

The Promise of Greater Works and Answered Prayer Pt2

John 14:12-14

John 14:12–14 (NKJV)

¹² “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater *works* than these he will do, because I go to My Father. ¹³ And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask anything in My name, I will do *it*.

Introduction:

There is no doubt that God has ordained in His all-encompassing foreknowledge and His infinite wisdom to respond to the pleading of His people and perform great triumphs through prayer. God has decreed to make the prayers of His people the cause of His triumph in many battles. He has ordained that prayer be the means of accomplishing many of His purposes believers and His enemies. But sadly that is not the way it is looked at in much of the church.... both evangelical and charismatic.

There are currently about half-a-billion self-proclaimed charismatics in the world – five hundred

million of them. And dominant among them, and largely all of them adhere to one or another element of this, is this prosperity gospel, this “name it and claim it” kind of aberrant deception.

For them, prayer is a personal force – a personal force that will bring you whatever you want; that’s what it is. It is a creative force; it is a creative power; it is a creative energy by which you attract any object or any experience or any situation that you want.

It works like this: know what you want, believe you will receive it, visualize its arrival, and speak it into existence. Those are the four steps, and you find them with everybody from Benny Hinn to Joel Osteen and everybody in between.

This is essentially the principle of prayer: know what you want. That’s where it starts. If you don’t know what you want, this thing isn’t going to get off the ground. Believe you will receive it. Visualize its appearance, and then your words, in that context, can speak it into existence. This is called the “law of attraction.” You will attract what you create by your faith expressed in words. In a sense, this is how you pray.

One writer says, and I quote, “It works every time, just place your order.” In fact, they tell us that when you pray that way, you shift the universe to

make your desires happen for you. This is how millions of people are being taught to pray around the world: decide what you want, believe you're going to get it, visualize receiving it, and speak it into existence; you create whatever you want. And the list does not sound like this: holiness, righteousness, purity, humility, brokenness. No, no. The list is all material: health, wealth, success, prosperity, privilege.

You speak, in this kind of prayer, faith words that bring into existence what you want.

This kind of confident prayer activates God for your desires, and God is just sitting up there waiting to be activated. They will even tell you He can't do anything until you push this button. And this has infected half-a-billion people who call themselves Christians, a pseudo kind of church across the planet where they have turned prayer into a mechanism by which they get what they want from God – who is obliged to supply it.

Let me have you look with me at James chapter 4 for a moment – James chapter 4. Here is a perspective that I think these people need to have, and it would do you well to have it as well, lest you be drawn away by this. In James chapter 4 and verse 3, we read familiar words, “You ask and do not receive” – you ask and do not receive; you ask God,

and you don't receive – why? – “because you ask with wrong motives” – what is your wrong motive? – “you want to spend it on your desires.”

So, here's a new principle that I would like to advocate: whatever you ask, simply because you desire it, you will not get. This is the exact opposite of everything that is part of that Positive Confession Movement.

James says, “You ask and you do not receive because you are asking to satisfy your own pleasures. This puts you in the category, verse 4, of an adulteress. What does that mean? You have deviated from your true love who is God, and you're having an affair with the world. “This,” he says, “is friendship with the world, and that is hostility toward God.”

When you ask for material things – cars, houses, more money, health, all of those kinds of things – you have literally become an adulteress. You have defected from the one you say you love – God – and you have taken up an affair – an illicit affair – with the world, and that is hostility toward God. And if you do that, you have just become the enemy of God. You have just become the enemy of God.

This is all illicit and is adultery and is defection from God.

So, this is a promise that whatever in this world you lust for, you will not receive from God. There's the truth. There's the message to the half-a-billion Health-Wealth advocates around the globe. But no one can make money preaching that as a Ponzi scheme. What is the true purpose of prayer? Is it to get you what you want? Is the true purpose of prayer to shift the cosmic order, to manipulate God for the purpose of giving you earthly, material, worldly possessions and privileges that are simply the longings of your fallen lusts? Is that it?

These people aren't off a little bit; they have taken up a posture that puts them in the category of being enemies of God, spiritual adulteresses, enemies of God, hostile toward God. Because what they're saying is, "God, it's not about what you want; it's about what I want. I don't exist to serve You; You exist to serve me." That is a form of blatant idolatry. That is a kind of blasphemy that violates the first commandment to have no other gods and to worship the Lord your God and no other. Nothing could be further from biblical prayer than that. This is not Christianity; this isn't close to Christianity; this does not honor God; this is just the opposite.

How are we to pray? As we see in the model prayer in Matt 6

“Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on Earth as it is in heaven.”

It’s not about me; it’s about God. It’s not about what I want; it’s about what God wants. It’s not about what elevates me; it’s what elevates God. It’s not about what aggrandizes me; it’s what aggrandizes God.

True prayer is the distilled essence of worship, while many think of prayer as nothing more than a way to get what they want, reducing prayer to some kind of a selfish superstition.

I just might add this; I couldn’t even find, in all the world of paganism, any pagan religious system that teaches that you can get what you want out of your deity. That isn’t even in paganism. Even pagans understand that they are at the mercy of their deity, not that that deity is at their mercy. This you don’t even find in paganism, and yet it’s invented and placed in Christianity. Faith and positive confession becomes a kind of blind credulity in which you tell God what you want.

If prayer is anything, it is the highest form of worship that an individual can participate in, because prayer is saying, “God, Your name, Your

kingdom, Your will be elevated, not my will, not my kingdom, not my name.”

John R. Rice wrote a book in 1942, a book on prayer. And in the book, he said this, and I quote, “Prayer is not praise, adoration, humiliation, or confession, but asking. Praise is not prayer, and prayer is not praise. Prayer is asking. Adoration is not prayer, and prayer is not adoration. Prayer is always asking. It is not anything else but asking.” End quote.

John R. Rice was a very looming figure in the world of the fundamental churches, and people bought into this for decades. That became the agenda for prayer: it’s just asking. How bizarre; how untrue.

Our Lord says prayer is primarily praise, primarily adoration, primarily humiliation, primarily confession, “I need you to feed me; I need you to forgive me; I need you to protect me. You are the great God.”

I love the prayers of the Bible. They shape my own prayers more than anything else. I love the prayers of Paul in Philippians 1:9–11, and **Ephesians 1:16–21** and 3:14–19, and Colossians 1:9–12.

Philippians 1:9–11 (NKJV)

⁹ And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰ that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, ¹¹ being filled with the fruits of righteousness which *are* by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Ephesians 1:16–21 (NKJV)

¹⁶ do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: ¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, ¹⁸ the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what *is* the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power ²⁰ which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, ²¹ far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

Ephesians 3:14–19 (NKJV)

¹⁴ For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵ from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, ¹⁶ that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, ¹⁷ that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the width and length and depth and height—¹⁹ to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Colossians 1:9–12 (NKJV)

⁹ For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; ¹⁰ that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing *Him*, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹ strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; ¹² giving thanks to the Father

who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.

I love the prayer of Jesus in John 17. And I love the whole book of Psalms, which is the inspired prayer book of the church — filled with such a range of emotions that the cry of our heart in almost any experience can find words in the Psalms.

But the prayer in the Bible that has gripped me most during this leave is the Lord's prayer in Matthew 6:9–13.

And, looked at one way, that's the way the Lord's prayer is. Almost everyone notices that it has two parts. The first part (verses 9–10) has three petitions; and the second part (verses 11–13) has three petitions. The first three petitions are:

- hallowed be your name
- your kingdom come
- your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

The second three petitions are:

- give us this day our daily bread
- forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors

- lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

You can see the difference — and feel the difference — between these two halves. The first three petitions are about God’s name, God’s kingdom, God’s will. The last three are about our food, our forgiveness, our holiness. The first three call our attention to God’s greatness. And the last three call attention to our needs. The two halves have a very different feel. The first half feels majestic and lofty. The last half feels mundane and lowly

“The Bible repeatedly teaches us the astonishing wonder of prayer. Abraham's servant prayed and Rebecca appeared. Jacob prayed and prevailed and Esau's mind was turned after twenty years of vengeance. Moses prayed and Amalek was struck. Joshua prayed and Achan was discovered. Hannah prayed and Samuel was born. David prayed and Ahithophel, his enemy, was defeated. Asa prayed and victory was gained. Jehoshaphat prayed and God turned away his enemies. Isaiah and Hezekiah prayed and 185 thousand Assyrians were dead in twelve hours. Daniel prayed and lions were muzzled. Daniel prayed again and the prophecy of the rest

of history down to Messiah was given to him in the “seventy weeks” prophecy. Mordecai and Esther prayed and Haman, who wanted to destroy the Jews, was hanged on his own gallows in a mere three days. Ezra prayed at Ebanah and God answered. Nehemiah prayed and the king's heart was softened in a moment. Elijah prayed and a three-year drought came, he prayed again and it rained. Elisha prayed and a child's soul came back to life. Believers prayed and Peter was released from prison and appeared at the door, and so it goes, the chronicle of the wonder of prayer all through Scripture and even until now.

We are familiar with prayer, we understand that God hears and answers prayer.

We know the Bible says you have not because you ask not. It says pray without ceasing, pray at all times, in everything by prayer and supplication let your request be known to God. We understand all of that. But there's so much more to understand. Most people focus on how prayer works, not on what its purpose is. In fact, one person said that praying for most people is like sailors pumping because the ship leaks. Prayer is sort of a crisis operation, a sort of a last-ditch

approach. That's so wrong. And I think most people assume that prayer, and they're even taught this, that prayer is primarily for us. It's our way to cash in. It's our way to activate God. It's our way to get what we want.

It's our way to put God in a place where He fulfills our desires, longings, dreams and ambitions. Of course that's wrong as well. Prayer is not for us, it is primarily for God. It is not for us to get what we want. It is for Him to display His glory through meeting our needs. Prayer really in the main is communion with the living God of the universe, really an unfathomable privilege, living our lives, as it were, in the constant awareness of God who is equally and perfectly aware of us.

Prayer is really coming into the presence of God to submit to His will. True prayer brings the mind into immediate contemplation of God's glory, and true prayer should hold it there until the believer's soul is properly impressed. The object of all prayer is that God be glorified.”

Hallowed Be Thy Name John MacArthur.
Sermons Luke 11:2-42-148 Nov 23, 2003

Review

This section of scripture has some of the most amazing and astonishing, and incomprehensible promises in all of scripture. On the eve of the death of Christ, he gives his some the greatest words in all a the Bible. Just listen to a few of them.

The Three Promises are

- 1. The Promise of the Same Works**
- 2. The Promise of Greater Works**
- 3. The Promise of Answered Prayer**

I. The Promise of the Same Works

12 “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater *works* than these he will do, because I go to My Father.

The New King James Version, (1982) (Jn 14:12). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

12 Αμην αμην λεγω υμιν ο
ΠΙΣΤΕΥΩΝ εις εμε τα εργα α εγω

ΠΟΙΩ κακίνοσ ποιησει και
 μειζονα τουτων ποιησει οτι εγω
 προς τον πατερα μου πορευομαι

I. The Promise of the Same Works

II. The Promise of Greater Works.

12 “Most assuredly, I say to you, he
 who believes in Me, the works that I
 do he will do also; and greater
works than these he will do,
because I go to My Father.

The New King James Version, (1982) (Jn 14:12). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

12 Αμην αμην λεγω υμιν ο
 πιστευων εις εμε τα εργα α εγω
 ποιω κακίνοσ ποιησει και
 μειζονα τουτων ποιησει οτι εγω
 προς τον πατερα μου πορευομαι

The apostles did not do more powerful miracles than He had. When the Lord spoke of His followers performing **greater works it was different.**

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12–21](#) (p. 106). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

_____ we need to recognize that the disciples would do greater works than Jesus did **because he was ‘going to the Father’ (cf. 13:1).**

because I go to My Father.

(This is KEY)

He promised that when he returned to the Father he would send the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, to them (16:7). In the power of the Spirit they would do ‘greater things/works’.

Kruse, C. G. (2003). [John: an introduction and commentary](#) (Vol. 4, pp. 295–296). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

12 “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; **and greater works than these he will do,**
because I go to My Father.

The power to perform those greater works would only be available **because** Jesus was going **to the Father**. It was only then that He would send the Holy Spirit

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12–21](#) (p. 107). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

John 16:7–13 (NKJV)

⁷ Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. ⁸ And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: ⁹ of sin, because they do not believe in Me; ¹⁰ of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; ¹¹ of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

Acts 1:8 (NKJV)

⁸ But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Christ’s promise to send the Holy Spirit offered further comfort to the disciples. Though Jesus would no longer be visibly present with them, the Spirit would provide them with all the power they needed to extend the work He had begun

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12–21](#) (p. 107). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

12 “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I

do he will do also; and **greater works** than these he will do, because I go to My Father.

greater
μειζονα

megas: great

Original Word: μέγας, μεγάλη, μέγα

Part of Speech: Adjective; Adverb, Comparative

Transliteration: megas

Phonetic Spelling: (meg'-as)

Definition: great

Usage: large, great, in the widest sense.

When the Lord spoke of His followers performing **greater works**, He was referring to the extent of the spiritual miracle of salvation. Jesus never preached outside of Palestine, yet His followers would spread the gospel throughout the world. Jesus had only a limited outreach to Gentiles (cf. Mark 7:26ff.), but the disciples (particularly Peter and later Paul) would reach the Gentile world with the gospel. The number of believers in Christ would also grow far beyond the hundreds (Acts 1:15; 1 Cor. 15:6) that were numbered during His lifetime.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12–21](#) (pp. 106–107). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

It needs to be noted at this point that Jesus did many miracles and many great miracles that directly affected people. Some were personally healed, some were fed, some were witness to some of the greatest miracles ever. Yet the large majority of people never believed. They never were saved and never went to heaven but rather ended up in Hell with their sins unforgiven. It is also true that some of the ones that the Apostles healed and cast out demons from where never converted.

So we need to ask a very serious question. Is the greatest work one that only temporarily heals, only temporarily feeds or only temporality delivers from demons.

Or would the greatest work be that which eternally delivers from Hell and the wrath of God. Would it be the greatest work to forgive you of all your sin and make you righteous but the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Would the greater work be the saving of souls, not just in Israel, but throughout the whole world, of every tribe, nation, and tongue.

There is no greater work than the work of salvation. No greater miracle than taking a dead, blind, hostile enemy of the Cross that is alienated from God and a hater of God and Christ, His word and righteousness and transforming him, resurrecting Him, giving him spiritual sight, reconciling him to God and making him a lover of God and Christ and His Word and Righteousness.

And this is done, not once, not 100 times but millions of times every years,

This is why in heaven there is little talk about healing the body or getting a miracle but rather the saving of the soul.

So this verse does not teach as some have so often said that we will do more and greater physical miracles.

The miracles signs and wonders were primarily the signs of the Apostles.

2 Corinthians 12:12 (NKJV)

¹² Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds.

The Early New Testament Church experience miracles and Signs and Revelation gifts because the canon was not complete. The New Testament was being given at this time and the miracles and signs confirmed it. By the time that James is written, there is already a diminishing of the healing gifts because it says that if there are sick among you, call the elders together anointing with oil.

James 5:13–15 (NKJV)

¹³ Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. ¹⁴ Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.

I. The Promise of the Same Works

II. The Promise of Greater Works.

III. The Promise of Answered Prayer

John 14:13–14 (NKJV)

¹³ **And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.** ¹⁴ **If you ask anything in My name, I will do *it*.**

13 και ο τι αν αιτησητε εν τω ονοματι μου τουτο ποιησω ινα δοξασθη ο πατηρ εν τω υιω

14 εαν τι αιτησητε εν τω ονοματι μου εγω ποιησω

As if His pledge to send the Holy Spirit to empower them was not enough, the Lord gave the disciples another incredible pledge. During their time with Him, they had depended on Jesus to supply all their needs (cf. Luke 22:35). He had provided food for them (Luke 5:4–6; John 21:5–12), and on one occasion even paid Peter’s taxes (Matt. 17:24–27). Now He was about to leave them, and they, having

left everything to follow Him (Matt. 19:27), must have wondered where their resources would come from.

Anticipating their concern, Jesus promised that even after He was gone, He would continue to supply the disciples' needs from heaven. Repeating it twice for emphasis, the Lord reassured them, **Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do ... If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.**

Prayer would bridge the gap between their needs and His abundant, limitless, undepleted resources (cf. Phil. 4:19).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12-21](#) (p. 107). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

Philippians 4:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

¹³ And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.

This is repeated over and over in the gospels by Jesus

Matthew 7:7–11 (NKJV)

“⁷ “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. ⁹ Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? ¹¹ If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

Matthew 21:22 (NKJV)

²² **And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.”**

Mark 11:24 (NKJV)

²⁴ **Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive *them*, and you will have *them*.**

John 15:7 (NKJV)

⁷ **If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.**

John 15:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.

John 16:23–24 (NKJV)

²³ “And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. ²⁴ Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

There are 3 statements about prayer here that are noteworthy and definitive

First, it means to make requests consistent with God’s will and the purposes of His kingdom.

Second, it is to acknowledge one’s spiritual poverty, lack of self-sufficiency,

Finally, it is to express a sincere desire that God would be glorified in His answer.

First, it means to make requests consistent with God’s will and the purposes of His kingdom.

¹³ And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask anything in My name, I will do *it*.

¹³ And whatever you ask in My name,
¹⁴ If you ask
 anything in My name, I will do *it*.

These statements are not unqualified, limitless get anything you want request. They are qualified by the phrase,
in My name,

To **ask in Jesus' name** does not mean to frivolously tack the words "in Jesus' name" onto the end of a prayer. It is not a magic formula that obligates God to grant every selfish request that people make.

It's not a token or a tag to add to your prayer to insure you get what you want.

Its not a religious saying that gets the attention of God.

It's not a binder that insures that God now has to act on your behalf.

To pray in Jesus' name has a far more profound and serious meaning.

It's a warning against self-seeking. It's a warning against asserting your will and your ambition and your goals and your dreams. God does not exist in heaven to fulfill your dreams, contrary to what you hear so much today. He does not exist in heaven to give you what you want. He exists in heaven and has redeemed you and made you His child in order that in you He might display His will and His kingdom and His glory. "Hallowed be Thy name."

Now we say that, we sing that, it's very familiar. In fact it's that kind of phrase that's so familiar we might not really understand what it means but think we do because we use it so much. So let's look a little more into this. It is more than just some official affirmation. It's more than just "Long live the king," or some other accolade that might be paid to a...a monarch or a ruler. It is not passing homage. It is not a casual bit of religious routine. It is really a recognition of a whole sphere of respect and reference and awe and appreciation for who God is.

It is a large; it is a sweeping kind of concept. "Name" is not just a title and "hallowed" is not just a passing thought. In fact, the Jews did understand this. They... They didn't quite understand the intimacy of God, they didn't understand the Abba part. But they did understand the transcendence of God. They did understand that God was high and holy and exalted.

That message got through to them through the constant reminder of the presence of God in the Holy of Holies to which only a high priest could go once a year which indicated to them with great clarity that God was hidden behind veils. They understood the sacredness of God. And they understood His name to be hallowed. They understood His name to be sacred, only in a superficial way. So enormous was the respect of the ancient Hebrews for the actual name of God, Yahweh, the tetragrammaton, the four Hebrew letters, so enormous was the respect for that name that they wouldn't speak it. The Jew wouldn't say the name. That wasn't the point, but they did that to everything. They turned everything into something superficial, something ceremonial, something functional because their religion never touched their hearts, they never really knew God.

And so, they knew the name of God to be sacred, but their way to deal with that was just not to say Yahweh. But that's how superficial religion always functions. You have God in your mouth but not your heart. They did realize the sacredness of the name but not the God behind the name. You've got to go deeper than that. This is not about: Don't say My name. In biblical times, as even today, "Thy name" stands for far more than a title, far more than a word. And when the Bible gives the command to not take the Lord's name in vain, it doesn't just mean don't use God's name to swear or to speak commonly or basely. What does the name of God mean? Well it means all that He is.

The name stood for the whole character of the person. We still feel that way today. In fact, when someone speaks evil of a person, denigrates that person, brings false accusation on that person, destroys that person's reputation, that person will respond by saying, "You have ruined my name." We understand that. And they may sue because our courts allow for lawsuits to be brought against people for the defamation of character. You can't just destroy someone's name. We understand the implications of that. If you say things that aren't true about a person, the next time the people who heard you say that hear the name of that person, they're

going to have attitudes toward that person that are basically the product of your input.

A person's name is to be protected. It's not that the name John or Bill or Sally or Mary is to be protected, it's that all that the person is behind the name. So when we say "God," we're talking about all that He is, the personal character of God. The name of God stands for His nature, His attributes, His character, His personality. In Exodus chapter 34, Moses was calling on the name of the Lord. In verse 5 of Exodus 34, he called on the name of the Lord. He was saying, "Lord, Lord, Lord," praying. But he wasn't just calling a name for a namesake. He was desirous to reach God and see the display of who God was. And so God responds.

The Lord comes and here's how the Lord speaks to Moses, "The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, abounding in loving-kindness and truth who keeps loving-kindness for thousands, forgives iniquity, transgression, sin will be no means leave the guilty unpunished, visits the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the grandchildren to third and fourth generation." Amazing, Moses says God, God, God; and God says, "Here I come, the Lord, the Lord God, gracious," all these attributes. This is who He is, this is His name. And Moses then makes haste,

bows low, worships God. Then says, "Lord, I pray," and gives his request.

First he calls on the name of the Lord to be hallowed. God responds by identifying who He is, which has a lot to do with what kind of prayers He'll answer. God puts Himself on display. Moses hallows the name of God.

Another illustration, much briefer, Psalm 9, verse 10, "Those who know Your name put their trust in You." It doesn't mean those who know the name God in English or Hebrew or Greek or any other language will necessarily trust God, but those who know His name, those who know who He really is, put their trust in Him; those who know the fullness of His nature and character, who really understand Him.

You find this, and I don't need to beg the issue here, but you find this all through the Old Testament. Psalm 7:17, "I will give thanks to the Lord according to His righteousness and will sing praise to the name of the Lord Most High." We praised His name today. We praised His name. We do it every week. We praise His name. What are we saying? Are we offering homage to a title? No, to the person who bears the title. His name is all that He is. It is the sum of His personality, His character, His will and His authority.

In Psalm 102:15 we read, "So the nations will fear the name of the Lord and all the kings of the earth Your glory."

So, there the name of the Lord and the glory of the Lord is equated. And you find that, Psalm 113:1, Psalm 135:1, Psalm 148:5, etc., etc., etc. Psalm 20 verse 7, "Some boast of chariots and some of horses, but we boast in the name of the Lord our God." We're talking about our God in all the glory of His person.

In John 17:6, Jesus said, "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You've given me out of the world." What did He mean, "I've manifested Your name?" I've told them Your name? No, I've revealed who You are. If you've seen Me, you've seen the Father. Jesus showed them who God was, His true nature, His true person. He was the Father's glory incarnate, full of grace and truth. "Name" is not a title, it's a total; it's the whole person. We understand that. The prophets of old said, "I come in the name of the Lord."

Preachers today come in the name of the Lord. Ambassadors that go to a foreign country come in the name of the government, the name of the ruler, the name of the leader of their land. When you go out to sell a product, you come in the name of your company.

When you go to court to defend someone, you come in the name of your client. It doesn't just mean the name itself. It means the person behind the name.

Putting it in plain terms, folks: Here's how you pray. You go, knowing that God loves you and cares for you as a tenderhearted, compassionate, merciful, gracious Father. And as you rush into His presence and say, "Papa, Abba," and celebrate that intimacy and that tenderness and that availability and that acceptance, you immediately stop and say, "Father, may Your person, Your identity, Your character, Your nature, Your attributes, Your glory be hallowed.

This isn't about me, this is about You. I bring whatever I bring as a request to give You opportunity to put Your glory on display, if it will do that."

The very names of God identify the range of God's glorious attributes. You know, in English we...we either say "Lord" or "God." You listen to people pray, they either say, "Father," "Lord," or "God." We don't have enough words to get beyond those things. The Hebrews did. They could say, Elohim, the name that acknowledges Him as Creator, the third word in the Hebrew Old Testament. They can come to God as the Elohim, the plural name of the triune God, Creator, recognizing Him as Creator like the hymn writer, "I sing the mighty power of God that made the

mountains rise, that spread the flowing seas abroad and built the lofty skies." It's wonderful to come to God as Elohim, the Creator.

Or we can come to God as El Elyon, God the Most High. "Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth," Genesis 14, referring to God not as Creator but as Sovereign over the whole of the universe. Or we can come to God as Jehovah. We can take that "I AM," which means the I AM, the eternally existing One and we can even say Yahweh.

We don't need to create a word, we can use the word Yahweh, the I AM that I AM. And in the Old Testament that word is connected to many other words. We can say, Jehovah-Jireh, which means, "the Lord who will provide." We can say, Jehovah-Nissi, "the Lord who is our banner"; that is, the King under whom we march. We can say Jehovah-Rapha, "the Lord our healer." We can say Jehovah-Shalom, "the Lord our peace"; Jehovah-roi, "the Lord our Shepherd"; Jehovah-Tsidkenu, "the Lord our righteousness"; Jehovah or Yahweh-Sabaoth, "the Lord of hosts"; or Jehovah-Shammah, "the Lord is present"; or Jehovah-Meqaddeskem, "the Lord who sanctifies." Or we could say, Adonai, which is the word "Lord." Or we could say the greatest title of all:

the Lord God and Father of Jesus Christ, the consummate title of God.

This is His name. This is His name. We can come to Him and call Him the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Father of eternity, Isaiah 9:6.

Or we can borrow the expressions out of the gospel of John, we can come to Him as the
I AM the Good Shepherd,
I AM the Door,
I AM the Way,
I AM the Truth,
I AM the Life,
I AM the Vine,
I AM the Resurrection, on and on.

Colossians 3:17

17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Hebrews 13:15

15 Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.

Philippians 2:9

9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,

(1) “in My name” (John 14:13–14; 15:7, 16; 16:23);
The name of Jesus represents His character. It is another way of referring to the mind and heart of Jesus. This phrase appears often in John (cf. 14:13–14, 26; 15:16; 16:23–26). The more like Christ one is, the more likely the prayers are to be answered in the affirmative

Uteley, R. J. (1999). *The Beloved Disciple's Memoirs and Letters: The Gospel of John, I, II, and III John* (Vol. Volume 4, p. 129). Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International.

(2) “keep on asking” (Matt. 7:7–8; Luke 11:5–13; 18:1–8);
Luke 11:5–10 (NKJV)

⁵ And He said to them, “Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves; ⁶ for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; ⁷ and he will answer from within and say, ‘Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise

and give to you'? ⁸ I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs.

⁹ "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

(3) "two agreeing" (Matt. 18:19)

Matthew 18:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ "Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.

(4) "believing" (Matt. 21:22):

Matthew 21:22 (NKJV)

²² And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."

(5) "without doubt" (Mark 11:22–24; James 1:6–7);

Mark 11:22–24 (NKJV)

²² So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God. ²³ For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,'

and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. ²⁴ Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive *them*, and you will have *them*.

James 1:6–7 (NKJV)

⁶ But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;

(6) “not selfishly” (James 4:2–3);

James 4:2–3 (NKJV)

² You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. ³ You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend *it* on your pleasures.

(7) “keeping His commands” (1 John 3:22);

1 John 3:22 (NKJV)

²² And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.

Psalm 66:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ If I regard iniquity in my heart,
The Lord will not hear.

Isaiah 59:1–2 (NKJV)

59 Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened,
That it cannot save;
Nor His ear heavy,
That it cannot hear.

² But your iniquities have separated you from your
God;
And your sins have hidden *His* face from you,
So that He will not hear.

James 5:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray
for one another, that you may be healed. The
effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails
much.

(8) “according to God’s will” (Matt. 6:10; 1 John
5:14–15).

Utley, R. J. (1999). *The Beloved Disciple's Memoirs and Letters: The Gospel of John, I, II, and III John* (Vol. Volume 4, p. 129). Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International.

Matthew 6:9–10 (NKJV)

⁹ In this manner, therefore, pray:

Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.

¹⁰ Your kingdom come.

Your will be done
On earth as *it is* in heaven.

1 John 5:14–15 (NKJV)

¹⁴ Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

All prayer is answered, but not all prayer is effective. Prayer is a two-way relationship. The worst thing God could do is answer believers' inappropriate prayers.

Utley, R. J. (1999). *The Beloved Disciple's Memoirs and Letters: The Gospel of John, I, II, and III John* (Vol. Volume 4, p. 130). Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International.

Second, it is to acknowledge one's spiritual poverty, lack of self-sufficiency, and utter unworthiness to receive anything from God based on one's own merits (Matt. 5:3). It is to approach God based on the merits of Jesus Christ (cf. John 16:26–28) and to acknowledge one's complete dependence on Him to supply every need (Matt. 6:25–32; Phil. 4:19).

1³And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴If you ask _____ anything in My name, I will do it.

1 Corinthians 4:7 (NKJV)

⁷ For who makes you differ *from another*? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive *it*, why do you boast as if you had not received *it*?

Philippians 4:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Matthew 6:6–13 (NKJV)

⁶ But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who *is* in the secret *place*; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. ⁷ And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen *do*. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.

⁸ “Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. ⁹ In this manner, therefore, pray:

Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.

¹⁰ Your kingdom come.

Your will be done
On earth as *it is* in heaven.

¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread.

¹² And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.

¹³ And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the
glory forever. Amen.

Matthew 6:25 (NKJV)

²⁵ “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor

about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?

Matthew 6:32–33 (NKJV)

³² For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Finally, it is to express a sincere desire that God would be glorified in His answer. It is to align one's requests with the Father's supreme goal of glorifying the Son. When believers pray in this way, they pray in keeping with Jesus' **name**—His person, His purposes, and His preeminence.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). *John 12–21* (pp. 107–108). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

¹³ And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask anything in My name, I will do *it*.

Matthew 6:9–10 (NKJV)

⁹ In this manner, therefore, pray:

Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.

¹⁰ Your kingdom come.
Your will be done

On earth as *it is* in heaven.

John 13:31 (NKJV)

³¹ So, when he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him.”

John 17:4–5 (NKJV)

⁴ I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. ⁵ And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

Philippians 2:9–11 (NKJV)

⁹ Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹ and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 4:19–20 (NKJV)

¹⁹ And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. ²⁰ Now to our God and Father *be* glory forever and ever. Amen.