

# Prayers God Always Answers— Prayers of Faith and Faithfulness





## JOHN 15:7

“If you remain in me and my words remain in you, **ask whatever you wish**, and it will be given you.”

## MARK 11:24

“Therefore I tell you, **whatever you ask for in prayer**, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.”

## 1 JOHN 3:21–22

<sup>21</sup> Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; <sup>22</sup> and **whatever we ask we receive from him**, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him.



*God answers people of faith who are faithful to him.*



My friend Greg Pruett, president of Pioneer Bible Translators, has a story of a blind man who acted on faith.

- In the West African it is a grave insult to refuse a greeting.
- In Greg's village, there was a blind man who sat at the door of his hut by the road.
- Because Greg told the man that he always waved at him when he drove past the man's hut, the blind man always waved back when he heard Greg's car pass by.

- The blind man **could not see** Greg waving at him, but he waved back because he **believed Greg's word** that Greg was waving at him.
- He **believed** Greg's word.
- He **trusted** in Greg's promise.
- So he **acted** on **what he believed** to be true.
- That is faith.

# 1. God answers people of **faith**.

- The first and most basic prerequisite to praying prayers that are answered is that we *believe in God himself*—that he *is there* and that he is *good* enough, *loving* enough, and *strong* enough to answer our prayers.





## Hebrews 11:6

<sup>6</sup> And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

- Next, there is the matter of simply *believing what God says* about hearing and answering those who cry out to him.

Mark 11:24

“Therefore, I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, **believe** that you have received it, and it will be yours.”

Hebrews 4:16

Let us then approach the throne of grace with **confidence**, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.



The faith of Bartimaeus

## Mark 10:46-52


And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside. <sup>47</sup> And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, “**Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!**” <sup>48</sup> And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But **he cried out all the more**, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” <sup>49</sup> And Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.” And they called the blind man, saying to him, “Take heart. Get up; he is calling you.”

<sup>50</sup> And **throwing off his cloak**, he **sprang up** and **came to Jesus**. <sup>51</sup> And Jesus said to him, “What do you want me to do for you?” And the blind man said to him, “Rabbi, let me recover my sight.” <sup>52</sup> And Jesus said to him, “**Go your way; your faith has made you well.**” And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way.

## Matthew 17:20

<sup>20</sup> “I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”





I HAVE A  
MUSTARD SEED,  
AND I'M NOT  
AFRAID TO USE IT!

When three-year-old Jenny, scraped her knee, as her mother was dressing the wound, Jenny said, “Mommy will you pray to Jesus to make it better?”



So, mom prayed a brief prayer.

As soon as she said “Amen,” Jenny said, “Well, what’d He say?”





- We need the faith of a child that wants and expects such clear and direct answers.

2. God answers those who are faithful to him.

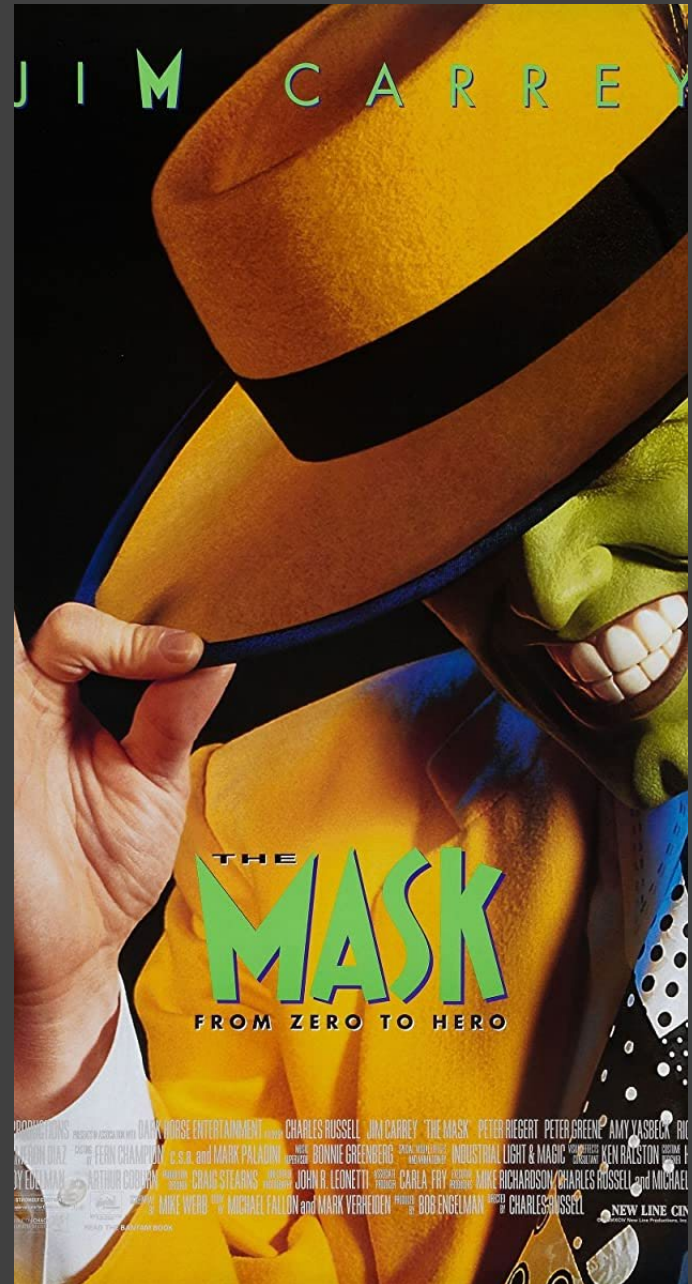
John 15:7

“If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.”

One of the great lessons of the parable of the True Vine is that an effective prayer life flows out of a **vital, living union** with Christ.



- In the 1994 movie *The Mask* a Bank clerk named Stanley Ipkiss finds an ancient Norse mask that gives **superhuman powers** to whoever wears it.
- When Ipkiss puts on the Mask he is transformed into a manic superhero.





- But there's a catch.
- When the movie's **villain** steals the Mask, he, too, acquires its powers.

- Even Stanley's dog Milo, when he gets hold of the mask, he has superpowers.
- The Mask is **indifferent** concerning who uses its powers.
- When the **good guy** wears it, he has superpowers to do good.
- When the **bad guy** wears it, he has superpowers to do evil.



- God has promised to answer his people with **supernatural power** when they pray.
- But, unlike the Mask, God is **not indifferent** as to how his power is used.
- God is not only all powerful, but he is good. He will not put his power at the disposal of someone who would misuse it.
- Hence ***in order to receive what we ask of him, we must be obedient to his word and will.***



## James 4:2-3

<sup>2</sup> You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. <sup>3</sup> When you ask, **you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.**

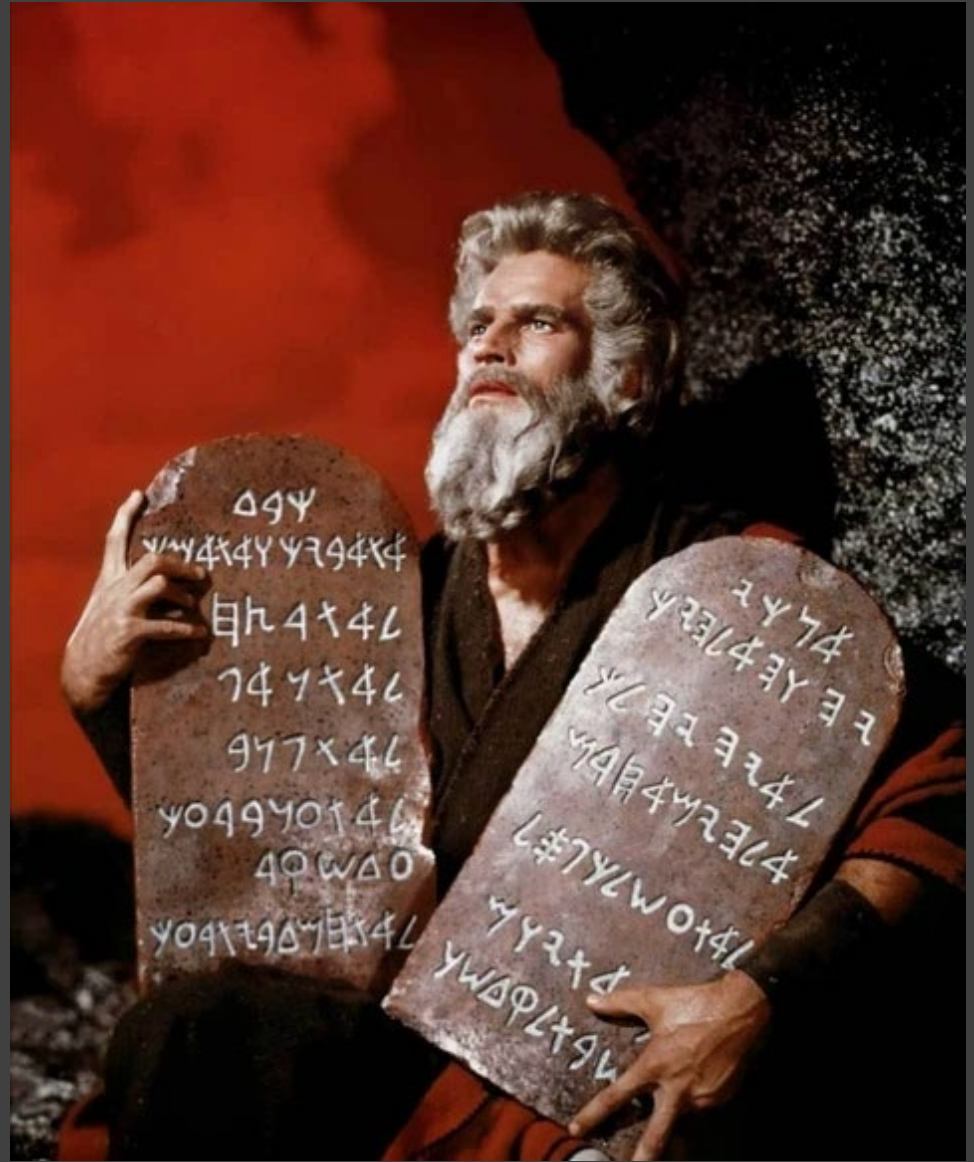


TAKE **DELIGHT**  
IN THE LORD,  
AND HE WILL GIVE  
YOU THE **DESIRES**  
OF YOUR HEART.



PSALM 37:4

If it *pleases*  
*you* to always  
want do only  
what *pleases*  
*God*, then God is  
happy to let you  
do as you please.





And if your **heart** is set on **what pleases God**, then he is happy to give you the **desire of your heart**.

It is my  
unshakable  
conviction  
—and has  
been my  
experience  
—that when  
faithful  
people pray  
in faith . . .



. . . God always gives us what  
we ask or he gives us  
something better.

- Before his conversion, the brilliant 4<sup>th</sup>-century theologian Augustine was a wild, profligate young man.
- He wanted to go to Rome to study rhetoric and oratory.



- Certain that the evils of the great city would destroy his soul, Augustine's devout mother, Monica, begged him not to go.
- And she prayed to God, "Please don't let Augustine go to Rome!"



While in Rome, Augustine went to Milan to hear **Ambrose** preach because he was the greatest orator of that time.



Under the preaching of Ambrose Augustine **converted** to Christianity, and later became the **greatest of the early Church Fathers**.



- All that time his mother was praying to God, "Don't let Augustine go to Rome."
- Scholars today doubt if anyone else in the world but Ambrose could have reached Augustine's brilliant young mind and wayward heart.



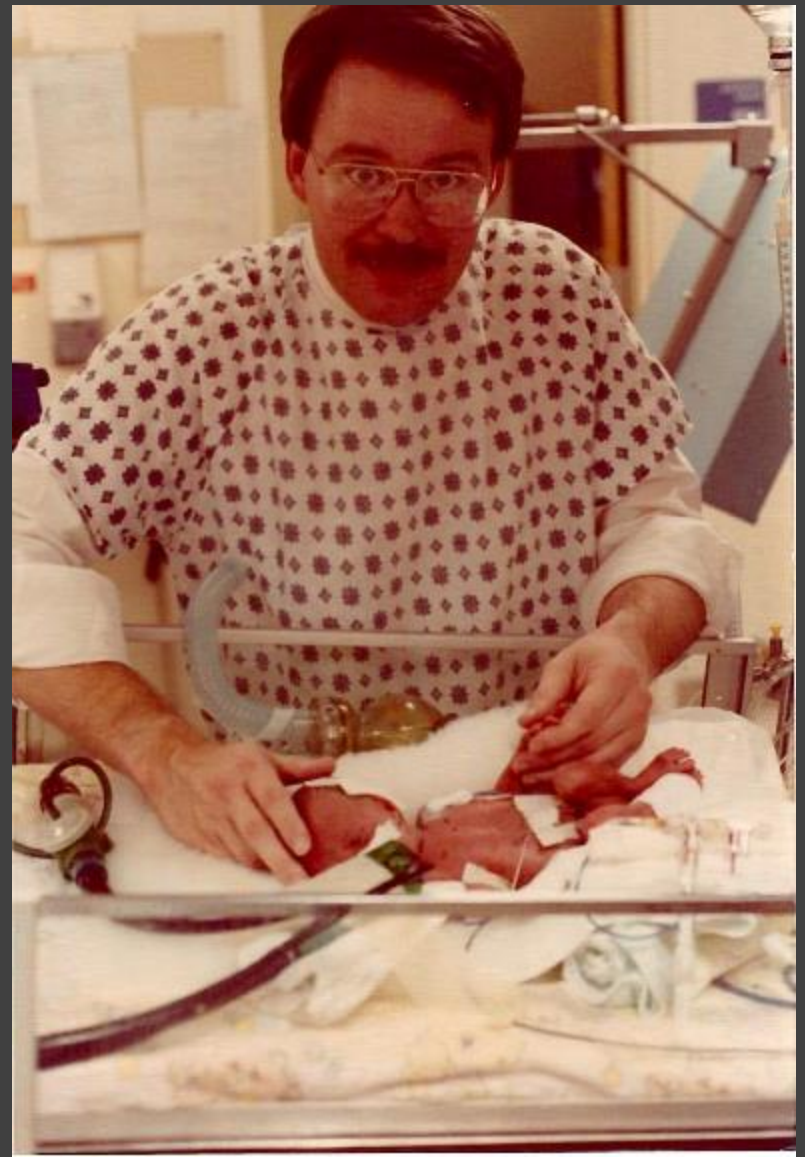
Did God  
answer  
Monica's  
prayer?

Yes, he did.



Did God give her what she asked?

No, **he gave her something better.**



“Heavenly Father, we thank you for so graciously giving us our sons Ian and Austin. We entrust them now to your never-failing care and love. Watch over them, we pray. Bless the hospital and the doctors and nurses who treat them. Protect them from all danger, deliver them from all sickness, and restore them to that perfect health which is yours alone to give, to the honor and glory of your name; through Christ Our Lord, the Great Physician, we pray. Amen.”



- My *ultimate desire* for each of our boys is that they grow up to be *strong, godly men* who will be *fit to spend an eternity with God*. I continually pray that prayer for Ryan, Noah, and Ian.
- But I *no longer pray that prayer for Austin*. God perfectly fulfilled that desire the day he took that little boy from my arms into his own.
- He is now *with God*.
- He is free from *sin*.
- He is safe from all *harm*.
- He now lives in a *perfected existence* which I can only dream of.

- Pray *hard*.
- Pray *specifically*.
- Pray *with faith* that God will grant what you have asked him.
- But also pray with a *willingness to accept the greater good* that God may give you when, in his infinite wisdom, his answer comes in a form different from what you asked.

# Application

- God is absolutely **wise**, absolutely **loving**, and absolutely **good**.
- You will be infinitely **happier**, **better**, and more **successful** living life his way than you will trying to live it your way.

Trust him.  
Surrender  
to him.  
Abide in  
him.



Then you can “ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.”