

Prayer Lesson 3 January 22, 2012

The *Problems* in Praying: Why Doesn't God Answer My Prayers?

Big Idea: Remove the obstacles that influence God to not answer our prayers.

Focal Scripture: 1 John 5:14–15 (NASB95) — **14** This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. **15** And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.

Class Objective: To learn how Christians can enhance their prayer life by removing improper attitudes and actions that are not according “to the will of the Lord.”

Reasons God does not answer our prayers.

A. Many times our prayers are hindered because we fail to trust and exercise the faith which God requires when we pray.

1. Because we lack faith (Matt. 19:26; Mk. 14:36; Eph. 1:11; 1 Jn. 5:14-15; Jam. 4:15).
2. Because we have weak faith, believing that He *can* but probably *won't* answer them (Jam. 1:6-7; Jer. 31:3; Psa. 147:5).
3. Because we believe God will answer others prayers but not ours (Jer. 31:3, Psa. 147:5).

B. We sometimes pray seeking things that may not be in His will to be done.

1. Because we see prayer as a lever to force God to do our will (Luke 11:5-10).
2. Because we are *double-minded*, wanting God's will *some* of the time but not *all* the time (Prov. 3:5-6; Jam. 1:6-17).
3. Because it might not be God's will for the person to have the request (2 Cor. 12:7-10; Matt. 20:21-23; Jn. 21:20-22; Lu. 22:42).
4. Because we are selfish, like spoiled children who demand and then sulk when we do not get our requests (Job 21:15; Jam. 4:3; Phil. 2:1-10).
5. Because God may want us to learn to trust patiently in His sovereignty (Job 42:1-2).

C. God's timing is perfect and is quite often different from ours.

1. Because God may delay answers allowing us to learn things we would not learn if He answered immediately (2 Cor. 1:8-10).
2. Because God wants to strengthen character and / or increase our faith (James 1:1-7).
3. Because we substitute prayer for obedience (Josh. 7:10-12; 2 Cor. 13:9-10; Numbers 21:7-8; James 5:14).
4. Because we believe we should only pray in times of extreme distress (2 Chron. 16:12; Isa. 30:1-2; Jn. 15:5; 2 Cor. 1:8-9).

D. Many times it is our own disobedience that hinders our prayers from being answered.

1. Because we are disobedient and / or have a guilty conscience (1Sam. 8:18; Psa. 32:3-5; Psa. 66:18; 1 Jn. 1:9; Num. 4:15; 1 Chron. 13:10; Ezek. 20:31).
2. Because we are proud (Matt. 5:3; Phil. 2:11; Jn. 15:5; Jn. 3:27; James 4:6).
3. Because our prayers are superficial (Jer. 12:2; Matt. 6:7; Matt. 15:8-9).
4. Because we have a pretentious attitude, mainly to impress others (Matt. 6:5).
5. Because we believe that God does not exist (Atheist); we do not know if He exists (Agnostic).