

# Answered Prayer (Continued) 2

by E.M. Bounds

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*E.M. Bounds emphasizes the certainty and power of prayer, urging believers to ask specifically and boldly, trusting in God's unwavering promise to answer.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 116:1-2, Jeremiah 33:3, Matthew 7:7-8, Mark 11:24, Luke 11:9-10, John 14:13-14, Philippians 4:6-7, Hebrews 4:16, James 5:16, 1 John 5:14-15

**Topics:** "Power Of Prayer", "Faith in God's Promises"

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## Description

E.M. Bounds emphasizes the unwavering truth that God hears and answers prayer, asserting that this is a universal and unchangeable law of God. He illustrates this with biblical examples, such as Jabez and Hannah, who received specific answers to their prayers, reinforcing the idea that God responds to earnest and specific requests. Bounds encourages believers to boldly approach God in prayer, reminding them that the promises of God are reliable and meant to inspire faith. He warns against the dangers of unanswered prayer, which can lead to doubt and infidelity, and calls for a revival of powerful prayer in the church. Ultimately, he urges the faithful to test God's promises through prayer, as it is through answered prayer that God's glory is revealed.

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## Transcript

WE put it to the front. We unfold it on a banner never to be lowered or folded, that God does hear and answer prayer. God has always heard and answered prayer. God will forever hear and answer prayer. He is the same yesterday, today and forever, ever blessed, ever to be adored. Amen. He changes not. As he has always answered prayer, so will he ever continue to do so.

To answer prayer is God's universal rule. It is his unchangeable and irrevocable law to answer prayer. It is his invariable, specific and inviolate promise to answer prayer. The few denials to prayer in the Scriptures are the exceptions to the general rule, suggestive and startling by their fewness, exception and emphasis.

The possibilities of prayer, then, lie in the great truth, illimitable in its broadness, fathomless in its depths, exhaustless in its fullness, that God answers every prayer from every true soul who truly prays.

God's Word does not say, "Call unto me, and you will thereby be trained into the happy art of knowing how to be denied. Ask, and you will learn sweet patience by getting nothing." Far from it. But it is definite, clear and positive: "Ask, and it shall be given unto you."

We have this case among many in the Old Testament:

Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, O that thou wouldst bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thy hand might be with me, and that thou wouldst keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me.

And God readily granted him the things which he had requested.

Hannah, distressed in soul because she was childless, and desiring a man child, repaired to the house of prayer, and prayed, and this is the record she makes of the direct answer she received: "For this child I prayed, and the Lord hath given me the petition which I asked of him."

God's promises and purposes go direct to the fact of giving for the asking. The answer to our prayers is the motive constantly presented in the Scriptures to encourage us to pray and to quicken us in this spiritual exercise. Take such strong, clear passages as these:

Call unto me, and I will answer thee. He shall call unto me, and I will answer. Ask, and it shall be given you. Seek, and ye shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

This is Jesus Christ's law of prayer. He does not say, "Ask, and something shall be given you." Nor does he say, "Ask, and you will be trained into piety." But it is that when you ask, the very thing asked for will be given. Jesus does not say, "Knock, and some door will be opened." But the very door at which you are knocking will be opened. To make this doubly sure, Jesus Christ duplicates and reiterates the promise of the answer: "For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened."

Answered prayer is the spring of love, and is the direct encouragement to pray. "I love the Lord because he hath heard my voice and my supplications. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live."

The certainty of the father's giving is assured by the father's relation, and by the ability and goodness of the father. Earthly parents, frail, infirm, and limited in goodness and ability, give when the child asks and seeks. The parental heart responds most readily to the cry for bread. The hunger of the child touches and wins the father heart. So God, our heavenly Father, is as easily and strongly moved by our prayers as the earthly parent. "If ye being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father in heaven give good gifts unto them that ask him?" "Much more," just as much more does God's goodness, tenderness and ability exceed that of man's.

Just as the asking is specific, so also is the answer specific. The child does not ask for one thing and get another. He does not cry for bread, and get a stone. He does not ask for an egg, and receive a scorpion. He does not ask for a fish, and get a serpent. Christ demands specific asking. He responds to specific praying by specific giving.

To give the very thing prayed for, and not something else, is fundamental to Christ's law of praying. No prayer for the cure of blind eyes did he ever answer by curing deaf ears. The very thing prayed for is the very thing which he gives. The exceptions to this are confirmatory of this great law of prayer. He who asks for bread gets bread, and not a stone. If he asks for a fish, he receives a fish, and not a serpent. No cry is so pleading and so powerful as the child's cry for bread. The cravings of hunger, the appetite felt, and the need realized, all create and propel the crying of the child. Our prayers must be as earnest, as needy, and as hungry as the hungry child's cry for bread. Simple, artless, direct, and specific must be our praying,

according to Christ's law of prayer and his teaching of God's fatherhood.

The illustration and enforcement of the law of prayer are found in the specific answers given to prayer. Gethsemane is the only seeming exception. The prayer of Jesus Christ in that awful hour of darkness and hell was conditioned on these words, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." But beyond these utterances of our Lord was the soul and life prayer of the willing, suffering divine victim, "Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." The prayer was answered, the angel came, strength was imparted, and the meek sufferer in silence drank the bitter cup.

Two cases of unanswered prayer are recorded in the Scriptures in addition to the Gethsemane prayer of our Lord. The first was that of David for the life of his baby child, but for good reasons to Almighty God the request was not granted. The second was that of Paul for the removal of the thorn in the flesh, which was denied. But we are constrained to believe these must have been notable as exceptions to God's rule, as illustrated in the history of prophet, priest, apostle and saint, as recorded in the divine Word. There must have been unrevealed reasons which moved God to veer from his settled and fixed rule to answer prayer by giving the specific thing prayed for.

Our Lord did not hold the Syrophenician woman in the school of unanswered prayer to test and mature her faith, neither did he answer her prayer by healing or saving her husband. She asks for the healing of her daughter, and Christ healed the daughter. She received the very thing for which she asked the Lord Jesus Christ. It was in the school of answered prayer our Lord disciplined and perfected her faith, and it was by giving her a specific answer to her prayer. Her prayer centered on her daughter. She prayed for the one thing, the healing of her child. And the answer of our Lord centered likewise on the daughter.

We tread altogether too gingerly upon the great and precious promises of God, and too often we ignore them wholly. The promise is the ground on which faith stands in asking of God. This is the one basis of prayer. We limit God's ability. We measure God's ability and willingness to answer prayer by the standard of men. We limit the Holy One of Israel. How full of benefaction and remedy to suffering mankind are the promises as given us by James in his Epistle, fifth chapter! How personal and mediate do they make God in prayer! They are a direct challenge to our faith. They are encouraging to large expectations in all the requests we make of God. Prayer affects God in a direct manner, and has its aim and end in affecting him. Prayer takes hold of God, and induces him to do large things for us, whether personal or relative, temporal or spiritual, earthly or heavenly.

The great gap between Bible promises to prayer and the income from praying is almost unspeakably great, so much so that it is a prolific source of infidelity. It breeds unbelief in prayer as a great moral force, and begets doubt really as to the power of prayer. Christianity needs today, above all things else, men and women who can in prayer put God to the test and who can prove his promises. When this happy day for the world begins, it will be earth's brightest day, and will be heaven's dawning day on earth. These are the sort of men and women needed in this modern day in the church. It is not educated men who are needed for the times. It is not more money that is required. It is not more machinery, more organization, more ecclesiastical laws, but it is men and women who know how to pray, who can in prayer lay hold upon God and bring him down to earth, and move him to take hold of earth's affairs mightily and put life and power into the church and into all of its machinery.

The church and the world greatly need saints who can bridge this wide gap between the praying done and the small number of answers received. Saints are needed whose faith is bold enough and sufficiently

far-reaching to put God to the test. The cry comes even now out of heaven to the people of the present-day church, as it sounded forth in the days of Malachi: "Prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts." God is waiting to be put to the test by his people in prayer. He delights in being put to the test on his promises. It is his highest pleasure to answer prayer to prove the reliability of his promises. Nothing worthy of God nor of great value to men will be accomplished till this is done.

Our gospel belongs to the miraculous. It was projected on the miraculous plane. It cannot be maintained but by the supernatural. Take the supernatural out of our holy religion, and its life and power are gone, and it degenerates into a mere mode of morals. The miraculous is divine power. Prayer has in it this same power. Prayer brings this divine power into the ranks of men and puts it to work. Prayer brings into the affairs of earth a supernatural element. Our gospel when truly presented is the power of God. Never was the church more in need of those who can and will test Almighty God. Never did the church need more than now those who can raise up everywhere memorials of God's supernatural power, memorials of answers to prayer, memorials of promises fulfilled. These would do more to silence the enemy of souls, the foe of God and the adversary of the church than any modern scheme or present day plan for the success of the gospel. Such memorials reared by praying people would dumbfound God's foes, strengthen weak saints, and would fill strong saints with triumphant rapture.

The most prolific source of infidelity, and that which maligns and hinders praying, and that which obscures the being and glory of God most effectually, is unanswered prayer. Better not to pray at all than to go through a dead form, which secures no answer, brings no glory to God, and supplies no good to man. Nothing so hardens the heart and nothing so blinds us to the unseen and the eternal, as this kind of prayerless praying.

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