

**Praying According to the Will of God***1 John 5:14-15*

**Introduction:** Today we continue our study on the topic of prayer. Over the past several weeks we've looked at the truth that God is a generous God who invites us to ask for the things we want. We've seen that even though we don't always get what we've asked for we can still know that God is good and generous. So, we should boldly ask for the things that we want. Hopefully, the things we want will increasingly align with the things God wants, because when we pray for the things God wants we are praying according to the will of God and praying according to the will of God is vital to a life of effective prayer.

**Opening Discussion:** What is something for which you have prayed recently that you were confident was according to God's will? Why were you confident?

**Read 1 John 5:14-15**

1. How would you summarize what John teaches here about prayer?
2. Where does confidence in prayer come from?
3. What does it mean to ask "according to His will" (v. 14)?
4. How do we know if we are asking according to God's will?

Steve said:

We have confidence that God will give us the things we pray for in accordance with His will. And so maturing in our prayer life involves shaping our prayers according to our understanding of God's will. For some of us this will require new habits. We may have to invest some time and energy in formulating our prayers. But that's okay because we're talking about having confidence in prayer – something that really priceless.

5. What are things that we can do to grow in our understanding of God's will?
6. What new habits might you need to pursue to being to more regularly pray according to God's will?

Steve offered two suggestions for learning to pray according to the will of God.

First:

***Meditate on Scripture with a view toward prayer.*** In John 15:7 Jesus said:

7 "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

If the words of Jesus saturate our hearts and minds, we will ask for things that are "according to God's will." I guarantee, for example, that if the Sermon on the Mount dominates the meditations of your heart, you will pray differently than you would otherwise. My suggestion is that as you read and meditate on Scripture, ask yourself the question, "How should I pray in light of what I'm reading?" That's simply another way of asking, "How can I pray according to the will of God?" This habit has the potential of rejuvenating both our experience of the Word and our experience in prayer.

7. How might you expect it to affect your prayer life if the words of Jesus did saturate your hearts and minds?
8. Why do you think the question, "How should I pray in light of what I'm reading?" can rejuvenate your experience in the Word and prayer?

Second:

***Allow biblical prayers to inform your praying.*** (Psalm 51, Colossians 1:9-12, Ephesians 1:15-19, 3:14-19, John 17) When you think about it, the great prayers recorded in Scripture are examples of praying according to the will of God. They express a deep understanding of God and His ways. . . If we want to learn how to pray according to the will of God, the great prayers recorded in Scripture provide a wealth of insight and instruction. Many people find great benefit in actually praying these prayers as their own – whether it be prayers found in the Psalms, the Lord's prayer, or Paul's prayers for the churches.

9. Have you ever tried using biblical prayers to guide your praying? If so, how has it helped you to pray?
10. Read the prayer found in Colossians 1:9-12. Can you think of situations in which this prayer would help guide you in praying according to the will of God?