stayed there even in that hot, dusty desert place. So it was when the cloud was above the tabernacle a few days, according to the commandment of the Lord, they would remain in camp. I'm reading verse 20.

And according to the commandment of the Lord, they would journey. Verse 21. So it was when the cloud remained only from evening until morning, when the cloud was taken up in the morning, then they would journey, whether by day or by night, whenever the cloud was taken up, they would journey, et cetera, et cetera.

The point is that their safety was always keeping their eyes on the cloud or always keeping their eyes on what God was doing. And if God moved them and kept them in a place, they were to stay. And if God moved them, they were to move, whether it was during the day or whether at night, because they were to have a constant relationship with God, constantly looking at the cloud above or the fire during the night or the cloud above them during the day.

We are to have that same kind of constant looking to the cloud, constant looking to God experience so far as His will is concerned. Remember what I said? God's work done God's way. That's God's will, right? We'll always have God's blessing.

I've been at places in the world where I've shared that statement. Remember I was in one place, I won't share the name, and someone said, you know, we're doing God's work, but I don't think we're doing it God's way, and I bet that's why we're not being blessed. They were running a school, and they couldn't understand why the other Protestant schools were doing so much better.

And someone said, I think that must be the reason, okay? That was actually a statement by Hudson Taylor. God's work done God's way. We'll always have God's blessing.

So we need to have God's will done. Let me share with you just a few statements in that regard. George Mueller, look on the back page.

George Mueller had many, many answers to prayer. He says, in reading about all these answers to prayer, the believing reader may be led to think that I'm spiritually minded above most of the children of God, and that therefore the Lord favors me thus. The true reason is this.

Just in as many points as I'm acting according to the mind of God, in so many am I blessed and made a blessing. He said there's no great magic to my ability to pray, but he said to the degree I've wanted to know God's will, to the degree I've wanted God's will to be done in my life, to that degree God has answered my prayers. If you want to have a perfect average with your prayers, always seek to know and to do and pray according to God's will.

That's the secret. Notice what Thomas Paine, an old writer from the 1800s, said regarding Daniel. Daniel's loyalty to the will of God in everything explains more than anything else the secret of his prevailing power in prayer.

Daniel always wanted God's will to be done. He prayed accordingly, and God always answered his prayer. Key point.

Very, very important point. Notice the next one. Christ says, Unequivocal.

What does that mean? If we pray according to God's will, we meet the conditions, are we assured of an answer? Yes. The word unequivocal. If you say I give you my answer on an unequivocal basis, that means no matter what happens, I will do what I promised.

I will do what I have promised. Let me share a couple of stories with you. I've talked about Roslyn Goforth.

She was a great, great Christian. She and her husband worked in China, in the mountainous regions of China. And they did a great work.

Actually, they were just in China in the coastal areas. And one day her husband told her, I believe that it is God's will that we should go into the interior of China. By that time, she'd lost some children.

I think three, maybe four. And she told her husband, it could not be God's will that we go into the interior of China because there they know even less about communicable diseases, and I don't want to lose any more children. She said, it can't be God's will.

I will not go. Now, it's not good to tell a man who feels convicted that God has called your family to go that you're not going to go. But he loved his wife.

He said, pray about it. Pray about it, Roslyn. And she agreed.

She'd pray. But every time he'd check with her, she said, I'm unwilling to go. Finally said, I'll let you pray through this coming weekend, and then tell me at the end of the weekend what your decision is.

When he checked with her, she said, my answer is still no. That has not changed at all. And his response was, I fear for our children.

Because she had made her children into what? Idols. They were more important than God's will at that point, and he feared for them. Well, a little boy got sick, and they prayed and prayed, and the little boy was healed.

A little girl got sick, and they prayed, and the little girl died. I'd like to read what she says. She says, my eyes seemed suddenly open to what I'd been doing.

I had dared to fight against Almighty God. It's not in your handout. It's just in my notes here.

I had dared to fight against Almighty God. In the moments that followed, God revealed himself to me in such love and majesty and glory that I gave myself up to him with unspeakable joy. Then I knew that I'd been making an awful mistake, that I could indeed safely trust my children to him wherever he might lead.

One thing only seemed plain, that I must follow where God should lead. I saw at last that God must come first. She said, I realized that I'd been holding out on God as a result of my children, and that I couldn't do that.

This was being written many years later in a little book called How I Know God Answers Prayer, a wonderful book on prayer. I have it as a PDF on my website if you want to read it. She says, was God faithful to the vision he'd given me, or did he allow the children to suffer in the years that followed? As I write, this 18 years have passed since we started on that first trip, and none of our children have died.

Never had we, as little sicknesses during that life, never had we so much evidence of God's favor and blessing in a hundred lives. You see, when she'd been so busy trying to protect herself, God couldn't really protect them. But when she said, I'll throw myself on God, when I'm willing to trust my children with God, she says, from that moment, never did our children enjoy such good health.

They trusted God. And their goal was to plant a church every month in the interior of China. And every month, that's what happened.

That's amazing, as a church planter, right? That's a great deal. And later, Jonathan Goforth went to Korea, if there's any students here from Korea, and he played a huge role in bringing revival to Korea. Now, it's interesting that for a long time, when the Goforths were in China, they had prayed together, and they had been working, you know, God had blessed them, but they'd been kind of itinerants, and so they'd never bothered to build a house or have a nice house.

But at some point, they were actually in a town where they were going to stay a while, and they began talking together about what they would do with their house. Before, they'd always had an open-door policy. They allowed people to come in.

You know, they didn't really stop people. And the nesting instinct kind of took over, and they thought, you know, maybe we shouldn't do that. But as they talked about it, they realized that they were going to allow their house to become a barrier to their witnessing efforts.

And they said, we shouldn't do that. We need to allow people to visit us as before, because we're living for one purpose, to win people to the Lord Jesus Christ. She said, notice, we therefore pray that God would

make the new house a means of reaching the people, a blessing and not a hindrance.

The answer to this prayer is often the case depended largely upon ourselves. We had to be made willing to pay the price that the answer demanded. We came to see that in order that our prayer would be answered, we would have to keep open house every day and all day, which is by no means easy.

Now listen. She said, the climax in numbers was reached in the spring of 1899, when 1,835 men and several hundred women were received by us in one day. How would you like to have that many visitors? 1,835 men plus several hundred women.

Now what happened was that as the men went through, Jonathan gave them Bible studies all the way through. Every person got a talk on the Bible, and they were very suspicious that the Western missionaries were kidnapping children, and so they wanted to look in every part of their house, and they couldn't find any kidnapped children inside the house. And when Roslyn took the women through, they all got a Bible study too.

And as a result of that, they won the people in that town over to them, where before they'd been suspicious and afraid of them, they became their friends. How was that possible? Because they believed that God's will was the best thing. Now, Andrew Murray makes a very interesting statement, and after that we're going to call it a day.

It's close again. We're going to spend some time praying before we close. But Andrew Murray makes the following statement, and listen carefully.

Do understand that there is no sure way, rather, there is no other possible way of getting into God's love and blessing in prayer than by getting into His will. He says, if you want God's blessing, pray. But pray according to God's will.

In prayer, give up yourself most absolutely to the blessed will of God. This will avail more than much asking. He says, when you want God's will to be done, actually, that will have more power with God than if you just keep asking, asking, asking.

Let me illustrate that for you. When my girls were little, and they were to have come into the kitchen on a cold winter morning, they might have seen me making some breakfast and using the stove, and with an electric stove, you know, there's a round circle of the heated iron, right? And it's hot, it's pretty. And my girls might have come to me and said, Dad, we're cold.

We want to put our hands on the red circle. What would I have answered? Go for it? No, I would have said, you can't do that, you're going to hurt yourself. What if they would have asked me five minutes later, can we put our hand on the hot stove? No.

They could have asked me a thousand times, and the answer would have never changed. The same is true with God. Even, you know, if God knows that something is not for our good, in mercy, he's going to say no.

And if we ask a thousand times, if God cares and loves for us, he'll keep saying no. We save a lot of time, you know, when we don't get a yes answer, saying, God, is there a problem? What is your will? I want your will. And often when we're open to that, God responds and shows us what he really has in mind.

Okay? Asking according to God's will avails more than much asking. Okay? Let me see what else is here. We've learned about the need to pray, praying according to God's will.

There's a handout called Guidance. I'm not going to go through it, but this is what a variety of people have said on how to know God's will. Maybe you're wondering, how can I know God's will? This is how to know God's will.

I am not into people jumping off of cliffs. When God works, he works in very specific ways. And if some of you have an interest in what the Bible says and what some people have said on secret prayer, there's a handout on that as well.

And on whether when we pray, God will always answer. All of those are very helpful. I don't want to go too late.

I know that there are responsibilities in the morning. I think we're supposed to close somewhere around 9 o'clock, and I'd like to close by spending some time praying. Would that be okay? I think it'd be a pity to spend this time and not pray.

I'd like to do something with all of you. I'd like to try a different method of prayer. It's a method that I introduce everywhere I go, and I hope you like it.

And let me explain what we're going to do. It's going to be sentence prayers. Who knows what a sentence prayer is? What's a sentence prayer? Roy.

Roy. Well, or a sentence or two. It's not very long, okay? The other thing with a sentence prayer is you're limited to one subject.

Okay? Short prayer, one subject, because you want everyone to pray many times. So for this, we're going to pray very briefly, okay? And tonight I want to suggest the subject matters we pray. I'm going to facilitate it.

So we're going to start, and I'm going to say, God, we want to spend some time praying together. We don't want to rush into your presence. We just want to spend a few moments remembering who you are and what you've been to us, how good you've been to us.

We'll take just a few minutes to pray along those lines. Then I'll say, God, we want to acknowledge that we're not all we should be. We want to just, and I'll probably pray that prayer myself.

Then I'll say, God, now we want to thank you for what you're doing. And just short sentence prayers of some of the blessings that have been going on. And finally, we'll spend some time making specific requests.

And I'll let you know. I'll say, now, Lord, we want to spend some time making specific requests. I'll make a request, and then short little prayers, okay, on the same subject, just bouncing back and forth.

It's a wonderful way to pray. I do this with people all over the world, and many find that one of the most enjoyable ways to pray in the world. Okay? Then the subject has to be linked, doesn't it? Because they're not these strong, these jointed sentences.

No. That they're linking. Well, we're going to resonate.

We're going to resonate. It works, okay? It will be linked, okay? Do you understand what I'm suggesting? Some of the group knows, because they've been with me at two prayer meetings. But it's the best way to learn about this, okay? So let's pray together, and I'll start you, and you'll know what's going on, I promise.

Father in Heaven, as we bring our meeting to a close, I just want to say thank you that you have been here with us. But Lord, we've been talking about prayer, and we want to actually spend some time talking with you in a group kind of way. But Father, even though we don't have much time, we don't even want to rush into your presence in this limited time.

We want to spend first some time just remembering who you are in our lives, how much you love us, and how much you care for us. Tonight, Father, I just want to say thank you for what you've done for us by giving us the gift of prayer. What an amazing gift.

Thank you for that. Thank you, Lord. Amen.

Anyone else now can pray a short prayer remembering what God is to them. There are many things, Father, that we could thank you for. But we want to, even if we don't have much time, we want to spend just a few moments acknowledging who we are in appropriate ways.

And Father, I'm going to pray this prayer for everyone here. We love you. We're here because we love you.

We want to serve you. We want to make a difference for other people. We know that sometimes, Lord, our minds stray, our minds wander, our feet tend to wander as well.

Thank you that you forgive us. Thank you that you change us. But you've been blessing us, Lord.

You have been blessing us. So just as we would praise you for who you are, we would ask your forgiveness for who we are, we want to spend a few moments just remembering all the good things that you've done for us in short, simple prayers. Thank you, Father.

My short prayer to begin is thank you for this church. I believe it's a miracle. And I believe that you're doing this miracle.

Thank you for that. Father in Heaven, because of the hour, we want to now spend some specific time praying for requests. We've already had a few requests.

But now, Lord, we want to lift up the burdens that you've put on our hearts. Father, needless to say, I ask for your blessing. Lord, you know that I've emailed a girl that's attending Melbourne, asking her to come to the care group where I'll be this Friday evening.

I pray that you'll put the desire in her heart to come. Thank you for that. Father, I want to thank you that you've been with us this evening.

You've heard our request. You also know the requests, Lord, that have been on our hearts. We've not chosen to break into small groups just because I wanted them to experience a group sentence prayer.

There are many other things. Help us, Father, to pray when you get home, pray in the morning. Thank you that the Holy Spirit is willing to intercede as well.

But thank you that you're with us here this evening. We ask now that you would give us safety and that tomorrow, Lord, would be a blessed day because we want your will to be done from beginning to end. I want to claim the promise that you're able to do exceedingly abundantly above and beyond what we could ask, which is much, or imagine, which is what we hold out for, thankfully according to your power.

And so we ask this with gratitude in Jesus' name. Amen. .

---

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/6D7XsChJgP0.mp4>  
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/dan-augsburger/stop-limiting-god/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**