

Sunday 4/14/2024 – What Happens When I Pray

Our big question today is, “What happens when I pray”?

The good news is that prayer is powerful.

And while Prayer is Powerful, Prayer can also be confusing...

These are such great stories of faith. And it reminds me of times where God answered my prayers and verses like this came to mind.

John 14:13-14 NIV

And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

So why is it that I pray and ask God and I pray in his name for him to do it, and it doesn't happen? Have you ever prayed for something knowing God could take care of it, but it seemed like he didn't?

Why didn't God answer my prayer?

You ask yourself...Is God not listening, does he not care, is he mad at me, did I do something wrong?

You and I are not the main characters in the story, life is not all about us and what we want all of the time! When you look at the narrative of life and the story of creation, and the biblical text we have to learn to understand that it's not always God's job just to serve us, we actually exist to serve and glorify him. This helps us understand our prayers in a different way.

The purpose of prayer isn't to get God to our will.

He is not a puppet on a string sitting up in heaven waiting to do whatever we tell him to do..

The purpose of prayer is to know God so we can do his will.

The purpose of prayer is to be in relationship with God and get to know him better and the more we know him we get to know his will and purpose not always ours.

God is not a button to be pushed, but a relationship to be pursued. He is a relational God.

He is love. He created us to love us and to be loved by us. Therefore, the purpose of prayer, there at its root, is not to get God to do our will. The purpose of prayer is for us to know Him and be conformed to His will and to do His will.

Why, why didn't God answer my prayer?"

And I want to say as clearly as I can, I don't know. I cannot tell you specifically why God didn't do what He could have done. And He might've done it for somebody else or another situation. I do not know...I honestly wish I did because there are prayers that I have some questions about that I have prayed to God...But I am not God and I am not all knowing...

but what I can do is show you in the Bible, at least four possible reasons why God didn't do what you asked Him to do. We're gonna let the Bible speak and let the Bible interpret the Bible. Why didn't God answer your prayer? Four possibilities...

Maybe you have a broken relationship.

Maybe you have a broken relationship that's hindering your intimacy with God, and therefore, in this case, perhaps that might be a reason He didn't answer a prayer.

Mark 11:24-25 NIV

Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”

Matthew 5:23-24 NIV

“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

1 Peter 3:7 NLT

In the same way, you husbands must give honor to your wives. Treat your wife with understanding as you live together. She may be weaker than you are, but she is your equal partner in God's gift of new life. Treat her as you should so your prayers will not be hindered.

Maybe you have the wrong motives...



Matthew 6:5–8 ESV

And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Maybe God has something different

1 John 5:14-15 New International Version

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.

Paul had something known as a thorn in his flesh and he wrote the majority of our New Testament and it doesn't seem like God ever removed it during his life...

2 Corinthians 12:7-9 NIV

Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

Why should I even bother praying?

The purpose of prayer is relational, it's to get to know God. It's to know Him intimately, so that we can do His will.

Why should I even bother praying?

It connects us to God.

God hears our prayers.

1 John 5:14-15 NIV

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.

1 Peter 3:12 NIV

For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer...

It reminds us that God is always with us no matter what we go through.

Hebrews 13:5-6 NIV

...be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?"



Don't Stop Praying Lyrics:

Here are the lyrics..

When you've cried, and you've cried 'til your tears run dry
The answer won't come, and you don't know why
And you wonder if you can bow your head even one more time
Don't stop praying
Don't stop calling on Jesus' name
Keep on pounding on Heaven's door
And let your knees wear out the floor
Don't stop believing
'Cause mountains move with just a little faith
And your Father's heard every single word you're saying
So, don't stop praying

My prayer:
