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NECESSITIES FOR PREVAILING PRAYER

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February 23, 2019

In order for a believer to confidently ask and receive from the Lord, he must follow the laws of prayer laid down by the Father. These guidelines are found scattered through the pages of Scripture and obedience to them opens up the channel from the Father's willing hand to our own hands stretched out in need.

First, approach God in and through the name of Jesus. We make our appeal on the basis of what Christ did for us rather than on our own merits, because we have none. It may be humbling to continually admit that we are helpless sinners saved by grace, but only this path will lead to a prayer-hearing God.

Second, a person who prays must believe. The Bible states that when we ask, we "must believe and not doubt." A doubting, double-minded person "should not think he will receive anything from the Lord" (James 1:6-8).

The third guideline involves the state of our hearts. The apostle John addresses the issue this way: "If our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask because we obey his commands and do what pleases him" (1 John 3:21-22).

A clear conscience and a pure heart are absolute necessities for prevailing prayer. I cannot confidently ask God for answers when I cling to the sins that nailed his Son to the cross of Calvary. It is impossible to live in iniquity and enjoy the Lord's favor simultaneously.

"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us "whatever we ask" we know that we have what we asked of him" (1 John 5:14-15). God desires an attitude of confidence "assurance" when we come to him in prayer.

I encourage you to approach God as a child approaches a father that he knows loves him unconditionally "no holding back or fear of rejection. "In and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence" (Ephesians 3:12).

Jim Cymbala began the Brooklyn Tabernacle with less than twenty members in a small, rundown building in a difficult part of the city. A native of Brooklyn, he is a longtime friend of both David and Gary Wilkerson.