We will discuss the topic of prayer by taking as reference John 15:1-8

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and ever

y *branch* that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. “I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned. **If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.** By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.”

We see how Jesus is talking to His disciples about abiding in Him and bearing fruit. About being branches and Him being the vine. After telling them all the important things like that without Him they couldn’t bear fruit and they can not do anything by themselves alone, He told them also that if they abide in Him, they can ask anything they desire and it will be done. Just think about it – anything we desire. What does it mean to ask anything we desire, if the Bible speaks about praying according the will of God?

We can see these two parts in the new testament that deal with prayer and we can compare them. They don’t contradict each other, they just complete each other. The first one is in James 4:2-4

“You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend *it* on your pleasures. Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”

This verse is telling us that sometimes we can ask in the wrong way and not to receive. We may ask for something to spend it in our pleasures. I think that this kind of prayer that gets rejected is having to do with our friendship with the world as the last part of the passage is speaking about. We nevertheless need to keep on praying, then if our prayer is somehow not right, we trust in God that He will show us what to correct and which is the right way of doing it. It could be also that even praying with the right attitude and for the right things, it is not time for some things to come right now in our life and we will receive them later on, in another time. We anyway need to keep on praying asking God for discernment.

There is the example of Jesus as well praying in Mathew 26:39

“He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You *will.*””

From these two passages we see that prayer is not having to do with what we would like only, but with His will and we also need to pray for what is right according to Him.

Let’s see other passages that speak about the other part of prayer.

“Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.” Mathew 18:19,20

This verse says that if two or three agree on earth concerning anything they ask, it will be done for them. Here it speaks about “anything”, but how we can define it? Notice also that it speaks about being gathered in His name. it is not a question of only to mention His name, but also to honor what His name represents. The other verse is the one in John 15:7

“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.”

It speaks about something similar as the previous passage we read – to ask for anything or else said for what we desire. Again this invitation comes with something else along – to abide in Him.

Lets see the passage from the beginning so that we can know what does this exactly mean. We need to see something about faith as well. Our kind of faith and the faith that can reach God, the one that comes from Him. You ask anyone on the planet and they will tell you that they have some kind of faith for certain things to happen. People believe in something, they have their hopes in something. Many times it happens that they don’t place it in the right place. When instead we speak about the faith that leads us to God, the faith that is accepted by God and it comes from Him, then we see that this kind of faith is humble and it glorifies God. It accepts what comes from Him. There is the example of the Greek woman that was praised for her faith.

“Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, “Lord, help me!”

But He answered and said, “It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw *it* to the little dogs.”

And she said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.”

Then Jesus answered and said to her, **“O woman, great *is* your faith! Let it be to you as you desire.”**And her daughter was healed from that very hour.” Matthew 15:25-28

We can see here that she was praised for her faith, but she was praised because she humbled as we see from the previous verses. In those days in Israel, the dogs were considered as very low class of animals. They were despised and yet, we see her comparing herself to those dogs and saying that just by receiving a little, was going to be sufficient, just by receiving crumbs that usually no one eats. In this way she showed to have a humble attitude while pleading Jesus to help her. This is the faith that pleases Him. Faith, of course is to be sure, to believe and have certainty, but it is also having to do with being humble. I believe that this is also a work of God. He is helping us and leading us to be humble, we just need to respond. This is the attitude and faith that pleases Him.

“The centurion answered and said, “Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this *one,* ‘Go,’ and he goes; and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes; and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does *it.*”

When Jesus heard *it,* He marveled, and said to those who followed, “Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!” Mathew 8:8-10

Here we see when Jesus praised another person for His faith. And it was again this kind of particular faith that was making that person humble and was leading him to ask the things that he desired, in this case for his servant to be healed, but with the right attitude, humbly. He being a great man of power and authority, being a centurion, said that he is like one of those soldiers submitted to him, ready to do whatever his master is telling him. He was saying that he is the same in front of Jesus and also said that he is not worthy of receiving Him in his home. He was such a great person and being used to command, he could’ve commanded Jesus to perform a miracle and even if in this way wasn’t going to work, he anyway understood who is in control and who is having the ultimate authority (that was Jesus) and humbled before Him. We can see that this great faith, the one that is praised by Jesus and pleases Him, is having to do with an attitude and is humble.

Jesus speaks also about abiding in Him in this chapter. To abide in Him means also to desire His presence, to dwell in Him, to submit to His words, to everything He is, to be prayerful, but not only by asking what we desire, but also what pleases Him. That’s why we are speaking about **abiding in Him**.Not in what we are, but in what He is. Meaning that in a way we need to look more for His presence, more for His person, not just to ask for things that we wish to happen. Important is what God wants to happen. That’s why one of the phrases He taught His disciples to pray for was: “Let Your will to be done”. This is important – His will. What pleases Him is also good for us, as we are His creatures, we are created by Him. We need to be one with Him. We are supposed to be in this way. That’s why this passage in John is telling us to abide in Him. To be one with Him. When we understand what is abiding in Him and what pleases Him, we will also change and will realize our purpose. Then I think that also our prayer will change and the things that we wish to happen. We will not ask anymore what can harm us, we will not pray in the wrong way by asking the wrong things to spend them in our desires.

What usually happens is that the statement of asking what we desire attracts everyone at the first look. We need to know that what comes first is not to ask what we desire, but to abide in Him.

**“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you**, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.” John 15:7

We are speaking about abiding in Him and His word to abide in us, meaning what His word is saying, His commandments. Then we can ask what we desire, but what I think is that when we abide in Him and we’ve got His faith, then we will automatically ask what pleases Him.

The secret and the most important is in abiding in Him. Then we understand the real purpose and then we begin knowing God, which is the purpose and is the most important.