



Sermon Series: Strengthen Me, Part 2

Sermon Title: How To Get What You Want

Date: 5/21/2023

James 4:1–3

Big Idea: Think God's thoughts, and you'll get what you want.

There is a 3-step process for the development of a satisfying prayer life.

Step 1. EXAMINE YOURSELF

1st: Do you know Jesus Christ as your Savior?

2 Corinthians 13:5 (NIV) — Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves.

- Have I trusted Jesus Christ as my Savior? When did I do that?
- What impact has it had on my life? Am I hungry for God's Word & fellowship with believers?

2nd way to examine myself: Are there unresolved conflicts in my life?

Unforgiveness or Bitterness? Smoldering conflict. If we tolerate unforgiveness, we will see few answers to prayer (**Matthew 5:23-24**)

Especially true in the context of our marriages. Conflict with your wife will hinder your prayers (**1 Peter 3:7**). It'll probably cause you to avoid prayer altogether. My desire may conflict with what God wants. If I want something God doesn't want for me, I'm destined for disappointment.

Step 2. EXAMINE YOUR MOTIVES

James 4:3

Ask yourself, *"Why am I praying for this?"*, *"Why do I desire this?"* Be careful not to judge the motives of other people. **1 Corinthians 4:5b**

When I do NOT receive what I want, it ought to prompt me to wonder why. James 4:3 says it's often because the objective is to satisfy our pleasures... not to advance God's glory. God's highest goal for your life is not to make you happy but to make you HOLY... to shape your character, marriage, and family to reflect Jesus and His priorities. **Hebrews 12:14**

Step 3. SEEK OUT GOD'S THOUGHTS

James 4:2b (NIV) — You do not have because you do not ask God.

- Effective prayer begins with asking Him what His will is for us. And He is eager to guide you. James 1:5
- But I must commit to following the wisdom God gives, or else it's useless. James 1:6
- And make it your aim to delight yourself in the LORD because that will lead you toward wanting what HE wants. Psalm 37:4

Additional verses

Romans 12:2 (NIV) — 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

When we renew our minds by His Word, we will think God's thoughts.

1 Corinthians 2:15–16 (NIV) — 15 The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, 16 for, "Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

What does it mean to have the mind of Christ? It is the mind that seeks to obey what God commands.

Philippians 4:8 (NIV) — 8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

Effective prayer involves discipline. It's not enough simply to want to be spiritually "fit." You'll need to commit to a process. You must arrange your schedule to reflect the priority of the process in your life. And adopt a "no excuses" kind of routine.

What should the process look like? (Suggestions)

- Choose a Bible
- Select a notebook (almost any will do)
- Accept a 28-day challenge. Suggestion - Matthew (28 chapters)
- Practice a simple structure (3 headings on each journal page)
 1. **RECALL** "What did I do yesterday." (Just a couple sentences)
 2. **REFLECT** What does today's chapter say about yesterday's activities?
 3. **RESOLVE** How will I incorporate a principle from this chapter into today's activities, desires, and conversations?

Discussion Questions:

- **What about the sermon stuck with you this week? What part challenged your thinking?**
- **What is the benefit of seeking God's thoughts?**
- **What do you think Peter meant when he wrote 1 Peter 3:7?**
- **Is it ever acceptable to pray for something nice for yourself? Is that the wrong motive? Explain**
- **How would you counsel a Christian who says that don't have time for prayer?**
- **What answers to prayer have you witnessed in your own life?**