

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, November 6, 2013 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

PRAAYER THAT WORKS

Answered Prayer

Various

Honestly now, wouldn't you be surprised if all your prayer were answered? Have you prayed, or at least thought you were praying, for such a long time for certain things that if they ever happened you would be utterly dumbfounded? Did you ever have the experience of sharing with friends some matter about which you were praying? Then your prayer was answered, and you rushed to tell them, "Guess what? My husband really was converted!" (or "We did reach our Sunday School goal," or "Mrs. Jones actually was healed!"). Only to have them answer, "Well, what's so strange about that? You were praying for it weren't you?" And you had to admit, "Yes, I guess I was!"

Do you really expect an answer to your prayers? Have not most of us had the sad experience of praying so generally, for so long, that when scattered drops of answered prayer do fall, they are so rare as hardly to be noticed?

Why? Because about only 10% of our prayers are specific, faith-centered petitions. The overwhelming majority of our prayers are far too general to being a specific answer, or even a slightly recognizable answer amid the general blessing that are going to fall anyway.

We call out, "God bless America, God bless our church, God bless our revival, God bless the missionaries and Christian workers around the world," but seldom have our lives been strengthened by knowing that our prayer for specific events and people have been answered. In fact, we do not know whether our prayer are ever answered!

Away with such empty prayer. Nothing has affected my life or will yours, as learning of this mighty treasure in the storehouse of God's dealing with man. Answered prayer is not a miracle, it is a law. It should always be. It may always be. It will always be, when the laws are kept and certain rules are observed. It is always to be expected!

Early in my ministry I was greatly affected by the relationship of this face to the law of revival as preached by **Charles G. Finney**. His contemporaries said of Mr. Finney that "he prayed down revival." Of which the mighty preacher said simply, "*Nonsense. It is neither Scriptural nor logical. Revival is not a reward sent in answer to my much praying. When I pray I do not beg*

my Heavenly Father for blessing as though He were deaf, I merely make my requests known and then turn quickly the searchlight of prayer upon my own self. Prayer doesn't change God, it changes you, so that it is consistent for God to do what He wants to do anyway."

When the child of God prays and his prayer are answered, three things happened: (1) he has prayed in faith believing, (2) he has prayed specifically and has thereby met the condition of a loving Heavenly Father, and (3) the Father has responded.

Learn these things well. They are basic to the mastery of answered prayer. Answers by a loving Father to a faithful child are not promises held out as rewards, not miraculous, not strange or abnormal. They are the norm. This is as it should be. Meet the conditions... pray and expect... and prayer will be answered.

Were you to turn the temperature down to 32 degrees, and ice formed from water, would you be surprised? No, because a law has been in operation. The physicist does not say, "Let me make you a proposition. If you lower the temperature to 32 degrees, I promise that I as a reward, I'll give you ice." He says that there will be ice. It is not a bargain or a deal, not a proposition or a promise really. It is not even a reward for having cooled air. It is a law, immutable, unchanging laws. God's laws are as unbreakable and steadfast as God Himself. A man may think he breaks a law of God, but he does not... not really; he only breaks himself on that law. God's laws cannot be broken.

Examine carefully again, the famed Old Testament verse, *2 Chronicles 7:14*, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

Does this sound like a promise, a bargain, or a law? Observe the wording carefully. It is not as though He says that when these conditions are met I will do thus and so as a reward, but rather, "Then will I hear." Do you see it? Something big is going to happen! It must happen. God's people have fulfilled the conditions, and the results never vary.

We thrill at stories of great saints who have prayed unwaveringly for 20, 30 or even 50 years for specific things as though they held onto God by the skin of their spiritual teeth, thereby proving their great faith. But wait. Must this be the logical conclusion, or might there be the slight possibility that the admonition of *James 4:3* could be applicable, "You ask and receive not because you ask amiss"?

Must long, laborious, unanswered prayer always be a sign of great spirituality or could it be an indication that we might be praying erroneously, or that at least there could be a better way to pray?

Answered prayer is not abnormal, it is normal. It is not unusual; it is, or can be, your everyday experience... not to be marveled at, but to be expected.

THE POWER BEHIND ANSWERED PRAYER - "What is the power of prayer?"

The idea that power is inherent in prayer is a very popular one.

“According to the Bible, the power of prayer is, quite simply, the power of God, who hears and answers prayer.”

Consider the following Biblical truths from Scripture that affirm the power of God to hear and answer prayer.

Four Biblical Truths that Affirm that God Answers Prayer:

1. **The Lord God Almighty can do all things; there is nothing impossible for Him** - As Luke’s gospel puts it in Luke 1:37, *“For with God nothing will be impossible.”* Nothing! This is the affirmation from the whole of Scripture. There is nothing God can’t do... no problem too big, no obstacle too great. The Prophet Jeremiah records it like this in Jeremiah 32:27... the Lord God, Himself, speaking says to us, *“Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?”*

What does this truth alone do for our prayer life?

2. **The Lord God Almighty invites His people to pray to Him** – Throughout Scripture this truth is affirmed... that God desires the prayers of His people. Why would He do this? Does He invite us to pray just so He can hear us talk? Why would God invite the prayers of His people, unless He intended to do something about it? Again the Prophet Jeremiah records the words of God, Himself on the matter in Jeremiah 33:3, where God says to us, *“Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.”* Not only does God invite His people to pray... to call on Him, but through His Word He tells us how that should look:

6 Biblical Descriptions of How Prayer to God Should Look:

(1) **Prayer to God should be made persistently (Luke 18:1)** – *“Then He (Jesus) spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart.”*

(2) **With thanksgiving (Philippians 4:6)** – *“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.”*

(3) **In faith (James 1:5-8)** – *“⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. ⁶ But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”*

(4) **Within the will of God (Matthew 6:10 & 1 John 5:14)** – *“You kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”-Mt.6:10 and “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.”-1 Jn.5:14*

(5) **For the glory of God (John 14:13-14)** – *“¹³ And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.”*

(6) **From a heart right with God (James 5:16)** – *“¹⁶ Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”*

3. **The Lord God Almighty hears the prayers of His children.** - He commands us to pray, and He promises to listen when we do. The Psalmist says in Psalm 18:6, *"In my distress I called to the LORD; I cried to my God for help. From his temple he heard my voice; my cry came before him, into his ears."*
4. **The Lord God Almighty answers prayer** - The Psalmist says in Psalm 17:6 says, *"I call on you, O God, for you will answer me."* And in Psalm 34:17, *"The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles."* Another popular idea is that the amount of faith we have determines whether or not God will answer our prayers. However, sometimes the Lord answers our prayers in spite of our own lack of faith. In Acts 12, the church prays for Peter's release from prison (v. 5), and God answers their prayer (vv. 7-11). Peter goes to the door of the prayer meeting and knocks, but those who are praying refuse at first to believe that it is really Peter. They prayed he would be released, but they failed to expect an answer to their prayers.

Observation: The power of prayer does not flow from us; it is not special words we say or the special way we say them or even how often we say them. The power of prayer is not based on a certain direction we face or a certain position of our bodies. The power of prayer does not come from the use of artifacts or icons or candles or beads. The power of prayer comes from the omnipotent One who hears our prayers and answers them. Prayer places us in contact with Almighty God, and we should expect almighty results, whether or not He chooses to grant our petitions or deny our requests. Whatever the answer to our prayers, the God to whom we pray is the source of the power of prayer, and He can and will answer us, according to His perfect will and timing.

THE QUESTION BEHIND ANSWERED PRAYER –

As stated before, there are many questions that surround the subject of prayer, but when one comes to the subject of answered prayer those questions may escalate to an even more pressing level and include such pertinent question as; "I've prayed and prayer, why doesn't it seem God is answering my prayer?," or "My prayers don't seem to be getting above the ceiling, is God even hearing me?," or "I must have done something really bad, because God doesn't seem to answer my prayer!" And the questions on answered prayer seem to go on and on as many struggle to get a hold on the subject. Let's explore three especially gripping questions concerning answered prayer and see if these don't help us to begin to grapple with the issues surrounding our own prayer life a little bit.

3 Pertinent Questions on Answered Prayer:

1. **Does God answer prayer?**
2. **Do I believe that God answers prayer?**
3. **How can I have my prayers answered by God?**

These are the questions that we will explore in this section in our study on answered prayer.



"Does God answer prayers?"

Certainly we must affirm by faith that God can answer prayer! He is able... right? So, the short answer to this question "Does God answer prayer?" is, "Yes!" God has promised that, when we ask for things that are in accordance with His will for our lives, He will give us what we ask for.

You say, “Well, where are you getting that?” Listen to 1 John 5:14-15 again, ¹⁴ *Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him” (1 John 5:14–15).* So... God has promised that, when we ask for things that are in accordance with His will for our lives, He will give us what we ask for. However, there is one caveat (stipulation) to add to this... we may not always like the answer.

We pray for a lot of things—some good, some bad, some really pointless. But God listens to all of our prayers, regardless of what we ask. Matthew 7:7 says, ⁷ *Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.”* He does not ignore His children (Luke 18:1–8). When we talk to Him, He has promised to listen and respond (Matthew 6:6; Romans 8:26–27). Keep in mind that prayer is not our way of getting God to do what we want. Our prayers should be focused on things that honor and glorify God and reflect what the Bible clearly reveals God’s will to be (Luke 11:2). If we pray for something that dishonors God or is not His will for us, He is unlikely to give what we ask for. God’s wisdom far exceeds our own, and we must trust that His answers to our prayers are the best possible solutions.

3 Ways God Answers our Prayer:

1. **Yes!**
2. **No!**
3. **Wait, not now!**

**Or some variation of these*

His answer may be some variation of “yes” or “no” or “wait, not now.” Let’s explore each of these possible answers from God

Does God answer prayers? – When God says “yes” (1 Samuel 1&2, *focus: 1 Sam. 1:9-20*) In the first two chapters of 1 Samuel, Hannah prays and asks God to give her a baby. She had been unable to conceive which, in biblical times, was considered a mark of shame for a woman. Hannah prayed fervently—so fervently that a priest who saw her praying thought she was drunk. But God heard Hannah, and He allowed her to give birth to a child.

Some keys to “yes” answers to our prayer:

- (1) **A key to a successful answer to our prayers is genuine humility and brokenness before God (vv.7-8, 10)** – Genuine humility and brokenness catches the eye of God always! This was certainly true for Hannah! Her humble and broken hearts as she cried out to God caught his attention. The Psalmist tell us in (listen to this) Psalm 34:4-15, ⁴ *I sought the LORD, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. ⁵ They looked to Him and were radiant, and their faces were not ashamed. ⁶ This poor man cried out, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. ⁷ The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them. ⁸ Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him! ⁹ Oh, fear the LORD, you His saints! There is no want to those who fear Him. ¹⁰ The young lions lack and suffer hunger; but those who seek the LORD shall not lack any good thing. ¹¹ Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD. ¹² Who is the man who desires life, and loves many days, that he may see good? ¹³ Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit. ¹⁴ Depart from evil and do*

good; Seek peace and pursue it. ¹⁵ *The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry.* Remember James writes in James 4:10, ¹⁰ *Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.*” A word of caution here... genuine humility and brokenness does not “guarantee” an affirmative answer to our every prayer, but it does put us in the right heart attitude for prayer and being surrendered fully with the will of God. Jesus also reminded us in John 14:13, *“Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.”* If you have prayed specifically for something and God has granted it to you, then you can be assured that it is His will. Nothing happens without God allowing it to happen.

- (2) **A key to a successful answer to our prayers is fervency in our prayer life and request before the Lord (vv.10-13)** - The word “fervent” is a word that we hear often used in connection with prayer in Scripture. For example, James says in James 5:16, *“...The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”* In other words, fervent prayer is successful... it avails. What do we mean by “fervent” or “fervency”? It means ardent, enthusiastic, zealous, passionate. Passionate prayer from the heart accomplishes much. Hannah’s prayer had a “fervency” to it as illustrated by her “bitterness of soul” in verse 10, her “much weeping” in verse 10, her “deep vow” and sense of commitment in verse 11, her persistency in prayer in verse 12, and even Eli’s recognition of her apparent drunk in prayer behavior in verse 13. These were all outward, physical manifestation of fervent prayer. So often we don’t allow ourselves to go deep enough into our prayer, really crying out to God and getting to the point of earnest and fervent toiling in prayer before God. This is the kind of prayer that always finds God answering.
- (3) **A key to a successful answer to our prayers is believing faith and trust when we pray (vv.17-19)** - What I love in this story of Hannah is her reaction with Eli told her, her prayers were answered. Hannah prayed and prayed hard, humble and broken prayer, persistent prayer, fervent prayer, but as soon as she receive word from God that her prayer was answered. She walked away back into her life and believed God for the answer. So must we when we pray... pray believing!

Does God answer prayers? – When God says “no” (John 11:1-44)

In John 11, Mary and Martha wanted Jesus to heal their dying brother, yet Jesus allowed Lazarus to die. Why did He say “no” to these grieving women who loved Him so much when they sent Him word and asked Him to come? Because He had greater things planned for Lazarus, things that no one could possibly have imagined. “No” is one of the hardest answers we can receive. But, once again, it is important to remember that God is all-knowing and is aware of the entire timeline of history. He knows every possible outcome of every possible choice in every possible situation; we do not. He sees the “big picture”; we see a partial brushstroke. Proverbs 3:5 says to *“trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.”* When we get a “no” answer, we must trust that whatever we asked for was not God’s will.

Why God Sometimes Says No?

- (1) **When a “no” answer will glorify the Father (v.4)** – Again when Jesus was told that Lazarus was sick and dying, and they needed Him to come right away, Jesus essentially said “no” and lingered where he was for two more days. In the meantime Lazarus died. Verse 4 tells us why Jesus said “no” to going immediately to Lazarus and healing him, *“... it is for*

God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." As believers and children of God our highest aim should always be for God's glory, even above our want's and wishes. Sometimes our what we are praying for and the outcome we are looking for, may actually shortcut God glory in us and through us.

- (2) **When the circumstances surrounding a "no" answer are in accordance with His will (v.11)** – After lingering for two days Jesus decided to head to Bethany and the home of Lazarus even though they knew that danger awaited Him there. In verse 11 He explained to His disciples his reason for going now, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep (died); but I am going there to wake him up." It was not God's will to go and heal Lazarus' sickness. It was God's will to go and resurrect Lazarus. I much better answer to the problem really. Applied spiritually... we often pray for our sick loved ones to be healed and it doesn't work out like we want it to. We lose them, they fall asleep and die like Lazarus. And just like Mary and Martha's hearts were broken, our hearts are broken with the "no" answer from our Lord, but just because there was a "no" because that wasn't God's will... God's will was even better. It involved ultimate healing... resurrection. And our loved ones who get the "no" answer to their healing here, as believers, get a better answer in God's will... resurrection, heaven, eternal life.
- (3) **When a "no" answer is for our best, even if we don't know it (vv.14-15)** – A very interesting conversation between Jesus and His disciples taken place in verses 11-15, that essentially concludes with Jesus saying to them in *verse 14, "... for your sake I am glad I was not there (to heal Lazarus), so that you may believe."* If Jesus had done what everyone was asking Him to do... run immediately to Bethany and heal Lazarus, they would have never experienced first-hand the resurrection power of Jesus, nor seen not just Lazarus and his family changed, but all the spectators changed. His words to His disciples was my ways are better than your ways just trust me.

Does God answer prayers? – When God says "wait, not now"

(Acts 1:3-12) Sometimes hearing "wait" is even harder than hearing "no" because it means we have to be patient. **Romans 8:25** says, *"²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance."* While waiting is difficult, we can be thankful God is in control and trust that His timing will be perfect. **Romans 12:12** tells us to *"rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation and continue steadfastly in prayer."* And the Psalmist tells us in **Psalm 37:7-9**, *"⁷ Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him; do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass. ⁸ Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; do not fret—it only causes harm. ⁹ For evildoers shall be cut off; but those who wait on the LORD, they shall inherit the earth."* Remember, God wants the best for your life. He does not want you to suffer needlessly. **Jeremiah 29:11** says, *"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope."* Abide by **Philippians 4:6** as you make your requests to God, *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."* Then, when God responds, be prepared to accept His wisdom—whether or not you agree with His answer.

5 Things "Wait, Not Now" May Mean for Us:

- (1) **Wait, not now reminds us that God knows better than we do**
- (2) **Wait, not now reminds us that God's timing is better than ours**

- (3) Wait, not now reminds us that God's plan is the one we need to follow
- (4) Wait, not now reminds us that faith and trust are being built into our lives
- (5) Wait, not now reminds us that God's has our best interest at heart.



“Do you believe God really answers prayer?” (Habakkuk 1:1-5ff)

Really and truly... do you really believe that God hears your personal prayers and cares enough to respond? Your answer to those questions probably dictates if, when, where, and how you pray. You know, prayer can serve many purposes, but generally speaking, it's an intimate conversation with God. Prayer involves Him stirring our hearts, us communicating with Him, and then listening for how God may respond to us. Now, when it comes to prayer, there are a lot of folks who have the idea that God doesn't want us to ask Him questions. But that's not true! God delights in His children asking Him questions. In fact, God was asked questions... big and small... all the way through the Bible.

One of the people who literally put God "on trial" was a man from the Old Testament named Habakkuk. Habakkuk was a prophet in Judah, and he felt the full weight of the problems, pressures, sins, and difficulties of his family and of his nation. And although Habakkuk lived a long time ago, his story is extremely relevant...especially when you look at modern history and all that we're dealing with in America and around the world.

In **Habakkuk 1:2**, Habbakuk asked the following of the Lord, **"How long, O LORD, will I call for help, and You will not hear?"** This was one of those big, deep, tough, "life" questions that Habakkuk was asking God. In the midst of all the chaos surrounding his life, he was basically asking, **"God, where were you when I needed you the most?"** Habakkuk was grappling with something each of us deals with as believers... unanswered prayer. He was complaining about the silence of God... and in his heart he desperately wanted to know why God wasn't answering his prayers.

I'm sure you've probably felt this way before. Anyone who's been walking with the Lord for any amount of time has. We want answers when we pray! And it's frustrating when it seems like God is silent. If you've ever felt this way, or even feel this way today, I have a word of encouragement for you. God does answer prayer. But He does it in four different ways.

4 Ways God Answer Prayer: (These sound very similar to what we just said a minute ago, but they are reinforced through Habakkuk)

- (1) **He is always answering even when we don't see it** - Sometimes the Lord can't hear us when we pray. And it's not because we need to talk louder or speak more clearly. Sometimes God can't hear us when we pray because according to Psalm 66 and Isaiah 5, there is sin in our life.
- (2) **"No."** - Sometimes the Lord says "No" when we pray. And while this can be a very difficult answer to receive, it's still an answer...regardless if we understand His decision at the moment or not. God is able to reveal His strength in you and me when we are broken and weak. So there is a purpose when God says "No."
- (3) **"Yes."** - There is true power in prayer. And when we pray in Jesus' name, He may also say "Yes." "Yes, I'll forgive. Yes, I'll heal. Yes, I'll step in to help."

- (4) **"Wait."**- Sometimes the toughest answer to receive from God is "Wait." When this happens, we need to remind ourselves that God is in control and can certainly handle our situation. We need to allow Him to continue working in whatever way He sees fit. And we can't try to take back the situation, but must truly be patient and wait on God's timing!

And this is exactly what God said to Habakkuk. He told him, "Even though you don't think I'm listening, Habakkuk, I am working on a plan that is so much larger than you." The truth is, even though Habakkuk couldn't see it, God was working the whole time! And the same is true in your life as a follower of Christ. If you're in a holding pattern, trust that God *is* working, and that He is sovereign over all the details in your life.

God indeed does answer prayer...and, yes, your prayers!

"How can I have my prayers answered by God?"

Many people believe answered prayer is God granting a prayer request that is offered to Him. If a prayer request is not granted, it is understood as an "unanswered" prayer. However, this is an incorrect understanding of prayer. God answers every prayer that is lifted to Him. Sometimes God answers "no" or "wait." ***God only promises to grant our prayers when we ask according to His will.*** *"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him"* (1 John 5:14-15).

3 Important Questions To Ask Regarding Praying According to God's Will:

- (1) **What does it mean to pray according to God's will?** - Praying according to God's will is praying for things that honor and glorify God and/or praying for what the Bible clearly reveals God's will to be. If we pray for something that is not honoring to God or not God's will for our lives, God will not give what we ask for.
- (2) **How can we know what God's will is?** - God promises to give us wisdom when we ask for it. James 1:5 proclaims, *"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him."*
- (3) **What according to the Bible are the specifics of God's will?** - A good place to start is 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24, which outlines many things that are God's will for us.

"¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not despise prophecies. ²¹ Test all things; hold fast what is good. ²² Abstain from every form of evil. ²³ Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it."

The better we understand God's Word, the better we will know what to pray for as Jesus, Himself said in John 15:7, *"⁷ If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will^[a] ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you."* The better we know what to pray for, the more often God will answer "yes" to our requests.

THE PROBLEM BEHIND UNANSWERED PRAYER

How many Christians have prayed for someone, only to see their prayers go unanswered? How many have prayed and perhaps have “given up” because either they have become discouraged through a weakness of faith or have come to the conclusion that whatever they have been praying for isn’t God’s will? Nevertheless, how we deal with unanswered prayer is not just for our own benefit but for the benefit of others as well. When we pray, we are engaging in the most precious and God-given act of communication with the One to whom we are accountable in all our affairs. We have been truly bought at a steep price—the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ—and therefore we belong to God.

Our privilege of prayer is from God, and it is as much ours now as when it was given to Israel (Deuteronomy 4:7). Yet, when we pray or speak to the One in Heaven, there are times when He seems not to answer. There can be many reasons for this, and the Scriptures suggest why and how our prayers are being dealt with by the One who is so tender and loving, who Himself loves our communing with God the Father, for He, Himself, is our representative ([Hebrews 4:15](#)).

4 Reasons Prayer May Appear to Go Unanswered:

- 1. A primary reason why prayer is unanswered is sin** - God cannot be mocked or deceived, and He who sits enthroned above knows us intimately, down to our every thought (Psalm 139:1-4). If we are not walking in the Way or we ask for things with the wrong motives (such as from selfish desires), then we can expect God not to answer our prayer because He does not hear (2 Chronicles 7:14; Deuteronomy 28:23; Psalm 66:18; James 4:3). Sin is the “stopper” to all the potential blessings that we would receive from the infinite “bottle” of God’s mercy! Indeed, there are times when our prayers are heinous in the Lord’s sight, most notably when we clearly do not belong to the Lord either because of unbelief (Proverbs 15:8) or because we are practicing hypocrisy (Mark 12:40).
- 2. Another reason way prayer may go unanswered is when we harbor enmity in our hearts toward our brother -**
- 3. Another reason prayer may go unanswered is wavering faith** – When we prayer Scripture tells us that we are to prayer believing.
- 4. Another reason why prayer seems to go unanswered is that the Lord is drawing out of our faith a deeper reliance and trust in Him** - Which should bring out of us a deeper sense of gratitude, love and humility. In turn, this causes us to benefit spiritually, for He gives grace to the humble (James 4:6; Proverbs 3:34). Oh, how one feels for that poor Canaanite woman, who cried out incessantly to our Lord for mercy when He was visiting the region of Tyre and Sidon (Matthew 15:21-28)! She was hardly the person a Jewish rabbi would pay attention to. She was not a Jew and she was a woman, two reasons that Jews ignored her. The Lord doesn’t seem to answer her petitions, but He knew all about her situation. He may not have answered her stated needs immediately, but still He heard and granted her request.

God may often seem silent to us, but He never sends us away empty-handed. Even if prayer has not seemingly been answered, we must rely upon God to do so in His own time. Even the exercise of prayer is a blessing to us; it is because of our faith that we are stirred to persist in prayer. It is faith that pleases God ([Hebrews 11:6](#)), and if our prayer life is wanting, does that not reflect our spiritual standing also? God hears our impoverished cries for mercy, and His silence

inflames us with a sense of persistence in prayer. He loves us to reason with Him. Let us hunger for the things that are after God's heart and let us walk in His ways and not our own. If we are faithful to pray without ceasing, then we are living in the will of God, and that can never be wrong (1 Thessalonians 5:17-18)