

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR *Real Life*

62. Because the Answer is Found in the Asking

You are listening to episode 62 of the Encouragement for Real Life Podcast, titled, *Because the Answer Is Found in the Asking*. Welcome back to the podcast today. I'm thankful you are here! I love it when friends sharpen one another. When they impact each other for good and help each other become the best versions of themselves. That's true friendship right there. One of these kinds of friends and I have an ongoing conversation about asking God specific questions, like asking Him specifically for things like what we need or what direction we are to take. And this conversation has been enlightening to me. It has revealed some interesting behaviors within me and has pointed me to the question, *do I ask God or do I simply assume He'll just provide for what I need? Do I ask or just assume?* I believe this is so important, that it's the subject of today's episode. What does God have to say about all of this? I invite you to hang with me here for the next short while and we'll find some help and hope and real-life encouragement in our relationship with God. Let's get to it.

My friend said it best.

Because it's all in the asking.

She's a wise woman, beyond her years, and our ongoing conversation about seeking God and asking Him for provision and answers has spurred me on in my faith recently. As a side note, interestingly, she and I have never met in person, but we both know God has intertwined our lives in ways we could have never done on our own. All through the Voxer app (which is like a walkie talkie app). We communicate daily, sometimes multiple times a day.

That's where she said those words, "Because it's all in the asking."

She was referring to her own experience in asking the Holy Spirit what she needed to pray about and what specific questions she needed to ask. And in listening to her walk this line of thinking out, I walked my own experience out as well.

Yes, it's all in the asking. Because truly it is. What do I mean by that? Well, when we don't know what direction to take, or how to handle a situation, or what to say, or how to make it through a difficult season, do we just assume God will help us? Do we just assume He will guide us? Do we assume He will provide, answer, or give us what we need? Without taking it to Him in prayer. Without asking Him about it or for it?

But God can do anything.

Right? He is in control, He knows all and sees all. (We talked about that in last week's episode.) He is above all, and His ways are not our ways, and His thoughts are not our thoughts. (Good thing, right? At least in my case.) And sometimes He shows up in ways we could have never asked for, or dreamed, or imagined. It's in those times we are humbly grateful for His intercession, and we praise and thank Him for it.

Ephesians 3:20 TLB says it this way: *Now glory be to God, who by his mighty power at work within us is able to do far more than we would ever dare to ask or even dream of—infinately beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, or hopes.*

So, yes. He is able to do much more than we can even think of.

But God clearly states in His Word how we are to ask Him for what we need. We are to seek Him for His provision. I think of two scriptures regarding this.

Matthew 7:7-11 VOICE: *Just ask and it will be given to you; seek after it and you will find. Continue to knock and the door will be opened for you. All who ask receive. Those who seek, find what they seek. And he who knocks, will have the door opened. Think of it this way: if your son asked you for bread, would you give him a stone? Of course not—you would give him a loaf of bread. If your son asked for a fish, would you give him a snake? No, to be sure, you would give him a fish—the best fish you could find. So if you, who are sinful, know how to give your children good gifts, how much more so does your Father in heaven, who is perfect, know how to give great gifts to His children!*

Mark 11:24 VOICE: *So listen to what I'm saying: Whatever you pray for or ask from God, believe that you'll receive it and you will.*

So, we are encouraged to ask.

To ask God for what we need. To ask Him for direction, guidance, healing, vision, wisdom, strength, whatever is on our hearts to ask for. We are to go to Him and ask for everything and all we need. Because maybe, just maybe, we're assuming He'll just provide all we need, and we never get around to the asking.

Do you ever do this? Because I think I have. I think I've neglected to partner with God in prayer at times.

I know it's not easy to ask for help. My parents raised me to be a strong, independent woman, and to not have to rely on anyone. I'm thankful they did. But there's also a downside to that. I don't like asking for help. I can do it on my own, thank you very much. If this is difficult for you, too, I completely understand. And sometimes it's just easier to do things ourselves, right?

But could it be we don't receive because we don't ask? Especially when it comes to God? Because how can He answer if we never ask the question?

James 4:2b (VOICE) states: *You do not have because you have chosen not to ask.*

Yikes.

So, yes. It's all in the asking.

My friend was spot on.

So, does that mean I can ask God for a million dollars and *voilà!* I'll have it? Or does this mean I will receive everything I pray for? Everything I ask God for? Will God grant you every request? (You probably already know the answer to this because you've experienced it.) No. God loves you and me too much to give us everything we ask for and to leave us to our own devices. He wants what's best for us, and sometimes what we want isn't God's best for us. And He knows that. Out of love He protects us from ourselves, and I'm so very glad He does.

God isn't a genie who lives to grant our wishes. No. He isn't going to give us all we ask for. But scripture says He will give us what we ask for that's aligned with His will.

Another translation of that same verse I mentioned a minute ago, Mark 11:24, in The Message translation gives us insight into this.

That's why I urge you to pray for absolutely everything, ranging from small to large. Include everything as you embrace this God-life, and you'll get God's everything.

Did you catch the ending of that verse?

"You'll get God's everything." Not your everything or my everything. But God's everything for you and God's everything for me.

Praying for God's will is modeled for us in how Jesus prayed in Matthew 6:9-13 King James 21 Century Version. Also known as the Lord's prayer. Verses 9b-10 read:

Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven.

Thy will be done. Not Julie's will be done or not your will be done. But God's will be done.

And His will is the ultimate best for us. We can trust this to be true, and we can trust Him wholeheartedly.

When we pray and ask and we don't receive, what's up with that? Well, James 4:3 VOICE gives us insight:

And when you do ask, you still do not get what you want because your motives are all wrong—because you continually focus on self-indulgence.

We are to pray and ask God according to His will.

Again, it's all in the asking.

And the more time we spend with God, the more in tune we will be to His will for our lives.

For example, I do not know God's complete will for my life. But I do know some parts of it because I've spent time with Him and in His Word to learn it. Like I know His will is for me to encourage women because He continues to show me that and it gives me great joy to do so. His will is also for me to write, because writing fills me up and encourages my own heart. I also know God's will for me is to be involved in my children's and grandchildren's lives. Because He's opened doors for me to do that and He blesses me each time I get with them. And I also believe God's will is for me to bring women together at my local events. Because of the fruit that happens during these events.

But knowing these things doesn't mean I stop praying for His will.

I continue to seek Him and ask for His wisdom, guidance, vision, and purpose according to His will for me and my life. Because when I'm in the center of His will, I feel fulfilled, at peace, and full of joy. And when I'm out of His will, well I certainly feel the opposite of all three.

It's a good practice to pray for whatever is on our hearts, according to His will. For example, this is a similar prayer I sometimes pray:

Father God, because You are sovereign and You reign over all, I trust You. You know what's best for me, so I desire Your will for my life. Please give me your wisdom, vision, strength, and creativity today. Please guide me and direct my steps, according to Your will, not my own. Help me be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit today. It's in Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

You could pray something similar according to what's on your heart or what your needs are. But God knows your heart. He knows what you need. And asking Him for it all not only blesses you, but it blesses Him as well.

Why not give it a try today?

Prayer doesn't have to be perfect, and prayer doesn't need to be complicated. It's simply having a conversation to God. It's praising Him, thanking Him, confessing to Him, and asking Him for what You need. Prayer grows our relationships with God, and it's essential for our growth. Prayer is a beautiful gift! We get to talk to the One who created us and everything we see! How incredible is that??!!

If you follow me on Instagram, you might see that I offer a "Today's Simple Prayer" each morning. It's there as a reminder to pray, to remember prayer doesn't have to be complicated, and to pray for what's on our hearts. These prayers are shorter than 15 seconds in length, yet they get to the point. If you're interested, you can find my Instagram link in the show notes.

Is there some area of life you haven't asked God for help with yet? Is there something specific you can ask God for today in prayer? Now is as good a time as any. Remember, He won't answer unless we ask.

We are taking this discussion over to our Encouragement for Real Life Community on Facebook this week. Come on over to be encouraged and uplifted. The link to this group is in the show notes.

If you found encouragement in this episode, would you please rate it and/or review it so others can find this too? Be sure to subscribe to the podcast so you never miss an episode.

In closing, it is all in the asking. God encourages us to ask Him, to seek Him, and to keep knocking. He encourages us to ask according to His will, and to believe He will answer. God loves us so very much, and He is ready and willing to handle anything we bring to Him. Draw near Him today, friend. I think that would make Him smile. Thank you for being here. I'm glad we're in this together. God bless you!

Julie Lefebvre