



CLARION CLASSICS

The Power of Prayer

and the prayer of power

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The Prayer of Faith

by R. A. Torrey (1856-1928)

“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

Please notice carefully exactly what God tells us in this passage. Here we are told that there is a way in which certain people can pray so as not only to get the very thing that they ask, but also to know before they actually get it, that God has heard their prayer and that therefore the thing which they have asked of Him He has granted to them. Listen again to these wonderful words that the Holy Spirit inspired John to write: “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.” Certainly that is an astonishing statement: it gives us the plain and positive assurance that there are some people who can pray in a certain way, and that if those people pray in that way they will not only get whatsoever they ask, but that, furthermore, they may know before they get it that God has heard their prayer and granted what they have asked. It is certainly a great joy when one prays to be able to know that the prayer we have offered has been heard and that what we have asked has been granted, and to be just as sure that it is ours as we shall be when we actually have it in our hand.

I. To Whom the Promise Is Made

Please note, first of all, just who it is to whom God makes this promise. As I have said so often before, when you try to understand and apply the promises of God which you find in the Bible you must always be very careful to note just exactly who the people are to whom the promise is made. Just who the persons are to whom this promise is made we are told in the immediate context, in the verse that immediately precedes, “I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.” Then immediately follows the promise that we are studying today, so it is as clear as day that the promise is made to those who “believe on the name of the Son of God,” to them and to nobody else, and anyone who does not believe on the name of the Son of God has no right whatever to take this promise to himself, or to think that if he does take the promise to himself and it is not fulfilled, God’s Word has failed. The fault is with himself, and not with God’s Word. He has

taken to himself a promise that was made to somebody else. Just what it means to believe on the Son of God we are told in the Gospel written by the same one who wrote this Epistle, the Gospel of John; John 1:12, "To all who received him [that is, received Jesus Christ], to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God."

So John himself interprets "believing on the name of the Son of God" to mean receiving the Son of God, that is, receiving Him to be to ourselves what He offers Himself to be to all who put their trust in Him, our personal Savior, who bore our sins in His own body on the cross, and our Lord and Master to whom we surrender the absolute control of our thoughts, our will, and our conduct. So, then, this promise is made to those who have received Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and trusted God to forgive them because Jesus Christ died on the cross in their place, and also who have received Him as their Lord and Master to whom they have surrendered the absolute control of their thoughts, their will, and their conduct, those who have made an absolute surrender to Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is made to them, and to no one else, and no one else has the least right to claim it.

Just here is where many go astray, they do not really "believe on the name of the Son of God," they have not really "received him," yet they appropriate to themselves this promise that was never made to them.

II. How We Must Pray in Order to Know that God Has Heard Our Prayers and Granted the Thing that We Have Asked

Now we come to the question, How must "those who believe on the name of the Son of God" pray in order to know that God has heard their prayer, and has granted the thing that they asked? Read the fourteenth verse again. "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us." In order to know that God has heard our prayer and granted us what we asked, we must pray according to His will. When we who believe on the name of the Son of God pray for anything that we know to be according to His will, then we may know, for the all-sufficient reason that God says so in His Word, that God has heard the prayer and granted us what we asked. We may know it, not because we feel it, not because of any inward illumination of the Holy Spirit; we may know it for the very best of all reasons-because God says so in His Word, and "God cannot lie."

But is it possible for us to know what the will of God is, so that we can be sure while we are praying that we are asking something that is "according to his will"? We can know the will of God with absolute certainty in many cases when we pray. How can we know the will of God?

1. In the first place, we may know the will of God by the promises in His Word.

The Bible was given us for the specific purpose of revealing to us the will of God, and when we find that anything is definitely promised in the Word of God we know that that is His will, for He has said so in so many words. And when we who believe on the name of the Son of God go to God and ask Him for anything that is definitely promised in His Word, we may know with absolute certainty that God has heard our prayer and that what we have asked of God is granted. We do not have to feel it--God says so, and that is enough.

For example, God says in His Word, James 1:5, "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him." So when I go to God and ask for wisdom, if I am a believer on the name of the Son of God, I know with absolute certainty that God has heard my prayer and that wisdom will be granted.

Some years ago I was speaking at a Y.M.C.A. Bible Conference at Mahtomede, White Bear Lake, Minnesota; I was speaking on the subject of prayer. I had to hurry immediately from the amphitheater to the train. As I passed out of the amphitheater I saw another minister from Minneapolis, who was to follow me immediately on the program. He was greatly excited. He stopped me and said, "Mr. Torrey, I am going to tear to pieces everything that you have said to these young men this morning." I replied, "If I have not spoken according to the Bible, I hope you will tear it to pieces. But if I have spoken according to the Book you had better be careful how you try to tear it to pieces." "But," he exclaimed, "you have produced upon these young men the impression that they can pray for things and get the very thing that they ask for." I replied, "I do not know whether that is the impression that I have produced or not, but it certainly is the impression that I intended to produce."

"But," he said, "that is not right; you must say if it be according to God's will." I replied, "If you do not know that the thing which you have asked is according to God's will, then it is all right to say, 'If it be according to Your will.' But if you know God's will, what is the need of saying, 'If it be according to Your will?'" "But," he said, "we cannot know God's will." I answered, "What was the Bible given to us for if it was not to reveal God's will?" "Now," I said, "when you find a definite promise in the Bible and take that promise to God, don't you know that you have asked something according to His will? For example, we read in James 1:5, 'If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.'" "Now," I said, "when you ask for wisdom do you not know that God is going to give it?" "But," he said, "I do not know what wisdom is." I said, "If you did you would not need to ask it, but whatever it may be, do you not know that God is going to give it?" He made no reply. I never heard that he tried to tear what I said

to pieces, but I know that later he himself spoke very boldly on the subject of confidently asking God for the things that we need of Him, and that are according to His will.

No, when you have a definite promise in God's Word you do not need to put any "ifs" before it. All the promises of God are yes and amen in Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 1:20). They are absolutely sure, and if you plead any plain promise in God's Word you need not put any "ifs" in your petition. You may know that you are asking something that is according to God's will, and it is your privilege to know that God has heard you, and it is your privilege to know that you have the thing you have asked; it is your privilege to get up from prayer with the same absolute certainty that that thing is yours that you will afterward have when you actually see it in your hand.

Suppose some cold winter morning when I lived in Chicago I had gone down on South Clark Street that was then teeming with poormen, and some shivering tramp should have come up to me and said, "Mr. Torrey, it is very cold and I need an overcoat. Will you give me an overcoat?" And then I had replied, "If you will come over to my house this afternoon at 39 East Pearson Street, at two o'clock, I'll give you an overcoat." Promptly at two o'clock the tramp makes his appearance. I meet him at the door and bring him into the house. Then he says to me, "Mr. Torrey, you said to me this morning on South Clark Street that if I would come to your home at two o'clock this afternoon you would give me an overcoat. Now, if you will, please give me that overcoat." What would I say? I'd say, "Man, what did you say?" He would reply, "I said, if you will, please give me that overcoat." "But why do you put any 'if' in? Did I not say I would?" "Yes." "Do you doubt my word?" "No." "Then why do you put in an 'if'?" So why should we put any "ifs" in when we take to God any promise of His own? Does God ever lie?

There are many cases in which we do not know the will of God, and in such cases it is all right to put in "if it be Your will." And even in cases where we do not know His will, our prayers should always be in submission to His will, for the dearest of anything to the true child of God is God's will, but there is no need to put any "ifs" in when He has revealed His will. To put in an "if" in such a case as that is to doubt God, to doubt His Word, and really is to "make God a liar."

This passage of Scripture is one of the most abused passages in the Bible. God put it into His Word to give us "confidence" when we pray. It is constantly misused to make us uncertain when we pray. Oftentimes when some young and enthusiastic believer is asking for something with great confidence, some cautious brother will go to him after the meeting is over and say to him, "Now, my young brother, you must not be so confident as that in your prayers. It may

not be God's will, and we ought to be submissive to the will of God, and you should say, 'If it be Your will.'" And so some men always have an element of uncertainty in their prayers, and one would think that 1 John 5:14 read, "This is the lack of confidence we have in approaching God: that we can never know God's will, and therefore can never be sure that our prayer is heard." But that is not the way the verse reads. It reads, "This is the confidence [not uncertainty, but absolute 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." Oh, how subtle the devil is to take a passage of Scripture that God has put into His Word to fill us with confidence when we pray, and use it to make us uncertain when we pray.

2. But can we know the will of God when we pray, even when there is no definite promise in regard to the matter about which we are praying? Yes, in many cases we can. How? Romans 8:26-27, answers the question: "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will." It is the work of the Holy Spirit when we pray to make known to us what is the will of God in the matter about which we are praying, and to show us if the thing is according to His will, that it is according to His will. There are many things we need which are not definitely promised in the Word, and it doesn't follow at all that because they are not definitely promised in the Word they are not "according to the will of God." It is the will of God to give us very many things which He has not definitely promised in His Word, and it is the method of God, when we pray, to give us, by the direct illumination of the Holy Spirit, to know His will even in regard to things about which He has given us no definite promise.

For example, while I was pastor of the Moody Church in Chicago, the child of a man and woman who were both members of our church was taken very sick. The child first had the measles, and the measles was followed by meningitis. The child sank very low, and the doctor said to the mother, "I can do no more for your child. Your child cannot live." She immediately hurried to my house to get me to come up to their house and pray for her child. But I was out of town holding meetings in Pittsburgh. So she sent for my assistant pastor, Rev. W. S. Jacoby, and he went to the house with one of my colleagues in the Bible Institute, and prayed for the child. That night when I got home from Pittsburgh he came around to my house to tell me about it, and he said, "Mr. Torrey, if I ever had an answer to my prayers in my life, it was today when I was praying for the Duff child." He was confident that God had heard his prayer and that the

child would be healed. And the child was healed right away. This was Saturday. The next morning the doctor called again at the house and there was such a remarkable change in the child that he said to Mrs. Duff, "What have you done for your child?" She told him just what she had done. Then he said, "Well, I will give her some more medicine." "No," she said, "you will not. You said you could do no more for the child, that the child must die, and we went to God in prayer and God has healed the child. You are not going to take the honor to yourself by giving him some more medicine." Indeed, the child was not only improved that morning, the child was well, and Mrs. Duff was at the morning service and would have brought the child with her if it had not been such a stormy morning that she thought it would be better not to take it out in the intense cold.

Now, neither Mr. Jacoby nor I could pray for every sick child in that way, for it is not the will of God to heal every sick child, nor every sick adult. It is God's general will in regard to His children that they be well in body, but there are cases when God, for wise purposes of His own, does not see fit to heal the sick; and there are cases, if we are living near to God and listening for the voice of His Spirit, and are entirely surrendered to the Spirit in our praying, in which the Spirit of God will make clear to us the will of God, and we shall know that our prayer is heard, and we will know that the request is ours long before we actually get it.

Take another and entirely different illustration, for the healing of the body is only one of the ways in which God answers prayer, and not by any means the most important. In my first pastorate we had a union meeting of all the churches of the town. In the course of the meetings we had a day of fasting and prayer. During the morning meeting while we were praying, God led me to pray that one of the most unlikely men in the town might be saved that night. The man had led a wild, roaming life; few in his family were Christians; but as we knelt in prayer that morning God put a great burden on my heart for that man's salvation, and I prayed that he might come to the meeting and be saved that night. And as I prayed, God gave me great confidence that the man would come and be saved. And come he did, and saved he was, that night. There was not a man in that whole town who was more unlikely to be saved than he. That was more than forty years ago, but when I was in Chattanooga, Tennessee, a few years ago, I met another man whose mother was saved about the same time, and he told me that this man was then living in Tennessee and was still living a Christian life. Now, I cannot pray for the salvation of every unsaved person in that way, but by His Spirit, God revealed to me His will regarding that man, and in many a case He has revealed His will.

Take still another illustration. One day, when I was in Northfield, Mass., I received word from Mr. Fitt, Mr. Moody's son-in-law, in Chicago, that we needed five thousand dollars for the work in Chicago at once, and asking me to pray for it. Another member of the faculty of the Bible Institute was in Northfield at that time, and that night we went out into a summer-house on my place and knelt down and prayed God to send that five thousand dollars. And God gave my friend great confidence that He had heard the prayer, and he said to me, "God has heard the prayer and the five thousand dollars will come." Mr. Fitt and Mr. Gaylord also prayed in Chicago, and God gave Mr. Gaylord a great confidence that the five thousand dollars would come. We knew it was ours, we knew that God had heard the prayer and that we had received the five thousand dollars. And a telegram came the next day (I think it was) from Indianapolis, saying that five thousand dollars had been deposited in a bank in Indianapolis to our account and was awaiting our order. Though we had prayed for the money and expected it, Mr. Fitt could hardly believe the news, and sent to our bank in Chicago, which inquired of the bank in Indianapolis if the information were true, and learned that it was. So far as I know, the man who put that money in the bank in Indianapolis at our call had never given a penny to the Bible Institute before. I did not know there was such a man in the world, and, so far as I know, he has never given a penny to the Bible Institute since. Now, I cannot go to God every time I want money and think I need it and ask God for it with that same confidence, but there are times when I can. There have been many such times in my life, and God has never failed, and He never will. Banks sometimes fail; God never falls.

To sum it all up, when God makes known His will, either by a specific promise of His Word or by His Holy Spirit while we are praying, that what we ask for is "according to His will," it is our privilege to know--if we really believe on the name of the Son of God--that our prayer is granted, and that it is ours, just as truly ours, as it will be when later we actually have it in our hand.

III. Praying in Faith

The passage we have been studying is closely related to another passage in the Gospel of Mark, which contains a promise of our Lord Himself that God will answer prayer. It is a very familiar passage; you will find it in Mark 11:24, "I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours." I will not stop to call your attention to whom this promise is made, further than to say that it is made, as are all the other promises of God to answer prayer which we have been studying, to those who believe on Jesus Christ, those who are united to Jesus Christ by a living faith that manifests itself in an obedient love. This is evident from the context, as you can find out for yourself

if you will read the promise in its context.

And how must we pray in order to get the thing that we ask? We must pray in faith, that is, we must pray with confident expectation of getting the very thing that we ask. Some say that any prayer that is in submission to the will of God, and in faith and dependence on Him, is a prayer of faith. But it is not “the prayer of faith” in the Bible sense of “the prayer of faith.” “The prayer of faith,” in the Bible sense, is the prayer that has no doubt whatever that God has heard and granted the specific thing “which we have asked of him.” This is evident from James 1:5-7, “If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord.” No matter how positive the promises of God may be, we will never receive them in our own experience till we absolutely believe them, and the prayer that gets what it asks is “the prayer of faith,” that is, the prayer that has no doubt whatever of getting the very thing that is asked.

This comes out clearly in Mark 11:24, “I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.” When we pray to God, and pray according to His will as known by the promises of His Word, or as known by the Holy Spirit revealing His will to us, we should confidently believe that the very thing that we have asked is granted us. We should “believe that” we “have received,” and what we thus believe we have received we shall afterward have in actual personal experience.

Take, for example, the matter of praying for “the baptism with the Holy Spirit.” When anyone prays for the Holy Spirit, anyone who is united to Jesus Christ by a living faith that reveals itself in an obedient love, anyone who has received Jesus Christ as his Savior and is trusting God to forgive him on the sole ground that Jesus Christ died in his place, and who has received Jesus Christ as his Lord and Master, and has surrendered all his thoughts and purposes and conduct to God’s control, he may know that he has prayed for something according to God’s will, for Jesus Christ definitely says in Luke 11:13, “If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” And as one knows that he has asked something which is according to God’s will as God has clearly revealed it in His Word, it is one’s privilege to say, “I have what I asked. I have the Holy Spirit.”

It is not a question at all of whether one feels that he has received the Holy Spirit or not; it is not a question of some remarkable experience: it is simply a question of taking God at His Word and that he who prays believes that he has

received, just because God says so. And what he has taken by naked faith on the Word of God, simply believing he has received, because God says so, he will afterward actually possess. There is no need that he go to any “special meeting,” no need that he work himself up into a frenzy of emotionalism, no need that he fall into a trance, or fall into unconsciousness, an experience utterly foreign to anything described in the New Testament. He has far better ground for his assurance that he has received what he asked than any feeling or any ecstasy; he has the immutable Word of God, “God who cannot lie.”

Praying in faith, that is praying with an unquestioning belief that you will receive just exactly what you ask; yes, believing as you pray that God has heard your prayer and that you have received the thing that you ask, is one of the most important factors in obtaining what we ask when we pray. As James puts it in 1:6-7, “When he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord.” That is, let not the man who has any doubt that God has heard his prayer think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. So the tremendously important question arises, How can we pray the prayer of faith? How can we pray with a confident, unquestioning certainty in our minds that God has heard our prayer and granted the thing that we ask? This has been partly answered in what we have already said, but in order that it may be perfectly clear, let us repeat the substance of it again.

1. To pray the prayer of faith we must, first of all, study the Word of God, especially the promises of God, and find out what the will of God is and build our prayers on the written promises of God. Intelligent faith, and that is the only kind of faith that counts with God, must have a warrant. We cannot believe by just trying to make ourselves believe. Such belief as that is not faith but credulity, it is “make-believe.”

The great warrant for intelligent faith is God’s Word. As Paul puts it in Romans 10:17, “Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.” The faith that is built on the sure Word of God is an intelligent faith, it has something to rest on. So if we would pray the prayer of faith we must study much the Word of God and find out what God has definitely promised, and then, with God’s promise in mind, approach God and ask Him for that thing which He has promised.

Here is the point at which many go astray. Here is the point at which I went astray in my early prayer life. Not long after my conversion I got hold of this promise of our Lord Jesus in Mark 11:24, “I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.” I said to myself, “All that I need to do if I want anything is to ask God for it and then make

myself believe that I am going to get it, and I'll have it." So whenever I wanted anything I asked God for it and tried to make myself believe I was going to get it, but I didn't get it, for it was only "make-believe" and I did not really believe at all. But I later learned that "faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ," and that if I wished to pray "the prayer of faith" I must have some warrant for my faith, some ground on which to rest my faith, and that the surest of all grounds for faith was the Word of God. So when I desired anything of God I would search the Scriptures to find if there was some promise that covered that case, and then go to God and plead His own promise; and thus testing on that promise I would believe that God had heard, and He had, and I got what I asked.

One of the mightiest men of prayer of the last generation was George Mueller of Bristol, England, who in the last sixty years of his life (he lived to be ninety-two or ninety-three) obtained the English equivalent of seven million four hundred dollars by prayer (\$7,000,400). But George Mueller never prayed for something just because he wanted it, or even just because he felt it was greatly needed for God's work. When it was laid on George Mueller's heart to pray for anything, he would search the Scriptures to find if there was some promise that covered the case. Sometimes he would search the Scriptures for days before he presented his petition to God. And then, when he found the promise, with his open Bible before him and his finger on that promise, he would plead that promise and so he received what he asked. He always prayed with an open Bible before him.

2. But this is not all that is to be said about how to pray the prayer of faith. It is possible for us to have faith in many an instance when there is no definite promise covering the case, and to pray with the absolute assurance that God has heard our prayer, to believe with a faith that has not a shadow of doubt in it that we have received what we have asked. The way that comes to pass we are plainly told in the passage to which I have already referred in the earlier part of this sermon, Romans 8:26-27, "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will." That is to say, the Holy Spirit, as we have already said, often times makes clear to us as we pray what it is the will of God to do, so that, listening to His voice, we can pray with absolute confidence, with a confidence that has not a shadow of doubt, that God has heard our prayer and granted the thing that was asked.

My first experience, at least the first that I recall, of this wonderful privilege

of knowing the will of God, and praying with confident faith even when one had no definite promise in the written Word that God would hear the prayer, came very early in my ministry. There was a young dentist in my congregation whose father was a member of our church. This dentist was taken very ill with typhoid fever, and went down to the very gates of death. I went to see him and found him unconscious. The doctor and his father were by the bedside, and the doctor said to me, "He cannot live. The crisis is past and it has turned the wrong way. There is no possibility of his recovery." I knelt down to pray, and as I prayed a great confidence came into my heart, an absolutely unshakable confidence that God had heard my prayer and that the man was to be raised up. As I rose from my knees I said to the father and the doctor, "Ebbie will get well. He will not die at this time." The doctor smiled and said, "That is all right, Mr. Torrey, from your standpoint, but he cannot live. He will die." I replied, "Doctor, that is all right from your standpoint, but he cannot die; he will live." I went home. Not long after, word was brought to me that the young man was dying. They told me what he was doing, and said that no one ever did that except just when he was dying. I calmly replied, "He is not dying. He will not die. He will get well." I knew he would: he did. The last I knew of him he was still living, and his healing took place between forty and forty-five years ago. But I cannot pray for every sick man in that way, not even though he is an earnest Christian, as this man was not at that time. Sometimes it is God's will to heal, usually it is God's will to heal, if the conditions are met; but it is not always God's will to heal. "The prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well," God tells us in James 5:15; but it is not always possible to pray "the prayer of faith"; we can pray it only when God makes it possible by the leading of His Holy Spirit

But "the prayer of faith" will not only heal the sick, it will bring many other blessings, blessings of far more importance than physical healing. It will bring salvation to the lost; it will bring power into our service; it will bring money into the treasury of the Lord; it will bring great revivals of religion. In my first pastorate one of the first persons to accept Christ was a woman who had been a backslider for many years. But she not only came back to the Lord, but came back in a very thorough way. Not long after her conversion God gave to her a great spirit of prayer for a revival in our church and community. When I had been there about a year she was called to go out to California with a sick friend, but before going she came into the prayer meeting on her last prayer meeting night there, and said, "God has heard my prayer for a revival. You are going to have a great revival here in the church." And we did have a revival, not only in the church, but in the whole community, a revival that transformed every church in the community and brought many souls to Christ. And the revival went on

again the next year, and the next, and the next, until I left that field. And it went on under the pastor who followed me and the pastor who followed him.

Oh, yes, “the prayer of faith” is the great secret of getting the things of all kinds that we need in our personal life, that we need in our service, that we need in our work, that we need in our church, that we need everywhere. There is no limit to what “the prayer of faith can do,” and if we would pray more and pray more intelligently, and pray “the prayer of faith,” there is no telling what we could do as a church and as an institute (Moody Bible Institute). But as we have said, in order to pray “the prayer of faith” we must, first of all, study our Bible much in order that we may know the promises of God, what they are, how large they are, how definite they are, and just exactly what is promised. In addition to that, we must live so near to God, be so fully surrendered to the will of God, have such a delight in God and so feel our utter dependence on the Spirit of God, that the Holy Spirit Himself can guide us in our prayers and indicate clearly to us what the will of God is, and make us sure while we pray that we have asked for something that is according to God’s will, and thus enable us to pray with the absolute confidence that God has heard our prayer, and that “we have received” the things that we asked of Him.

Here is where many of us fail in our prayer life: We either do not know that it is our privilege to “pray in the Spirit,” that is, to pray under the Spirit’s guidance; or else we do not realize our utter dependence on the Holy Spirit, and cast ourselves on Him to lead us when we pray, and therefore we pray for the things which our own heart, our own selfish desire, prompts us to pray for; or else we are not in such an attitude toward God that the Spirit of God can make His voice heard in our hearts.

Oh that we might all be made to realize the immeasurable blessings for ourselves, for our friends, and for the church and for the world, that lie within the reach of “the prayer of faith,” and determine that we would pray “the prayer of faith”; and then get down to the study of the Word of God so that we could know God’s will and what to pray for; and be in such a relation toward God, be so fully surrendered to His will and in utter, constant dependence on the Holy Spirit, looking to the Holy Spirit that as we pray it might not be so much we who pray as the Holy Spirit praying through us! Then we would soon see this spiritual-desert city, and our spiritual-desert churches, “blossom as the rose.”

[R. A. Torrey Archive](#)