

GREG'S NOTES

A NEW BEGINNING TEACHING OUTLINES

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SECRETS TO ANSWERED PRAYER

Luke 11

There are three ways that God answers prayer: yes, no, and wait. Granted, we may not like hearing “no” and “wait,” but they are legitimate answers.

Of course, no one prays for something that they don't want to hear God say yes to. So, it's only natural for us to want to know the secret to getting our prayers responded to in the affirmative.

The truth is that there aren't any secrets. The Bible clearly tells us how to approach God and have meaningful communion with Him through prayer. On the other hand, if you don't know the principles that are laid out in Scripture, then they are secrets that could unlock your prayer life.

PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES

- 1. I must align my will with God's will.** The primary objective of prayer is not to bend God to our point of view, but to bend ourselves to His. When we pray, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done,” we are saying, “Lord, if what I am about to pray for is somehow out of your will, overrule it.”
- 2. I must confess my personal sin.** This is very important. The psalmist writes, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me” (Psalm 66:18). That word “regard” means if I cling to or hold on to. If you are holding on to some kind of sin in your life, you are not going to have your prayers answered in the affirmative. The closer you are to God, the greater your sense of sin in your life.
- 3. I must forgive others.** The Lord's Prayer does not say that God will not forgive us if we don't forgive others. Rather, it is saying that if I know anything of the forgiveness of God, I should be extending that same forgiveness to others. If they accept it, then all is well. If they don't, then you have at least made the effort to reconcile and can come to God with a clear conscience.
- 4. As much as possible, stay out of the way of temptation.** The first thing to remember is that it is impossible to escape temptation completely. That's because temptation comes from inside of us, from our flesh (James 1:13). That said, you can and should avoid situations that you know will cause you to be tempted. The less you put yourself in harm's way, the less likely it is that you will have to face temptation.
- 5. Keep praying.** It's easy to pray for a need, not see a response, and then stop lifting up that request. But sometimes, God's “no” is really a “not now.” Perhaps you're not ready for what you're asking for, or the person you're praying for is not ready. But when the timing is right, and you are praying in His will, He will answer it. So keep on praying, even when it seems hopeless.

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RELEVANT REMINDERS

Sometimes, it's easy to rationalize sin in our lives, even when we are quick to point out someone else's sin. If there is any question at all about whether something is a good idea or a bad idea, do these two things.

- Pray about it in the clear light of the presence of God. Jesus said, "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation." So pray about whether you should be doing it. If you think it sounds foolish, then perhaps it's because you know you should not be doing it. In the presence of God, you begin to see things the way they really are.
- Ask yourself, "If I saw another Christian doing it, how would it appear to me?" Forget about yourself for a moment. If you saw another Christian doing what you are about to do, what would you think? If you were to say, "I think that person is seriously backslidden or, at best, they are putting themselves in a compromising situation," then why are you doing it? If it's not something another Christian should do, then it's something you shouldn't do either.

APPLICABLE ACTIONS

Is there something holding you back from fully committing your life to God today? God's plans for you are better than your plans for yourself. So never be afraid to commit an unknown future to a known God.