

Living Life to the Fullest

Part XXXVII

The Place of Honor

1 John 5:14-15

According to reporters, courtside seats sold for \$22,000 apiece at the NBA championship finals. So how did a kid get to be front and center on the court of the Boston Gardens after the Celtic's decisive and surgical-like dismantling of the Los Angeles Lakers? The young boy seemed almost oblivious to the 15,000 screaming fans who had waited 22 years for this special moment.

And the boy? How did he, of all people, get there? He was simply a child, a 17 month old child who had been released from the hospital only 48 hours earlier after being diagnosed as a diabetic. Why was he, of all people, in such a place of privilege? It was because he was *Walker Allen*, the son of Ray Allen who had just shot a lights-out 26 points to win the decisive 131 to 92 victory over the helpless Lakers. Walker was there because he was the son of a champion.

As the world watched this loving father (who had spent the two previous nights in the hospital) embrace, kiss, and give full attention to his son, one could not help but think of the privilege of the son. The thought came to mind of the incredible parallel of the "Father's" love for those of us who also were sick and helpless apart from His love and care for us. It was so obvious that Walker wanted to be nowhere else. As a 17 month old child, he was totally dependent upon his father to provide for him what others could only dream about. If only we who are God's children could come to know and believe that God has for us the place of privilege and provision only a loving Father desires for us. Is that where we would like to be? Do we desire it in such a way that, with the innocence of a child, we would be so embraced by our Father that we would be oblivious to the screams and distractions of those around us?

It's not a stretch to know that this is exactly what the Apostle John was saying when he wrote, "For this is the love of God," that in our intimacy with Him, in our relationship, in our security in Him, He will provide everything we would desire or dream of. He taught that based upon the conditions surrounding our relationship with the Father, "if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him." Sounds attractive, doesn't it? Can we imagine what could happen if we would give ourselves to the One who is so generous and loves us so much?

Today we will discover three essential ingredients that guarantee we will receive what we request simply because we are in the place of honor—in the arms of the Father.

LIFE RESPONSE:

1. This week **MEMORIZE** and **MEDITATE** on 1 John 5:14-15, "*And this is the confidence which we have before Him that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.*"
 - (a) How would you define the depth of intimacy of the Father/child relationship of this passage in the context of the theme of 1 John? Note words and phrases such as "abide," "love of God," "born of God."
 - (b) How do you relate to such intimacy? What influences that intimacy in both positive and negative ways?
2. How would you define the parallels between the *will* of God and *obedience*?
 - (a) What first comes to mind when we think about God's will for our lives, our decisions about our future plans or present obedience to His Word? How does this process affect what we pray about?
 - (b) What impact does sin or lack of obedience have on answered or unanswered prayer?
(Psalm 66:18; 1 John 1:9)

3. Think about the deity, holiness, reverence, power, majesty, priestly identity, etc. of the Father and how we approach Him in prayer.
 - (a) How should it affect us prior to prayer?
 - (b) How does our culture, especially our “Christian” culture, tend to dilute how we should approach the Father with respect and reverence?
4. What have you learned from this and related passages that will provide a greater confidence and encouragement to pray?

“Prayer is not a battle, but a response; its power consists in lifting our wills to God, not in trying to bring His will down to us . . .”

- Dr. Stephen Smalley

1 John 5:14-15 The Apostle John gives us three criteria for answered prayer.

IN RELATIONSHIP AS A CHILD OF GOD “And this is the confidence”
Intimacy

* Begins with Spiritual birth

Jn 1:12

Rom 8:15-17

1 Jn 3:1-3

* Completed in Fellowship ---

Intimacy with the Father

1 John 1:1-3; 6-9

1 John 5:1-2

Loves (sacrificial, unconditional, relational) the Father

Loves (sacrificial, unconditional, relational) the brother

It’s conditional: “According to My will” Initiative

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Luke 22:39-42

Issue of obedience

Do I possess a submissive spirit to God’s will?

It’s conveyed: We can know with certainty

1 John 5:1-3

Issue of knowing

Am I living in obedience to God’s revealed will?

It’s continual:

Psalm 37:23-26

The work of Holy Spirit

Issue of trusting

John 16:8-15

Do I pray for God’s will to define my future plans?

Prayer

Father, we pray that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith; and that we, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that we may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

IN REVERANCE TOWARD THE MAJESTY OF GOD “before Him” Integrity

“No man ever found God as Father until He recognized Him as King.”

G. Campbell Morgan

Luke 11:1-4 A lesson on prayer

It happened that while Jesus was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples." And He said to them, "When you pray, say:

‘Our Father who is in heaven,

Hallowed be Your name.

‘Your kingdom come

Your will be done,

On earth as it is in heaven. (Matthew 6:9-10)

Prayer

How great are Your works, O LORD! Your thoughts are very deep. A senseless man has no knowledge, nor does a stupid man understand this: (Ps. 92:5-6)

The LORD reigns, He is clothed with majesty; The LORD has clothed and girded Himself with strength; indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved. Your throne is established from of old; You are from everlasting. (Ps. 93:1-2)

Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen. (Eph. 3:20-21)

Three criteria for guaranteed answered prayer are:

IN RELATIONSHIP AS A CHILD OF GOD

Fellowship - Intimacy

IN RESPONSE TO THE WILL OF GOD

Obedience

IN REVERENCE TO THE MAJESTY OF GOD

Presence