

# GOD IS ABLE . . . To Answer Prayer!

## Ephesians 3:20

John L. Kachelman, Jr.  
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### Introduction:

- I. It is a known fact of history that Queen Elizabeth looked with favor upon Sir Walter Raleigh. The monarch held a special fondness for the man and granted whatever was requested of her by him. On one occasion the Queen replied, "Raleigh, when will you quit begging?" He replied, "When your Majesty quits giving!" Such is the case with God and our requests – He will always give if we always ask! (John 15:7b).
  
- II. Prayer is a wonderful blessing (Hebrews 4:16; 1 Timothy 2:5). Unfortunately many Christians refuse to believe in God's ability to answer prayer (Exodus 22:23; Psalm 91:15; Isaiah 65:24). Failing to understand the blessings of prayer brings tragic results:
  1. Some pray for absurd things.
  2. Some pray for things that are not God's will.
  3. Some pray without faith that God hears.
  
- III. Ephesians 3:20 removes all doubt about God's ability to answer prayers. Here is a text that gives great encouragement and comfort.

### Body:

- I. The **PROMISE** of answered prayers.
  - A. Ephesians 3:20 offers a guarantee. Notice how this promise begins small but progresses to a wonderful end.
    1. God is able to give what we ask.
    2. God is able to give what we dream (think).
    3. God is able to give "ALL."
    4. God is able to give MORE than we ask.
    5. God is able to give MUCH MORE than we think He is able to do.
    6. God is able to give us VERY MUCH MORE!
  
  - B. Often when people hear of this marvelous ability of God to answer prayers abundantly, they are skeptical – unbelief! But God wants us to

trust Him and believe that He is able! (Genesis 18:14a; Numbers 11:23; Matthew 8:26a). Can God do great things via prayer? Yes! (Psalm 71:19).

1. Can God forgive that sin that you feel is unforgivable? Yes! (1 Timothy 1:13-16).
2. Can God change governments so that oppression and cruelty ceases? Yes! (Daniel 2:21).
3. Can God help your family; heal a wounded spirit; help the divorced and lonely; bring a rebellious child back home? Yes and much more than we can ever ask or think! (Ephesians 3:20).

C. There are many examples of God's ability to do exceedingly abundantly in answering prayers.

1. Moses only wanted an escape but he received abundantly (Exodus 14:13-16, 22, 27b-28).
2. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego received abundantly (Daniel 3:12, 15-30).
3. Philip had no answer for the hopelessness confronting him (John 6:5-7) but he received exceeding abundantly.

D. There is no doubt that the promise of God to answer our prayers is given. We must believe in these promises as we pray!

II. The **PROVISO** for answered prayers.

A. Many want to believe that prayers will be answered but they fail to understand that there are conditions to God's abundant answers.

1. God's abundant answers do not arrive automatically.
2. The condition – "according to the power." This refers to the possession of the Holy Spirit that indicates we are in fellowship with God (John 15:7a – "abide in"). Hebrews 10:29b; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; Ephesians 4:30

B. To be able to receive this exceeding abundant answer we must:

1. Abide in Him (John 15:7a)
2. Never give up believing (Luke 18:1b)
3. Guard our attitudes (1 Timothy 2:8)

4. Have confidence that God hears us (Mark 11:23)
5. Trust in God to give us the right answer (Matthew 26:39).

C. When we follow these conditions we have access to a power source that works mightily for us!

### III. The **PERSONAL** application

A. We should be humbled by our failure to pray as God directs! Too often we ask too little believing too little in God's ability to respond (James 4:2-3).

B. We should utilize prayer's blessings in our lives. When trials and situations threaten to destroy your peace, turn to God in trusting prayer (Psalms 121; 46:1-3).

C. We should remember that we cannot ask God for too much! We have heaven's riches at our call.

1. Even if our requests are denied, God can do abundant things!
2. An unknown soldier in America's Civil War wrote the following words that show how even God's refusal to grant our requests can bring divine blessings:

I asked the Lord for strength that I might achieve; I was given weakness that I might learn humbly to obey.

I asked for health that I might do great things; I was given infirmity that I might do better things.

I asked for riches that I might be happy; I was given poverty that I might be wise.

I asked for power that I might have the praise of men; I was given weakness that I might feel the need for God.

I asked for all things that I might enjoy life; I was given life that I might enjoy all things.

I received nothing that I asked for, but received everything I had hoped for.

My prayers were answered!

D. We should help our non-Christian friends realize the blessings they miss.

1. By failing to submit to God's will, they are basically asking God to stay out of their lives until an emergency happens. They thus miss the daily benefits of having a heavenly Father (Psalm 68:19).
2. Let us urge them to re-evaluate their relationship with God.
  - a. God is able to offer them a blessed salvation that is exceeding abundantly MORE than they have ever found (Psalm 51:1-2, 10).
  - b. Yet, if they refuse, God is able to cast them out of His presence for all eternity into a state that is abundantly beyond all the horrors we can know on earth.
3. Why should anyone choose to be the object of the Lord's exceeding abundant wrath when they can be the recipient of His exceeding abundant mercy?

**Conclusion:**

- I. Let all remember the ability of God to answer our prayers (Jonah 2:2,6,7).
- II. May all strive to seize the promise of an exceeding abundance of divine answers to prayers. Let all carefully conform to God's conditions so answers will come!