

The Science of Prayer

Its ABC's

By Glenn and Ethel Coon

Name: _____

Date: _____

LESSON 5

Conditions to Answered Prayer

Introduction

Years ago we began to learn the science of the prayer of faith; the Prayer of Reception. We are to ask, believe, and actually receive. Matthew 21:22. We were thrilled. Our hearts throbbed in eagerness to share. Others must learn this beautiful science. But there were those difficult conditions to prayer. These conditions bothered many professed Christians. How could we present conditions the way God wanted us to? We asked for wisdom. We believed He was giving us wisdom. We returned thanks that He had given us wisdom to place conditions in the proper light. And then beautiful light came. We were most delighted.

Here was the answer: God does not demand of man anything that he cannot do with God's help. God does not expect man to do it alone. Never. Could man fulfill conditions without God's help, he could save himself. Could man fulfill conditions without God, he would not need to pray to God. More than this, conditions to prayer are themselves gifts. They are God's gifts. Some are given us long before we ask. Others come with our asking, believing, and claiming. But every condition to prayer is a free gift. It comes straight from our Lord.

The following are a few examples of conditions.

1. Faith is both a condition and a free gift.

"But without faith it is impossible to please him." Hebrews 11:6.

"God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." Romans 12:3.

No longer do we need to lament our lack of faith. God hath already dealt to every one of us faith. All we need to do is exercise it and it will grow.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is ... faith." Galatians 5:22. If we want more faith, we just ask, believe, and claim His Holy Spirit. The fruit will follow. Faith is a free gift, absolutely without price. It came by no effort of ours. It came with us at our birth. Faith is a gift of God. But the power to exercise it is ours. (See a later lesson on ways by which faith is strengthened).

2. Repentance of cherished sin is both a condition and a promised gift.

"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Psalm 66:18.

Science of Prayer

"Him hath God exalted with his right hand to ... give repentance." Acts 5:31.

God's everlasting love is ever offering repentance as a free gift for the one who will ask, believe, lift the hand of faith, and receive it. He cries out, "With loving kindness have I drawn thee." Jeremiah 31:3. It is, therefore, up to each one of us to reach right up and take the proffered gift of repentance for cherished sin. We cannot give up cherished sin except as we accept the deliverance as a free gift from God.

We met a fine young married couple. Their deep sincerity impressed us greatly. Their winsomness intrigued us. Their Christ-like simplicity delighted us. One year later, in another city, we met them again. The wife had become infatuated with a man half her age; but she was as precious to us as ever. She was trapped. She was a slave. She cherished this sinful infatuation. She could not let go. We could have said to her, "If you will let go of this cherished sin, we will ask God to help you." But no! No!

She was a prisoner in the cell of the evil one. She could not unlock the door. Someone else must bring her freedom. Someone else must bring her a hatred for the sin she cherished. Someone else has promised to do this. His name is Jesus Christ. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." John 8:36. The Holy Spirit inspired the prophet of old to prophecy of Jesus that he would "proclaim liberty to the captives." Isaiah 61:1. He would "put enmity" in the human heart for Satan and all he stands for. Genesis 3:15. He would "deliver them who ... were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Hebrews 2:15.

For us to tell this lady to give up her cherished sin would have been to mock her. She was so frustrated that she did not even have reasoning powers to exercise her faith. So we exercised faith for her. We claimed the promise of Matthew 18:19. "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven."

As we started to kneel, she was so frustrated she repeated again and again, "I do not have the faith that God will deliver me." Again and again we enthusiastically answered back, "Rest on our faith. We believe. Jesus promised that the faith of two of us will do it." We opened the Bible to Hebrews 2:14, 15. We read how He will deliver them who ". . . were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Since God can deliver lifetime bondsmen, surely he can deliver those who have been bound only a few months. Surely! There is no question.

We told her of the two geese who flapped their wings in midair under a wounded goose and carried him along. We told her we were doing something similar for her. God fulfilled His promise and set her free from cherished sin. The next day she testified of the remarkable deliverance. Said she, "When I returned home from that prayer session I tried to think of that man, but I could not. The next morning I tried again, but in vain."

That precious soul was delighted that God had freed her from cherished sin. She was thrilled that He had put enmity in her heart for the thing she was clinging to; that He had set her free. She and her husband became beautiful workers for Jesus Christ. We were happy we had learned that repentance is a free gift. It is not earned. It is not worked up. It comes down from God. It enters the heart of a prisoner—a slave of sin. It warms the soul. It brings new life, new breath. It spells victory in Christ. Repentance for cherished sin is free. It is as free as the air. It is God's gift.

Not all sinners are as helpless as was this woman in the exercise of faith. Thousands can actually reach right up and take the proffered gift of repentance while they sit under the shade of an oak tree, or in a church pew, or beside a rippling brook.

3. Obedience is a condition, but also a free gift.

"And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight." 1 John 3:22.

"I will ... cause you to walk in my statutes." Ezekiel 36:27.

"I will put my laws into their mind." Hebrews 8:10.

We had the privilege of baptizing two young men who had spent years in the drug world, smoking, drinking, running the route of sex, LSD, marijuana, hashish, etc.... Then they began reading the gospel story of Jesus Christ. In four days one found eternal life. The other found it in about ten days.

One had tried, years before, the route of obedience as a condition which he supposed he was to fulfill. But he seemed unable to get help from God to obey. He did not know that God promises complete obedience as a free gift. It is without price. It cannot be earned. Obedience is not something that one does on the basis of his own power. Rather it is something God does for the sinner. On the basis of this gift of obedience, the sinner dares to ask for more and still more blessings. All are unmerited. All are free gifts. He deserves none of them.

Now these young men have been used by the Holy Spirit to lead thousands into assurance of eternal life through what they call an "assurance session." The assurance session is based on free gifts which come from the bountiful hand of the one who was crucified on Calvary. One of the promises these young men lead their hearers in claiming is Ezekiel 36:26, 27. It is the free gift of obedience.

4. Diligence and perseverance are both conditions and free gifts.

"She ... doth . . . seek diligently till she find it." Luke 15:8.

"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Philippians 2:12.

"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Philippians 2:13.

"He shall beholden up." Romans 14:4.

"I will strengthen thee." Isaiah 41:10.

We recommend to the student of these lessons the claiming of the promise in Hebrews 1:7. "Who [God] maketh.... his ministers a flame of fire." We have claimed this free gift repeatedly. Can you imagine one asking, believing, and claiming this promise, and then preaching a sleepy sermon? Can you visualize a soul winner claiming this promise and then telling smutty jokes?

The gospel is the good news of the drawing power of God's love. "With loving kindness have I drawn thee." Jeremiah 31:3.

The sinner responds to this magnetic love. We know that the sinner may resist this love. He may refuse to be drawn to Christ. But if he does not resist this love, he will be drawn to Jesus.

5. The ABC's of personal salvation.

a. Acknowledge that you are a sinner. "Only acknowledge thine iniquity. ..." Jeremiah 3:13.

To make it easier for us to acknowledge ourselves as sinners, think of how God has put all in the same class as ourselves. He says, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23. Acknowledge that we deserve death. "For the wages of sin is death. . . ." Romans 6:23.

Science of Prayer

To make it easier for us to acknowledge that we deserve death, think of how "in Adam all die." 1 Corinthians 15:22. As soon as we acknowledge, or identify, ourselves as sinners, we are prepared for the next step in salvation.

b. Behold believingly the Lord Jesus Christ. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Acts 16:31. There are three parts to this text: (1) Lord, (2) Jesus, (3) Christ.

To believe on the Lord means that since we have bungled our own lives, we need a guide. We need someone who will direct our steps. We need someone who can lay out a pattern of life for us to follow. It means that since our own plans and purposes have not had good results, we want to take on another Master who is infinite in wisdom, in power, in love. Therefore, we ask Him now to be our Lord. We choose His leadership. We crave His guidance. We completely surrender to His Lordship. "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" Luke 6:46.

It is true we cannot obey Him in our strength. But we can choose Him as our Lord. When we choose believingly, we open the heart. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Philippians 2:13.

To believe on Jesus we can cry out, "thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:21. Jesus is "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29. The death that we deserve, He took. "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." 2 Corinthians 5:21.

To believe on Jesus, then, is to believe that He died in my place and satisfied the demands of the law (which was death) because of sin.

To believe on Jesus is to believe that "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." 1 John 1:7.

You will observe that under "A" we acknowledge ourselves as sinners. We identify our own condition. Under "B" we immediately go into orbit around our Saviour His death in our place. His forgiveness, cleansing, and salvation is promised. We are then prepared to go into the "C."

c. "Come unto me." Matthew 11:28. Come confessing sin. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9. Notice the many "C's" if you are studying this in the English language. "C" come. "C" confess our sins. "C" we are cleansed. And, "C" Christ, the One on whom we believe. Acts 16:31.

As we come confessing, we are forgiven. As we believe in Christ, coming to Him, we understand the meaning of Christ. Christ is the anointed, the Messiah. John 1:41. He was anointed with the Holy Ghost. Acts 10:38. So as we come confessing our sins in simple, childlike faith, we are cleansed. But more than this, we have Christ in our hearts through His Holy Spirit which is given to Him without measure. John 3:34. The Holy Spirit which anointed Christ gives us power to "confess" Him before men. Matthew 10:32. We then go forth to tell others of our personal Savior. Mark 5:19.

6. Caution.

Remember that witnessing, or confessing of Christ, involves not merely our conversation but our lives. 2 Corinthians 3:1-3. And confessing Christ is not primarily giving Bible studies on doctrinal topics. Confession of Christ is talking about Christ, witnessing to His love, His mercy, His grace, and how He keeps His promises to all who come acknowledging their unworthiness, and then behold Him believingly. We are then confessing Him before men.

Science of Prayer

This sharing unselfishly is one of the big conditions to answered prayer. Read the story of the man who asked his friend for three loaves that he might share. This is the very setting of Christ's ABC's of prayer. Luke 11:2-13.

We thank thee, Lord.....

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above. James 1:17

FORGIVENESS IS OURS.

Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Matthew 11:28

A PERSONAL MESSAGE:

Dear Student:

There is always a temptation to tell John Doe what he must do in order to receive the favor of God. This can be a grave mistake. It is important to always remember that John Doe may be a slave to sin. He may be like a prisoner in a cell. A prisoner cannot escape. For one to suggest that he can is but to mock his frustration.

What a prisoner needs is the key, if he would find freedom. There is a key to the freedom of John Doe. The key is Jesus Christ, His love, His power, His promise. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." John 8:36. If John Doe could obey in his own strength, he would not need a Saviour. If John Doe could live up to the conditions of prayer, he would not need Jesus.

What we need to do when we meet John Doe, when we write him, when we converse with him by telephone, is simple. We need to act like Jesus. We need to have an unshockable attitude toward John Doe. No matter what John Doe does we are to love him just the same, fellowship with him just the same as we would want one in Christ to fellowship with us if we had fallen.

We need to share with John how repentance from sin is a gift. Forgiveness is a gift. Cleansing from sin is a gift. Obedience is a gift just as faith is. What we have done, we may tell John Doe, is to reach right up and Ask, Believe and Claim these free gifts even as this lesson has taught us.

Cordially yours,

Glenn Coon, Sr. Glenn Coon, Jr.

QUIZ ON LESSON 5

1. Has God already given everyone faith? Yes ___ No ___ Romans 12:3.
2. We do not work ourselves up to get repentance for it is a _____ gift. Acts 5:31.
3. God is eager to deliver people who all their lifetime were subject to _____. Hebrews 2:14, 15.
4. God promises to put His laws in our _____ Hebrews 8: 10.
5. In order to be forgiven of sin we must _____ Jeremiah 3:13.
6. To be saved we must _____ on the Lord Jesus Christ. Acts 16:31. [Page 66]
7. Jesus invited us to _____ to Him. Matthew 11:28.

Correct Answers on Answer Sheet.