

The Simple Secret to Answered Prayer

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The Simple Secret to Answered Prayer by Christ John Otto.
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Since the late 1980's
I have been involved in many prayer groups,
and I have led hundreds of prayer meetings.

I was looking for the
secret to answered prayer
that all the great saints
experienced in their own lives.

Once upon a time my prayer life
was very involved and complicated.
I was looking for the secret,
and the secret was very simple.

If God is the most relational being in the Universe,
and if what Jesus Christ said is true,
then all the promises about prayer in the Bible
will work
for anyone
regardless of
education,
ability,
or experience.
The secret is simple.

Jesus said in John 15:

I am the Vine you are the branches.
If you are living in me
and I am living in you,
you will bear much fruit.
When you are not connected to me
you can do nothing.

If you are living in me,
and my word is living in you,
then you can ask anything in my Name
and I will do it.
By this my Father gets glory,
and you will bear much fruit.

All the great saints and masters of prayer
learned how to live in Jesus,
learned how to hear his voice
and be in his Word,
and then prayed in alignment with that word.
And when they did this,
the life flowed,
and their prayers were answered.

And throughout history,
there is this incredible record
of people who saw their prayers answered,
in every denomination and tradition,
in every place where the Kingdom of God
was preached,
in every place where people
learned how to live in Jesus,
and listen to him.

I lead a prayer group on Tuesdays.
We have had a Tuesday prayer group for a long time,
and what I am sharing with you
is what I learned in our prayer group.

A few years ago I took a cue from Agnes Sanford,
and our Tuesday prayer group began doing "prayer experiments."
We prayed for something concrete,
and we have seen God answer real tangible prayers
with real tangible answers.

We have seen a man who was pronounced
"dead on arrival"
rise up from his hospital bed.
We have seen broken bodies heal.
We have seen God provide in impossible situations
and we have kept track of the miracles.
For the record,
we have received five MacBook Pros,
seven cars,
hundreds of plane and train tickets,
over 500 rolls of toilet paper,
and unlimited supplies of food,
clothing,

and daily provision.

We have had two events that went viral on the internet.

And we have watched as men and women
get transformed and changed.

We have learned the secret of answered prayer.

And I am going to share this secret with you.

Jesus is the Vine.

One of the reasons
many people see little or no answer to prayer
is that they try to see something happen
without the source of Life.

Jesus Christ is the Vine.
He is the source of life,
and that source
is where the life comes from.
Our job is to tap into his life
and let it flow through us.
And Jesus warned us
that apart from him
we can do nothing.

The fruit of this is obvious.
Any place where people attempt to do something
without Jesus,
even good things,
they eventually become corrupt and ineffective.
Good intentions,
even the best and most virtuous,
are powerless,
and will become a source of evil,
when they are done in human strength.

There are thousands of churches everywhere
that are trying to stay afloat and survive
through programs,
rituals,
strategies,
gimmicks,

and initiatives.
They see little or no success,
because there is no life.

People are hungry,
and they will go where the food is.
When there is nothing to eat,
the people leave.
Jesus is the bread of life
and when you offer no bread,
there will be no one there.
Where the body is
the vultures gather.
It is very simple.

The same with prayer.
Jesus is the Vine.
And he told us to judge a tree by its fruit.
We live in a time
when we are being told not to judge things
by the fruit they produce,
but rather,
by the good intentions
and the expertise
of those making the decisions.
Look around,
the fruit is very bad.

Christians have also adopted this idea,
and there are many beliefs and methods
that bear bad fruit and do not work.
And the lives of those around us are a mess.
Jesus wants us to bear good fruit,
fruit that will last.
That fruit will come when we are connected to him.
He is the Vine.
He is the source of life.
There is no other source.

The next part of the secret is this:
We need to live in him.

So Jesus said that he is the Vine

and we are the branches,
and that we need to live in him.

In other words,
we need to become a vehicle
for his life.
We have to get connected to him
and learned to stay in connection.

This is not theology or philosophy.
This is practical.
And how do we do this?

First,
we need to remove the things that stop the flow of life.

Again and again
in the Sermon on the Mount
and in the gospels,
Jesus tells us that when we hold onto
unforgiveness
the flow of life
will not flow through us.
And so before we pray,
we take time
to forgive.

Lots of people struggle with this,
but I have learned a simple way to forgive.
I imagine the person who hurt me
and I say to them:
I forgive you,
and I release you.
And then I imagine them walking away with Jesus.
And I pay attention to how Jesus
responds to them.
And I wave goodbye.

And if that person comes back again,
I do it again.
And eventually I am free.

And I have also discovered

that when I am upset or angry about something,
my anger will stop the flow.
God can do nothing with human anger.

And so I imagine my anger
as a big red ball.
Sometimes the ball is really big.
And I take my big red ball and I throw it off to Jesus.
And then I wait.

Most of the time,
when I give my unforgiveness and anger to Jesus
I begin to sense the flow of life.
That flow is the life of the Holy Spirit.
The flow is the life in the Vine.
And without this life
I can do nothing.

God gave you feelings and imagination,
and they are tools to activate your faith.
It's okay to imagine things
and to feel things.

Remember what I said
about bad theology,
good intentions,
and no fruit.

I have fruit,
and I can promise you
what I am telling you works.

**The next part of the secret is very important.
We live in Jesus
and his word lives in us.**

Jesus is telling us what needs to be in place
for his life to flow.
We need to live in him
and his word needs to live in us.

Many of the promises in the Bible are conditional.
We have to meet a condition

in order for something to happen.

Part of the secret to answered prayer is meeting the condition:
If you live in Jesus
and you live in his word,
then you can ask anything in his name.

So once we have removed things that block the flow:
our anger and unforgiveness,
we need to listen.

We need to listen to his word in the Bible,
because God will never say something to us
that is contrary to the clear reading of the Bible.

So we need to be in the Bible all the time.

In Isaiah
it says that God's thoughts are not our thoughts
and God's ways are not our ways.
Many people think of human ways
and then they ask God to bless these human thoughts.
And then they get offended when
God doesn't answer their prayers.

This is why we need to learn how God does things.
The best example of this for us
is the life of Jesus,
and the record of this is in the Bible.

But that is just the dead letter.
You need to sit with God,
and listen to him.
And if you are living in Jesus,
you will begin to recognize the voice of the Shepherd.

That voice will be
calm,
kind,
loving,
and gentle.
The Good Shepherd
does not drive his sheep.
Jesus is never in a hurry.

So if you hear something
that is hurried
and full of pressure,
that is another voice.

It might be your unsettled soul,
or it might be some unhappy spirit.
The more time you spend with Jesus
and in the Bible,
the more clear his voice will become.

So our Tuesday prayer group sits.
And when we sit,
we listen.
And sometimes we sit for a long time in silence.
Sometimes it takes a while to detox
from the world, the flesh, and the devil.

And then God begins to talk to us.
Sometimes it will be a verse from the Bible,
sometimes it will be a mental picture.
Sometimes it will be a thought about something.
And when we hear these things,
we begin to pray in agreement and accordance with them.

**And this is the last part of the secret.
We ask anything in his name.**

Jesus says this four times to the disciples
at the Last Supper.

Ask anything in my name.

Of course,
this is also conditional.
Often you will hear preachers say,
"Jesus said that, but . . ."
Jesus didn't say "but."

But there is a condition.
You have to be living in him
and living in his word.

And if you are in that place
where the life is flowing,
you can ask anything in his name.

From praying with people
and teaching this,
I can tell you
that if someone chooses to ask something
outside of the flow of life,
then the life stops flowing.
And usually the group can feel it.
And sometimes the religious instinct
rises up in people
and they think they need to do something to get the life back.
And so they start praising,
or babbling some prayer that worked once,
or getting anxious.

No,
that will only make it worse.

If the life stops flowing,
you stop.
You pull back,
and rest.
And you listen.
And when you sense the flow again,
you say,
“Lord, help me to pray in accordance with your word.”

Again, it is very simple.

There is always constant pressure to not pray this way,
to revert back to human effort
and try to pray a certain way to get something from God.
And periodically,
I have to remind my group
that we are drifting back into the old
disconnected
way of praying.
And when we do,
we stop and go back to the simple steps.

Jesus is the Vine.

**We need to live in him,
and get reconnected
through forgiving others and releasing anger.**

**His word needs to live in us
and so we wait for his word.**

And then we ask in his name.

It is very simple.

And when you stop
hearing guidance
from the Holy Spirit,
you stop.

Sometimes you will get more done in ten minutes
than in all the prayer meetings in the world.
We don't have to pray more to impress God.

And when you are done,
you rest.

And I pray a prayer like this:

**Thank you, Lord Jesus,
for being with me in this time.
Thank you for the life flowing through us
and for all the fruit we are going to see.
Surround me and our group,
and protect us as we leave this time.
Amen.**

It is very simple.

And then you wait and see the fruit.
You don't have to pray more.
You aren't trying to make God do something.
You are following the lead of the Holy Spirit.
And if you pray for real things

you will see real answers.

And you will see fruit,
and God gets glory from the fruit.
So tell people that you found a vine
with a lot of life,
and that this Vine produces good fruit.

Trust me,
other people will come along
and want to get connected.

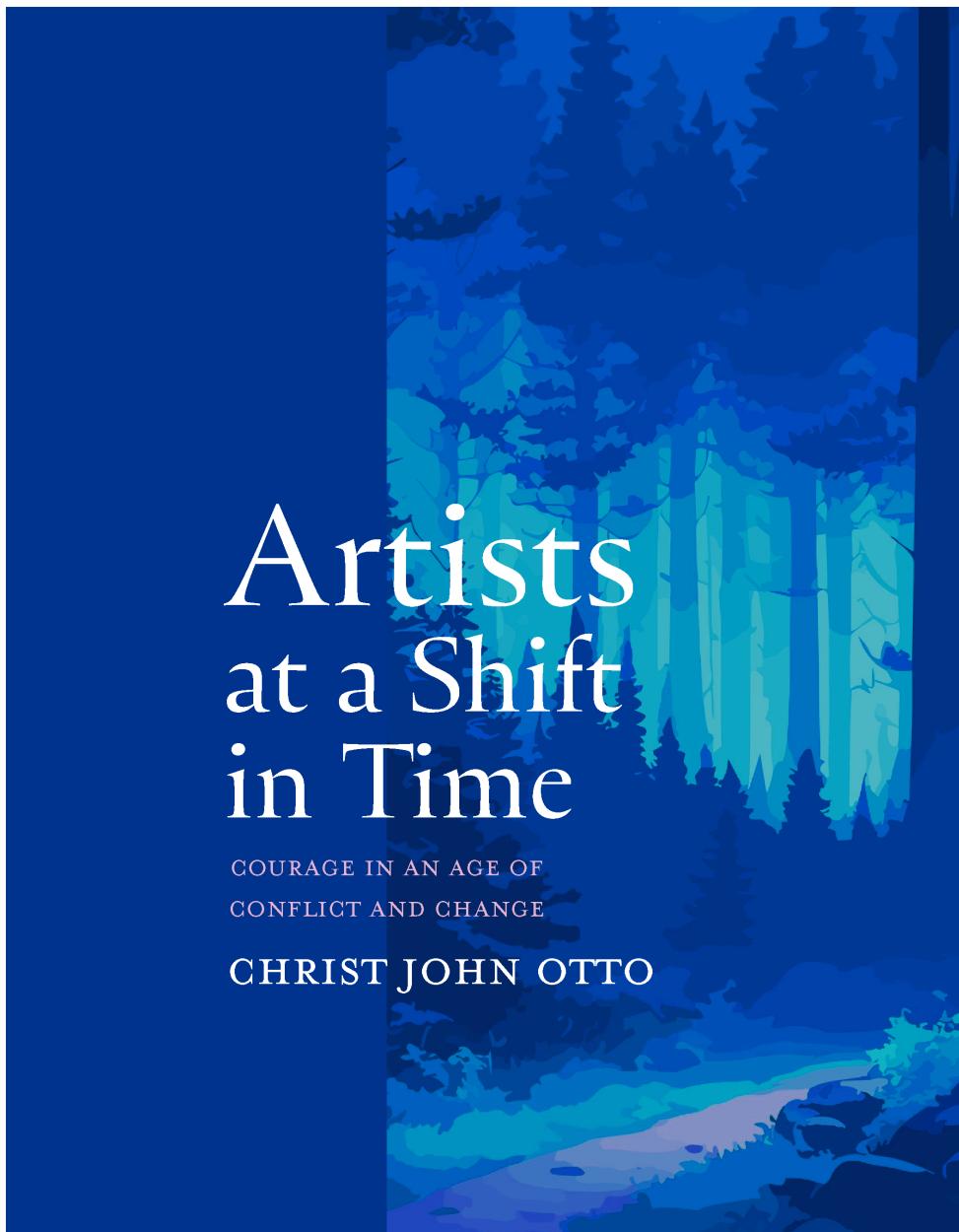
The secret to answered prayer is very simple.

And finally,
if you really do not know what to pray,
Jesus said pray this way.

I translated the Lord's Prayer from the Greek,
and this prayer is what our community uses.
Again, it is very simple,
and it works.

**Father of us all,
who rules and reigns within the heavens,
may your name be made holy among all nations.
Come Kingdom of God.
Be done, will of God,
on earth as that will is unhindered in heaven.
Give us today our supersubstantial bread.
Forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us away from trials,
and deliver us from the evil one.
For the Kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever.
Amen.**

Christ John Otto is the leader of Belonging House and is the author of several books.



His most recent is *Artists at a Shift in Time*. Available on [Amazon](#) and wherever books are sold.

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