

## Why are some prayers answered and others are not?

Jesus promised to answer our prayers.

(Matthew 7:7–11) “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 9 Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? 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!

There are several reasons we might not receive an answer to our prayers:

1. We do not ask in faith. Instead, we doubt His answer.

(James 1:5–8) 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. 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. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

- Faith is a necessity in our prayer life. It’s the substance of our hope.
  - Believe you will receive...
  - (Hebrews 11:1) Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.
  - When we doubt, we lose hope, and we cease to abide in Christ.
  - (John 15:7) If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.
  - Notice the condition for answered prayer. We must abide in Christ, meaning we must live according to His will.
  - Doubt isn’t always about not receiving an answer, but not receiving the answer that we want. This leads to #2.
2. We ask according to our will, not God’s will. Our objective is not to glorify God.
    - (James 4:3) You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.
    - (John 14:13–14) And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.
  3. The answer is no, but for reasons we do not yet understand.
    - We ask for deliverance from a trial, but the burden remains.
    - (2 Corinthians 4:16–17) Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

- We pray for health, but God allows us to be afflicted. Either for reasons we don't understand in the present, or for the purpose of strengthening our faith, our dependence on Him, or because we will become better able to sympathize with people in affliction.
  - (2 Corinthians 12:9–10) And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.
  - (From Heaven with Love, p. 77) "When God brings us into trial, He has a purpose to accomplish for our good."
4. The answer is not now, but later.
- God's timing is different than our own. If a door God closes now, He often will open it later.
  - We have a limited perspective. We don't know what is best for all impacted by our circumstances.
  - (Psalm 27:14) Wait on the LORD; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the LORD!
  - (Psalm 40:1–2) I waited patiently for the LORD; and He inclined to me, and heard my cry.  
<sup>2</sup> He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps.
  - (1 Peter 5:6–7) Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.
5. The answer is yes, but in a different way.
- Sometimes God answers positively, but not in the way that we've asked. Only down the road do we discover why.
  - (The Faith I Live By, p. 64) "Our heavenly Father has a thousand ways to provide for us of which we know nothing."
  - God did not promise to give us what we want, but what we need.

#### How to make sure your prayers are answered?

- Repent from and confess the sin in your life. Holding on to a specific sin in your life can keep your prayers from being considered. We need to humble ourselves before the Lord.
  - (Isaiah 59:1–2) Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.
  - (Jeremiah 30:15) Why do you cry about your affliction? Your sorrow is incurable. Because of the multitude of your iniquities, because your sins have increased, I have done these things to you.
- Always pray according to God's will. Trust Him to do what is best.

- (1 John 5:14–15) Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, 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 the petitions that we have asked of Him.
- Do not tell God how or when to answer your request.
  - (Galatians 5:25) If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.
  - (Ephesians 6:18) praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit...
  - (Romans 8:26–27) Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.