

J.R. Miller:

"If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." Matthew 21:22

There are other scriptures qualifying this:

In the first place, it is not all asking that is really praying "and therefore not all asking that receives. James says, "You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts." A man asks for money, not to use it for the glory of God and the good of others "but for his own glory and pleasure.

Again, the Psalmist says, "If I regard iniquity in my heart "the Lord will not hear me." That is, if one is cherishing a secret sin in his heart while he is trying to serve God "no prayers that he offers will be heard or answered. So here are at least two kinds of asking that will not bring an answer.

Then there are conditions. One is that we must ask in Christ's name. That implies that we believe in Christ as our Savior, and are His faithful friends, and therefore have a right to use His name. This condition narrows down the promise to the true followers of Christ.

Another condition is that we are abiding in Christ, and His words are abiding in us. Even a Christian who is following afar off does not come within the circle of this promise.

Then there is another qualification which belongs to all promises to prayer. God Himself must be the judge as to the things we ask, whether they would really be blessings to us or not. There may be things we desire very earnestly "that it would be the greatest unkindness to grant us. Is God then bound by this promise to give us what we crave? By no means. The Lord will give what is good. "No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly." But He will withhold even from the most upright, the things which in His Divine wisdom "He sees would not be good things. This is implied in every such promise as this.