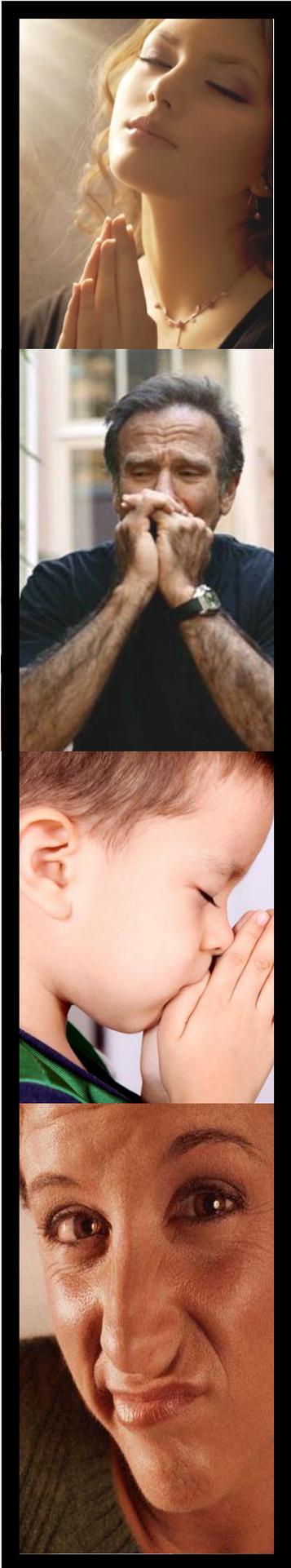


# Why Doesn't He Answer My Prayers?

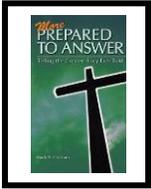
November 22, 2020  
10:05 am Sunday Bible Study

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# I Need An Answer

“Why Doesn’t He Answer My Prayers?”



## REV. PAUSTIAN'S INTRODUCTORY DEVOTION

In the Garden of Gethsemane, from just a stone's throw away, watch Jesus pray. You see Jesus fall, his face in the dirt. You hear God crying out to God. You wonder, "What could it be that God, wrapped in flesh, wants so badly that he bleeds?"

First, he wants there to be a way around the cross –and don't be disturbed. There is nothing about sinless perfection that says he ought to want the experience of crucifixion or ought to want nails through his hands and feet. He will receive within himself the accumulated guilt of this whole human race. He will feel in his soul the Father's face turning away. The very thought makes him so sad he could die.

"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me."

Second, he wants his father's will to be done that the people of the world should be redeemed whatever the cost, that though undeserving we should yet know the breathtaking love of his Father, that we should be let in to that love and see with our eyes the glory Christ had before the creation of the world.

The dreadful truth dawns. The answers to both his prayers can't be yes. His deep yearnings are incompatible. Either he will die horribly or we will –one or the other is certain. Either his need will be met or ours.

Which, dear Lord? You're going to have to lead us to the bottom of your desire. Which do you crave more?

"Father...not my will, but yours be done."

That's what you hear from Jesus, from a stone's throw away.

*Let's each and all read Luke 22:39-44 to ourselves. (Rev. Mark Paustian, Prepared to Answer, pp.124-125)*

# Is He Real?

What are some conclusions a person could reach if they have no answer to prayer?

What frustrations are vented by the following quote?

Give a man a fish, and you'll feed him for a day;  
give him a religion, and he'll starve to death while praying for a fish.  
~Author Unknown

# Compelled to Listen

*What predicament does the inspired writer of Psalm 10 write about?*

*How many perspectives can you list among the different cries out to God around the world:*

*Different thoughts on:*

- *"I'm talking to..."*
- *"God is..."*
- *"I can pray to him because..."*
- *"He should listen..."*
- *"His answer is..."*

## ***What do the following add***

### **1 Kings 18**

At noon Elijah began to taunt them. "Shout louder!" he said. "Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened." <sup>28</sup> So they shouted louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom, until their blood flowed. <sup>29</sup> Midday passed, and they continued their frantic prophesying until the time for the evening sacrifice. But there was no response, no one answered, no one paid attention.

<sup>30</sup> Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come here to me." They came to him, and he repaired the altar of the Lord, which had been torn down. <sup>31</sup> Elijah took twelve stones, one for each of the tribes descended from Jacob, to whom the word of the Lord had come, saying, "Your name shall be Israel." <sup>32</sup> With the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord, and he dug a trench around it large enough to hold two seahs of seed. <sup>33</sup> He arranged the wood, cut the bull into pieces and laid it on the wood. Then he said to them, "Fill four large jars with water and pour it on the offering and on the wood."

<sup>34</sup> "Do it again," he said, and they did it again.

"Do it a third time," he ordered, and they did it the third time. <sup>35</sup> The water ran down around the altar and even filled the trench.

<sup>36</sup> At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: "Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. <sup>37</sup> Answer me, Lord, answer me, so these people will know that you, Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again."

<sup>38</sup> Then the fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench.

<sup>39</sup> When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, "The Lord—he is God! The Lord—he is God!"

### **Psalm 34**

<sup>15</sup> The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their cry;

<sup>16</sup> the face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth.

### **Isaiah 59:1-2**

Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. <sup>2</sup> But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.

Most people do not pray; they only beg. ~George Bernard Shaw

# He More Than Just Hears Us

“If you pray to a god whose love is bought by good works, for example, I’m not surprised that there was nobody home. That god doesn’t exist. If you are praying in Jesus’ name, relying on the perfect access Christ has granted you to the very Father in heaven, he has certainly heard every prayer, not to mention every inward groan and barely audible sigh. Knowing Jesus means leaving out any thought of making God willing to listen. By faith in Jesus, God’s heart is already entirely yours. He hears you.” -Paustian

**Can you give an example from your life when God answered your prayer?**

**What do the following teach us about prayer?**

- **Genesis 32:22-26**
- **Luke 18:1-8**
- **1 Kings 3:4-10**
- **Matthew 6:31-33**

## **Hebrews 4**

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. <sup>15</sup> For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. <sup>16</sup> Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

## **1 Thessalonians 5:17**

“pray continually”

## **1 Peter 5:7**

“Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”

When at night you cannot sleep, talk to the Shepherd and stop counting sheep. ~Author Unknown

# “But There Was No Answer!”

“If for a time God doesn’t seem to care, know him better than that.” –Paustian

How might prayer be wrongly used as a means to test God?

I prayed for twenty years but received no answer until I prayed with my legs.  
~Frederick Douglass

**Explain these three simple truths:**

## **1. The answer to all our prayers can’t be yes.**

“To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me 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.” -2 Corinthians 12

**In what way did Paul have conflicting desires?**

## **2. We don’t know what should best happen.**

“Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! <sup>23</sup> I am torn between the two” Philippians 1:21-22

**What was Paul’s struggle?**

## **3. We are only dimly aware of what we really want.**

“You don’t know what you are asking...” –Matthew 20:22

**What did James and John not realize?**

# Concluding Thoughts

**Explain:**

“I’ve prayed to be taller, smarter, and better. I’ve prayed for success, for love, for wisdom. What I’ve always really wanted was God. ...We found all we ever really wanted clawing in Gethsemane’s dirt. There was Jesus saying yes to the prayer behind all our prayers.”

*–Paustian, Prepared to Answer 128*

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I pray for an easier time of it here. . . I pray for a life that is worthwhile.

I pray for some circumstance to go the way I want. . . . I plead to my God that I want to know his Son.

I pray to be happy here in this or that way. . . I pray, “Father, let me see your face in heaven.”

To each of these the Father in heaven must say, “Which is it?” and I remember what I really want. I don’t want to stay standing a stone’s throw away from Jesus. “Your will be done.” *–Paustian, Prepared to Answer 128-129*

