



## **God's Guarantee - Prayer**

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### **Introduction:**

We have entered a new year. What is before us as individuals this year? How will God reveal Himself to us in 2005? Will we see that neighbor, relative, friend come to Christ? What will our fellowship look like next January? Will there be people who have come to salvation because of this ministry?

There are several guarantees with conditions in God's word that if we do certain things, God will do certain things.

Becoming fully devoted as followers of Jesus Christ is a growing experience that we can measure. Along the journey we learn that God responds in determined ways to the steps we take and our faith.

Every one of the areas we are going to explore in the next few weeks has to do with faith and confidence in what God says He will do. If we do our part, He will do His part.

A guarantee by definition is an assurance for the fulfillment of a condition: as an agreement by which one person undertakes to secure another in the possession or enjoyment of something.

God wants us to be assured. He wants us to walk confidently in this world. He wants us be our security. So there are conditions in His word. If those conditions are met, God's word which is un failing, unchanging and true, tells us what we can expect from God.

This morning we are going to look at some guarantees that God made in regard to praying. Prayer is a basic discipline in the life of a devoted follower of Christ. Taking to God and allowing God to speak back to us is necessary to our spiritual life and vitality.

We cannot hope to do what God wants us to do in this world, unless we communicate with God. Let's look at our text this morning. There we will find some conditions that we as the people of God are to meet, and if so, we will see the guarantee of God's response to our prayer.

### **2 Chron. 7:14-16**

**If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land. Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place. I have chosen and consecrated this temple so that my Name may be there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there.**

## **I. The conditions we are to meet:**

**Humble themselves** – literally it means to bring into subjection or bend the knee. To do that means we have to get real. We have to get real with ourselves, real with God and evaluate ourselves. We have to deal with pride. We have to realistically face the things in our life that are not God-like and to do something about them.

We read in scripture that God resists the proud. Pride goes before destruction. We know that pride was one of the downfalls of Satan. God had created him a beautiful spectacular being, and Satan made a decision that he would be like the most high, like God himself. As a result God dealt with him and threw him out of heaven.

You and I can be humble. That means that we don't think more highly of ourselves than we should. We do not exalt ourselves. We need to have a healthy balanced perspective of who we are.

**Pray** – to speak to God and to allow God to speak back to you. I don't know about you but I am glad God listens and speaks back to us when we pray. When we come before Him and call out to Him, His ear is tuned and attentive to our prayer.

God especially listens to those who are broken hearted. He listens to those who are sincere in their effort to commune with Him.

The thought behind this word pray is the thought of intercession. Intercession means to extend oneself. Not all prayer is directed at us and our needs. A well balanced prayer life will include these five elements. They are:

**Adoration – the soul lost in wondering worship of God, especially for what He is in Himself.**

**Thanksgiving – the heart overflowing in grateful appreciation of His many gifts and mercies to us.**

**Confession – the expression in words of heartfelt contrition, of a sense of sin, and failure to attain the divine standard.**

**Petition – the laying of personal needs before a loving heavenly father.**

**Intercession – the request of one on behalf of others who may stand in the same position of privilege, or who do not enjoy the same access into the presence of God.**

**Seek his face.** All too often we seek His hand and pray, “do this Lord, give me that, meet me here,” and we treat Him like a genie in a bottle. We should seek Him to see Him, to look into His eyes, to spend time waiting before Him, looking for His appearance.

The thought here is to strive after, to enquire and request. It means to search out.

People who sought for gold during the Gold Rush gave up family, gave up homes, and businesses, and ventured out just on the prospect of getting rich and finding a fortune. They sold all, and spent months and some even years, panning for gold. They sought after it with a passion. They did not let anything else get in the way of their search.

People who sought solutions as far as inventions or medical breakthroughs have spent years of research and development, and given great fortunes to find answers.

Oh that we would approach God with the same passion. Oh that we would seek His face, that we would keep on seeking for Him with a passion that exceeds seeking for anything else here on earth.

Stretch yourself this year. Seek His face and see what amazing, astounding, overwhelming newness you will find in your walk and relationship with Him. Anticipate how He will reveal Himself to you and the new ways you will be attracted to Him.

**Turn from their wicked ways.** The idea is that one would return to the starting point. God wants us to go back to the starting point. He wants to go to the place of innocence, the place of purity, the place of simplicity, the place of intimacy the place of priority, the place of passion. To get there means we end up walking a different path and direction than we have been going.

It doesn't matter to what area you apply this principle. People will ask me, what should I do differently? I don't like what keeps happening to me. Maybe it is in choosing friends. Maybe it is in behavior, maybe it is in habits. Why do I keep getting the same results? It's because you keep doing the same thing. If we

want different results, we have to do something differently. If we want to get close to God, we can't just keep hoping and thinking about it. We must take some action, go a different direction. God is saying turn from your wicked ways. Turn away from evil. Retreat from the path that leads you away from God. One would not think that a follower of Christ would have any wicked ways in his or her life. Think again. We must keep coming to the source of life and purity, and the path of holiness. This is something that is done deliberately, decisively, and with determination.

We can walk with God many years and there are times that we get comfortable and lukewarm. We drift in our passion and priority and purity and if that happens we need to turn away from that and get back to God. If you are comfortable with not seeing souls come to Christ, then keep on doing what you are doing. If it troubles you that we don't see more people coming to Christ and we don't see the church growing, then look at your individual and our corporate prayer life. We need to do something differently if we want to see different results. When we have the light and truth and we know the path we choose, our will is involved.

## **II. The guarantee that God gives in response:**

**I will hear from heaven.** I am amazed at the internet. It is an awesome tool that can be used for good or used for evil. It is amazing to me that I can log on here in Mayville and, anywhere in the world where there is a computer terminal that connects to the Internet, someone can get my message and respond to me.

Listen, we have something that is much better than the internet. We have a direct connection available to God. It is wireless. There are no delays in transmission of message. We don't have to concern ourselves with viruses or spam mail; it is a direct line to the heavenly Father. I don't have to be in any particular place, or have any expensive equipment or any special passwords to call on the Father. The connection is immediate and direct. He hears from heaven when we call out to Him on earth.

**And will forgive their sin.** If there is anything that will distance anyone from God it is sin. Sin is something that we carry with us and we don't need to do that. When God created us He gave us freedom to choose, freedom to obey or disobey. God gave us the ability to live righteously or not.

The word "forgive" means to pardon or spare. God is willing to pardon or to spare us from the wages of our own sin. What a mighty, compassionate God He is.

**And heal their land.** The word "heal" means to cure, to repair or mend. We need the curing of Christ in our nation. There is a growing outcry against Christianity in the market place. I heard a number of discussions about this issue over the past Christmas season. People could put up an Islamic display, or a Jewish display but not a crèche. Listen brothers and sisters in Christ, this nation was founded on Christian principles and if we open our eyes we can see that we need healing in our land. The people in America need to be healed of addictions. There are addictions to pornography, to gambling to drinking, to homosexuality. WE NEED HEALING. God can heal a nation. He promises to do so, but we have a responsibility and an obligation to seek His face, pray and turn from our wickedness.

So there is help from God. There is a guarantee that if we will pray, and turn from wickedness, and humble ourselves, He has promised, that He will hear, will forgive, and will heal.

If we have this guarantee, why do we not do our part? There is effort involved in seeking His face. There is honesty involved in humbling ourselves. There is repentance, and turning from the same old ways, to new ways if we are going to go anywhere with God.

We all know that it takes more than good intentions to get things accomplished. When you want to lose weight, you have to discipline yourself with exercise and diet. There are certain things that you don't do like eat things that would make you gain weight. There are certain things that you do, like exercise to burn off more calories. If we keep on the same path most of us have been on through the holiday season, we will continue at the weight we are or add more weight.

So it is when it comes to God's guarantees. We can know about them, know we should be doing them, know they would help our relationship with the Lord, and know that if we meet the conditions, God will certainly answer prayer and will hold up His end of the guarantee, but it has to be more than knowledge. We have to put into practice what we know to be true.

There are some new things in this New Year that will take place at CLF. We have a new associate pastor coming in 2 weeks. We are starting a new outreach called Family Connection this next Saturday evening. I want God's anointing on this ministry, and on these new additions to the CLF ministry. I believe you want that too. But we can't have life as usual. We can't just show up and expect that God will move. The guarantee is that if we will seek His face, He will answer and reveal Himself.

This afternoon we have an opportunity to come together and do something about what I have just preached on. That is gathering for corporate prayer. What could be more important than seeking God's face, then having Him hear and forgive and heal? I assure you, prayer is a tool that requires discipline and passion. It's one thing if you truly can't come to pray, its another thing if you don't want to come to pray. It's a matter of our heart. I urge you to come and start this year with our church family here in prayer. God guarantees – He will if we will.

### **Conclusion:**

When Robert Louis Stevenson was a boy he once remarked to his mother, "Momma, you can't be good without praying" "How do you know, Robert?" she asked. "Because I've tried!" he answered. This brings to mind a story about another little fellow -- one who had been sent to his room because he had been bad. A short time later he came out and said to his mother, "I've been thinking about what I did and I said a prayer." "That's fine," she said, "if you ask God to make you good, He will help you." "Oh, I didn't ask Him to help me be good," replied the boy. "I asked Him to help you put up with me."

*Our Daily Bread, June 15.*