

Here we find the secret of much unanswered prayer. We are not listening to God's Word, and therefore He is not listening to our petitions.

I was once speaking to a woman who had been a professed Christian, but had given it all up. I asked her why she was not a Christian still. She replied, because she did not believe the Bible. I asked her why she did not believe the Bible.

"Because I have tried its promises and found them untrue."

"Which promises?"

"The promises about prayer."

"Which promises about prayer?"

"Does it not say in the Bible, Whatsoever ye ask believing ye shall receive'?"

"It says something nearly like that."

"Well, I asked fully expecting to get and did not receive, so the promise failed."

"Was the promise made to you?"

"Why, certainly, it is made to all Christians, is it not?"

"No, God carefully defines who they are, whose believing prayers He agrees to answer."

I then turned her to 1 John 3:22, and read the description of those whose prayers had power with God.

"Now," I said, "were you keeping His commandments and doing those things which are pleasing in His sight?"

She frankly confessed that she was not, and soon came to see that the real difficulty was not with God's promises, but with herself. That is the difficulty with many an unanswered prayer today: the one who offers it is not obedient.

If we would have power in prayer, we must be earnest students of His Word to find out what His will regarding us is, and then having found it, do it. One unconfessed act of disobedience on our part will shut the ear of God against many petitions.

### **One Year Bible Reading**

Apr. 12: Joshua 5:1-7:15, Luke 15:1-32, Psalm 81:1-16, Proverbs 13:1

Apr. 13: Joshua 7:16-9:2, Luke 16:1-18, Psalm 82:1-8, Proverbs 13:2-3

Apr. 14: Joshua 9:3-10:43, Luke 16:19-17:10, Psalm 83:1-18, Proverbs 13:4

Apr. 15: Joshua 11:1-12:24, Luke 17:11-37, Psalm 84:1-12, Proverbs 13:5-6

Apr. 16: Joshua 13:1-14:15, Luke 18:1-17, Psalm 85:1-13, Proverbs 13:7-8

Apr. 17: Joshua 15:1-63, Luke 18:18-43, Psalm 86:1-17, Proverbs 13:9-10

Apr. 18: Joshua 16:1-18:28, Luke 19:1-27, Psalm 87:1-7, Proverbs 13:11

# Living The Dream

**Text: Matthew 7:12, I John 3:16-17**

## **The Plain Truth**

**Living the Dream is loving \_\_\_\_\_  
and loving people.**

**April 11 & 12, 2015**

# Living the Dream

Life Group Lesson • Week of April 12

From the time we were children we have been taught the Golden Rule: “Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you.” These are in fact Jesus’ words, and the second half of that verse reads: “This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets” (Matthew 7:12). What is Jesus saying here? He of all people knows the summation of all truth—that which from the beginning has been “taught in the law and the prophets”—and He says treating another person like we want to be treated is key. To love God and love others is foundational for every good thing.

## Read 1 John 3:16-24

1. According to v16 of this passage “we know what real love is.” Who has ultimately defined “real love”?

Jesus has defined “real love” in that He “gave up His life for us.” We in turn are called to give up our life for one another. Why is it difficult to follow Jesus’ example in this regard?

How do you translate “giving up your life”?

The kind of love John is talking about isn’t a passing emotion—merely seeing people in need and feeling sorry for them. That, according to John the Beloved, is not true and full compassion yet. It begins with observing a need (an awareness), but then a certain energy generated by the indwelling Spirit of God propels us in a forward motion (an action) to assist in meeting the need for which we have been made aware. “Let us show the truth by our actions” requires faith. It shows we believe God is calling us personally to give up some of “our life”—our time, our money, our selfishness—in order to value another person. It is God’s Word in motion. John says, “Our actions will show that we belong to the truth” (v19a).

2. If you served this past weekend (after one of the worship services), how is this passage of Scripture (1 John 3:16-24) coming alive for you?

Think about something that stood out to you from your serving experience. In your opinion, why did the Lord allow you to experience this?

Sometimes special knowledge (a deep truth of the Lord and His ways) is only revealed when we are serving another person selflessly. Why is this?

Jesus said, “The most important commandment is this: ‘...you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.’ The second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” Read Mark 12:28-34. Sometimes it is difficult to love another person the way Christ has loved us because of resistance. There are times we must be willing to break through walls that have that have been erected over many years.

3. Our natural inclination is to look after ourselves. Think of a time Christ called you personally to move beyond this inclination. What did you learn from that experience?

Christ-like love is often tough love. Why is tough love not for the faint-of-heart?

If you are inclined to be faint-of-heart, how has Christ provided strength for you to love hard during difficult situations?

“Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets” (Matthew 7:12).

4. Think of one thing you would like someone to do for you right now, in this moment (season) of your life. What would that be?

Perhaps the Lord is calling you to “do unto others” first. If so, are you willing to be a blessing first? Are you willing to selflessly serve another person trusting that your heavenly Father will in turn take care of your needs?

*“All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubles, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has give us.”*  
(2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

## Mini Prayer Lesson

One of the most significant verses in the Bible on prayer is 1 John 3:22. John says,

“And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.”

What an astounding statement! John says in so many words, that everything he asked for he got. How many of us can say this: “Whatsoever I ask I receive”? But John explains why this was true, “Because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.” In other words, the one who expects God to do as he asks Him, must on his part DO WHATEVER GOD ASKS HIM. If we give a listening ear to all God’s commands to us, He will give a listening ear to all our petitions to Him. If, on the other hand, we turn a deaf ear to His commands, He will be likely to turn a deaf ear to our prayers.