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5 Assurances Series
Assurance of Answered Prayer
“Perceiving the Receiving”
John 16:24

John 16:24

Until now you have not asked for anything in my name.
Ask and you will receive that your joy may be full.

Perceiving the Receiving God’s Answers

- a. God answers by giving me what I asked for. (Acts 12)

- b. God answers by using me. (Matthew 14)

- c. God answers by pursuing greater glory and joy. (John 11)

- d. God answers by changing me. (James 1:2)

e. God answers by giving me Himself.

David – Psalm 23 – ... you are with me.

Paul – 2 Corinthians 12:9 – My grace is sufficient for you...

Asaph - Psalm 73:23-24 – Being with you, I desire nothing on earth.

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Opening

Story: High School - I asked my parents to go shopping for clothes & shoes. I was so happy they bought me the clothes & shoes;

What happened that I was so joyful? Today we'll explore ...

John 16:24

Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive that your joy may be full.

Transition

Notes, handout

Last week: Salvation(beginning) → Relationship (Prayer)

Today we look at the part Prayer plays in that relationship.

Assurance of Answered Prayer

Assurance = level of sureness

The Study Guide does a really good job covering That God answers Prayer, and the conditions to Answered Prayer, and what obstructs answers to prayer.

Assurance, remember, is the level of sureness we can or should have.

At our church we teach full orb ed prayer life.

- Prayer Hand Illustration – A.C.T.S.S
- Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication, Stillness
- Answers to Prayer is just **one** facet of prayer, but it is where most people begin.

Body

Brief overview of John 16:24

- Focus on Receiving, and Joy

Perceiving the Receiving.

When we pray, do we perceive what we receive?

- Super simple way to answer: Yes, No, Later
- The older I get, the more I perceive the “Yes.”
- God has been giving me what I’ve been asking for all along, but I didn’t perceive it.

Observations from older praying believers.

Wisdom from the journey. Seasoned through experiences.

a. God answers by giving me what I asked for.

- I saw it and rejoiced
 - **Example:** friend who asked God for a wife. 10 criteria.

- I didn't see it. – Peter in Acts 12

Joy comes from Perceiving the Receiving

That ...

God answers by giving me what I ask for,
God answers by using me to answer my prayer.

Without question, when God gives us what we ask, and we perceive it, we have great joy!

But there are other ways we receive answers from God...

b. God answers by using me.

- **Matthew 14** – Disciples asked Jesus to dismiss the crowd so they can eat. Jesus said, “You feed them.”
- The “good idea principle” – you thought of it, you do it. (Jesus thought of it first)

Joy comes from Perceiving the Receiving

That ...

God answers by giving me what I ask for,
God answers by using me to answer my prayer.

c. God answers by pursuing greater glory and joy.

John 11

When Lazarus was dying Mary and Martha asked Jesus to come quickly, presumably to heal Lazarus. Not only did Jesus not come quickly, he let Lazarus die!

Jesus then raised Lazarus from the dead.

- Did Mary and Martha receive what they asked? (no)
- Which “answer” produced greater glory to God?
- Which “Answer” produced greater Joy for Mary and Martha?

Joy comes from Perceiving the Receiving

That ...

God answers by giving me what I ask for,

God answers by using me to answer my prayer.

God answers by pursuing greater glory and joy,

d. God answers by changing me.

- I asked God to change the **other person**. He changed me.
- I asked God to change my **circumstances**, He changed me.
- We Pray for **Christlike Character**, not realizing the process necessary to conform to Christ. (patience?)
- God answers with Trials, Testing, Refining, Suffering.
- **James 1:2** – Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance → maturity there is no shortcut
- **John Piper**

We are often unprepared for the answers we receive from God. His answers frequently do not look at first like answers. They look like problems. They look like trouble. They look like loss, disappointment, affliction, conflict, sorrow, and increased selfishness. They cause deep soul wrestling and expose sins and doubts and fears they are not what we expect, and we often do not see how they correspond to our prayers. – John Piper

- **Such a joy is possible!** -but we must understand how God answers prayers indirectly.
- **Illus:** Cheyenne, Ice skating.
- Cute story, but some stories are much more heart-wrenching.

- **Song: Blessings, Laura Story**
 - 2006 – Laura Story’s husband nearly died from a tumor. She wrote a song as a reminder that God is faithful even when circumstances are difficult.

We pray for blessings, we pray for peace, comfort for family, protection while we sleep. We pray for healing, for prosperity, We pray Your mighty hand to ease our suffering. And all the while you hear each spoken need, Yet love us way too much to give us lesser things.

Cause what if Your blessings come through raindrops, what if your healing comes through tears? What if a thousand sleepless nights are what it takes to know you're near? What if trials of this life are your mercies in disguise?

Joy comes from Perceiving the Receiving

That ...

God answers by giving me what I ask for,

God answers by using me to answer my prayer.
God answers by pursuing greater glory and joy,
God answers by changing me.

Finally, Joy comes from Perceiving and Receiving that

e. God answers by giving me Himself.

David – Psalm 23 – ... you are with me.

Paul - My grace is sufficient for you...

Asaph, Psa 73:23-24

Psalm 73:23-24

²³ Yet I am always with you;

you hold me by my right hand.

²⁴ You guide me with your counsel,

and afterward you will take me into glory.

²⁵ Whom have I in heaven but you?

And earth has nothing I desire besides you.

²⁶ My flesh and my heart may fail,

but God is the strength of my heart

and my portion forever.

Here is where other answers to prayer face in the presence of God.

We understand that in His presence is the fullness of joy.

Our answers to prayer start to face in the presence of the Answerer of Prayer.

Joy comes from Perceiving the Receiving

Conclusion

I am fully convinced that all of us can become better at
Perceiving the Receiving.

In the end, we receive all things in Christ → fullness of Joy!

(Pray)