

## **Praying with Expectation**

Years ago we had one of the great Christian leaders in the world speak at a spiritual life conference at Reformed Seminary in Jackson Mississippi where I was serving on the faculty. His messages were powerful and insightful. His grasp of Scripture was deep and profound. During the question and answer time, one of the students asked him this question. "Doctor Stott, God seems to greatly bless your ministry in all you do; your books, your influence in the Christian world, and especially your preaching. How do you account for this?" Doctor Stott's answer was a little surprising. He said, "Because I expect Him to." He went on to explain, that if you pray for God to bless your testimony and your witness in the world, you ought to pray with the expectation your prayers will be answered, otherwise, why pray? That makes a lot of sense. Mostly our prayers have to do with material success, good health for ourselves and those we love. In these prayers we may pray hopefully and trustingly, but we have no promise from God that we will always succeed in business, that we will always be healthy and wealthy. Quite to the contrary, we are warned that in this world we will have tribulation. Furthermore, we read in the Bible that all the great saints of old had their trials and temptations. This same story continues in the lives of God's saints to this very day. The history of the church is a study in persecution and martyrdom. But when it comes to seeking God's wisdom and blessing on the work we do for him, individually and collectively as a congregation, we can truly expect God to honor and answer such prayers. Oftentimes He has to correct us, and re-focus our attention and direction on His will. Then we can grow and persevere, and earnestly seek for His blessing on His work which He gives us to do. Like Doctor Stott, we may confidently expect His blessing. So as we pray for God to increase our influence for Him, for our churches to grow spiritually and in numbers as we seek the lost for Christ, pray in faith and with confidence. God is not reluctant to save the lost, or to revive His church. So pray believers, pray long and hard, and look for God to answer your prayers.