

KEYS TO ANSWERED PRAYER
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Introduction

And it came to pass, that, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, one of His disciples said unto Him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. And He said unto them, when ye pray, say...
Luke 11:1-2

Prayer is one of the most important rights God has given His children. Prayer is the breath of the regenerated spirit. Its very importance

demands that we know how to go about it. For, except we know how to pray in the God-given way, we can be certain that we cannot receive from Him.

The Scripture says very simply,

"*Everyone that asketh receiveth.*"
(Matthew 7:8).

But in its simplicity also lies one truth: we must ask aright. Therefore, knowing how to pray is as vital as the need to pray. It is often said that the way to learn how to pray is to pray. However, this is not correct. The way to learn to pray is to be taught. From the Master's mouth, we learn the mechanics of prayer, "...when ye pray, say..." We must humble ourselves and learn like children. The purpose of this book is to teach effectual prayer. There is, as I have already stated, a place for knowledge in prayer, which nothing can replace. Without knowledge we "ask amiss," and asking amiss is the reason some do not receive. (James 4:3). This book will teach you how to pray, using the word of God, and the word of God is the source of knowledge for effectual prayer.

WHAT IS PRAYER?

Prayer is communion with God. The Bible talks about different types of prayer. Basically, however, prayer is asking God to intervene in a given situation on the basis of His word. As you can see, it is not telling God about our problems and needs. No! He knows our problems and needs before we ask. (Matthew 6:32). Rather, it is the word of God concerning our need that we return to Him (Isaiah 55:11). I want to assure you that the principles outlined in this mini- book will work for you if you faithfully follow them. They have always worked for me. God has no favourites, neither has He respect of persons.

Chapter 1

Come With Praise - And Maintain It

And He said unto them, when ye pray, say, our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name...
Luke 11:2

Ever before we make our request to the Father, His high praises must be on our lips. Prayer must be preceded by praises. There are heavenly gates, and it takes praise to unlock them. The Psalmist sang:

Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be thankful unto Him, and bless His name.
Psalm 100:4

The saints of old certainly knew the secret of praise. They used it with great effect. Nehemiah prayed,

O Lord of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love Him and observe His commandments.
Nehemiah 1:5

The effect of his prayer was that God used him (a slave) to bring about the restoration of Jerusalem and the temple.

In the prayer of Daniel, recorded in Daniel 9, Nehemiah's introductory praise is repeated almost verbatim (verse 4). The result was a rather unprecedented revelation of things that are yet to happen.

The Book of Acts, chapter four, tells us of the prayer of the disciples that received instantaneous answer. Once more, praise was the key that unlocked the heavenly gates. *In verse 24*, we read,

And when they heard that, they lifted up their voices to God with one accord, and said, Lord, Thou art God, which has made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is.

The answer came immediately, accompanied by a shaking of the place where they were gathered together.

When Jehoshaphat's Judah was invaded by the combined forces of Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir, it was praise that got the ear of God (2 Chronicles 20:6,22). After that, the Lord heard the prayer of the king and the people. To everyone's surprise, He chose an unlikely weapon.

And when they began to sing and praise, the Lord set ambushment against the children of Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten.
(Verse 22)

Not by numbers, or spear and bows and arrows and the sword — but by praise!

Where praise is replaced with murmuring and complaining, the flow of blessing is cut off. In fact, sometimes murmuring will be punished by God. Therefore, take heed to the warning in ***1 Corinthians 10:10,***

Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.

Rather, create a habitation for Him - by praising Him! (Psalm 22:3) It is necessary to mention that this attitude of praise must be maintained. Added to other keys, it ensures the manifestation of the answer. Praise is still heard, when prayer is long over. In ***Psalm 119:164***, the psalmist said,

Seven times a day do I praise thee because of Thy righteous judgements.

Compare this with ***Psalm 55:17***,

Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray and cry aloud: and He shall hear my voice.

Seven to three is the ratio of praise to prayer.

Every believer ought to learn to live a life of praise. Praise is comely unto the upright. There is no limit to what God will do when He is adequately praised. ***Psalm 67:5-6*** says,

Let the people praise Thee, O God… Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our God, shall bless us.

That is what happened to Jehoshaphat and his people. They got so much spoil that it took

them three days to gather. (2 Chronicles 20:25. Come with praise and maintain it!

BE SPECIFIC

And they came to Jericho: and He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me...

And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight.
Mark 10:46-47,51

In this passage, Jesus sought to teach a great lesson in effectual prayer. Blind Bartimaeus cried fervently, "Have mercy on me". He was convinced Jesus could heal him of his blindness. His appeal was to the compassion of the Lord.

It all seemed very simple. That is why the reply of the Lord was rather strange. He asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" All except a blind man would fail to see that Bartimaeus was blind. What else then, would a blind man want but a restoration of sight?

It seemed so obvious, that the Lord Himself, who knows the secret of the hearts of men, ought not to have asked. Or, so one would think. Yet, the Lord asked him, "What do you want Me to do for you?"

Many people engage in generalities and call that prayer. Prayer has to be specific. You have to identify your need. Many think that because God knows everything, there is no need to present their case with precision. "He knows, anyway," is often the statement used by some to cover their ignorance of some of these things.

Vagueness in prayer suggests an unsettled mind. Such a mind is a wavering mind. A wavering mind will not receive anything from God (James 1:6-7).

One important reason why God wants us to be specific is, so that we will have no difficulty assigning the glory to Him when the answer comes. If you are vague or not specific, it proves that you do not expect the Lord to answer you. You are limiting God’s abilities, because you are operating in the realm of doubt and unbelief.

You must determine what you want, and be precise. Avoid ambiguities. A prayer like "God bless all Nigerian ministers" is entirely vague.

Nigerian ministers would experience no growth at all if they had to depend on such intercessors.

Come with praise, and be specific about your need!

ASK ACCORDING TO HIS WILL

The problem with a lot of believers is: they have difficulty understanding what is meant by the will of God. They think that God's will is bottled up somewhere in heaven. Then, from time to time, He lets some old prophet have a piece of it. For this reason, they pray, "Lord, if it be Thy will..." Now this is part of the ignorance which has stolen the people's blessings from them.

The average person knows what a will is. A will is the document which a person leaves behind before he dies. It tells how he wants his possessions to be shared among his relations, etc.

Now, you see that his will means his intention concerning the distribution of his property. They have his word, expressing his intention. Thus, after his death they do not need to go about complaining "what on earth does he want us to do with such and such?" All they do is share out the property as instructed in the

will. How does this apply to God and we, His children?

God is up there in heaven and here on earth, we, His children have to live our lives. So here are the questions: How does our Father intend for us to live? Where do we locate His will? We discover that God's will is not up there in heaven at all. It is right here on earth. The Bible, the written word of God, is God's will for us!

Here is one more thing. We all know the will of man hardly fails. If you go through records, you will discover that most wills made by men generally stand. Now we say this in relation to man and his will. Yet, many believers do not think much about the will of God. Many think God's will may somehow fail. They do not trust His will. We know that His word is His will, and yet, they do not trust His word.

I want you to know that God's will is for your spiritual and physical welfare (3 John 2).

For I know the thoughts and plans that I have for you, says the Lord, thoughts and plans for welfare and peace, and not of evil, to give you hope in your final outcome.
Jeremiah 29:11 (Amplified)

That is the plan of God for us, His children while we are yet here on earth. Do not be trapped by the subtlety of the devil. Satan has put into the heads of God's people that God places sicknesses on people to humble them. Satan tells people if it is well today, it might be ill tomorrow. But God wants it to be brighter with us each day, that we grow from strength to strength.

But the path of the uncompromisingly just and righteous is like the light of dawn, that shines more and more - brighter and clearer - until (it reaches its full strength and glory in the perfect (to-be prepared) day.
Proverbs 4:18 (Amplified)

God's will is good. He has no desire to put you under any plague. His will is that you lack no good thing; He does not intend to withhold any good thing from you (Psalm 84:11).

It is important you have a settled mind concerning this matter of the will of God. I want to state it so simply you cannot miss it. Everything that is good comes from God and everything that is bad comes from the devil (James 1:17; John 10:10).

Having determined what you want, dig into the Word (The Bible) and find the promise that covers your particular need. You cannot miss

it when you pray this way. For ***1 John 5:14*** says,

...This is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us.

Come with praise. Specify your need. Ask in accordance with the will of God.

ASK IN THE NAME OF JESUS

All prayer must be made in the name of Jesus. The use of the name of Jesus in prayer can be explained with this simple example. Most of us are familiar with the workings of the cheque system used by the banks.

The cheque is presented to the bank, but it must bear the authorized signature of the drawer. If his signature does not appear on the cheque, the bank will refuse to honour the cheque. It would not matter that he has one million naira in his account. This is called endorsement. The bank looks for the authorized signature.

In much the same way, God looks for the authorized signature of Jesus on the prayer of the righteous. He (Jesus) must endorse your prayer, or it will not be accepted before the heavenly counter. The reason is,

All the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him amen.
2 Corinthians 1:20

Jesus owns the account you intend to draw from. All things were made by Him, we are told in John 1:3. He has the monopoly of the heavenly bank. Note that it is not for the sake of Jesus you ask. You ask for your own sake, but in Jesus' name.

There is an added reason why the Father would act in the name of Jesus. The Father has decreed that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow. (Philippians 2:10). Notice that verse 9 says "His name is above every name."

Here is the idea. No name will do for a substitute. Believers are not accepted on the basis of their own names. We cannot come in our own recognition. We do not have a standing with God separate and apart from the standing we have in Jesus. In verse 10, it says, "everything in heaven, on earth, and in hell."

All things we would ordinarily ask for in prayer are included here. All these things can be ours if we ask in the name of Jesus. And He has given us the assurance that whatever we ask in His name we can have (John 16:23). It is a power of attorney — a power to act in another person's name. When we pray this

way, it is as if Jesus Himself is doing the praying.

Additionally, Jesus is the mediator between man and God (1 Timothy 2:5). He is the sole authorized attorney for all believers. No other attorney is permitted in the court of heaven. Come with praise. Be specific about your need. Find the appropriate promise. Ask in the name of Jesus.

ASK IN FAITH

You have identified your need. You have also found the appropriate promise that covers that need. You are ready to ask. Here is the next thing you should know: ask in faith.

But let him ask in faith, not wavering.
James 1:6

Why so? Because God deals with us on the basis of faith.

Without faith it is impossible to please God.
Hebrews 11:6

When Jesus was physically on earth, He succeeded in healing and delivering people only if they believed that He could do it. If they

did not believe, then they did not get anything. Matthew 9 gives us an account of the healing of two blind men by Jesus.

Notice that He did not ask them for their case histories. Many of us have the idea that we can somehow arouse God’s sympathy by telling Him, and everyone else, the history of our suffering. I want you to notice that Jesus was interested in only one thing their faith. He asked: "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" (Verse 28).

If they did not believe that He had the ability and the willingness to heal them, they would die in their blindness. It would matter very little that Jesus was anointed without measure.

In verse 29, He told the blind men: "According to your faith, be it unto you." They could receive healing, because they believed.

So, you see that to change your situation, it is not by weeping and self-affliction. Neither is it by long association with God.

Matthew chapter 13, records the following incident. Jesus had gone to Nazareth, where He was brought up. His own folks said He was a fake. They would not believe that He did those things everybody said He had done.

Those folks had lived with Jesus all His youth. They knew all about His physical life. That was all they knew and had seen. Therefore it was difficult for them to believe that He was anything other than that.

And He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.
(Verse 58)

God can do nothing for you except you believe that He can do it. So ask in faith.

For blessed is she that believeth: for there shall be a performance of those things which have been told her from the Lord.
Luke 1:45

WHAT IS FAITH?

Hebrews 11:1 defines faith as the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

It works out this way. The word of God is the promise... This promise is not seen with the physical eye. This promise is what you hope for. Faith will make it happen in the physical. In other words, faith will make what you are hoping for a reality.

Faith transforms the unseen to the seen. When something happens before you believe in its existence, that is not faith. This is the evidence of the sense. Faith is of the recreated human spirit. It calls those things which be not as though they were, just like God (Romans 4:17).

You have to be fully persuaded that what God promised, He is able to bring to pass.

Come with praise. Be specific about your need. Find the appropriate promise. Ask in the name of Jesus. Ask in faith.

BE EARNEST

The word "earnest" means serious determination. When your heart is fixed on something, that is determination. Therefore, as used in reference to prayer, earnestness means heartfelt prayer. It is the heartfelt prayer of the righteous that God reckons with. The Amplified version of ***James 5:16*** reads:

The earnest (heartfelt, continued) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available — dynamic in its working.

The reason why you must be earnest is that God looks into the heart. Half-hearted prayer, or prayer that has root only in the mind of the person praying, will have little or no effect.

Such prayer amounts to the confession of idle words.

Earnestness in prayer means the "pouring out of soul" (1 Samuel 1:15). It has nothing to do with physical exertions and postures assumed in prayer. The account of Hannah praying in the temple states,

She spoke in her heart: only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard.
1 Samuel 1:13

Fervency in prayer has to do with the heart alone. Your heart must be fixed on what you are looking for. ***James 5:17-18*** states,

Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

Earnestness was the determining factor, and the aim of the Spirit of God in exhorting us to emulate Elijah (Elias) is simple: that we might have power in prayer.

Come with praise. Be specific. Ask according to His will. Ask in the name of Jesus. Ask in faith. Be earnest.

BELIEVE YOU HAVE THE ANSWER And Give Thanks

Therefore I say unto you, what things so ever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.
Mark 11:24

Blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.
Luke 1:45

The Scriptures emphasize one important principle in effectual prayer. You must believe, at the time you pray, that God has granted already the thing you desire of Him. "Believing is seeing, and this is the exact opposite of what the world is accustomed to, that, seeing is believing.

This is extremely important. If you are waiting for the arrival of the thing desired before believing, you will miss it entirely. You have to call those things which be not, as though they were.

In the Scriptures cited above, the future tense "shall" is used. It means that the receipt is subsequent to the believing. In other words, it follows. The believing precedes the

manifestation. Therefore, until you believe, you are not ready for the answer.

It is not enough to be told that all things are possible with God. The devil also believes that and trembles at the knowledge of it. The profit comes to the one who acts upon that knowledge. Therefore, the Master's admonition to the man whose son had a dumb spirit is for everyone of us.

If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.
Mark 9:23

Believe, then, at the time you pray, that you have the answer. After praying and believing, the next thing for you to do is to give thanks for the results of your believing prayer.

This is basically, a demonstration of your confidence in God's ability and preparedness to answer and perform the things you have believed for. To you, it is as good as done. You see it done, even if situations do not seem to portray it. You give thanks, because this is God's will concerning you.

In all things give thanks, for this is the will of God concerning you.
1 Thessalonians 5:18

Giving of thanks is God's will concerning you after you have prayed. This is so because God has moved on your behalf and you are acknowledging His goodness and faithfulness to His word. Note that God's programme for answering prayer includes giving of thanks. It is vital to guarantee your prayers being answered.

Be careful for nothing: but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let you request be made known unto God. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your heart and minds in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 4:6-7

This is important. It is God's expressed will for you to praise Him. Giving thanks is God's will for you.

For you have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.
Hebrews 10:36

Understand that the Bible says that having done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. The promise is your answer. It is what you are believing God for. It will only come after you have done the will of God which is giving thanks.

Come with praise. Be specific. Ask according to His will. Ask in the name of Jesus. Ask in faith. Be earnest. Believe you receive and thank God for the answer.

Chapter 2

BE RELAXED

Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.
Philippians 4:6-7

The Bible has much to say about worry and anxiety. Worry and anxiety will cause you to want to act ahead of God. They are symptoms of unbelief. If you believe in the ability of God to intervene in your situation, you will have rest and peace.

In Genesis 15, God promised Abraham an heir. He and Sarah his wife waited several years. Then it seemed to them that God would not make good His promise. Abraham was tempted: "assuming God would not deliver on

His promise?," the tempter questioned Sarah. "What would become of you and Abraham?... You will both go to the grave without an heir!"

It was quite natural to want to do something to help God. So Sarah said, "Abraham, my lord, you can have Hagar, my maid: we just might get the child God promised us through her." And Abraham agreed.

The result of this seemingly harmless arrangement is well known. We have several hundreds of Arabs (descendants of Ishmael, Hagar's son by Abraham) ready to root out (if they could) the very seed of covenant (the Jews). Now we have a dangerous situation in the Middle East.

The enmity between the Jews and Arabs started from when Ishmael was born ahead of Isaac. It was a moment of anxiety that caused.

Some ask the same question today: will God do something about my situation?

Does He really care?

Yes, He will. And yes, He cares. His word says so. ***Isaiah 55:11*** reads,

So shall My word be that goeth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it

shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

If you have God's word, it will come to pass. Only if you do not worry and fret. Anxiety is the thief of God's blessing. It will destroy the effect of the word. Let's look at another example from the Book of 1 Samuel 13.

In this passage, Saul had been instructed by Samuel to wait in Gilgal. There, the prophet Samuel would make an offering that would give Israel victory over the Philistines.

On the seventh day, Saul worried that Samuel would not come after all, and he made the offering himself. Now, according to the law, he was not supposed to do it at all. Yet, anxiety drove him to act contrary to God's word.

That moment of anxiety, lest God would not fulfill His promise to deliver the people from the Philistines, cost Saul his throne, and his very life! Samuel told him: "thou has done foolishly" (1 Samuel 13:13). He destroyed his future by giving in to worry.

God's grace is frustrated when we begin to question His integrity through worry. Worry and anxiety are deadly foes. Resist them. Peter says,

Casting all your cares upon Him; for He careth for you.
1 Peter 5:7

REFUSE TO QUIT

Cast not away therefore your confidence, which has great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.
Hebrews 10:35-36

Someone rightly said that waiting on God is less difficult than waiting for God. Many have thrown in the towel too soon. But we must have the faith that will not give in. We must have tenacious faith.

By action and by word of mouth, many have cast away their confidence in God and His ability, and even His willingness to answer prayer. "Do not quit the line" is a good admonition. For if you must receive, then you must be prepared to hold out in faith.

Jesus told the parable of the unjust judge in ***Luke 18:1-8***. Here is how He told it:

And there was a widow in that city; and she called unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I

fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.
(Verse 3 - 5)

Here was a triumph of faith over great obstacles. It was the single-minded determination of the widow that turned the heart of the unjust judge.

If the widow had quit trusting that she would be heard, she would not have been heard. Faith reckons with no opposition. Rather, as James says, faith rejoices in the face of trials, tests and temptations. The initial stone-walling (opposition) of the unjust judge was brought on by the devil to steal the widow's faith. The period between prayer and manifestation is sustained by faith. You ensure the manifestation of your blessing by maintaining a settled heart.

Confidence is derived from a settled heart. It considers as done what God has promised. The poor widow believed absolutely in her right to be avenged. Deep within her spirit she knew justice belonged to her. Thus, she was not moved when the unjust judge refused her. We must have such an attitude.

In their last battle with the Philistines before the death of Eli, the priest, the Israelites took the ark of the covenant into battle.

When the Philistines saw it, they were afraid. They said, "God is come into the camp. Woe unto us! For there hath not been such a thing here before.'' But, somehow, those heathens knew the secret of firmness and confidence. Somebody told them,

Be strong and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you: quit yourselves like men, and fight!

And fight, they did. They defeated the Israelites and captured the ark of the covenant. (1 Samuel 4). Victory had come to them, because they held fast unto the confidence inspired in them by their commanders.

Ours is a fight of faith, yet we need confidence no less. Thus the Holy Spirit teaches us in ***1 Corinthians 16:13***,

Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.

We must guard our faith with every spiritual weapon at our disposal. We must refuse to quit.

WALK IN LOVE

Paul identifies love as the greatest of the three important spiritual qualities of faith, love and hope (I Cor. 13:13). It is not by chance that Jesus demanded love as a prerequisite to successful prayer. (Matthew 6:12, 14-15). Outside love, there is no effectual prayer.

Faith worketh by love.
Galatians 5:6

God is love. Love is not something we can detach from God. It is His nature. Being God's children, we are creatures of love. Therefore, we must love. Indeed the Scripture says when someone hates his brother, it is proof that such a person has not passed from death to life (1 John 4:20).

Every believer must make a deliberate and conscious effort to love. Love defines the character of the Christian. It is the one thing that marks out the born again Christian in a world of hatred and variance. Jesus commanded that we return hatred and ill-treatment with love. We are to love our enemies. This is all for one purpose: that we

have boldness in the day of judgment (1 John 4:17).

One can hardly exhaust the subject of love. It is impossible for the believer consumed by love to live in sin at the same time. When you step out of love, you walk in sin's realm. For the law of the Spirit of life is also the law of the Spirit of love. Love and life are interchangeable. Where love is, you will find life. The New Testament has only one commandment,

That we should believe on the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another as He gave us commandment.
1 John 3:23

If you entertain bitterness and ill-will concerning anyone even an unbeliever, you block the effectiveness of your prayer. Love is essential. Do not allow the slightest seed of unforgiveness in your heart. Refuse it absolutely.

In one of the series of Faith Seminars held in Kaduna, Nigeria, there was one woman in the congregation who, I later learnt, had been praying and fasting for a particular need. Her husband had gone overseas and she intended to join him over there. But an embargo on issuance of international passports had made

it impossible for her application for passport to be granted.

As a child of God she knew well that if thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. No doubt, she believed that verse and on that basis, she used her faith to claim her passport. It never worked. Her fasting could not help either.

Confounded, she attended the seminar where she learnt that the basic hindrance to answered prayer is failure to walk in love. It turned out that she had been nursing grudges against her in-laws. In ***Psalm 66:18***, the Bible says,

If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.

Her faith was there all right, but it needed the fuel of love to set it in motion. That fuel was lacking and there was no way God could move her "mountain" without contravening His own law.

With this understanding, this woman went home, bought gifts, sought and obtained reconciliation with her in-laws. A few weeks later, she obtained her passport and foreign exchange and was ready to fly out to join her husband abroad.

Her faith did not work until she began to walk in love. Love is essential to answered prayer. Fasting cannot take its place. Faith cannot. No other thing can, because,

Faith worketh by love.
Galatians 5:6

Chapter 3

Talk, Think And Act Like You Have The Answer

This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.
Joshua 1:8

The period separating the prayer of faith and the manifestation of the answer is a crucial one. But the truth of it is that it all lies within the absolute control of the individual. Joshua 1:8 is the key. His confessions, thoughts, and actions are the principal determinants of whether he will have success and prosperity or failure and want.

CONFESSION

This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth.

Entire volumes have been written on the power of the tongue. James warned against the unbridled use of the tongue. It is a serious theme in the Bible. This is because nothing gets done until it is spoken.

Hebrews 11:3 says,

Through faith, we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

God said something before anything got done. (See Genesis 1:3). God expects us to act like Him, calling into being, things that (at the moment) do not exist, as if, in fact, they exist (Romans 4:17). Faith is the substance of things hoped for. When we act in the faith realm we are seeing the outcome of things without the aid of our natural senses. Thus, the language of the mouth must correspond with the hope that is in the heart. In ***Mark 11:23***, Jesus said,

Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall

come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

You can have what you say. Therefore, it will matter very little if after you pray for something, you talk quite contrary to your expectation. You have what you say, not what you believe. The heart and the mouth must agree. As the Lord put it,

Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.
Matthew 12:34

Some people allow wrong teachings to interfere with this level of operation of faith. It has been taught (wrongly, of course), that this is psychology, a manipulation of the mind. They think that it is wrong to continually talk about something you have not seen. That is why they miss it. First, if you wait to see it happen before you believe, that is not faith. You do not need faith to receive what you already have. Faith is the evidence of things not seen.

Secondly, confession is God's own system of operation. We have to be wise to these things. That is how He Himself acts. He, for example, confessed, through hundreds of years, right from Adam's disobedience in Eden, till that glorious morning in Bethlehem, that the

Messiah was coming. He told Adam and Eve, Abraham, Moses, and the Prophets. He was confessing. He was calling those things that be not as though they were. He said,

I proceeded forth and came from God.
John 8:42

Jesus confessed His Sonship several times. He had to do so to maintain an awareness of His Sonship. Keep the word of God continually in your mouth.

THOUGHT LIFE

...but thou shalt meditate therein day and night,...

Meditation means deep, continued thought or reflection, to ponder, solemn reflection on sacred matters, as a devotional act. It means letting your thoughts dwell constantly on God's word. Your thought life, or the way you think, after you pray, is extremely important. The reason for this is simple.

As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.
Proverbs 23:7

A man is not different from his thoughts. Therefore, let your thoughts dwell on the answer. Doubt is a weapon of the devil, and it is aimed at destroying your faith. When faith is

destroyed, there is no basis for reaching out to God. Hebrews 11:6 is straight to the point:

"Without faith, it is impossible to please Him (God)" Faith is the ticket for receiving. Guard your thoughts jealously. Continually cast down imaginations (or reasoning) that are contrary to the word of God.

ACTIONS

...that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein:...

Your actions must correspond to the confession of faith you have made. You must do the word. James takes to task those who profess to have faith - without acting on it. He concludes that "faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" (James 2:17). James is merely pointing out what must be an inconsistency in a faith which does not produce fruit. If there is faith, then, there will be something to show for it. And this is not only so that men will know we have faith, but God Himself weighs actions too.

For the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by Him actions are weighed.
1 Samuel 2:3

Doing the word requires acting out in faith. Faith is a "touch." The classic example is provided by the woman with the issue of blood, recorded in ***Mark 5***.

When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched His garment. For she said, if I may but touch His clothes, I shall be whole.
(Verses 27,28)

Of course, a note of caution is necessary here. Action alone will not produce the work of faith, nor must action precede faith. The true position is that where there is action, there must be faith.