

# THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

1 John 5:13-17  
Lesson #20  
Prayer Promises  
05/15/2022

## 1 John 5

“14...if we ask **anything according to His will**, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask,



**we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.”**

1

Of all the promises in the N.T. this one is among the:



- most **claimed**
- most **confused**
- most **CERTAIN**

2

It is **claimed** because:



- ✓ Who doesn't **dream of access** to this kind of power through prayer?
- ✓ It is **unrestrictive** (anything) in its scope.
- ✓ This should be the most powerful **evangelistic tool** imaginable.

3

It is **confused** because:



- ✓ It doesn't seem to work - even with **FAITH**, etc.
- ✓ The **Apostles** did not experience this (2 Cor.12).
- ✓ **Jesus** did not experience this (Jn.17:11).
- ✓ It is not mentioned in the **Epistles** (save 1 Jn.).

4

? **“anything according to His will” ?**

- ✓ **OUR wish**. - ANYTHING we choose can be ours if we ASK.
- ✓ **GOD'S will** - Anything congruent with GOD'S WILL for our life at this moment.
- ✓ **GOD'S way** - As long as we ask it IN FAITH and IN JESUS NAME (His will).



**Could we be missing something?**

5

## Berean's tools for reading the Bible

**Context, context, context**  
(cultural, literary, theological)

**Major on majors, minor on minors**  
(The main thing is to keep the main  
thing, the main thing.)

**Principles over "proof texts"**  
(The Spirit of the text)

6

### 1 John 5 (literary context)

"13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, **in order that you may know that you have eternal life**. 14 And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him."

The subject is **ASSURANCE**  
of "eternal life" (vs.13,16,17).

"His will" in this context may refer to  
**"eternal life in the Spirit by faith"**

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### 1 John 5

"16 If anyone sees his brother committing a **sin not leading to death**, he shall ask and God will for him **give life** to those who commit sin not leading to death. There is a sin leading to death; I do not say that he should make request for this. 17 All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not leading to death."

If "Death" is seen as "spiritual death"  
this passage may be talking about

**rejection of the Gospel of Grace  
through faith in Christ.**

8

## The sin that leads to death

- ✓ **Willful, continuous, unrepentant sin** - Those who fail to repent of their sins.
- ✓ **Apostasy** - fake faith that does not bear fruit of good works.
- ✓ **Disbelief** - rejection of the Gospel of God in Christ.

**Only "disbelief" makes sense  
in a theological context.**

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**Why was Jesus harder on  
religious people who  
did not believe  
than on immoral sinners  
who did not behave?**

**The Word of the Cross  
made provision  
for misbehavior  
but not for  
disbelief.**



10

### Hebrews 6

"1 Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying **again** a foundation of **repentance** from dead works and of faith toward God; 2 of instruction about washings, and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. 3 And this we shall do, if God permits. 4 For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 and then have fallen away, it is **impossible** to renew them **again** to **repentance** since they **again** crucify to themselves the Son of God, and put Him to open shame."

11

### Hebrews 6

<sup>1</sup> Therefore leaving the elementary (**beginning**) teaching about Christ, let us press on to maturity, **not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God**, <sup>2</sup> of instruction about washings, and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. <sup>3</sup> And this we shall do, if God permits.”

### **Not repeating one's initiation into the faith is the subject.**

<sup>4</sup> For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the **heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit**, <sup>5</sup> and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come,

**True believers are in view.**

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### **Keys to understanding this text:**

1. **The Jewish system involved repeated atonement.**
2. **The word “again” is used often (6:1, 6:6a, 6b).**
3. **The phrase “once for all” in Hebrews (ch.7,9,10)**
4. **The word “impossible” means impossible.**
5. **The phrase “falling away” = misdeed or trespass.**

<sup>6</sup> and then have fallen away (**stumbled, sinned**), it is impossible to renew them again to repentance (**conversion**), since they again crucify to themselves (**as with Jewish sacrifices**) the Son of God, and put Him to open shame (**mocking the Gospel**)”

**When the old system is dead  
and the new system is discarded  
we have no place to atone for our sin.**

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### Hebrews 10

<sup>26</sup> For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, **there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins**, <sup>27</sup> but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and *the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries*. <sup>28</sup> Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. <sup>29</sup> How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has **trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?** <sup>30</sup> For we know Him who said, “*Vengeance is Mine, I will repay.*” And again, “*The Lord will judge His people.*” <sup>31</sup> It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

14

### Hebrews 10 (interpretive paraphrase)

“The Old Covenant sacrificial system made provision for pardon from sin but it is no longer operational. Those who reject and blaspheme the New Covenant’s provision of Christ’s once for all sacrifice for sin are left without hope in that they cannot go back to the Old Covenant, which is no longer operative. Without faith in Christ, they face the justice of God on their own merit.”

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**Note that the offense (sin)  
in Heb.10 is not disobedience to the  
Law but disrespect for the Gospel.**

**The displacement of the Old  
Covenant is a major theme in the N.T.**

### Hebrews 8:13

“When He said, “A new covenant,”  
He has made the first **obsolete**.  
But whatever is becoming  
obsolete and growing old  
is ready to disappear.



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### What are we to ask God for?

- ✓ Christian’s petitions after Pentecost take on a different perspective - **focused on inner wisdom and power as opposed to outer circumstances.**
- ✓ God does not anoint our circumstances, **so much as our response to them.**
- ✓ God does not give us power to change our world **so much as overcome its challenges.**



**THE WAY OF THE CROSS**

17



### 1 Peter 5

“6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time 7 **casting all your anxiety on Him**, because **He cares for you**. 8 Be of **sober spirit**, be on the **alert**. Your **adversary**, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to **devour**. 9 So **resist** him, firm in **your faith**, knowing that the same experiences of **suffering** are being accomplished by your brothers and sisters who are in the world. 10 After you have **suffered** for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His **eternal glory in Christ**, will Himself **perfect, confirm, strengthen, and establish you**.”

**God's caring is in the midst of suffering.** 18

### Petitioning God **BEFORE** Pentecost

#### Luke 11 (parallel to John 16:16-24)

“9 And I say to you, **ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you**. 10 For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it shall be opened. 11 Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he? 12 Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he? 13 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more **shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?**”

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### Petitioning God **AFTER** Pentecost

#### James 1

“2 Consider it all joy, my brothers *and sisters*, when you encounter various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. 4 And let endurance have its **perfect** result, so that you may be **perfect** and complete, lacking in nothing.

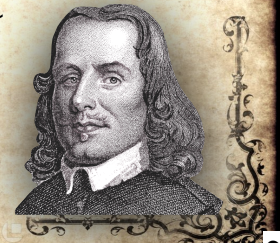
5 But if any of you lacks **wisdom**, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6 But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For that person ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, 8 *being* a double-minded man, **unstable** in all his ways.”

**Wisdom is internal management of external circumstances.**

20

“In prayer it is better to have a heart without words than words without a heart.”

John Bunyon



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### Example

This is illustrated in decisions made **before Pentecost**.

#### Acts 1

(discerning a replacement for Judas) “24 And **they prayed**, and said, “Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show which one of these two Thou hast chosen . . . 26 And **they drew lots** for them, and the lot fell to Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.”

#### after Pentecost.

#### Acts 15

(discerning the inclusion of Gentiles) “19 it **seemed good** to the apostles and the elders, . . . 28 For it **seemed good** to the holy Spirit and to us . . . 34 But it **seemed good** to Silas . . .” (note also Acts 6:5)

22

### It is **CERTAIN** because:



- ✓ **God's Word** can be trusted when read properly.
- ✓ **Our experience** - Of all the things that we can ask for that are certain - **the Gospel promise** is one.
- ✓ **Context** is important in interpreting and applying Scripture.

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## The “Bottom Line”

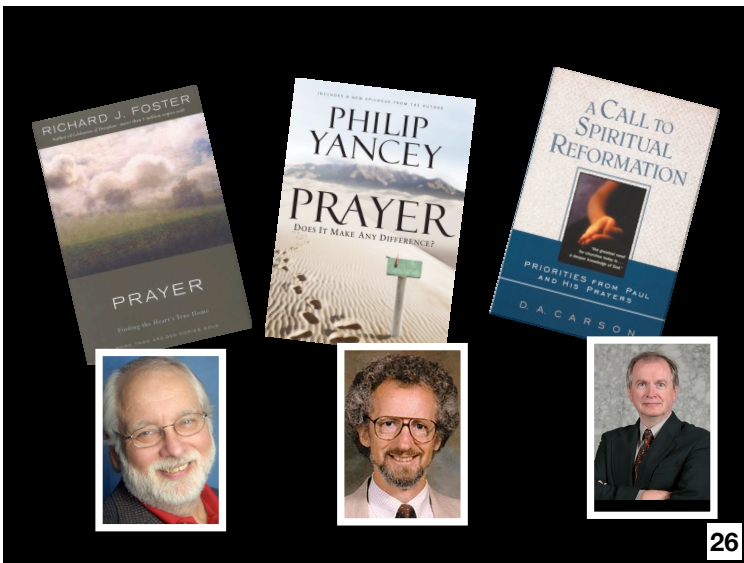
- Apply this promise to **saving faith** through the Gospel of Christ.
- Don’t demand that God change your world from the **outside-in**.
- Pray for a **renewed** mind, a **selfless** heart, and a **courageous** faith.
- Pray that God makes you the **answer** to someone else’s prayer.

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## How should we pray when facing illness?

- **Seek to glorify God** more than satisfy self.
- **Ask for Godly wisdom** to shape our heart and mind.
- **Trust God to build our inner man** not just restore our outer man.
- **Cast our cares on Him** and trust the Spirit to intercede for our heart.
- **Ask to enlighten others** in their response to circumstances.
- **Ask to be the answer** to someone else’s prayer.

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