

Praying for Blessings

As Christians, we must consider what's involved when we pray for blessings; the Bible reveals what we need to know

We all love God's promises, and use them often in prayer. It strengthens our prayers to use Scripture, and it is good to show God that we're aware of the things He has promised to do for His children. But we must be careful to consider His promises in the context of the passages in which they appear, as well as the broader context of the whole body of truth in the Bible. There is probably no stronger or more repeated condition in Scripture than obedience.

We're to obey the commandments of God. He made especially clear in Deuteronomy that His blessings for His people are contingent upon their obedience [Deut. 30:16]. Jesus emphasized no less than five times that obedience is a demonstration of our love for God [John 14:15, 21, 23, 24; 15:10].

The Apostle John teaches that we can have whatever we ask in prayer when our hearts do not condemn us and our lives are obedient and pleasing to God [1 John 3:22]. Should we claim God's promises for those who are disobedient and expect Him to answer? When we want God's abundant blessings for someone, we must pray that they will be enabled to live the life that meets the conditions of obedience, and any other condition we're aware of.

Scripture is very specific. You might begin to note verses that tell us *if* we will do something or behave in some way, *then* God will respond with His blessings. Those verses can be turned into powerful prayers.

Psalms 37 has many such promises and conditions. Here are key ideas from a few of them, and suggestions for prayer:

v. 4 -- If we delight ourselves in the Lord, then He will give us the desires of our heart. *"Father, help us to delight ourselves in You, so that You can give us the desires of our heart -- Your desires, Father. Let us have no desires but Yours."*

v. 5 -- If we commit our way to the Lord and trust in Him, then He will help us to be righteous. *"Lord, help us to commit our lives to You, all that we are and all that we do, and to trust You without reservation, for we want to be righteous in Your strength."*

v. 23 -- If the Lord delights in a man's way, then He will make our steps firm and keep us from stumbling. *"Father, help us to live obedient lives, for we know that pleases You, and You will keep us from stumbling and falling into sin."*

v. 26 -- If we are generous and lend freely, our children will be blessed. *"Lord, give us a generous spirit, that we might give and lend freely to those in need, that You may bless our children in every way."*

God has filled His Word with powerful promises for His children who live obedient, Spirit-filled lives. He wants to bless us, and He's given us very clear conditions so that we can make right choices. Our prayers are surely according to His will when we ask for His enabling power to make those choices.