

CA 05 EMAW 05 YOU DO NOT HAVE BECAUSE YOU DO NOT ASK
(MUSIC THEME)

FOSTER: For those of you who are dads, I have a question. If I gave you two coins for every time your kids said, "Daddy can I have...?" how wealthy would you be right now? Most of you would collect a lot of money, right? Yet if God were asked how many times He heard us say, "Daddy can I have? What would His answer be?"

Welcome to Champions Arise. I'm Foster Braun with Kent Darcie. Today we're focusing on the challenging statement that is found in James chapter 4 verse 2. "You do not have, because you do not ask God." Is this saying we aren't asking God enough? What can we ask for? Who can ask God for things? These are important questions and we'll discuss some answers when we return to Champions Arise.

(THEME MUSIC IN – 5 S.)

(MUSIC THEME OUT)

FOSTER: Kent, when we read James's words "You do not have, because you do not ask God," it makes it sound like we don't ask enough. But it seems like, in today's world, all people do is ask for things. Have we changed, or am I missing something?

KENT: I don't think you are missing anything. It's a very fair question. I think the best way to start our discussion today is with a story of a situation that actually happened. There was a couple who were newly married. They were Scott and Joyce. They were a typical couple who, though they tried to live by godly priorities, they both worked and only had a little money left at the end of each month. Joyce wanted a piano, in fact she had asked for one just after they were married. Scott had scrimped and saved before marriage to start a business, put together a down payment for a house, and to pay off student loans. So he thought a piano was a luxury. When she brought it up, they'd have an argument that would end with Scott saying, "We just can't afford it." One day, while they were on a short vacation to visit Joyce's family, Scott decided to have an extra-long Quiet Time. While he was reading his Bible, Joyce was downstairs playing the family piano. She played and played and he could tell she was really enjoying herself. And, Scott hadn't realized how much he enjoyed hearing her play the piano. Now here is where things get tricky. Scott started thinking, "Maybe I should spend the house-savings and buy a piano." But God had something else in mind. While Scott was reading his Bible and meditating, he noticed James 4:2, "You do not have, because you do not ask." And there was also a cross-reference in his Bible to John chapter 16 verse 24, which says "Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete!"

Over the next two months, every day Scott secretly prayed that God would provide his wife with a piano. He prayed for a nice one that she would really enjoy.

About two weeks later the miracles began to happen. First, a friend from college stopped by to pay off an old loan that Scott had long forgotten about. That was \$200! Scott suggested that

they put the money away in an envelope. Joyce thought it was a strange request, but she agreed. Shortly after that, an older Christian couple took them to dinner and gave them \$200, because they felt God had told them to do that. Scott decided to set aside that money in an envelope too. Well, Joyce began to get suspicious now, so Scott told her how he had been challenged in his quiet time to pray for a piano. So now they both prayed for God to provide them with a piano. A month later Joyce was given some money as a birthday gift and Scott got a bonus for finishing a job. Now they had \$850 in the piano fund! This was great, but unfortunately, a good piano costs a lot more than \$850. But one day Scott and Joyce heard about a family who were moving and had to sell their piano. It was just six years old and hardly used. Guess how much they were asking for it.

FOSTER: I'm almost afraid to say it, \$850?

KENT: \$850. God had blessed them with a piano. And it all started with Scott and his quiet time with God.

FOSTER: What a great testimony of God's provision. I'm sure many of us could tell about God blessing us or blessing people we know. But if that's true, why don't we ask more? And does this mean that God just gives us whatever we want, whenever we want?

I want to look at this in more detail, but first if you are just joining us, this is Champions Arise. I'm Foster Braun and the other voice you hear is Kent Darcie. We are discussing a topic that is based on chapter 6 of Lonnie Berger's book, "Every Man a Warrior."

Kent, we know we are not supposed to treat God like He's Santa Claus who just gives and gives, but when James wrote "You do not have, because you do not ask God," he seems to be saying we have the opposite problem. So why don't we ask God for things?

KENT: I think the first question to answer is who can ask? The answer to that is Christians. James is writing to people who had accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Those of us who have accepted Jesus Christ's sacrifice on the cross for our sins, believe that He rose bodily from the grave, and confessed that we will follow Jesus all our lives, are God's children. The Apostle John confirms this in his first letter where he writes, "See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are."

And Jesus said in Matthew chapter 7 verse 11, "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!"

FOSTER: That's an important clarification. So, as Christians, why don't we ask God to help us with our needs?

KENT: Let's look at two big reasons. First, some of us don't realize that we can ask. We might think God is too busy, or our needs are too small or unimportant. But as Christians we need the right perspective of God's relationship with us. The Apostle Paul wrote:

"And because we are his children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, prompting us to call out, "Abba, Father." [NLT]

The word "Abba" means Father, or actually "Daddy." This is the relationship those who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord have with God. So we can ask. And we don't have to be

timid about asking either. In Hebrews 4 verses 15 and 16 it says, "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." So we can come boldly to our Heavenly Father with our requests AND the Bible says He cares about those requests. 1 Peter 5 verse 7 says, "Give all your worries and cares to God, for He cares about you."

So we can boldly ask God for our needs because we are His children (if we've accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior) and because He cares about us as a loving Father.

FOSTER: What an amazing image that is of God loving us as His children. But you said there were two key reasons why we don't ask for things from God. What is the second reason?

KENT: I think the second reason is, if we're honest, we don't believe God will answer our prayers. Partly because we're like the father who brought his son to be healed and Jesus asked him, "do you believe?" and the father said, Yes I believe, help me with my unbelief." I think that father's plea speaks to all of our hearts. But there's another cause. And one of the reasons Champions Arise is so important, is because we don't avoid the tough questions. As men, and the spiritual leaders of our homes, we need to deal with these issues. And I say all that because I think another reason we don't ask God for things, is because we've asked God in the past, and He either apparently didn't answer, or didn't answer the way we wanted.

We prayed for someone to be healed and they died. We prayed for a rebellious son or daughter to turn around, and their behavior got worse. We prayed for a job so we could support our families and it didn't happen. Maybe as a young person, we prayed that the abuse would stop, and it didn't. I believe everyone listening has seen God answer prayers. But, we've all experienced situations where (it appears to us) that He didn't. And that's hard. But how should we deal with that? Without sounding simplistic, we have to pray and trust God. And that is not just idle words. That is following in the steps of our Lord. In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus prayed. He prayed that He wouldn't have to go to the cross. But God's answer—His loving heavenly Father's answer—was no. Jesus had to go to the cross.

But this is the point, even though He didn't get the answer He wanted to His prayer, Jesus trusted God. And we have to pray and trust Him too.

FOSTER: [Somberly] But it's not easy is it?

KENT: No. it can be hard, and very painful sometimes—as it was for Jesus.

FOSTER: [Still on the somber side] Basically God has the big picture and sometimes answering our prayers the way we want isn't what's best.

KENT: That is what the Bible teaches us.

FOSTER: Are there any other reasons God doesn't answer our prayers?

KENT: Yes and we mentioned it earlier. James 4 verse 2 begins with, "You do not have because you do not ask," but ends with, "And even when you ask, you don't get it, because your motives are all wrong—you only want what will give you pleasure." What this verse is saying is

God might not answer our prayers for the same reason we don't give our children everything they ask for. It's not good for them. That is why the daily quiet time we've been teaching about over the last few programs is so important. It keeps us focused on God's desires and His will.

FOSTER: So since the Bible encourages us to pray and ask, what should we pray for?

KENT: Philippians 4 verses 6 and 7 give us that answer. It says "Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus."

FOSTER: We are just about out of time, and I'm really sorry because this has been very interesting. Kent, please do a brief recap of where we've been. Our focus has been James chapter 4 verse 2, "You do not have because you do not ask."

KENT: Yes and first we discussed that those who have Jesus Christ as their Lord can ask. We also looked at why we don't ask, and why God may not answer prayers. We learned that we can pray for anything, but our daily quiet times with God keep us focused on praying for things that will honor God. We covered a lot today, but you can review this lesson in the book "Every Man a Warrior" in Lesson 6.

IF TIME PERMITS

<p>FOSTER: Kent, I think we've touched some hearts with this message. Would you pray for our listener's please?</p>
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<p>KENT: It would be my privilege. [PRAYER}</p>
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FOSTER: Thanks Kent. We've been challenged to have a daily quiet time and to give our needs and requests to God. I hope we will all take this challenge to heart and apply it in our lives. We'll be right back.

(MUSIC THEME IN)

CLOSING

(MUSIC THEME OUT)

FOSTER: Thank you for listening to Champions Arise where men are equipped and strengthened to meet their God-given potential. Today we looked at why men don't pray. The material for this program was based on lesson #6 in the book "Every Man a Warrior," by Lonnie Berger. His book is a great tool for individuals, small groups, or in a class at your church. For more information on his book or to hear this program again, visit our website at www.championsarise.org. I'm Foster Braun with Kent Darcie. Thank you for listening to Champions Arise. May God mold you into the man He knows you can be.