

Why are There So Many Unanswered Prayers?

James 4:1-8

What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.

You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that He has made to dwell in us"? But He gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Prayer changes things.

God is sovereign.

God is all-powerful.

God does answer prayer!

And yet - people do pray and nothing seems to change.

Is prayer an emotional crutch?

1. God did answer your prayer – NO!

- He won't violate His will.

And this is the confidence that we have toward Him, that if we ask anything according to His will He hears us.

1 Jn. 5:14

And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do what pleases Him. 1 Jn. 3:22

Example

His will is to love our wives

Hurt your wife – prayers are hindered.

- He won't violate His character.

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You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.

James 4:3

Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? (4)

If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.

Ps. 66:18

... even though you make many prayers I will not listen. Isa. 1:15

The Lord is far from the wicked but He hears the prayer of the righteous.

Prov. 15:29

- He won't violate human responsibility.

Let Him ask in faith, with no doubting for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. James 1:6

For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord. (7)

Biblical Faith

. Built on God's Word (Rom. 10:17)

. Motivated by pleasing God (Heb. 11:6)

. Seen by our actions (James 2:18)

. Focused on Jesus (Heb. 12:2)

. Generated by prayer (Lk. 17:5)

God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. (4:6)

"Humility is the key to experiencing God's power"

Jim Cymbala

Submit yourselves therefore to God.

(7)

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

(8)

**2. God did answer your prayer –
WAIT!**

While you wait...

- He gives His Presence

Though he fall, he shall not be cast headlong, for the Lord upholds his hand. Ps. 37:24

I have not seen the righteous forsaken.
(25)

I will never leave you or forsake you. Heb. 13:5

Be their shepherd and carry them forever. Ps. 28:9

He will tend His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs in His arms. Isa. 40:11
Try to avoid or “fix” the wilderness.

When they finally hit rock bottom maybe they’ll come looking for Me.
Hosea 5:15 (MSG)

- He gives hope.

Wait for the Lord and keep His way, and He will exalt you to inherit the land...
Ps. 37:34

And now, O Lord, for what do I wait?
My hope is in You.
Ps. 39:7

Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation.
Rom. 12:12

- He gives strength.

But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint. Isa. 40:31

“He may want you to be squeezed into a situation where no other explanation can suffice for your deliverance than that God has done something special for you.”
One in a Million by Priscilla Shirer

3. God did answer your prayer – WISDOM!

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach and it will be given him. James 1:5

“But , Pap, I didn’t want you to eat it.
I just wanted you to get the worm out.”

Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart.
Ps. 37:4

Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him.
(7)

Sometimes what we need most
is not a change of circumstances
but a change of heart.

Search me, O God, and know my heart!
Try me and know my thoughts.
Ps. 139:23

And see if there be any grievous way in me and lead me in the way everlasting. (24)

In the “wilderness” we learn the truth of Deut. 8:3 -

Man does not live by bread alone but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord.
Teach me to do Your will for
You are my God.
Ps. 143:10

Some of God’s greatest gifts are unanswered prayers.
Garth Brooks – “Unanswered Prayers”

4. God did answer your prayer – YES!

Maybe the answer came...

- Quickly!
Servant of Abraham sent to find a wife for Isaac. Gen 24:12-15

Before he had finished speaking, behold, Rebekah... came out.. (15)

Before they call I will answer; while they are yet speaking I will hear.
Isa. 65:24

Over time!

Ruth 2:11-12

- Ruth lost her husband
- Ruth leaves father and mother
- Ruth has no children
- Ruth leaves her native land
- Ruth comes to an unknown place

Son born – grandfather of David

Ruth 4:17

- With Diversity
Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think...
Eph. 3:20

I am Miao!”

“These are my people.”

- Is on the way!

My God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.
Phil. 4:19