

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Does God Really Answer Prayer?

What is Prayer?

- Prayer is *not*:
 - Forcing or twisting God's arm to do something
 - Trying to manipulate God to answer our by making deals with Him
 - God is *sovereign*, He can choose to answer or not answer any prayer He wants
- Prayer *is*:
 - Communication with God, it's talking to God
 - An act of a believer's *devotion* to God
 - Offered in faith **James 1:6 (KJV) 6 *But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.***
 - Spoken or silent, private or public, formal or informal
- Prayer takes many forms:
 - *Adoration* - a prayer focused on worshipping God for who He is
 - *Confession* – Acknowledging our sins **Psalm 32:5 (NLT2) 5 *Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the LORD." And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone.***
 - *Thanksgiving* – a prayer of gratitude for something God has done
 - *Healing* - a prayer for physical or emotional healing in our bodies **Jeremiah 17:14 (NLT2) 14 *O LORD, if you heal me, I will be truly healed; if you save me, I will be truly saved. My praises are for you alone!***
 - *Intercession* - praying for others **Luke 22:31-32 (KJV) 31 *And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: 32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.***

The Problem is Not God, It's You

- Many people, the unchurched and some Christians think that when their prayers are not answered; God is the "problem"
 - The problem is not with God, it's with us in how live and what we're praying for
- God does not answer the prayer of those:
 - *With selfish motives James 4:3 (KJV) 3 **Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.***

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- Many prayers are not answered because we only want to gratify our lusts and pleasure
- *Who have unconfessed sin in their heart Psalm 66:18 (KJV) 18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:*
 - When we refuse to repent or when we love and maintain certain sins, we place a wall between us and God
- *Who remain in sin John 9:31 (KJV) 31 “Now we know that God heareth not sinners: ...”*
 - When we continue to sin, God turns His face from us and will not answer our prayers
 - God is holy and He does not excuse, ignore, or tolerate sin in our lives
- *Who have no faith James 1:6-7 (KJV) 6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. 7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.*
 - The root of prayer is faith in God, if you don't believe God answers prayer, why pray?
 - A “wavering person” has divided loyalty is not completely convinced that God's way is best
- *Who are proud 1 Peter 5:5 (KJV) 5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.*
 - When we insist on elevating ourselves and refuses to trust God as sovereign, good, and trustworthy, we will discover God resisting or opposing us; by not answering our prayers
- *Who will not heed God's Law Proverbs 28:9 (KJV) 9 He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.*
 - God does not listen to our prayers if we intend to go back to our sin as soon as we get off our knees.

The Prayers God Answers

1 John 5:14-15 (KJV) 14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: 15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

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- The emphasis here is on *God's will*, not “our will”
- God’s Word *is* God’s will
- We can have confidence that God hears our prayers if we are *in* Him, that is, in Christ
- We can approach God the Father *through* the Son
- You must *believe* on the name of the Son of God and approach God in His name.
- We can have confidence that God hears our prayer if we ask according to His will
- We can be confident that God will hear and answer our prayers when we are in right relationship with Him ask according to His will

How God Answers Prayer

- God answers our prayers in one of four ways:
 1. God says “No” when our request is not right **2 Corinthians 12:8-9** **8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.**
 - a. Paul prayed three time for Jesus to remove the thorn in the flesh from his life
 - b. Instead of cure or a “yes” answer, Paul got a “no’ answer
 - c. Jesus responded to Paul prayer by saying, “My grace is sufficient for thee”
 2. God says “Wait” when the timing is not right **John 11:5-6 (KJV)** **5 Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. 6 When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.**
 - a. Jesus will sometimes delay in answering our prayers, but His “delays” are not *denials*
 - b. The delays are designed to help us learn patience
 3. God says “Grow up” because the timing and the request are right, but were not right **Genesis 41:41 and 46 (KJV)** **41 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. ... 46 And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt.**
 - a. God showed Joseph when he was 17 that he would be a great ruler and that his family would bow to him

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- b. It happened exactly as God said after *13 years of growth* in the life of Joseph
4. God says “Yes” when the timing, the request, and we’re right **1 Samuel 1:19-20 (KJV) 19 And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the LORD, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah: and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the LORD remembered her. 20 Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of the LORD.**
- a. Hannah prayed and asked God to give her a baby because she was unable to conceive
 - b. Hannah prayed so fervently that Eli the priest thought she was drunk, she was pouring out her soul to God 1 Samuel 1:17 (NLT2) 17 “In that case,” Eli said, “go in peace! May the God of Israel grant the request you have asked of him.”**
 - c. God heard her prayer and He allowed her to give birth to Samuel

How We Can Answer the Question, “Does God Really Answer Payer?”

- Tell them:
 - Prayer is more than getting what you want, it’s means of communication and fellowship with God
 - God answers prayers of those who have placed their faith in His Son, Jesus Christ
 - Our faith in Jesus Christ gives us *relational access* to God
 - They need to have a personal relationship with God and if they don’t invite to give their life to Jesus
 - Praying in accordance to God’s will living a life pleasing to God are key to answered prayer
 - We pray to God *through* Jesus Christ with the *help* of the Holy Spirit **Romans 8:26 (NLT2) 26 And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don’t know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words.**
- Tell your own story of how God has answered your prayers