

Dear Shama Jean,

Thank you for writing us at Christian Questions Radio. You told us that even though you ask God for intelligence in life and wisdom to serve him, you feel as if you are failing on both counts. You wanted to know how else you could pray to grow.

The Apostle Paul tells us to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). There is a reason he makes that statement. Prayer is the Christian’s lifeline. No matter how hard the Christian tries, he is beset with sin from his own fallen flesh, from the world’s allurements, and from Satan. The Christian is incapable of withstanding these attacks on his own. The only way he can stand firm against them is to go to the Lord in full submission, asking for His strength. The Apostle tells in Romans 12:12 to “be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful [instant] in prayer.” What a blessed privilege to be able to lift up our hearts and minds to God at any time and in any place! Believers who come to Him never weary God. Jesus illustrated this point when he told his disciples the parable of a persistent widow, who was answered because she refused to give up. Likewise, we should pray and not give up (Luke 18:1-8)

However, are our prayers always answered? “You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss” (James 4:3). Prayers offered in harmony with the scriptural condition that we are abiding in Christ (John 15:4) are always answered, even if the answer is “no” or is long delayed. The Christian should strive to learn what God’s will is for him, rather than tell God what his preferences are. Such prayers are “asking amiss.” He should pray for development of character so that he will grow in Christ-likeness and not seek his own will, but seek to do the will of God.

Every trial of faith and patience is an occasion for prayer. Every failure is an occasion for prayer for forgiveness as well as for blessing that the lesson may be deeply impressed upon us so that in the next similar experience we may lay hold upon the “grace to help” (Hebrews 4:16) promised. Every victory we have over our self-wills is an occasion for prayer that we stay humble and watchful for the next attack by Satan. We should also pray for opportunities to serve the Lord and for grace to use these opportunities wisely.

You asked how you “could pray to grow.” You can pray to be more like God’s dear Son, Jesus, who never sought to do his own will, but always sought to do the will of his Father. You will begin to grow when you pray continually, asking for forgiveness and mercy, for strength against the wiles of Satan and the allurements of the world, for guidance in life’s affairs, and for thankfulness in all matters, even hard experiences, since these experiences are allowed by God for the Christian’s spiritual development. Worship not only implies prayer in its elements of invocation, praise, thanksgiving, confession, petition, communion, and assurance, but a whole-hearted deadness to self and the world, and aliveness to God.

We should render this complete devotion in grateful and appreciative faith, hope, love and obedience.

“O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.” (Psalm 95:6)

We hope we have helped you. Be sure to sign up for CQ Rewind at www.christianquestions.net. The service is free without obligation and will provide you with scriptural perspective on many questions and topics.

Sincerely,

Christian Questions Radio