

God Provides What We Need

Tony Brewer - Toronto, Ontario, CA

When we approach God in prayer, we often have a specific request in mind. It might be for healing, provision, or guidance, but many times we approach Him with what we think is the solution. The challenge for Christians is learning to trust that God's response, whether it aligns with our desires or not, is always for our good. The Bible teaches that God gives us what we need, which is not always what we want - and sometimes, it is something we do not want at all. This is a hard truth, but one that, when understood, deepens our faith and strengthens our relationship with God.

God Knows Our Needs Before We Do. One of the foundational principles in approaching God is recognizing that He already knows our needs. Jesus said, "*Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him*" (Matt. 6:8). This is a profound reality. We may think we know exactly what is necessary for our lives, but God, with His perfect knowledge, sees what we cannot. When we bring our requests before Him, we must come with a heart of trust, knowing that His perspective is infinitely better than ours. Jesus' teaching continues in Matthew, where He explains the nature of God's provision. He points out how earthly fathers provide good things for their children and then asks, "*How much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him*" (Matt. 7:11)? The emphasis here is not on God simply granting our wishes, but on Him giving good things - what we need. The distinction between what we want and what is good for us is crucial. As human beings, our desires can be short-sighted, focused on immediate comfort or satisfaction, but God is concerned with our eternal good.

Misguided Desires in Prayer. James addresses one of the reasons why our prayers may not be answered as we expect: "*Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts*" (Jam. 4:3). James highlights the fact that our requests can be driven by selfish desires or even misunderstanding. We might be asking for things that, though appealing in the moment, would not be good for us in the long run. God, in His wisdom, denies those requests, not out of indifference, but out of love.

One of the foundational principles in approaching God is recognizing that He already knows our needs.

This passage from James should serve as a reminder for us to evaluate our motives in prayer. Are we seeking God's will, or are we trying to bend His will to fit our own? The challenge is to surrender our desires and trust that God knows what is truly beneficial for us. This requires humility and faith, especially when God's response differs from our expectations.

When God Gives Us What We Do Not Want. The apostle Paul's experience with his "*thorn in the flesh*" is perhaps one of the clearest examples of God providing what is needed, though it was not what Paul wanted. Paul prayed three times for God to remove this affliction, but God's response was, "*My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness*" (2 Cor. 12:9). Paul wanted relief, but God gave him endurance through grace. What Paul received was not what he asked for, but it was what he needed to fulfill God's purpose in his life. This is a reality that many Christians struggle with - when God's answer to our prayers is something difficult, something we would never have chosen for ourselves. Yet, in these moments, we are called to trust that God's provision, even in hardship, is better than what we could have imagined. The lesson from Paul's life is that God uses our weakness, suffering, and trials to display His strength and grace. Our discomfort and suffering are often the very means by which God shapes us for His service.

Trusting God's Will Over Our Own. Proverbs 3:5 tells us, "*Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.*" This is where the rubber meets the road in our prayer life. We might not understand why God withholds something we desire or why He allows trials we would rather avoid, but our call is to trust Him fully. Our understanding is limited, but God's knowledge is perfect. He sees the full picture, including the impact that His answers to our prayers will have on our spiritual growth and eternal destiny. Even Jesus, in His humanity, wrestled with this concept in the Garden of Gethsemane. Facing the cross, Jesus prayed, "*O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt*" (Matt. 26:39). Jesus did not want to endure the suffering of the cross, yet He submitted to the Father's will. In doing so,

...continued page 3...

Some of my favorite places to eat are All-You-Can-Eat-Bufferets. One of the reasons being, I have a large family. There is something for everyone at a buffet. If you do not like what is in front of you, move on down the line and you will find something that will be appetizing to you. That is ok when it comes to physical food. However, that becomes a problem when people bring that attitude over into religion. Many people have the attitude of, "I don't like the way they worship over here, so I am going to go across town where they worship how I like." It is something that I like to call, "buffet-style religion." People pick and choose what church to go to based on what pleases them. It is very dangerous and sinful. We do not worship to please ourselves. When we assemble together on the Lord's day to worship, we ought to be focusing on pleasing God. Some things to consider on the matter:

GOD'S WORD IS OUR AUTHORITY. Second Timothy 3:16-17 says, "*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*" It is the word of God that is our authority, or our standard, for what we do in religion. We are not to go beyond what is written (1 Cor. 4:6). We are not to add to or take away from the word of God (Rev. 22:18-19). There is no other gospel (Gal. 1:6-10). We are to speak as the oracles of God (1 Pet. 4:11). It does not matter what I like, what you like, or what anyone else likes. What matters is what God likes and what He has authorized in His word.

IT MATTERS TO GOD HOW WE WORSHIP. In Leviticus 10:1-2, the Bible reads, "*Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it and offered profane (unauthorized, ESV) fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. So fire went out from the Lord and devoured them, and they died before the Lord.*" Nadab and Abihu offered unauthorized praise to God when they offered a fire that He had not commanded them. God punished them for it. Many people today offer unauthorized praise to God when they go beyond what is written, and either add to or take away from the word of God.

People pick and choose what church to go to based on what pleases them. It is very dangerous and sinful.

GOD'S WORD SPEAKS OF FOUR TYPES OF WORSHIP.
Ignorant worship: Acts 17:23 says, "*for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing (ignorantly, KJV), Him I proclaim to you.*" Paul

continues in Acts 17 and declares the one true God. He declares that God is our Creator, our Provider, and that Jesus Christ is our Savior.

Vain worship: Matthew 15:7-9 records, Jesus said, "*Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: 'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'*" The word 'vain' means empty, useless, or meaningless. That describes our worship if we are worshipping according to the doctrines and commandments of men.

Will worship: Colossians 2:23 says, "*These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion (will worship, KJV), false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.*" Will worship is exalting self's will above the will of God. Rather, we ought to have the attitude that we see John the Baptizer have in John 3:30, "*He must increase, but I must decrease.*"

True worship: Jesus said in John 4:23-24, "*But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.*" Notice the word 'must' in verse 24. Jesus said that we **MUST** worship in spirit and truth. If we **MUST** worship in spirit and truth, then we **CANNOT** worship in any other way.

WORSHIP IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH. Worshipping in spirit means worshipping with the proper attitude, reverence, and respect toward God. We must have our heart in the right place. It is easy for us to get into robot mode when it comes to our worship. What I mean by that is, that it is easy to just go through the motions without having your thoughts or your heart in it. Realizing this, we must be ever mindful of the dangers involved in this. If we do not worship in spirit, then our worship is unacceptable to God. We must all do our best to have our hearts in the right place, and to be reverent, respectful, and focused on worship. Worshipping in truth means to worship according to the pattern found in the Scriptures. God's word is truth (John 17:17). When we worship in truth, we will worship the way God's word instructs us to.

...continued on next page...

Buffet-Style Religion?

There are 5 acts of worship that we see in the New Testament. **Preaching/teaching:** The early church continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42). When the early church came together, a message from God was presented. **Praying:** The early church continued steadfastly in praying (Acts 2:42). We are instructed to pray without ceasing (1 Thess. 5:17). **Singing:** Ephesians 5:19 says, "*speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.*" This was done acapella style. Mechanical instruments of music were not added until later and we have no authority to use them. **The Lord's Supper:** This was instituted by Christ in Matthew 26:26-29. We find further instruction on this in First Corinthians 11:23-29. The saints met on the first day of the week to partake of the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7). **Giving:** The saints gave on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:1-4). God loves a cheerful giver (2 Cor. 9:6-7). Worshipping in any way other than what the Bible instructs, is unauthorized worship. Do not fall prey to buffet-style religion, but worship God in spirit and truth at the church of Christ nearest you.

The Mammoth Spring church of Christ would like to thank everyone who supports this work with financial contributions! We could not do what we do without your support. We currently send out over 6,000 copies of FCGN to 45 states. There are also hundreds of copies that are sent out via email. All extant copies of FCGN, going back to 1953, are available in PDF on our website:

www.mammothspringchurchofchrist.com

We also have a podcast on Podbean.com - fcgn.podbean.com

Subscribe to our YouTube channel - www.youtube.com/@MammothSpringchurchofChrist

We currently have over 1,600 videos on our YouTube channel

If you have a topical or textual question, send us an email - mscoc251@gmail.com

God Provides What We Need

He provided the ultimate example of trusting God's plan, even when it leads to pain or difficulty.

God's provision through prayer is not about receiving what we want, but what we need. Sometimes what we need aligns with our desires, but often it does not. There will be times when God's answer to our prayers is something we do not want, but through it, He works for our good. As we grow in our faith, our prayers should reflect a desire for God's will above our own. We must trust in His wisdom, knowing that He provides what is best, even when it challenges us or causes us discomfort. The Christian life is about submission to God's will, trusting that His provision - whether it brings joy or difficulty - is always for our ultimate good. We are called to approach prayer with humility, faith, and trust in God's perfect will. In every request, may our hearts echo the words of Jesus: "*Not my will, but thine, be done.*" When we rest in this truth, we find peace in knowing that God's answers are always what we need.

Check out more of Tony's articles at www.christianitynow.substack.com

November/December 2024 Contributors

Churches of Christ

Pilot (Mammoth Spring, AR)	\$700.00
Mammoth Spring	\$600.00
Bellefonte (Harrison, AR)	\$300.00
Crossroads (Gepp, AR)	\$300.00
Lowell (Springdale, AR)	\$300.00
Troy Road (Obion, TN)	\$300.00
Bakersfield (Bakersfield, MO)	\$200.00
Main St (Troy, TN)	\$200.00
Moody (Moody, MO)	\$200.00
Poughkeepsie (Poughkeepsie, AR)	\$200.00
Clarkridge (Clarkridge, AR)	\$150.00
Agnos (Agnos, AR)	\$100.00
Elizabeth (Elizabeth, AR)	\$100.00

Individuals

Ellen Smith	\$3,770.00
Gordon Barnett (Salem, AR)	\$90.00
R.B. Watts (Gilmer, TX)	\$50.00

Contribution Total **\$7,560.00**

Postage Cost \$2,480.92

Printing Cost \$1,955.25

Total Cost **\$4,436.17**

Difference **\$3,123.83**

The Churches of Christ

- Bible only (2 Pet. 1:3)
- Name of Christ (Rom. 16:16)
- Began in Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2-3; Acts 2:1-4)
- Established by Jesus (Matt. 16:18)
- Purchased with Jesus' blood (Acts 20:28)
- Married to Christ (Rom. 7:4)
- Established in the 1st century (Acts 2:47)
- Jesus the Head of the One Body (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4; 5:23)
- Added to the church by God (Acts 2:41, 47)

Salvation

- Saved by grace, through faith (Eph. 2:8-9)
- Not by faith alone (Jas. 2:14-26)
- Not by grace alone (Matt. 7:21)
- Belief and baptism (Mk. 16:16)
- Repentance and baptism (Acts 2:37-38)
- Belief, confession, and baptism (Acts 8:37-38)
- Heard, believed, baptized (Acts 18:8)
- Faith and baptism (Gal. 3:26-27)
- Baptism does save us (1 Pet. 3:21)

Scan the QR code to
 get access to all of our
 online content!



Fulton County Gospel News (USPS Publication #211780) is a periodical publication issued bimonthly by the church of Christ at Third & Bethel (PO Box 251), Mammoth Spring, AR 72554-0251. **POSTMASTER: Please mail all changes of address to the above address.** FCCGN is mailed free of charge to any who care to receive it. If you send in a name we must have a complete address, including number and street name, or RR, or HCR number, plus box number, or a PO Box number and the **NINE DIGIT ZIP CODE**. This paper is supported by voluntary contributions for which we are grateful. Financial information will be furnished upon request.

Mail address corrections to: Fulton County Gospel News, PO Box 251, Mammoth Spring, AR 72554

Editor - Barry O'Dell - Office Phone - (870) 625-3217