

## **Blessings for Faith and Obedience**

Having focused on the negative aspects of free will in last week's article, I want to turn our attention to the positive side of free will. God has filled the pages of inspiration with promises—promises so grand only God Himself would be able to see them through. But, when we read the promises of God, we often forget the conditions God always attaches to His promises. You see, just as man has a part in choosing to sin and disobey God, thus bringing upon themselves God's wrath, so too does man have a role in obtaining the blessings God has promised throughout scripture.

Throughout this article, I want us to study the pattern established by God of promise/condition and notice how God uses this same pattern when He speaks about prayer and entering His presence.

### **The Promise/Condition Pattern**

When God is speaking to His people and offering them blessings, unless the blessing is a prophecy of the Messiah, God attaches conditions to His promises.

- Deuteronomy 7:1
  - Promise:
  - Condition:
- Deuteronomy 11:12-14
  - Promise:
  - Condition:
- Deuteronomy 28:1
  - Promise:
  - Condition:
- 2 Peter 1:10
  - Promise:
  - Condition:
- James 1:12
  - Promise:
  - Condition:

Notice how throughout each of these verses, God is making a statement that is sure, but only after you do your part. God will do His part—time and time again He has shown that—but He expects us to do our part and be obedient to His conditions.

The Blessing of Prayer – God’s Promise and Condition

Prayer is arguably one of the greatest blessings promised by God to humanity. Prayer acts as a direct line between man and God, allowing the troubles, petition, and thanksgiving of man to be laid at God’s feet. It is here many forget the conditions God calls for before He answers our prayers.

Scripture	Promise	Condition	Man’s Responsibility
Jeremiah 33:3			
Matthew 21:22			
John 14:14			
1 John 5:14-15			

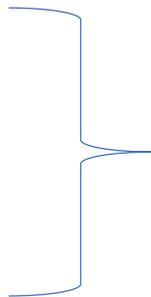
God’s word highlights the expectations He has for His people regarding prayer. We cannot expect an answer unless we first ask; but God goes beyond the obvious and requires those coming in prayer to believe, to ask using the correct name, and to ask only for that which is according to His will. We might find it strange to encounter conditions for prayer; but since God has set them up, we must adhere to them if we want to receive the full blessings of prayer.

The Blessing of His Presence – God’s Promise and Condition

Like Prayer, God’s presence is a gift of which man could never be worthy. The idea of a near God is strange to other religions. Our God is not distant; He is not divorced from His creation. Instead, He has given His people the promise of His presence if only man would meet the requirements.

- **God's Promise.**

- Deuteronomy 31:6
- Joshua 1:9
- Psalm 23:4
- Isaiah 41:10
- Acts 17:27



What did God promise?
_____
_____
_____

God's promise for all nations, across all timelines, is nearness. He has promised His presence to go with His people wherever they might faithfully go. What venture for the Lord can give us fear when He is with us to provide strength and courage?

- **God's Condition.**

- Psalm 24:3-4 – The Psalmist gives four conditions that must be met for one to stand in the presence of God.

1. \_\_\_\_\_.
2. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. \_\_\_\_\_.
4. \_\_\_\_\_.

- God's presence is entered by first having clean hands. Our hands speak of our actions—what we do. God is saying if you want to come to be where He is, you need to have clean hands. You must keep yourself from acts of sin that defile your hands.
- God's presence is entered by next having a pure heart. If our hands signify our outward actions, our heart signifies our inward intentions. As clean as our hands might look outwardly, God is asking for more—that our heart would be pure. He wants all of the thoughts and emotions and intentions that make up who you are to be genuine.
- Next, God's presence is entered through a lack of idolatry. Idolatry happens when you put things in place of God and get your worth and satisfaction from them. The lusts of the flesh, the passions of the world, and the pride of man are all contrary to what God would have your soul delight in. To lift your soul is to allow your

soul to reach, grasp, and hold onto something. Either your soul will be lifted to God, to desire and delight in Him, or it will be lifted to something else.

- Finally, God's presence can be entered into when our language is Godly. The language of those who approach God also needs to be pure and truthful. God speaks truthfully; and if we are to communicate with him, we too have to speak honestly.

God's presence is not entered into lightly; it is easy to forget how much of an impact our speech plays in our dealings with God. How often do we flippantly say things without thinking? Do we forget to ask if the thing I just said will keep me from the presence of God? One writer spoke of Psalm 24:3-4, saying that for us to be in the presence of God, we must have "good actions, good intentions, good desires, and good speech."

### Conclusion:

God has been and always will be a gracious God. The bountiful gifts He offers have sustained His nation for thousands of years. Yet, within God's blessings He has set up conditions to be met before one may receive the full benefits of His promises. In understanding this fact, each of us must learn to dive into God's word with a mind searching for the whole truth, looking for both the promise and the condition.