

Genie In A Bottle

Personal Study

"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.

And if we know that he hears us - whatever we ask - we know that we have what we asked of him."

~ 1 John 5:14-15 (NIV)

We've all confessed...so how have YOU treated God as a "genie in a bottle"?: _____

GOD



The above bible verse has been greatly mis-understood. What is the key part of that verse that proves God is NOT our "genie in a bottle"?:

How will you change your perception of God?:

Scripture verses to help you continue to study "Genie In A Bottle"

"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows." ~ **James 1:17 (NIV)**

"For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me."
~ **John 6:38**

"Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."
~ **Mark 11:24 (NIV)**

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened." ~ **Matthew 7:7-8 NIV**

"Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it."
~ **John 14:12-14**



The LORD's Prayer

It's a Pattern, Not a Chant. Jesus said, "This, then is HOW (not what) you should pray..." Jesus gave it as a pattern for his followers to copy. He did not intend for them to recite it as if they were chanting a magical incantation that would force God to do what they want him to do. The different parts of the Lord's Prayer are meant to teach us something about God, prayer, and about our need.

"Our Father in Heaven." First, we should start our prayers by recognizing that we are praying to God Almighty who is in Heaven. But at the same time, we approach him as a child approaches his loving father. God is "in Heaven," but He is our loving Heavenly Father. Just as a respectful child approaches his father with humility and love, we also should approach praying to our Heavenly Father with humility and love rather than praying as if God is a "Cosmic Vending-Machine" who is there to give us whatever we ask for. We should start our prayers by humbly recognizing who we are and who God is.

"Hallowed be your name." We barely ever hear the word "hallowed" today, and most of us couldn't give a good dictionary definition for it... and yet many recite it in the Lord's Prayer without giving much thought to what we're saying in this line. "Hallowed" literally means "to make holy" or "to demonstrate as holy." So when we say "hallowed be your name," what we are praying is, "show us how holy and perfect and 'different from us' you are!" This line really is an extension of the opening acknowledgement that God is our Father in Heaven: First we recognize that God loves us and listens to us ("Our father in heaven") and then we move on to recognize his holiness ("hallowed be your name). God is not our buddy whom we should carelessly address, but neither is He is distant and uncaring God whom we should be terrified to pray to.

"Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." God is the King. When we say that God is "Sovereign," what we are declaring is that God really is in charge of everything. Even some atheists pray when their loved ones are in a terrible life-threatening accident. That's because there's just 'something' inside of us that tells us God is in control, and Scripture time and again affirms that idea. The word "will" means the same as "desire," so by praying for God's will to be done we are praying for all that God desires to be done. If we pray but refuse to submit to God's authority ("your will be done..."), then we are only deceiving ourselves and we're not really praying the way Jesus taught his followers to pray. As Jesus' people pray and obey God's will for them, his kingdom is made increasingly evident to the unbelieving world around them.

"Give us today our daily bread." God provides. He does not give us everything we ask for, but He gives us everything we need. This doesn't mean that people who are dying of starvation aren't praying enough (but it does mean that others aren't praying "your will be done" enough!). God provides everything we truly need. This points back to when God was leading Israel out of Egypt and provided the Manna from Heaven each morning for them to eat. God did not give them enough to last any more than a day, so that they would have to continue relying on Him to provide. Likewise, if we are following Jesus, each day can trust that He will provide everything I need for today; and tomorrow he will provide for

everything I need tomorrow. God cares for his children and takes care of them.

“Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.” God is the only one who can forgive sin, I think most people agree about that. In Matthew 6:12 the Lord's Prayer says “Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors” while Luke 2:4 says “Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.” Scholars agree that the reason these lines are different is because Jesus probably taught them this prayer in Aramaic (which was the commonly spoken language of the day), so when they wrote the prayer in Greek they used different words to communicate what Jesus said. This line in the prayer is significant, because we we pray we confess our sins to God and admit our need to be forgiven. You cannot receive forgiveness if you don't admit that you need it!

“And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.” Confessing sin to God in prayer is really important, but so is repenting from your sin. I like to think about “Repentance” as doing an “About-Face” – imagine you're walking one way, then you stop, turn around, and start walking in the opposite direction that you were walking in before – that's what repentance is like. When we confess our sin to God we are admitting our need to be forgiven and that we have dishonored God. Confession is great, but if we do not repent of our sin then we are doomed to repeat it. Praying this part of the Lord's Prayer might sound like this: “God, I know that I have sinned by gossiping about my coworker. This does not honor you and isn't what you want from me. I want to speak well of people and not be known as a gossip or slanderer. When I am tempted to gossip, remind me of your desire for me to to speak well of people and make me a blessing rather than a discouragement.” It's important for us to realize that we cannot escape temptation on our own, no matter how “good” we are or how much self-control we have. We are fully dependent upon the Holy Spirit who lives in Christians to give us eyes that see temptation coming and feet to escape it.

“For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, Amen.” Technically, this isn't in the Lord's Prayer in Scripture and therefore some traditions don't say this when they recite the Lord's Prayer. This simply is a way of closing out the prayer while again declaring God's holiness and sovereignty. We pray for God's kingdom and power and glory to be lifted up and made more beautiful in the eyes of all people. “Amen” is an expression that means, “So be it” or “Make it so.” By closing our prayers with “Amen,” we are declaring that we truly believe that God has heard everything we have said and that He will do it.