

**REACHING REAL FULFILLMENT AS A CHRISTIAN**  
**"Part V: Achievement Fulfillment Through Effective Prayer"**  
**(1 John 3:21-22; 5:14-16)**

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

(1) The Sunday before I went on vacation, Barry Stickney brought to our attention the needs of a friend named Marie Brewer. She had been afflicted with a stroke, leaving her brain swollen and her hopes faint of ever regaining fully normal functions. How can we do anything about that?

(2) Both Wayne Richard and Duane Doot reported to the Board a month ago that we had a problem with the Church roof. We badly needed to reshingle and possibly add some plywood to the sanctuary roof. Problem: the cost and the short time needed to do the job! We needed to shingle before the snow came, by November at the latest, but we estimated that the cost would be around \$7,600.00. We had to come up with this money in several weeks to cover the work that needed to be done. The congregational meeting faced the ins and outs of the problem. It looked like we might have to borrow money, so we obtained permission via congregational vote as a board to borrow if we needed to do so. How can we as a Church proceed in such times when we seem so backed up against the wall?

(3) Often I have witnessed people in my office talking about hurdles to God's blessing in the work even here at Nepaug, and after laying out their concerns I have so often heard them say, "How in the world is this problem ever going to go away? What can we do -- we're so powerless!"

(We turn to the "Need" section of the message . . .)

***Need:*** "I feel like I am on a treadmill, doing a lot of spinning but not really achieving a lot in my life. I know that I am right with God, that there's no sin in my life, but I'm still not making real progress! What's the solution, and why?!"

I. **1 John was written that Christians might be happy, 1 John 1:4.**

II. **One avenue for the believer to gain happiness is his achieving great things in life that will follow him into eternity. This achievement is possible through effective prayer as follows:**

- A. God wants the believer to achieve marvelously great things in life that will make his earthly sojourn worthwhile, Jn. 14:12; 15:8.
  1. Jesus stated that the Father in heaven is glorified if the Christian produces great things for Christ on the earth, Jn. 15:8.
  2. In fact, Jesus predicted that believers would achieve **greater** things than He accomplished in His earthly life, John 14:14!
- B. The believer achieves these things by grace through prayer:
  1. The works that believers will perform that outperform Christ's earthly works will occur because Christ departed unto His heavenly Father, John 14:12c.
  2. As a **result** of this departure, the believer can obtain whatever he asks in prayer that the Father may be glorified in the Son, John 14:13-14.
  3. This is how it works: God the Father earnestly desires that the human race accept Jesus as being His true Son. Since prayer in the Name of the Son to the Father gives the Father opportunity to testify that Jesus is His Son, **and that by publically answering the prayer in His Son's Name and hence His honor**, the believer's prayer in the Son's Name elicits great responses from the Father!
- C. However, God is righteous, so His answers to prayer must be equally righteous! This **qualifies** how God responds to the believer's prayer requests as follows:
  1. Requirement One for Answered Prayer - One must be upright for the Lord to hear him, Psalm 66:18. This is how to achieve it:
    - a. First, one must believe on Christ in obedience to the Father to become a true child of God, Acts 17:30; John 3:16.
    - b. Second, as a believer, if we have sinned, we must confess it to God for cleansing, 1 John 1:8-9 with Ps. 66:18.
    - c. Third, as a believer, once we are upright before God, we must apply God's Scripture commands to life for God to want to supply us with answers to prayer, 1 John 3:22!
    - d. However, we cannot live righteously without the Holy Spirit's behavior control, Gal. 5:17. We must depend upon Him to will and to do God's will, Gal. 5:16; Phil. 2:12-13.

2. Requirement Two for Answered Prayer - We must pray in accord with God's will, 1 John 5:14. This comes by being familiar enough with Scripture to discern that will, John 15:7.
3. Requirement Three for Answered Prayer - We must pray with the purpose of helping others as opposed to gratifying our own lusts, James 4:2b-3.
4. Requirement Four for Answered Prayer - We must pray with a persistent faith that God will answer us, Lk. 11:5-9:
  - a. Jesus gave a parable about a man knocking on his friend's door at night until he opened to obtain what he requested, Lk. 11:5-8.
  - b. In the same way, we are to be persistent in believing that God will answer our prayers if all other conditions are right; thus, go ahead and ask, seek and knock in faith, Lk. 11:9!

***Application:*** *To find great achievement fulfillment in this life, (1) believe on Christ for salvation from sin to become a child of God, Jn. 1:11-13. (2) As a believer, we must busy ourselves with preparing to be acceptable to God in prayer by (a) confessing any sins we have done (1 Jn. 1:9 with Ps. 66:18) and by (b) applying God's Word to our lives, 1 Jn. 3:22. (3) Then we achieve great things by prayer where God actually performs our desires for us, John 14:12-14!! (4) If we have done the above but still sense a lack of effectiveness, check the following: (a) Are we praying in accord with God's will, 1 Jn. 5:14? (b) If we are unsure of how to answer "(a)" above, are we into Scripture enough to discern God's will, John 15:7 with Hebrews 5:11-14? (c) Are our requests to God garnered with selfish concerns, or do they reflect a concern for others, James 4:2b-3? (d) All other items considered above, are we praying with persistent faith that God will indeed hear us, Luke 11:5-9?*

***Lesson:*** *Achievement fulfillment is possible beyond our greatest expectations through a life of righteous prayer!*

**Conclusion:** (To illustrate the sermon's lesson . . .)

- (1) In Canada, in the year of 1893, a godly woman named Mrs. Gowans prayed earnestly for the multitudes of unsaved African peoples on the "Dark Continent." She prayed in accord with her heavenly Father's will that Africans believe that Jesus Christ is God's Son, and believe on Him for eternal life. Her son, Walter, in his twenties, joined Rowland Bingham and Thomas Kent, two other young men, to take a trip to Nigeria to give the Gospel to Africans.
- (2) A year later, Mrs. Gowans' son, Walter and Tom Kent died of malaria fever in Nigeria. Rowland Bingham returned to Canada ill and discouraged. Mrs. Gowans, the deceased Walter's mother, persisted that Rowland to return to Africa and continue the work for which her son had given his life and for which she earnestly prayed. Her prayers followed Rowland on his return trip to Nigeria.
- (3) Rowland Bingham started the Sudan Interior Mission, and eventually a school for missionary children called Kent Academy, named after Thomas Kent. I attended that school from 1954 to 1962!
- (4) Today, SIM disciples people in Africa, South America, India, and Malaysia so that the sun never sets on its work. There are thousands of churches in Africa today, and SIM related African national missionaries (ECWA) bring the gospel of God's Son to one million African children per year! **All because a godly mother, Mrs. Gowans, sacrificially gave of her son and persistently prayed for the salvation of the African people in accord with her heavenly Father's will.**
- (5) Accordingly, the motto for SIM has always been "By Prayer." We achieve great things in this life, as did Mrs. Gowans, by prayer. . .

**By the way, we prayed about the roof and about Mrs. Marie Brewer. We won't have to borrow any money on the roof as the cost came in under \$3,000.00! As for Marie Brewer, Barry Stickney reported in Prayer Meeting that God has answered our prayer of two Sundays ago. Her swelling has gone down, she has returned to full functioning, and the doctors are saying "It's a miracle!" (We also prayed for Ray Baldwin, and he's in church today!) We prayed about these things! God wants us to pray!**