

A Person of Obedience

Over the past couple of weeks, we have seen that a person who prays well is a person of the Word (John 15) and a person of faith (James 1). Scripture also teaches that obedience is critical in the life of a person who prays well. As one reads through the Scriptures, he or she will notice that there is an undeniable connection between a vibrant prayer life and obedience to God. We will start today by looking at a passage in 1 John, which is a letter that was written to give believers assurance (or confidence) of eternal life. John also teaches that we can have confidence in prayer – a confidence that is really a subset of our assurance of salvation.

Read 1 John 3:21-24

1. What is the confidence that John is talking about here? How can we have it?
2. What connection does this passage make between obedience and prayer?
3. In verse 24, John says that the one who obeys God abides in Him. What does it mean to “abide” and how does abiding relate to an effective prayer life (see also John 15:7-10)?
4. Read Psalm 66:16-20; Isaiah 1:4, 15; Zech. 7:8-13. How do these passages discuss the connection between obedience and prayer?
5. Why do you think that keeping God’s commandments is so critical to seeing our prayers answered?
6. Are these verses saying that we need to be perfect to have our prayers answered? Why or why not? What is the difference between being obedient and being perfect?

7. Are these passages saying that a person who is obedient merits answers to prayer? Why or why not?

Steve said:

Ultimately it is reasonable that **a person of prayer is a person of obedience** because God is a good Father. He's not only listening to our words; He is listening to our lives. He is so committed to our holiness that sometimes He will not answer our prayers (or will delay answering our prayers) to get our attention and to move us toward repentance. We find throughout Scripture that when people are desperate for God to act, they often humble themselves before Him and repent and **then** bring their requests. Unanswered prayer should get our attention and prompt us to examine our lives and ask whether or not there are areas of disobedience that need to be addressed.

8. Has it been your practice to examine your life for areas of disobedience when you experience unanswered prayer? Why or why not?

Steve said:

If what we've seen today from Scripture really is true (that sin hinders our prayer, that God is a good Father who might withhold answers to prayer until we turn back to Him in repentance), we need to pursue obedience in a very intentional, honest, humble way. There is too much at stake to do anything else. God has assignments for you that are impossible in your own strength. If you read the NT and if you notice what the people around you really need and if you notice what is happening in this nation and in this world, you will conclude that you need (and that **we** need) God to do what you cannot do (and what **we** cannot do). Because we can't begin to live out our calling without the wisdom and power of God, we must be people of prayer. Therefore we must be people who pursue obedience with all our hearts.

9. What's your response to what Steve says here?

10. What do you sense is the main thing that God is saying to you through this study?