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Dear Praying and Supporting Friends,

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Greetings from North Central Nigeria! I want to begin this letter by thanking you for your support. Your financial support has been very helpful in carrying out our numerous assignments and your prayers have been very uplifting.

The importance of prayer in a Christian's life cannot be over emphasized. As important as prayer is, it has been a difficult assignment for Christians. It is often neglected and taken for granted. Why are there so many promises in the Word of God concerning prayer? Why is God teaching us about this subject and why did Christ pray? Why did he respond to the disciples by teaching them how to pray and why did He encourage His disciples to always pray? Why will God who is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent ask His children to ask before He answers given these three main attributes? If God is indeed omnipresent (everywhere), omnipotent (all powerful) and omniscience (all knowing), why does He not use His fore-knowledge and almighty power and His presence everywhere to help the Christians who are His children by virtue of faith in the finished work of Christ at Calvary? This is the lesson I have been learning lately.

The answer to this question is GOD IS GOD and He does things His own way. Isa. 55:8,9 says, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

I. GOD'S PROMISES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT:

There are numerous promises in the Old Testament for God's people Israel, and even those concerning the nations. Here are just a few of these undertakings by God in respect of His covenant people.

1. Isa. 30:19: "For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: thou shalt weep no more: He will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when He shall hear it, He will answer thee."
2. Isa. 65:24: "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear."
3. Isa. 58:9: "Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and He shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;"
4. Jer. 29:11-14: "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive."
5. Jer. 33:3: "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not."

6. Pro. 15:29: "The LORD is far from the wicked: but He heareth the prayer of the righteous."
7. Ps. 91:15: "He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him."
8. Ps. 65:2: "He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved."
9. Ps. 34:17: "The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles."
10. Ps. 55:17: "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and He shall hear my voice."
11. Ps. 145:18,19: "The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of them that fear Him: He also will hear their cry, and will save them."
12. Zech. 13:9: "And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God."

II. JESUS' PROMISES IN THE GOSPELS:

In the New Testament, the Lord Jesus made profound statements concerning prayer. All these appeared in the four gospels. The amplification of these promises, orders or directives to His followers are now seen in the practice of the apostles and the early Church. Throughout the book of the apostles we see the fulfillment and actualization of what the Lord had told them earlier. The apostles and the disciples of the apostles also became witnesses to these truths as God confirmed them through their messages as the church spread from Jerusalem to Judea, Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the world. But the Christian can only see the true reality as the words of Jesus are accepted and believed unreservedly. Do you really believe these words of Jesus to the truth? Was Jesus really serious when He made these promises? Should these words of Jesus be taken literally? The Christian does not have a choice in this matter.

1. Matt. 6:8: "Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him."
2. Matt. 7:7, 8, 11: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"
3. Matt. 21:22: "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."
4. Mk. 11:24: "Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."
5. Lk. 11:9: "And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."
6. John 14:13,14: "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it."
7. John 15:7: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."
8. John 16:23,24: "And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."
9. I John 5:14,15: "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."

III. CONCLUSION:

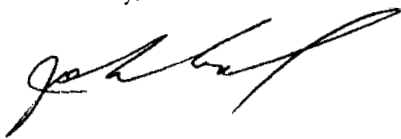
There are so many promises of God scattered throughout the Bible for the benefit of the people of God. Unbelievers do profit from some of these promises on their own and as they come in contact with God's people. Just as we see in the Abrahamic covenant (Genesis 12) where the nations were promised blessings through Abraham. Throughout the Old Testament history we see how God took care of the gentiles even though the covenant was not primarily meant for them.

Today, unbelievers living among Christians partake in the fruits of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. They receive physical blessings as Christians are blessed by God in many different ways. Christians who have been given Kingdom authority as children of God are also enjoying the blessings of God because of the new covenant. The death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ has made these blessings in the heavenly places possible. Unfortunately, not many Christians are enjoying the abundant life promised by Jesus because of unbelief and doubting the Words and promises of Jesus himself. It is my hope that these scriptures would give new meaning to your hearts as you read these short message because it is only in believing and relying completely on the truth of the Word of God that you would find true rest, physical and spiritual blessings now and in the life to come.

Finally brethren, remember to pray for the following points:

1. Spiritual revival of Christians and Churches in Africa
2. The filling of the Holy Spirit for African Christians
3. The economic growth of African Christians to result in the growth of the Church in Africa through increased giving to the work of the Lord
4. Qualitative growth of ministers of the gospel in Africa
5. Local resources (personnel and finance) for the promotion of missions and church growth in Africa
6. Open doors for the proclamation of the gospel
7. For the message of the Lord to go forth as it should
8. For the Christians undergoing torture and persecutions
9. For the nations in Africa being threatened by famine and ecological disasters
10. For food for all in Africa so we do not mortgage our beliefs and conscience to donor countries of the world
11. And also for us all in the gospel ministry here in Nigeria

Yours truly,



John & Lydia Apeh along with Hosea & Rosemary