

1 John 5:14 Commentary

PREVIOUS

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FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD AND HIS CHILDREN
Click chart to enlarge
Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission
Another Overview Chart - [1 John](#) - Charles Swindoll!

BASIS OF FELLOWSHIP		BEHAVIOR OF FELLOWSHIP	
Conditions of Fellowship	Cautions of Fellowship	Fellowship Characteristics	Fellowship Consequences
Meaning of Fellowship 1 Jn 1:1-2:27		Manifestations of Fellowship 1 Jn 2:28-5:21	
Abiding in God's Light		Abiding in God's Love	
Written in Ephesus			
circa 90 AD			
From Talk Thru the Bible			

1 John 5:14 This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us:

Greek - kai aute estin (3SPAI) he parrhesia he echomen (1PPAI) pros auton hoti ean ti aitometha (1PPMS) kata to thelema autou akouei (3SPAI) hemon:

Amplified - And this is the confidence (the assurance, the privilege of boldness) which we have in Him: [we are sure] that if we ask anything (make any request) according to His will (in agreement with His own plan), He listens to and hears us.

ESV And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us.

NET And this is the confidence that we have before him: that whenever we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.

Wuest - And this is the assurance which we are having toward Him, that whatever we keep on asking for ourselves according to His will, He hears us.

- **this:** 1Jn 3:21 Eph 3:12 Heb 3:6,14 10:35
- **if:** 1Jn 3:22 Jer 29:12,13 33:3 Mt 7:7-11 21:22 John 14:13 15:7 16:24 Jas 1:5,6 4:3 5:16
- **He:** Job 34:28 Ps 31:22 34:17 69:33 Pr 15:29 John 9:31 11:42
- [1 John 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

CONFIDENCE IN PRAYER

The **NAS** does not translate the **and (kai)** which is the first word in the Greek and which connects the truth of this passage with 1Jn 5:13. Here's the connection - "Confidence in prayer is founded on the assurance that you have eternal life. If you do not have eternal life, there is no way that you can pray according to the will of God, except to pray that God would save you from your sins. The promise of our text is only for God's children." ([Cole](#))

The believer's first confidence was eternal life (1Jn 5:13) and here it is confidence in answered prayer.

This is the confidence which we have before Him- Confidence speaks of "free and fearless confidence, cheerful courage, boldness, assurance." (Wuest). Believers can have boldness and assurance before the Holy God, a simple but profound truth that is easy to skim over. Stop for a moment and meditate on this truth. Then thank Jesus our Mediator for it is through Him we (Ro

Brooke on this - The object of the preceding section was to produce assurance in the readers that they were in possession of the new life. This assurance is now described as **parrhesia**, boldness or confidence, with perhaps special reference to the original meaning of the word, absolute freedom of speech. ([1 John 5 Commentary - ICC NT Commentary](#))

Steven Cole - God is a prayer-hearing God (Ps. 65:2). But at the same time, I can't gloss over the tremendous difficulty that our text creates for my prayer life. It is simply not true to my experience. John, who is echoing here the repeated promises of Jesus (Mk 11:22-24; Jn 14:13-14; 15:16; 16:24), says that if we ask anything according to God's will, He will answer favorably. "No" is not an acceptable answer. It must be "yes" every time! Over the years, my "prayer batting average" is pretty low. I have prayed for the salvation of people who have not gotten saved. I have prayed for the restoration of sinning Christians, who have not repented and been restored. I have prayed for the reconciliation of many Christian marriages that have broken up. Some try to get God off the hook by saying, "He gives people free will." But if God cannot subdue a sinful person's will, then He can't do anything! That means that sinful man, not God, is sovereign! And it means that prayer is useless and impotent. If God promises to answer our prayers, then He has the power to answer them! I'm sure that the fault is with me, not with God's promise! I am probably lacking in understanding God's perfect will and lacking in faith. But I could not find any preachers on this text who admit to having the difficulties that I have. So this has not been an easy message to prepare, because if I'm honest, I have to expose my own failures in prayer to you! My prayer has been that perhaps by sharing my struggles, you will be motivated to keep "swinging" in your prayer life. Maybe we'll all improve our batting averages!" ([1John 5:14-17 Confidence and Carefulness in Prayer](#))

Earlier John had spoken of **confidence in prayer** writing "Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight." (1Jn 3:21-note, 1Jn 3:22-note)

Cole makes four observations from 1Jn 5:13 "

(1) **We should have confidence when we approach God in prayer.** Our confidence is never in ourselves, but rather in Christ. After reminding us of our sympathetic high priest, the author of Hebrews states (Heb 4:16), "Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (see also, Eph. 3:12). Our confidence is never in anything in ourselves, but only in Jesus Christ, whose blood gives us access to the very throne of God.

(2) **We must come into His presence when we pray.** We have confidence before Him (1Jn 5:14). Prayer is not just mumbling through a list or repeating some rote formula. Prayer is coming before the living God, humbling ourselves in His presence. If we have not come before God, we haven't prayed.

(3) **We must come confidently into His presence and ask.** As James (James 4:2) pointedly reminds us, "You do not have because you do not ask." He adds (James 4:3), "You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures." We need to be sure to ask (not assume), but we need to ask with the proper motives, that our requests would further God's purpose and glory.

(4.) **If we ask anything according to His will, He hears us..** Since God hears everything and even knows the unspoken secrets of our hearts, John means that He hears us favorably by coming to our aid. I've been at church gatherings where many children were playing as the adults sat eating or talking. Suddenly one mother jumped up and ran for her child. Why? Because she heard his cry. None of the other parents heard the cry, or if they did, they knew that it was not their child. But the mother knows the cry of her own child, and she responds to his need. Our heavenly Father knows the cry of His children. He hears our prayers. ([1John 5:14-17 Confidence and Carefulness in Prayer](#))

Hiebert says confidence "relates to the believer's present confidence as he stands before God in prayer. In each instance it is confidence Godward, grounded in our relationship with Him. As a compound noun, the word "confidence" (parrhēsia, par = "all" and rhēsis= "speech") basically denotes that freedom of speech which enables us to express our thoughts and desires before God without hesitancy or fear of embarrassment. ([1 John](#))

John Stott - Christian confidence belongs not just to the future, to the parousia (1Jn 2:28) and the judgment day (1Jn 4:17), but to the here and now. It describes both the manner of our approach to God, free and bold (1Jn 3:21), and our expectation of its outcome namely that ... he hears us. In 3:22 the condition of answered prayer is whether our behaviour accords with God's commands; here whether our requests accord with His will.

Confidence (boldness) ([3954](#))(**parrhesia** from **pás** = all + **rhesis** = speech, act of speaking) is literally all speech or speaking all things and thereby conveys the idea of freedom to say all. The basic idea is freedom of speech or an attitude of openness that stems from freedom and lack of fear to speak all. Greeks used **parrhesia** of those with the right to speak openly in the assembly. Ultimately this quality of **confidence** is that which is energized by the indwelling Spirit, emboldening (Spirit filled) believers to openly declare (with great conviction) all that He births within (cp Acts 4:31).

This is John's fourth use of **parrhesia** in this letter...

1 John 2:28-**note** Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have **confidence** and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.

1 John 3:21-**note** Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have **confidence** before God;

1 John 4:17-**note** By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have **confidence** in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.

1 John 5:14-**note** This is the **confidence** which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

Have ([2192](#))(**echo**) basically means to have or possess and in this context speaks of this confidence as the present possession of John ("we have") and fellow believers. **Echo** is in the **present tense** which signifies this confidence is something we can continually possess before our Father.

Before Him - The preposition **pros** means near, facing or toward and speaks "of the saint's attitude towards a prayer-hearing and a prayer-answering God." ([Wuest](#)) The picture is of the believer "in an intimate face-to-face relationship with God in prayer." ([Hiebert](#))

Who is **Him**? While the nearest antecedent is the Son, this more likely refers to the Father as prayer is generally addressed to Him. For example Jesus instructed His disciples (and all listening to His Sermon on the Mount) to ""**Pray**, (**present imperative** = command to make this your lifestyle) then, in this way: 'Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name.'" (Mt 6:9-**note**) It is interesting to note a recent popular trend to direct prayers primarily to Jesus ("Dear Jesus," "Lord Jesus"). While I think that one can certainly pray to Jesus, it is notable that the pattern Jesus Himself gave is to direct our prayers to the Father. Jesus is the Mediator through Whom our prayers reach the heart of Father (1Ti 2:5-6).

Hiebert adds that "The pronoun "him" (auton) may refer to "the Son of God" (1 Jn 5:13) as the nearest antecedent, but more probably the reference is to God the Father, since Christian prayer is generally addressed to Him. This imprecision in the pronoun in relation to God is characteristically Johannine; he accepts both as truly one in nature and knows that prayer can freely be addressed to either. ([1 John](#))

Brooke adds that **pros** "generally denotes that which "goes out towards," a relation realized in active intercourse and fellowship. Cf.

Jn. 1:1 = "the Word was with [pros] God." Jn 1:2+ "He was in the beginning with [pros] God.") What a privilege, to have continual entree into His very presence in the Throne Room! (cp Ro 5:1-2-note) As the writer of Hebrews says "Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need." (Heb 4:16-note, cp Heb 10:21-22-note)

That (hoti) is a term which in context serves to explain how we can draw near to God in confident prayer. John says we can do so when we ask according to His will.

NET Note on if we ask - A third-class condition is introduced by (ean) + present subjunctive... In the Koine period ean can mean "when" or "whenever" and is virtually the equivalent of hotan (**Ed**: hotan means "when, whenever, as often as"). Thus the meaning here is, "whenever (i.e., if) we ask anything according to his will, then he hears us." (**Ed**: See NET translation above) ([NET Note](#))

Ask (154) (aiteo) means to ask for something with a sense of urgency and even to the point of demanding **Aiteo** means to ask for, with a claim on receipt of an answer. In contrast to erotao (2065), aiteo more frequently suggests attitude of a suppliant = petition of one who is lesser in position than he to whom the petition is made, as of men in asking something from God (Mt 7:7 Jas 1:5 1Jn 3:22, as of a child from a parent (Mt 7:9-10), as of a subject from a king (Acts 12:20), as of priests and people from Pilate (Lu 23:23) or finally as of a beggar from a passer by (Acts 3:2).

Wuest adds that **aiteo** means "to ask for something to be given. It is in the **middle voice** in which the person acting in the verb does so in his own interest (**Ed**: middle voice signifies that we pray earnestly as with a personal interest). It is in the **present tense, subjunctive mood**, which speaks of continuous action. Thus, the total idea is, "if we keep on asking for something for ourselves." ([Word Studies from the Greek New Testament](#))

See also -

- [Pithy Prayer Phrases](#)
- [Prayer - Greek Words for Prayer](#)
- [Prayer Devotionals and Illustrations](#)
- [Prayer Hymns and Poems](#)
- [Prayer Quotes](#)
- [Praying in the Spirit](#)
- [Spurgeon's Gems on Prayer](#)
- [certainty; prayer, and God's will; asking](#)
- [Devotional on Prayer](#)
- [Guide to Praying for Missionaries](#)

THE QUALIFICATION: ACCORDING TO HIS WILL

That, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us - A precious promise

According to His will (compare 1Pe 4:19; Gal. 1:4; Eph 1:5, 11) - This is a very important qualifier for the word **anything! Is what we are asking in His will?** As **Robertson** notes "This is the secret in all prayer, even in the case of Jesus himself. For the phrase see 1 Pet. 4:19; Gal. 1:4; Eph. 1:5, 11."

Related Resource:

- [Topic Will of God - several articles](#)

Jackman - Our praying is never on a surer foundation than when it is grounded in Scripture, for here God's will is revealed. As we pray Bible prayers, we know that God will hear and answer. Of course, we still have to make sure that, at our human end, we are not vitiating our prayers by unbelief or disobedience. 'If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened' (Ps. 66:18). It is hypocritical nonsense to hold on to some cherished sin in our lives and at the same time come to God in prayer, to ask him for some gracious good gift. But if we have first found his cleansing and forgiveness (1Jn 1:9), we can ask with boldness. God's will is 'good, pleasing and perfect' (Rom. 12:2), so when a request is refused it is not due to any reluctance or unwillingness in God, unless it be the unwillingness to give to a dearly loved child something that the heavenly Father, in his perfect wisdom, knows would not be in that child's best interests. For prayer is not an attempt to get God to see things my way and to extract from him what I have decided I need or want. Prayer is submitting my will to his. To paraphrase the Lord's Prayer, it is saying, 'Your will be done in me, your bit of earth, as it is in Christ, who is my heaven!' It is opening the door of my need to the Lord Jesus. And this means that prayer is God's means by which my submission to Christ's lordship can be developed. The less I pray, the more self-willed I become.

But the corollary is wonderfully true. 'Not my will, but yours'—that is the essence of assured prayer, the secret of prevailing prayer. What confidence we can have! This should be a great stimulus in our personal lives to find out God's will, to build on the commands and promises of his Word in our prayers, to talk every situation through with him, and to submit all our thinking, planning and deciding to God. Answers to prayer do not depend on a right diagnosis or analysis of the problem by us as we pray, but on a childlike submission to the Father, knowing that he will give what is best according to his will. If he were to answer on any other basis, which of us would ever dare to pray again? We do not have that sort of wisdom. ([The Message of John's Letters](#))

John Stott - Prayer is not a convenient device for imposing our will upon God, or for bending his will to ours, but the prescribed way of subordinating our will to his. It is by prayer that we seek God's will, embrace it and align ourselves with it. Every true prayer is a variation on the theme 'your will be done'. Our Master taught us to say this in the pattern prayer he gave us, and added the supreme example of it in Gethsemane. In such prayers, and only in such, he hears us. That is, he takes note of our petitions and, in addition, he listens favorably to us (as in John 9:31; 11:41–42).

Hiebert - In 1Jn 3:21–22 John speaks of confidence that our request would be answered "because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight." Here the condition is that our prayers are "according to his will." The two conditions set forth the human and the divine aspects for effective prayer... Yet whenever we have a request concerning which we are not assured that it is in accord with His will, we can follow the example of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane when He prayed for the removal of "the cup" but added "nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt" (Mark 14:36; cf. also John 12:27–28). Prayer is not a device for imposing our will upon God, but rather the bending of our will to His in the desire that His good will may be done. "Prayer, according to God's will," G. Williams notes, "is an activity growing out of the consciousness of the sweet relationship of a child and a father. Such an intimacy involves harmoniousness of will and only asks for what accords with that will." ([1 John](#))

Steven Cole discusses the qualification of asking according to God's will - Many who do not know God pray, but they are not seeking God's will in prayer. Rather, they are trying to use Him (whoever they conceive Him to be) to get what they want. But biblical prayer is not trying to talk God into giving us what we want. Rather, it is submitting our will to His will. It is praying, as Jesus instructed (Mt. 6:10-note), "Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." It would be the height of stupidity to pray for your will to be done as opposed to God's will. For one thing, it would mean that you know better than God what is best for your life. But He knows everything and He has assured us that He loves us far more than the best earthly father loves his children. **So it only makes sense to submit to and pray for His will for your life and for others.** Also, to pray for your will against God's will would be asking God to abdicate His sovereignty over the universe and submit to you as the sovereign! Again, this would be the epitome of stupidity! But, the difficulty is, how do we determine what God's will is so that we pray in line with it? Are we talking about His will of decree or His will of desire? God's will of decree is what He has determined to do. In this sense, God "works all things after the counsel of His will" (Ep 1:11-note). Everything that happens takes place because God decreed it. If anything could happen outside of His will, then He would not be in control of the universe. He would not be the sovereign who plans it and does it (Isa. 46:9-11). **God's will of desire**, however, is different than **His will of decree**. God does not in any sense desire that men sin, and yet in His **will of decree**, He permitted the fall of man and He ordained the Cross as the means of rescuing us from sin. But although God ordained these events, He did not cause Adam and Eve to sin. He was not responsible for the evil men that crucified Jesus (Acts 2:23; 4:27-28). They sinned because of their own evil desires. God took no delight in their sin. He hates sin. Yet, He ordained that Jesus had to die at the hands of sinners. **Here's the difficulty when it comes to praying for God's will** It is God's will of desire that all men be saved (1Ti 2:4). Yet, we know that in His decree, God has willed to save only His elect (Ro 9:9-24). So it would be going against God's will of decree to pray, "God, save everyone in the world." (In fact, Jesus excluded the world in His prayer; Jn 17:9). But, we should pray, "God, save my loved one," and, "Save my neighbor." The problem is, I cannot know in advance whether or not He will do it, because I do not know His will of decree. So I ask, but I have to say, "Not my will, but Yours, be done." Also, it is difficult to pray according to God's will because His ways are not our ways (Isa 55:8-9), and we often think that He has to work in the way that makes sense to us. If I had been a disciple of John the Baptist, I would have been praying that he be released from prison and have many more years of effective ministry. God's way was to have a drunken, lustful king make a stupid promise that resulted in John getting his head lopped off! If I had been the apostle John, I would have prayed for God to spare my brother, James. After all, he was one of the inner circle of three disciples who were especially close to Jesus. His gifts were needed in the early church. But God permitted Herod to put James to death, but He sent His angel to deliver Peter from the same fate (Acts 12:1-17). Although Scripture does not say that John was praying for his brother's release, I could not imagine anything else. Yet, his request was not granted, because it was not God's will! One more example, which I used when we studied 1Jn 3:22: If I had heard that Satan was asking permission to sift Peter like wheat, I would have prayed that Peter be able to resist the devil's attack. But, Jesus didn't pray for that. Rather, He prayed that Peter's faith would not ultimately fail, and that after he was restored, he might strengthen his brothers (Lk 22:31-32). I hope that I'm not discouraging you from praying, but I want you to understand that while God promises to grant our requests when we ask according to His will, it's not a simple, "name it and claim it," process. God's will is that His kingdom will come, and yet the outworking of His will involves thousands of years and many setbacks. We must persevere in prayer even when we do not understand God's will or His ways. That's the general principle, that if we ask anything according to God's will, He hears and grants our requests. ([1John 5:14-17 Confidence and Carefulness in Prayer](#))

Will (2307)(**thelema**) from thelo = to will with the "-ma" suffix indicating the result of the will = "a thing willed") generally speaks of the result of what one has decided. One sees this root word in the feminine name "Thelma." In its most basic form, thelema refers to a wish, a strong desire, and the willing of some event. Most of the NT uses of **thelema** (over 3/4's) refer to God's will and signify His gracious disposition toward something.

Wuest distinguishes boule from **thelema** noting that "**boule** is a desire based upon the reason, but thelema is a desire based upon the emotions. God's will or desire here (Ep 1:9, 11), comes from His heart of love." (Word Studies from the Greek New Testament)

Zodhiates says that thelema is the "Will, not to be conceived as a demand, but as an expression or inclination of pleasure towards that which is liked, that which pleases and creates joy. When it denotes God's will, it signifies His gracious disposition toward something. Used to designate what God Himself does of His own good pleasure." ([Zodhiates, S. The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament](#))

Vine - Since the will of God for His children has as its design their greatest possible benefit, it is only divine grace that puts the stated limitation upon the fulfillment of our request. If our prayer has as its object, not our self-interest, but our brother's real good, the condition is fulfilled and prayer will be answered in God's time and way.

David Smith on **we ask... He hears** - A large assurance: our prayers are always heard, never unanswered. Observe two limitations, (1) according to His will which does not mean that we should first ascertain His will and then pray, but that we should pray with the proviso, express or implicit, 'If it be thy will.' Mt 26:39 is the model prayer. (2) The promise is not 'He granteth it' but 'He hearkeneth to us.' He answers in His own way 1Jn 5:15. An amplification of the second limitation. 'We have our requests' not always as we pray but as we would pray were we wiser. God gives us not what we ask but what we really need." Said Shakespeare, "We, ignorant of ourselves, beg often our own harms, which the wise powers deny us for our good; so find we profit by losing of our prayers." ([Expositor's Greek Testament](#))

Hears (191)(**akouo**) means to attend to or consider what is or has been said (not just to hear but to listen, give thoughtful attention to). In this context **akouo** means not only that He hears our voice but that He even listens with divine attention. This is an amazing thought that God listens to us! **Why are we so reticent to talk to Him (speaking from personal experience)?** The **present tense** shows He continually hears us.

Robertson reminds us that **He hears us** "Even when God does not give us what we ask."

Vincent on **He hears us** - **Hear** is used in this sense by John only. Compare John 9:31 (*We know that God does not **hear** [akouo] sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing, and does His will, He **hears** [akouo]him.*); Jn 11:41-42. (*And so they removed the stone. And Jesus raised His eyes, and said, "Father, I thank Thee that You **heard** [akouo] Me. And I knew that You **hear** [akouo] Me always; but because of the people standing around I said it, that they may believe that Thou didst send Me."*)

Robert Morgan - from [100 Bible Verses Everyone Should Know by Heart](#) - recommended

1 John 5:14 Now this is the confidence we have before Him: whenever we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. —1 John 5:14

This verse and the next offer one of the Bible's best definitions of prayer. It's easy to memorize when you notice how the verses unfold and expand. The meaning and marvel of prayer grows deeper and more practical as phrase builds upon phrase. Prayer is...

- Coming before Him.
- Coming before Him with confidence.
- Coming before Him with confidence and asking.
- Coming before Him with confidence and asking according to His will.
- Coming before Him with confidence and asking according to His will, knowing that He hears us.

Writing near the end of the Bible and at the end of the apostolic age, the apostle John wanted us to know something about the biblical promises related to prayer. They are all conditioned by God's will. In his Gospel, for example, John quoted Jesus as saying, "You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it" (John 14:14 NIV). Anything is a huge word, and perhaps some of John's readers had taken it a bit too literally. So in 1 John 5:14, he reminds us that the promise of answered prayer is dependent on the phrase "according to His will."

From the perspective of infinity, our God knows what's best from beginning to end. He sees the outcomes of every chain reaction in

life. He knows how the dominoes fall and how the cookies crumble. His perfect, providential oversight makes no mistakes and always results in the best for His children.

Our vantage point is as limited as a person who's fallen into a hole and can only see a circle of sky above him. We don't always know the landscape, and we can't see distant vistas. So we pray earnestly and ask God for our needs, our wants, our wishes, and our desires. But we always pray with the attitude, "if it be Your will." In that we can have total confidence.

Sometimes when I purchase roses or plants from a nursery catalog, there's a little box on the order form saying, "If we are out of the item you want, may we substitute one of equal or greater value?" I always say no, because I don't think the workers in the warehouse know what's best for my garden. But with the Lord we should always say, "Yes, Lord! You may substitute. You may grant an alternative answer of equal or greater value. I trust You with substitutions."

The purpose of prayer is to get God's will done.... The greatest prayer any one can offer is "Thy will be done." It will be offered in a thousand different forms, with a thousand details, as needs arise daily. But every true prayer comes under those four words. —S. D. Gordon

[Why Do You Ask - Our Daily Bread](#) - If we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. —1 John 5:14

You may have heard the saying, "Our small things are great to God's love; our great things are small to His power." How true! There's nothing in our lives so small that God isn't concerned about it—no need, no desire, no burden, no emotion. Likewise, no problem or crisis is so big that it baffles God's wisdom and power. And because He cares for us, we are invited to tell Him about any and all of our concerns (1 Peter 5:7).

Does that mean we can ask God for anything and expect to receive it? For example, does a Christian on a sports team have the right to ask God for victory in a particular game, and then expect God to intervene directly to help his team win? And what if players on the other team are also praying for victory?

Faith in our Savior and praying in His name are surely praiseworthy. But let's be sure that what we're asking for is something in line with what we know God would want. It is possible to cross the line from trustful dependence to superstitious selfishness.

Biblical faith is controlled by submission to God's will (1 John 5:14). So every petition must be offered in a way that reflects the attitude of Jesus, who said to His Father, "Not as I will, but as You will" (Matthew 26:39). ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

God's will, not mine, I make my goal
When I bow to Him in prayer;
I know He'll do what He deems best,
When I cast on Him my care. —Fitzhugh

The keynote of every prayer should be: "Your will be done."

[Frustrating Promises - Our Daily Bread](#)

Do any Bible promises frustrate you? Some people say that Psalm 37:4 is a guarantee that you'll get whatever you want—a spouse, a job, money. This has made me wonder at times, Why don't I have what I want?

When a promise frustrates us because it seems that God is not fulfilling it, maybe it's because we don't understand what the verse really means. Here are three suggestions to help, using Psalm 37 as an example:

Consider the context. Psalm 37 is telling us not to worry or be envious of the wicked. Our focus is not to be on what they have, nor on what they seem to be getting away with (vv.12-13). Instead, we are commanded to trust and delight in the Lord (vv.3-4).

Consider other verses. We're taught in 1 John 5:14 that our requests need to be according to God's will for us. Other Scriptures on the same topic can give us a balance.

Consult a Bible commentary. In *The Treasury of David*, C. H. Spurgeon says this about verse 4: "[Those] who delight in God desire or ask for nothing but what will please God." Doing a little deeper study can help us understand frustrating Bible verses like this one.

As we learn to delight in the Lord, His desires will become our own and He will grant them. ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Standing on the promises that cannot fail,
When the howling storms of doubt and fear assail,
By the living Word of God I shall prevail,
Standing on the promises of God. —Carter

You can't break God's promises by leaning on them.

Mountains Can Move! - Our Daily Bread

A familiar slogan about prayer is, "Prayer changes things." But prayer doesn't do this—God does. Some people think that prayer itself is the source of power, so they "try prayer," hoping "it will work" for them. In Mark 11, Jesus disclosed one of the secrets behind all true prayer: "Have faith in God." Not faith in faith, not faith in prayer, but "faith in God" (v.22).

Jesus told His disciples they could command a mountain to be cast into the sea, and if they believed it would happen, it would. Jesus then gave them His meaning behind that astonishing promise. He said, "Whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will" (v.24). Jesus was speaking about answered prayer. We can ask and receive answers only if our asking is directed to God in faith and according to His will (1 John 5:14).

I've often wished that I could move mountains by faith. Having once lived in Switzerland, I'd like God to move the Alps into my backyard in England. But He has done something much more important: He has removed mountains of worry, fear, and resentment from my heart and cast them into oblivion through my faith in Him. He is still in the mountain-moving business! Have faith in God and pray! ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

When the Spirit prompts the asking,
When the waiting heart believes,
Then we know of each petition—
Everyone who asks receives.
—Anon.

Faith is the key to answered prayer.

Why Do You Ask - - Our Daily Bread

You may have heard the saying, "Our small things are great to God's love; our great things are small to His power." How true! There's nothing in our lives so small that God isn't concerned about it—no need, no desire, no burden, no emotion. Likewise, no problem or crisis is so big that it baffles God's wisdom and power. And because He cares for us, we are invited to tell Him about any and all of our concerns (1 Peter 5:7).

Does that mean we can ask God for anything and expect to receive it? For example, does a Christian on a sports team have the right to ask God for victory in a particular game, and then expect God to intervene directly to help his team win? And what if players on the other team are also praying for victory?

Faith in our Savior and praying in His name are surely praiseworthy. But let's be sure that what we're asking for is something in line with what we know God would want. It is possible to cross the line from trustful dependence to superstitious selfishness.

Biblical faith is controlled by submission to God's will (1 John 5:14). So every petition must be offered in a way that reflects the attitude of Jesus, who said to His Father, "Not as I will, but as You will" (Matthew 26:39). ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

God's will, not mine, I make my goal
When I bow to Him in prayer;
I know He'll do what He deems best,
When I cast on Him my care. —Fitzhugh

The keynote of every prayer should be: "Your will be done."
