

Why Our Prayers are Not Answered

Part 2

Introduction

In this part of this study, we considered some of the reasons our prayers are not answered in the way we would like them to be. Some of the important reasons are lack of faith, not praying in Jesus' name, wrong motives, and neglecting the poor. In this part, we will search for more reasons.

Our Study

Sin

The Scripture: Isaiah 59:2

"Your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you."

1. What do our sins do? _____

Nothing puts distance between us and God as much as sin does.

The Scripture: Psalm 139: 23, 24

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

2. What does the psalmist ask the Lord to do? _____

This should be our daily prayer. We need to constantly search our hearts for any signs of sin. Our sin breaks off fellowship with God and we fail to act out of love for Jesus.

Lack of Forgiveness

The Scripture: Mark 11:25

"When you stand praying if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins."

Our sin breaks off fellowship with God and we fail to act out of love for Jesus.

3. What does Jesus tell us to do before we pray? _____

4. What will happen if we do this? _____

The Scripture: Psalm 66: 18-20

"If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened; but God has surely listened; and heard my voice in prayer. Praise be to God who has not rejected my prayer or withheld His love from me!"

5. What happens if we cherish sin in our heart? _____

Disobedience

The Scripture: 1 John 3: 21-22

"If our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from Him anything we ask, because we obey His commands and do what pleases Him."

6. What is another key to receiving what we ask for from God? _____

The Scripture: John 15: 9-10

"Remain in My love. If you obey My commands, you will remain in My love, just as I have obeyed My Father's commands and remain in His love."

7. What is Jesus' command in this verse? _____

8. How do we do this? _____

The Scripture: John 15:7

"If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you."

9. What is Jesus' promise? _____

The Scripture: Hebrews 5:7-8

"He (Jesus) was heard because of His reverent submission. Although He was a son, He learned obedience from what He suffered."

10. Why was Jesus heard? _____

11. How did He learn obedience? _____

Spiritual Strongholds

Jesus was fully aware of the power of Satan in this world. Below is a list of some of the names or powers Jesus or Paul called Satan in each of the verses.

The Scripture: John 12:31 - Prince of this world

“Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out.”

The Scripture: 2 Corinthians 4:4 – The god of this age

“The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God”.

The Scripture: Ephesians 2:1-2 - Ruler of the kingdom of the air

“As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.”

The Scripture: 1 Peter 5:8 - A roaring lion

“Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”

Recognizing who Satan is, neither Jesus nor Paul underestimated his power, his ability to thwart the plans and activities of the Christian. On one occasion, Paul says that Satan stopped him from visiting Thessalonica.

The Living Bible describes the activities of Satan and his followers: *“The evil rulers of the unseen world, those mighty satanic beings and great evil princes of darkness who rule this world and against huge numbers of wicked spirits in the spirit world.”* (Eph. 6:12)

12. How does Paul describe these spiritual strongholds? _____

Although we Christians have ultimate power over Satan because of Jesus' death and resurrection, there are times when Satan can at least temporarily prevent the answer to our prayers.

Not God's Will

We must remember, too, that our desires are not always God's will for us, either at the present time or ever.

“Going a little farther, He (Jesus) fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from Him. 'Abba, Father,' He said, 'everything is possible for You. Take this cup from Me. Yet not what I will, but what You will.'”

13. What was Jesus' prayer? _____

Lack of Wisdom

Many times our prayers are prayed without wisdom. But how do we acquire God's wisdom? Here, too, God has an answer for us.

The Scripture: James 1:5

"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."

14. What should we do if we lack wisdom? _____

15. Does God ever begrudge us wisdom when we pray for it? _____

Persistence

Too often our prayers are lukewarm or we pray once and then stop praying.

The Scripture: Luke 18:1

"Then Jesus told His disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up."

16. What should we do? _____

Jesus tells us that in order to see our prayers answered, we must pray with persistence, not giving up until we see them answered.

Having our prayers answered is not a matter of either/or. We cannot choose a certain path, deciding our prayers are not answered for a particular reason.

We must recognize that there may be many reasons why they are not answered and attempt to follow all of Jesus' principles. We must nourish our relationship with Him by reading His word and trusting in His goodness. Only then will we experience the joy of answered prayer.

The Answers

1. They separate us from God.
2. To search his heart and see if there was any offensive way (sin) in him
3. To forgive anyone that we hold anything against
4. The Father will forgive our sins.
5. The Lord will not listen to our prayers.
6. Obeying Him
7. To remain in His love
8. By obeying His commands
9. If we remain in Him and His words remain in us, anything we ask will be given to us
10. Because of His reverent submission
11. From what He suffered
12. Evil rulers of the unseen world, mighty satanic beings; great evil princes of darkness who rule this world; wicked spirits in the spirit world
13. "Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."
14. Ask God.
15. "No"
16. "Always pray and not give up."

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