

## When you pray

Jesus said, "And in praying use not vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him" (Mt 6:7-8).

God is highly attuned to our needs. But He has set certain rules in place by which we may obtain from Him what we need. The first and most important is that you ASK. The Bible says, "Ye have not, because ye ask not" (James 4:2). Jesus said, "Ask, and it shall be given you" (Mt 7:7). The second most important rule in prayer is that when you pray, BELIEVE YOU RECEIVE.

The secret to success in prayer is to pray BELIEVING. I can't count the number of prayers I've offered-up over the years in which I prayed doubting. Except by sheer mercy of God, I've never had one of those "doubting prayers" answered. It is the "prayer of faith" that moves mountains—not the prayer of doubt. Jesus said, "According to your faith will it be done to you" (Mt 9:29).

Faith is acting as if something is so. We ask God in faith and believe our request has been granted. We thank and praise God AHEAD OF TIME for the answer. We let every thought, every action, every mental picture correspond to our faith—that it is now a "done deal." Jesus said, "Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, BELIEVE THAT YE RECEIVE THEM, and ye shall have them" (Mark 11:24).

Here is a case in point. At the time of this article, it has been 40 days since we had any significant rain. The other morning, while it was still dark, outside under the full moon, I stood, lifted my hands in prayer, and asked God to send His rain. Then I thanked Him for sending the rain. And I continue to thank Him for the rain. "But it hasn't come yet," you might say. No, but it will. I believe I receive—therefore I thank God ahead of time.

The third rule to answered prayer is to WALK IN LOVE. Jesus, after giving the instructions "believe you receive" in Mark 11:24 said this: "And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins." Elsewhere Jesus said if we abide in Him and His words abide in us, we shall ask what we will and it shall be given us (Jn 15:7). Walking in love constitutes pretty much everything He taught. In fact, the Bible has a special word to husbands in this matter. If the husband does not honor his wife, his prayers will not be answered (1 Pet 3:7). Period. I doubt that it works any different for the wife, either.

So, three rules to answered prayer: Ask God, Pray believing, and Walk in love.