

## John 14:7-15 | A Blank Check Pt. II

### Congregational Reading

#### The Transfiguration

Matt. 17 "Jesus came to them and touched them and said, "Get up, and do not be afraid." And lifting up their eyes they saw no one except Jesus Himself alone. As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man has risen from the dead."

And His disciples asked Him, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?"

And He answered and said, "Elijah is coming and will restore all things; but I say to you that Elijah already came, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they wished. So also the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands."

Then the disciples understood that He had spoken to them about John the Baptist."

### Prayer.

### Responsive Reading

Q24: Why was it necessary for Christ, the Redeemer, to die?

A24: Since death is the punishment for sin, Christ died willingly in our place to deliver us from the power and penalty of sin and bring us back to God. By His substitutionary atoning death, He alone redeems us from hell and gains for us forgiveness of sin, righteousness, and everlasting life. (Col. 1:21-22)

Q25: Does Christ's death mean all our sins can be forgiven?

A25: Yes, because Christ's death on the cross fully paid the penalty for our sin, God graciously imputes Christ's righteousness to us as if it were our own and will remember our sins no more. (2 Cor. 5:21)

Q26: What else does Christ's death redeem?

A26: Christ's death is the beginning of the redemption and renewal of every part of fallen creation, as He powerfully directs all things for His own glory and creation's good. (Col. 1:19-20)

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"If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him."

Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us."

Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father?'

Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.

Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves.

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father. Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it. If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”

**Jesus is offering a blank check** to His disciples. Every disciple has an account number. There is a routing number. There is a line by which you justify their payment of the check. There is a description of what the check is for. There is a place where it is to be sent and there is a limitless amount by which this check provides access to.

There is no overdrawing on the account. There is no overdraft fees. There is no interest rate. There is no credits, only debits. There is, **however, a condition.**

This blank check **must be written in Jesus name**. This blank check is access to ‘anything’ so long as it meets the conditions by which Jesus has given criteria.

This blank check is established in prayer. This blank check is communicated spiritually, in prayer. This blank check is communicated from you to God, in prayer.

It has been said, that ‘prayer is a force, a force just like gravity’

Prayer is a reality that simultaneously both grounds and elevates the Christian's life. Prayer is a vital component of your life. The degree to which you pray, the way by which you pray, the methods, the precepts, the focus, a line here, a bit there, will be the degree to which you deposit this blank check.

Look at **John 16:23-24**. Reiterated promise about this prayer.

Often we avoid prayer because we are too busy. This seems like wisdom to us, but the idea of that was foolishness to our forefathers.

We should beware of the barrenness of a busy life. As **Martin Luther once told his colleague, Philip Melctanion** ‘Master Melectan, I’m so busy today, that I must spend an extra hour in prayer.’

I have heard of pastors who require their church staff to spend at least an hour a day in prayer. Luther was an Augustinian Monk, prior to becoming a pastor, so an hour in prayer was nothing to him.

### **Q: Why I should pray?**

**God works through our prayers.** It is evident, though for the skeptic it is difficult to prove or convince. Yet, for the person who is a faithful person, they know that God hears and the see that God answers their prayers.

This is why we must pray in faith. Faith is a substance and prayer is a substance.

Faith is no less a substance than the very things you hold in your hands and wear on your body. Prayer is no less a substance than those very tangible things of life as well.

Yes, I acknowledge that is difficult to accept and difficult to explain and understand but it is true.

**Prayer is an Action. Prayer is an activity. Prayer is a thing. Prayer is both a noun and a verb.** As such, you can both possess a life of prayer and live a life of prayer. It is a thing that you both possess and do. It is a thing to take hold of and take action in.

Prayer is NOT wishful thinking. It is not grasping at the wind. It is not futile. It is not hogwash. Prayer is NOT vain repetition. Or a naughty and nice list. Prayer is NOT our opportunity to see God like a Divine Santa Claus, who gives us what we want if we're good and restricts what we want if we are bad.

This promise this Jesus is giving should not be viewed in the sense of 'well, shoot for the stars and maybe God will give you the moon.' Prayer is NOT a matter of ambition or motivation or habit change.

**Prayer IS a matter of faith.** It is a substance of matter and spiritual material that goes unseen.

### **A warning of lack of faithfulness.**

Heb. 3:12 'take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an **evil, unbelieving heart** that falls away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin."

It is sin that keeps a person from prayer. Prayer is an activity. Pray IS an activity just like mowing your grass or driving your car or going to work or exercising or fishing or hunting or doing your taxes. Pray IS an action.

This ACTION of prayer is done in your conscious. You can vocalize prayer, silently with your words. You can vocalize prayer, aloud, with your words. But you must pray and are always restrained in your prayer by the nature of your conscious.

Prayer must be a daily activity just like anything else. If we do not bath daily we will stink. And if we do not pray daily our life will stink.

**Must people** stink spiritually because they never pray. They are drugery to be around because they are prayerless. Because they are prayerless, they are peaceless. Because they are prayerless, they are powerless.

**Q: When can you deposit this blank check? Anytime and all the time.**

**Set regular times and places that you pray.**

**Ex.** When we get in the truck we have a habit of prayer that our children know we each pray. When we eat, we pray. When we go to bed we pray. When we go to school, we pray.

**This is not to force times of prayer, but it is to encourage you to have daily structure in prayer.**

#### **Rules in Prayer.**

1. When we pray we must consciously commit our heart and mind to the understanding that we are presenting ourselves to communicate with Almighty God.
2. When we pray, we should sincerely and wholehearted believe that we need and should receive what we are approaching Almighty God with.
3. When we approach Almighty God in prayer, we must completely divest ourselves of personal glory and merit, self-confidence.
4. When we pray we should be filled with the full hope of receiving the very thing we have petitioned God about. No double-mindedness.
5. When you pray, **Pursue agreement** with other genuine Christians about the thing that you are petitioning God about and together agree about that thing. **Have integrity with the request.**

It is the nature of your conscious, which we often call your heart and mind, of where your prayers come from.

A doubting conscious is a sinful conscious. We always pray out of the well-spring of our conscious.

**Explain in more detail these 4 rules in prayer.**

1. **Reverence. Focus. Detailed and direct communication.**
2. **To pray without belief is to not pray. If you do not believe in the very thing that you are praying about then you are distrusting God. Distrusting God is an irration to God. It pleases God that you would believe that He would give you good things.**

To not recognize and agree with Jesus that He has authorized us a limitless, entrance into the throne room of God, is to see prayer in a wrong view.

You and I have direct access to God for **anything in prayer**.

**‘Anything.’ Q: What is ‘anything’?**

**Well, we first know what it is not. Anything is not anything sinful. Therefore, anything that would be sinful is not going to be anything that God answers in prayer.**

**And I think that is an initial trouble to many people. Because what they desire in their conscious is sinful things.**

### **Wrong Ambitions in Prayer.**

We know that it is not about ambition. Anything in prayer is not ambition in prayer.

Rank in the Kingdom.

**Matt. 18:1 'Who is the greatest in the kingdom?' Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven."**

Childlike faith is an anything prayer request, Climbing the latter is not an anything prayer request. Humility to serve the kingdom is an anything prayer request, outranking people in the kingdom is not an anything prayer request.

**THEN, Jesus goes on to say, 'Woe to those who cause stumbling blocks and encourage sinfulness' Pray that God would keep you from anything that causes yourself or others to stumble. Pray your lifestyle remains free from sin and encourage others lifestyles to remain free from sin.**

**THEN, the Lost sheep, the 99 for the one. Compassion for the lost sheep.**

**Discipline among brothers and prayer.**

**Then forgiveness. -These are topics that are a blank check in prayer.**

**Example of 'Anything' prayers. Blank checks in prayer. Instead of explaining this exegetically, let's look at this practically in examples from Christ and Paul.**

**Look at Matt. 4.** Jesus led in the wilderness. Battled Satan in prayer. Ministered to by Angels. Satan is a defeated foe. Often tricking you because of your lacking of anything prayer.

**Look at Matt. 5:3-12. You can pray the Beattitudes.** That God would grant you the behavior traits of a saint that enters heaven. That is an anything prayer.

**Matt. 6:44 'love you enemies and pray for those who persecute you'**

**Cure for anxiety.**

**Matt. 6:25-34 'Look at the birds of the air'** where the sparrow says to the lily, why do these humans worry so much, and the lily responds, they must not know the God that we know.

**The God that provides everything we need in every season. They must not know the God that we know that is in control of all things. How many independent decisions does the lily make? God controls the directing of their life, why wouldn't He ours?**

**The LORD's prayer.**

**Matt. 6:5-15**

**Reflection and Meditation in Prayer.**

**Reflective. Meditative.** You naturally become reflective when you consider your life in light of praying through key passages of Scripture.

**Puritans in Prayer.** Reflection/Meditation of the Character of Christ. **4 main meditations.** The Death of Christ. The Resurrection of Christ. And Heaven. That's what people used to do before they had TV/internet.

Too many unnecessary distractions in our life today. Unlimited convenience has led to a lid placed over the jars of our prayers. But distractions and convenience is not the only reason we fail to **'ask anything'**

Conflict and entanglements seemingly go away. Let me tell you a story about a business man who was struggling greatly.

**Satan gives a conditional promise of worldly blessing to Jesus in Matt. 4.**

**Matt. 4:9 'I will give you all of these things, if you fall down and worship me.'** Highlighting that Satan does have control over the access to certain things. Yet it would be clear that it is those things that are not the things that we need to be praying for.

**Turn to James** and let's just jump through in the book of James these 'if' clauses.

**Arriving finally at James 4.. James tells us how to pray. 17 direct uses of 'If' clauses with regards to faith and prayer in the 5 chapters of James.** The **'anything' in prayer** circles around, faith, double-mindedness, foolishness, partiality, selfishness, and wrong motives that come from lust.

**James 4:3 'You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.'** **Q: What is the motive of the prayer? Bad motives will always lead a person to avoid faithful prayer.**

**Motives, internal motives** in the conscious, often determine how or whether or not a person will pray.

**Story about business man.** There was a **business man who ran a large**, very successful manufacturing business. **All of sudden in mid-life**, the business began to fail. The business fell apart and the man's life fell apart. In essence, He was ruined.

The man did what many men do when they exhaust all of their options, he went to talk to his pastor. He told the pastor how his business was ruined and his life was ruined. The pastor asked him, how is your relationship with God?

The man responded, 'How would I know? How would I evaluate that?' – The Pastor said, 'I think the simplest way you could evaluate your relationship with God is by your relationship with His Word.'

The man said, 'well if that is criteria, then I am doing not very well.'

The pastor made deal with him. The pastor said, 'Here's my deal, I want you to spend time daily reading the Bible, I want you to meditate on what you read, ask questions, pray about what you read and this problem at work, and ask God to emblazon His word on your mind and to have mercy on you and to fix this problem at work...I will be praying He do just that.'

**Time passed and the pastor** had not heard from the man. A year or so passed and he had not heard from the man, and the pastor decided to visit the man. He passed through a large parking lot. A beautifully landscaped property. A nicely decorated building, just adjacent to a state of the art manufacturing facility.

As **the pastor approached a kind receptionist**, he noticed a peace and quite nature to the facility. The receptionist directed the pastor to the businessman's office. Where he was welcomed with a smile and big hug. The pastor finally asked him, how are things going? The businessman said, we do not have any problems.

This business has a state of the art facility, it has more than enough to care for all of the employees, and we continue to get more and more contracts for business.

The pastor asked, '**What changed?**'

The businessman said, '**I did.**'

I was the problem. It was not the people. It was not the product. And it was not the process. It was me.

**I was an enemy of God** and I didn't even realize it. The Pastor said, 'So what did you do?'

He said, 'Exactly what you said. I didn't address any problems at work. I read the bible, I meditated on the passage, I prayed about the passage and the problems and it was as if they had never existed.'

**God solved the problem and He did so with His Word and prayer.**

The **business man grabbed his bible** and looked at the pastor and said if you look at this multi-million dollar facility, if you observe the streamlined processes, if you see the most modern equipment – nothing here is more valueable than this book, nothing here is more streamlined than when I pray over this book. This book is the most important equipment in this entire facility.

**Wrong Motives in Prayer.**

This is what James address, it is about self-focus, selfishness. James 4:1-2 "**What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask.**" Q: Why do people not ask God for 'anything' in prayer? They have access to God, don't they?

There's really only two main reasons why a person lacks access to God in prayer. The first is unrepentant sin the second is a lack of faith.

**Q: How should I pray?**

Our prayers are often filled with **short and trivial matters**. "Lord give me this, Lord protect me from that" – those **are not** bad prayers. The garnishes on the side of a main dish, are not bad, but they are also not the full substance of the meal.

We should see our prayers like a full course meal. Our prayers should be constant, and we should be developing the body of our prayers over the course of our day. Make your day an entire day of prayer.

**How should we pray?** We should pray, understanding that Jesus Christ has given us a blank check with regard to requesting anything in His name.

**Look at the pattern of Paul's prayer. Turn to Romans.**

Rom. 1:8-10; thankfulness

Rom. 10:1, salvation

Rom. 12:12 'devotion'

Rom. 15:5-6, same mindedness

Rom. 15:13, filling of joy and peace, abounding in hope and the power of the Holy Spirit

**John Newton, Anglican pastor in the 1700's, crediting for writing Amazing Grace. conference on praying without ceasing.**

Went to the lady serving food. **Q:** How do you pray without ceasing? She said, I kind of do it like this.

**When I wake up, I pray that my mind** would be awakened to the things of God today.

**When I shower,** I pray that God would wash me clean from the ways of this world.

**When I get dressed for the day,** I pray that God would clothe me in His righteousness.

**My husband had to leave** the house early for work, so I grabbed his hand and prayed the God would protect him.

**My children are growing up fast,** and I am concerned with the future of the world that they will live in. So I pray that God would show Himself true to them.

**When I stepped out the door** for the day, I ask that God would ensure I am stepping onto His path for my life.

**When I arrived here this morning,** I ask that God would bless the work of my hands. And things were going good.

**Then I realized a co-worker had become sick** and couldn't make it to work. So I prayed that God would heal my co-worker.

Yet, that troubled me because it **doubled my workload.** I started to feel very anxious. And at that time, I needed to begin to prepare the food. So, I as I made the eggs, I prayed that my life would not be scrambled like these eggs I am making.

Instead, I asked that **God would make my life healthy and nutritious,** as I hope these eggs are to those I prepare it.

**When I prepared the coffee,** I prayed that my life would be bold and vigorous. When I poured it for you, I prayed God would make my hands and life steady.

And now, after doing all of that, you have me here, explaining to you at your conference, how we are to pray without ceasing. And all I can think, is how would I make it through my day, if I ceased from praying.

**Pastor Newton,** I think the better question is not how do we pray without ceasing, **but instead,** what kind of life would it be, if we ceased from praying? I'm not so sure, I would have even made it out my door today if I did not have access to God in prayer.

Life would be too sad, it's challenges too daunting, it's burdens too heavy, it's losses too difficult.

**You ask how do we pray without ceasing?** Dear Pastor, I'm not so sure, how people live without praying!



Charles Haddon Spurgeon once said that for a Christian prayer is of equal equivalence to breathing.

After precaching well over 3000 expository sermons, upon the death of Martin Lloyd Jones, his wife stated, if there is one thing I would describe my husband as, 'he was a praying man.'

Quite possibly, my favorite quote in all of church history, that has to do with prayer is a statement that comes from a non-Christian.

Mary Queen of Scots was one of the most powerful political figures in all of Europe. As such, arguably the whole world.

Queen Mary's, in conjunction with the Roman Catholic Church martyred over 300 Bible teaching pastors in under a 5 year period.

In the height of her power she is recorded as saying, **'I do not fear all of the Armies of Europe, but the prayers of John Knox, that is what fear.'**

What kind of man, would it be, that puts that trepidation in the heart of the world's highest rulers? It will be the kind of man that has the ear of the World's Hightest Ruler!.

In the midst of the **American Civil War, Stonewall Jackson** had been credited for his great prowess in battle. He was asked, 'General Jackson, how is it that you are so fearless in battle?' Jackson responded, 'I have fashioned my life, to where I don't so much as lift a drink of water to my lips without thanking the Almighty God for it. I feel just as comfortable in battle as I do asleep at home. God has already numbered my days.'

### **Fear in Prayer.**

I believe too often Christians are playing the game in order to not lose. Instead of playing the game in order to win.

It's as if, they have learned of salvation and then transitioned to a four-corners offense. They have learned of Christ's death for their sin, and now they are taking a knee on second down. They have learned that Christ has secured a dwelling place in Heaven for them, and now they are packing it in the box, instead of taking to the endline and going for the goal.

Too often we play scared.

I will tell you, that the thing that you should fear the most is not fearing God enough.

**Fear often leads us to prayer.** We are afraid for our finances, so we pray about our finances. We are afraid of job, so we pray about our job. We are afraid about sickness, so we pray about not getting sick.

We are afraid for our children so we pray for our children.

But when do we get fearful that we might be living in rebellion to God? When do we fear that we may have slipped up before the Almighty? When do we get concerned with the clear and present danger, that our individual character is just not adding up?

When do we ever get concerned that the testimony of our life might not be leading to the greater works that Christ called His disciples to? Character and Conversions.

It's that fear, that leads us to pray rightly. It's that fear, that God honors. It's that fear, that leads to the deposit of blank check that God will hear, answer, and be glorified.

John 14:13-14 **'Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it. If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.'**

Email

'Jesus begins a series of promises to the disciples in the upper room. These promises both begin and end, in prayer. Follow along as we pursue what it means to ask anything in Jesus' name.'

Questions/Childrens.

1. What does it mean to pray in Jesus name?
2. What is a good outline of routine prayer?
3. What are things we should consider to be able to pray about anything?
4. What reasons does James give why people pray and do not receive?
5. How can we build a more robust prayer life?