

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.**

Fellowship with the Lord can be investigated in this sections by looking the conditional statements.

- If you remain in me.
 - “Ask” - 7b.
 - Bear fruit - 8.
- If you keep My commandments - 10.
 - Remain in Heavenly Father’s Love.

If you remain in Me.

Both of these conditional statements are 3rd class - maybe yes maybe no. Every day the believer has the challenge to do two things - “remain” and “keep.” What does it mean to “remain” - “abide?” The original uses the subjunctive, aorist,¹ word of *meno* - to remain - to stay - to be permanent. The LXX uses this word to depict God as One who endures forever - Who is steadfast to His people (Dan 6:26). God’s word remains forever (Isa 40:8). The new heavens and new earth He is going to create will endure forever (Isa 66:22). In the New Testament the same application of changelessness is applied to God’s Immutability: His word stands forever (1 Pet. 1:23, 25). Jesus remains forever (John 12:34).

So how does that apply to the other side of the equation - the believer? Please note that Jesus makes application for us in that we are to be like Him. In verse 9 we see our Heavenly Father continues to love His Son - Jesus loves His friends - disciples. He makes the application that we should love Him. The context suggests with the same constancy as He loves us. In verse 4 Jesus uses reciprocity to strengthen this relation - “I in you - you in me.” Interesting way Jesus put it - “Abide in me, and I in you.” That was a command - how can we fulfill the second part of that command? Yet it is there - so intimate is this relationship when the condition of reciprocity is used it becomes compelling. In verse 10 we are to keep His commandments as He keeps His Father’s commandments. This is, indeed, a tremendous responsibility on our part **to be completely occupied with Christ**. Occupation with Christ represents a very important part of the Christian imperative - along with;

- Confession of personal sins (1 John 1:9),
- The filling of the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18),
- Faith-resting in Him (Heb 4:1 - 11).

“...ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you....”

The Commandment of Asking.

Actually, this isn’t the word to be used for prayer but it certainly points to it - it is a

¹ As part of the 3rd class conditional clause.

very down-to-earth word to request - anything. A startling idea. Both Towns and Lenski point out that we are commanded to ask - it's not that we may ask, or might ask but that we must ask. Note that it is connected with our wills. Lenski draws from the illustration of the Vine in that the Vine orders the branches to ask of it all that it is able to give. There is no limit from the resources of the Vine. There is, however, the limit of the will of the branches - that's us folks. The Christian experience is not one of passiveness nor is it one of fate. Rather, it is one where the believer knows that he is in the tender care of the Husbandman and that all the resources of the Vine are made available to the branches - indeed commanded to be so.

So where does that put us in our personal prayers? I think we all have used the phrase "if it is your will" when it comes to our requests to our Heavenly Father.

How does that apparent uncertainty square with this command - to ask what we "will?" I think we need to take a second look at our prayer life - it's frequency, it's importance in our lives as

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Christ's disciples, and the true nature of what prayer *is*. May I be blunt and say that before we "will" for something to be so, we should be in such an intimate relationship with the Father that the thought "if it be your will" should certainly not be an escape hatch,² should our requests not be fulfilled. Prayer, in my view, is an ongoing experience. Paul said that we should "pray always."³ Jesus found it necessary to be alone so that He could pray unto the Father. If He found it necessary - should we require less prayer? Prayer is viewed by as a staccato experience by many believers - a series of disjointed wish lists that we present to the Father so that we might have our desires fulfilled. I do not think that is what Jesus meant by "ask what you will."

Here's a potentially disturbing thought; and what about cooperate prayer within the family and the local church? By way of example, the Brooklyn Tabernacle in New York city started out a small struggling church barely surviving. During a time of soul-searching Pastor Jim Cymbala keyed in on the necessity and power of prayer. Well, the rest is history, as they say - Brooklyn Tabernacle is growing in ministry at a tremendous rate. One comment I remember him saying during an interview was that they would not look for a sanctuary larger then was necessary to accommodate their prayer meeting. Here is a portion of Pastor Cymbala's personal message on their web site, <http://www.brooklyntabernacle.org/>:

² Christ used this expression properly in [Matt. 26:38 - 40](#). He knew the Father's will - it was also His will.

³ Ephesians 6:17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: [18] **Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit**, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; [See these verses also.](#)

“Eventually we began to learn many things, especially the necessity of real prayer to secure God's grace and power in our work. The Tuesday Night Prayer Meeting, though very small at the start, became a central feature in the life of our church and has remained so to this day.”

I use this example only to point out the importance of believers praying together. When Peter was put in jail for his witness for Christ, the church prayed non-stop. However, being mortal, I suppose, when their prayers were answered and Peter presented himself after having being miraculously delivered, they thought he was not real.⁴ So let's take another look at our verse. I will add some comments within the verse:

John 15:7 **If ye abide in me** [that's up to us], **and my words abide in you** [the result of our abiding in Him], **ye shall ask** [this is an act of obedience to His command] **what ye will, and it shall be done unto you** [it will become a reality in your Christian experience].

That conditional clause is very important. Paul said that we were to *present* our bodies a living sacrifice⁵ - a veiled reference to the Levite tribe of the Old Testament. They had no land - they had no physical inheritance - the Lord was their inheritance. During their dedication, they were offered as a wave offering unto the Lord - a living sacrifice, if-you-please.⁶ Look at the implication of being a living sacrifice from the Levite's point of view. Their whole life was centered around service to the Lord, particularly with regard to maintenance of the Tabernacle, a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.⁷ The Levites were completely maintained by the Lord Himself and were to serve Him without reservation and consideration of this world's goods. This is the condition of “If ye abide in me...” The whole of our Christian experience hangs on it. That being the case and His words abiding in us Jesus states (middle intensive voice of “it shall be done unto you”) that it will come to pass.

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⁴ [Read Acts 12:1 - 16.](#)

⁵ [Read Romans 12:1, 2.](#)

⁶ [Read Numbers 18.](#)

⁷ [For a more in-depth study please read of the Levites from my series on the Tabernacle.](#)