

Doctrinal Summary of
Prayer: Common Reasons for Rejection-Incompatibility with God's Will

In 1 John 5:14, John identifies incompatibility with God's will as a common reason why God rejects prayer requests.

"This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us."

The word "confidence" is translated from the Koine Greek word *παρησία* ("par-rae-si-ah") which more literally means, "confidence to speak freely and openly because of confidence one's position or standing, based on response." It identifies a mental disposition derived from recognition of a fact or set of facts that provides motivation to speak with courage and confidence. Here, John is speaking in relationship to the believer's confidence that he will receive his request from God. God has given believers the right to petition Him for their desires (cf. Eph. 1:5) as a result of being in Christ. But the believer's confidence that God will grant his request comes from his recognition that it will be granted if it meets the standard of God's will for him.

The words "according to" are translated from the Koine Greek word *κατὰ* ("kah-tah") which more literally mean, "according to the norms and standards of the limitations and boundaries of something." It identifies a comparison between two things whereby the first thing is evaluated and judged by the second thing. Thus, the believer's prayer request (the first thing) is evaluated and judged by the norms and standards of the limitations and boundaries of God's will (the second thing). If it meets the norms and standards of God's will for the believer, then it will be granted. If it does not meet the norms and standards of God's will then it will not be granted.

The word "will" is translated from the Koine Greek word *θέλημα* ("the-lae-mah") which more literally means, "desired objective pursued by choosing to carry out a specific course of action, being a tool or instrument used to accomplish something." It identifies an objective that an individual has which he pursues by carrying out a process or protocol that he believes will accomplish or secure the objective he desires. God's will for the believer consists of all the objectives that God desires for the believer's life. This includes God's general plan for the believer's life and the specific occurrences that take place within it. All of which is a part of God's overall will for the universe within the angelic conflict. If the believer asks anything that is in line with God's will for him, then he can have confidence that God will hear and grant his request.

The word "hear" is translated from the Koine Greek word *ἀκούει* ("ah-kou-ei") which more literally means, "He really performs the action to hear and respond positively to what has been heard." It identifies an individual hears something and then acts accordingly and favorably toward carrying out the appropriate response to what he heard. If the believer's prayer request is in line with God's will, then he can be confident it will be granted. But if the believer's prayer request is not in line with God's objectives for him, then no such confidence is present because God is likely to reject that which is not His desired objective for the believer.

Often times prayer requests are rejected without the believer understanding why. Though there are many reasons why God will reject the believer's prayer request, one of the more common reasons is that it just flat out does not meet the standards of God's plan for the believer's life or circumstance.