

Third Requirement for Approaching God: In the Name of Jesus



How to Pray and Get What You Pray For (Part 4)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again. The theme that I'm dealing with this week is, "How to Pray and Get What You Pray For." At present I'm dealing with the requirements for a right approach to God. So far I've outlined two requirements that we have to fulfill as we approach God in prayer.

The first is to renounce our own will. As long as we cling on to our own will we cannot find the will of God, and the will of God is far higher and better than anything we could ever imagine or think of for ourself.

The second requirement is that we must approach God with faith. Not a doctrinal kind of faith, not theology, but faith in God's faithfulness, in His character, in His reliability.

Today I'm going to speak about the third requirement, which is that we must pray in the name of Jesus. Let's look at some scriptures in the New Testament where this is so clearly stated. In John 14:13-14, Jesus says:

> "And whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it." (NAS)

And then again in John 16:23-24:

> "And in that day you will ask Me no question. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you shall ask the Father for anything, He will give it to you in My name. Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be made full." (NAS)

In those verses, the phrase "in My name" occurs four times. Three times it's spoken of asking God in the name of Jesus, but the fourth time it says that God will give what we ask in the name of Jesus. In other words, the relationship to God is in the name of Jesus both ways, in our asking and in God's giving. Now, what is implied when we pray in the name of Jesus? I suggest that there are three main things implied by

coming to God in the name of Jesus.

First of all, we are coming to God on the basis of what Jesus has done on our behalf. Let me say that again, on the basis of what Jesus has done on our behalf. That's implied when we pray in the name of Jesus. Now on our behalf Jesus has paid the penalty of sin, He's died in our place, He's taken our guilt and our condemnation, and He's made the way open for us to come to God without feeling guilty or ashamed.

This is what is says in 1 Peter 3:18:

> "For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God..." (NAS)

The purpose of His death on the cross, bearing our sins in our place, was that He might bring us to God, that we might have the right of access to God.

Again in Ephesians 2:13, Paul says:

> "But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ." (NAS)

The blood of Christ is the visible, eternal evidence of the sacrifice that Jesus made on our behalf. When we come in the name of Jesus, we come in the merits of the blood that He shed on our behalf.

In Hebrews 12:24, it says this about the things that are in the heavenlies:

> "And to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel." (NAS)

There's a beautiful comparison there based on an incident in the Old Testament. You remember the story of Cain and Abel? Cain murdered his brother Abel, and then God spoke to Cain and said, "What have you done?" And when Cain pleaded ignorance and innocence, God said, "The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground, crying for vengeance and justice."

But here the writer of Hebrews says the blood of Jesus is sprinkled on our behalf in the heavenlies, and it speaks better things than Abel's blood. In other words, the blood of Jesus is speaking of reconciliation, mercy, forgiveness, atonement. When I'm under pressure and I find it hard to pray, one of my greatest consolations is that even if I don't know what to say, the blood of Jesus is always speaking in heaven on my behalf. And when I come in the name of Jesus, that's included in coming in His name.

The second thing that we are entitled to when we come in the name of Jesus is we come on the basis of who Jesus Himself, is. In Hebrews 10:19, 21-22, the writer says:

> "Since therefore, brethren, we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith..." (NAS)

We come with Jesus as our great priest. And then again in 1 John 2:1, John says:

> "My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous..." (NAS)

The word that's translated "advocate" means literally "someone called in alongside to help us and to plead our cause for us." So when we come in the name of Jesus, we come with Jesus as our High Priest and our Advocate. As our High Priest He offers up our prayers to God on our behalf, and because they are offered up by Jesus, we know that they reach God, and as our Advocate, He speaks to God on our behalf. He pleads our cause better than we could ever do ourselves.

So when we come in the name of Jesus, it means that we're coming because of who Jesus is, not because of what we are, but because of who He is. First of all, He's the Priest that offers up our prayers. Secondly, He's the Advocate that speaks directly to God on our behalf. And when we make mistakes and errors and even sin, we don't need to stay away from God and feel ashamed; we can come to God freely because Jesus is our Advocate, He's pleading with God on our behalf.

I've said that when we come to God in the name of Jesus, we come on the basis of what Jesus had done for us on the cross and of who Jesus is. There's a third aspect to coming in the name of Jesus. It bases our coming to God on the relationship that we have to God through Jesus. Listen to what Paul says in Ephesians 1:3-6:

> "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He

> predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved." (NAS)

Notice God had an eternal purpose that was in His heart and mind before time ever began, or creation ever took place. God foreknew us and He determined that through Jesus Christ He would adopt us into His family as His sons, as His children. All this was worked out in time and human history when Jesus came and died on our behalf. But it wasn't something that God had just thought up. It was an eternal purpose that was being worked out in human history. The purpose of God was He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself. And then it says, "This is to be to the praise of the glory of His grace which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved."

Now in the King James Version, that sixth verse of Ephesians 1 is translated this way:

> "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." (KJV)

I love that phrase, "Accepted in the beloved." That's what we are. We are accepted by God as His children when we come to Him in the beloved, Jesus Christ. We're not accepted because of what we were but because of what Jesus is. One of the biggest psychological and emotional problems of our contemporary culture is the problem of rejection. So many people go through life feeling rejected, unwanted, second-rate, perhaps because of a wrong attitude of parents in childhood, or perhaps of a wrong attitude of a husband or a wife in a marriage situation. And probably there's no greater wound than the wound of rejection. But the first step to the healing of that wound is to realize that when we come to God in Jesus we are not rejected. God never rejects his children. We are accepted in the Beloved, and that makes all the difference in the way we come to God.

Now once we come to God through Jesus on this basis, here are some of the wonderful things that re made available to us. First of all, Romans 8:32:

> "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with him freely give us all things?" (NAS)

Isn't that a marvelous phrase? With Him, with Jesus, God will freely give us all things. But it all depends on the "with Him," the "with Jesus." With Jesus we're entitled to everything as God's children, but without Him we have no claim upon Him at all.

And then in Philippians 4:19:

> "And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

"All your needs." That means no need of your needs go unsupplied, and the supply comes from God's riches. And I believe that God is rich enough to supply the need of all His children and not even notice that He's lost anything, but the supply is in Christ Jesus. Outside of Christ Jesus we have no claim to God's supply at all.

And then listen finally to 2 Corinthians 1:20:

> "For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God." (NIV)

Somebody's estimated that the Bible contains about 8,000 promises that God has made. But Paul says here that no matter how many promises that God has made, it doesn't matter if they are infinite in number, they are all "Yes in Christ." Every promise God has made He's committed to fulfill in Christ.

So God says "yes" and when we appropriate the promise and come to God on the basis of the promise, we say our "amen" back to God. God says "yes," we say "amen" and that settles it because it's in Christ.

Well, our time is up for today but I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll be dealing with the next main requirement for approaching God in prayer.

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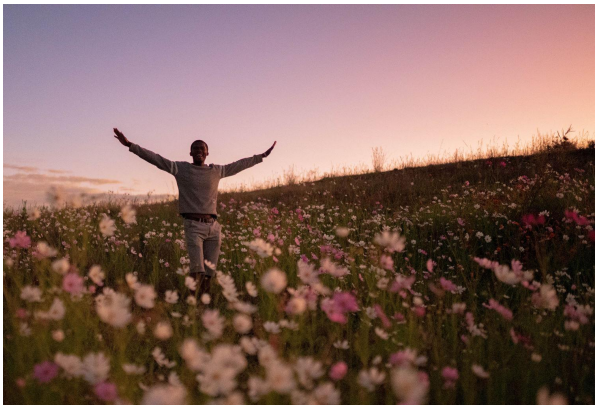
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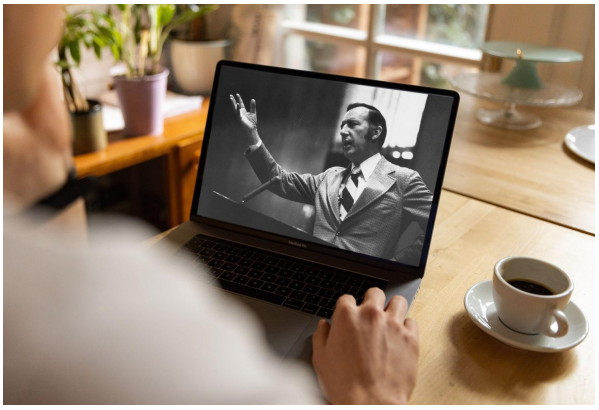
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