

Pacific Coast Church

March 31, 1996

First John 3:21-24

Pastor Mike

96-13

Prayers that get Answered

Asking God for the Right Things in the Right Way

1 John 3:21-24 -----> 21) Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God 22) and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him. 23) And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. 24) Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us. (NIV)

1. _____ Praying (vv.21-22)

A. *Sins* _____

B. *Life* _____

2. _____ Praying (vv.23-24)

A. _____ *Requests*

B. _____

Discussion Questions

These questions are provided to further your application of Sunday's message and to prepare you for PCC's small group discussions.

1. It almost goes without saying that unresolved sin is a major problem when it comes to asking God for things. What happens to your prayer life when there is sin that you have not confessed and renounced?

Attempting to understand the problem from God's point of view, describe what it is like for you when someone (even a child who you love very much) asks you for something but has not apologized or made right a hurt that they have previously caused you?

From your side of things, how does guilt effect your motivation and attitude in prayer?

2. Moving beyond forgiveness, it is necessary to consider the present state of our lives when we bring God our requests. Why do you think a pleasing life is important when it comes to answered prayer?

It might be a temptation to believe that we in some way "earn" the answers to our prayers through "good behavior". Why is this inconsistent with what you have read about God in the Bible?

What is the balance between the truth of 1 John 3:22 and this misunderstanding?

3. How do you think that concept of "praying in the name of Jesus" has been misunderstood and abused?
4. What is the relationship between humility before God and "praying in Jesus' name"?
5. Understanding and trusting in the "name of Jesus" when we pray is very important because it will determine the things for which we ask. Have you ever had the experience of sitting down to pray for something specific but as you attempted to ask for that you struggled because you sensed that your request was in some way in conflict with the nature and values of Christ? What was that like?

Have you ever had the experience of coming across a passage in the Bible that convicted you about something on your prayer list—something that shouldn't be there? Explain.

6. Attempting to be totally honest with yourself, what percentage of your praying is about things to benefit you compared to what percentage is out of "love for one another" (ie. for the benefit of others)?

What would you like the percentage to be?

Depending on the ratio and the time committed to prayer an adjustment may mean less prayer about the things that benefit you. What was the suggestion in Mike's message for making up this deficit? Who will you recruit?