

The Answer to Unanswered Prayer

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The Answer to Unanswered Prayer

Millions of people pray to God daily for their daily needs. Many people have sickness and diseases like cancer that they have to deal with every single day of their life, and ask God to help them. Does God hear prayer? Is there a missing ingredient that people do not apply to their lives which prevents God from hearing their prayers? This booklet will attempt to answer these questions from the Bible!

God DOES Hear Prayer!

God is real! God is alive, active in this very real universe and has his eyes on mankind (see Proverbs 15:3; Psalm 34:15) which he has created on this earth for a purpose! This same God said that he would hear our prayers! But sometimes, failing to receive an answer to prayer can prove frustrating, especially to people who are sick, poor, destitute and are in desperate need. Most people who are living the good life with 2 cars, a big house and pocket full of money really don't pray all that often, until disaster strikes—they lose their job, rack up unpayable debts etc....then all of a sudden they are on their knees begging God for help. Does it work that way? Is God some personal genie and every time we need something all we have to do is rub the lamp and say "I wish"?

First step to the answer to prayer we must recognize that God exists! "...for he that cometh to God must believe *that he is...*" (Heb 11:6). There is a God and you can prove it! How? By the laws of science; by history, archaeology, by logic, and by the Bible.

There are seven proofs God exists. Each is deserving of a book to thoroughly explain, but in brief, they are:

1. Creation
2. Law
3. Life
4. Design
5. Sustainer
6. Fulfilled Prophecy
7. ANSWERED PRAYER

The most personal proof—a proof God exists that is absolute, incontrovertible, to those of us who have received dramatic, undeniable answers to prayer. To the individual who has experienced, seen, felt, known the answer to prayer in a vivid, undeniable, personal experience, the existence of a loving, powerful God is clearly proved. I know God answers prayers—I know, by the same token, that there are many prayers He seems *not* to answer—or perhaps *defers* to answer.

However, few seem to understand that God has made *answered prayer conditional*. That is, there are keys to answered prayer-*formulas*. In this booklet, using the outline of the famous "Lord's Prayer," we shall see what those formulas are. By the time you have finished this book, you will understand, as never before, why so many prayers seem to go unanswered—and you will understand how to receive an answer to your own personal, heartfelt prayers to God.

The Answer to Unanswered Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

Did not the Savior of the world say, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

"For every one that *asketh receiveth*; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

"*If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?*" (Luke 11:9-10)?

Or, "*If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?*" (Matthew 7:11) Jesus is saying that God *knows* what good thing to give you when we ask him-and we must ask! Many people are afraid to ask. James said, "yet ye have not because *ye ask not.*" (James 4:2).

Now the disciples were thinking the exact same thing you are thinking right now, and they asked Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray..." (Luke 11:1).

Jesus said to them, "*When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.*

"Give us day by day our daily bread.

"And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil." (Luke 11:2-4). Many problems come up with this sample prayer that Jesus gave to his disciples. The problem however is *not* with the prayer; it's with *men* and what *they do* with this prayer. They do the exact opposite of what Christ said NOT TO DO!

This same prayer is in Matthew the sixth chapter as well and Jesus establishes some rules for prayer. Notice, "And *when* [not "if"] thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites *are*: for they *love to pray standing in the synagogues* and in the corners of the streets, that they may be *seen of men*. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward." (v.5). what are the motives of these people? To be seen of men! To have people admire them and have the "glory of men" (v.2).

Jesus said we must not do that! Prayer is private between you and God, and your motives are to speak to God about your *personal* problems, spiritual growth, your family, and yes even your enemies! (Matthew 5:44).

Jesus said, "But thou, when thou prayest, *enter into thy closet*, and when thou *hast shut thy door*, pray to thy Father which is in *secret*; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." (Matthew 6:6). Jesus said that this must be done privately and people are *not* supposed to know what you are doing in *your secret place*; if they knew it wouldn't be a secret would it!

Notice this next rule, "But when ye pray, *use not vain repetitions*, as the heathen do: for they think that *they shall be heard for their much speaking*.

"Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him." (vv.7-8). isn't that amazing! And what do men do? They take the Lord's Prayer and vainly repeat it endlessly every single Sunday in church. Jesus ***did not*** say, "Since I said use not

The Answer to Unanswered Prayer

vain repetitions, *here is the vain repetition I want you use*, ‘Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

‘Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven.

‘Give us this day our daily bread.

‘And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

‘And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.’ HE DOES NOT SAY THAT!

Jesus said, “But when ye pray, use **not** vain repetitions, as the heathen *do*.” We are not to be like the Pagan heathen people that use vain repetitions, like the Muslims who endlessly recite the Kalima, “God is great and Muhammad is his prophet.” Or the Hindus and Buddhists with their chants, charms and incantations. The heathen do this, and Jesus said, “for they *think* that they shall be heard for their much speaking...*Be not ye therefore like unto them*” We Christians are not to be like the heathen nations. Jesus has shown us the real way to pray to the true God, and it is not to be done by *endless repetition!*

Then Jesus said, “for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.”(v.8). This is, “**For**; *i.e.* you stand on a different footing altogether from the heathen; you are intimately related to One above, who *knows* your wants, even before you express them to him.” (Pulpit Commentary). As oppose to the heathen, God knows your needs and wants, the pagan god’s do not, because pagan gods do not exist, they are dead, not a living God like the God of the Bible.

Jesus said in another place, “(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.” (Matthew 6:32). Again the pagans seek the material things from their gods, but God already knows that you are in need of these things before you ask, he is ready to give it to you, he knows you need it-*just ask!* Like God is “ready to forgive” (Psalm 86:5)-*just ask!* “yet ye have not because *ye ask not.*” (James 4:2). Prayer is communication with God, a relationship between you and him. It is also an act of worship. It is to show God that we are diligently seeking Him (Heb 11:6). This is the step we must make to receive an answer; he is ready to forgive-*just ask in prayer.* He is ready to supply for all your needs-*just ask in prayer!*

By this understanding, Jesus said, “After *this manner* therefore pray ye...” (Matthew 6:9). Notice the context! Robertson Word Pictures states, “After this manner therefore pray ye (*houtōs our proseuchesthe humeis.*)...It should be called ‘The Model Prayer’ rather than ‘The Lord’s Prayer.’ ‘*Thus*’ pray as he gives them a model. He himself did not use it as a liturgy (cf. John 17). There is no evidence that Jesus meant it for liturgical use by others.” (Emphasis added). The prayer Jesus gives is a model, a sample, an *outline* for prayer. This model gives us directions for prayer; it could only be used as a directory;

Now with this understanding that the so-called “Lord’s Prayer” which in actuality it is not, because this is not a prayer that Jesus prayed but a model, an outline in which we are to follow for prayer. The true Lord’s Prayer is found in the 17th chapter of the Gospel of John. This was the longest prayer ever recorded by Jesus praying to the Father.

The Answer to Unanswered Prayer

Our Father

So begins this model for us to follow, and when get down on our knees in prayer in a private place where no one can *see* or *know* what you are doing, we address God and acknowledge him as “our Father.” If we expect answers to prayer, we must come to know to *whom* we are praying— to know that God IS OUR FATHER!

Why? Why not “mother” (as some may prefer), or “God,” or “Great One in the sky”? Why did Jesus tell us to use a *family title*, the name connoting fatherhood?

First, God is the Author of all life. He is the ultimate Creator, even though Jesus Christ was the Divine Spokesman, or the Executive Member of the Godhead who did the creating—the Logos (Greek for “Spokesman” in the *Aramaic use of the word*) who issued the command, “Let there be light” (Genesis 1:14; John 1:3). The Father designed, authorized and was overseer of it all. Therefore, God is the Father of all humankind. He is not “Big Brother,” or some anonymous “First Cause,” but the actual Progenitor of the human race. As we have seen, God is the Life giver of us all—This is who we are addressing in heaven!

“Who art in heaven...”

Where is heaven? Is it the sky, space? The Bible says that there are *three* heavens, “I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to *the third heaven.*” (2 Corinth 12:2).

The first is identified as the mantle of air that cloaks the earth; our atmosphere.

The very first verse in the Bible says, “In the beginning, God [Hebrew: Elohim] created the heaven and the earth. “ The Hebrew word for “heaven” is *shameh* (pronounced shaw-meh’ Strong’s #8064), meaning “to be lofty,” as the sky, or “aloft.” It means the visible arch in which the clouds move, as well as the higher part of our universe where the astral bodies revolve, and is also used to refer to the place of God’s throne.

The word has three different usages which are clear only from the context.

Notice a couple of examples: “And God called the firmament heaven” (Genesis 1:8). The Hebrew word “firmament” is *raqiya* (Strong’s #7549) which means “an expanse.” The Bible says, “And God said, let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years...” (Genesis 1:14). Obviously, the word *shameh*, translated “heaven,” is not here referring to the place of God’s throne, but at once to our earth’s atmosphere and to space—the physical universe.

Notice the usage of the word in relationship to *our* atmosphere: “In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven [*shameh*] were opened” (Genesis 7:11). There are many other examples. Genesis 8:3 speaks of the rain from heaven being restrained.

The Answer to Unanswered Prayer

The third heaven is mentioned by Solomon when he dedicated the temple—the context is obvious, “Then hear thou in heaven [Hebrew: shameh] *thy dwelling place*, and forgive, and do, and give every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest ... hear thou in heaven *thy dwelling place*...” (1 Kings 8:39-43). He obviously refers to God’s throne, yet uses the identical Hebrew word for heaven which was used in connection with rain falling, or the heaven where the stars are, which is shameh.

However the difference is, the heaven of God’s throne is not like the heaven of the physical three dimensional universe that has a beginning. Instead God dwells, “For thus saith the high and lofty One that *inhabiteth eternity*, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy *place*,...” (Isaiah 57:15). The heaven in which God dwells is not subject to time and space, since God is eternal, it’s only fitting that he lives in a habitation suited for him.

In *vision*, Paul said he was given a glimpse of heaven itself. He called it paradise, said the language was unknown to him. He calls this paradise, this place of God’s throne, “the third heaven.” Paul was obviously acquainted with the other usages of the word shameh, or he would not have specified “the third heaven” when speaking of the heaven of God’s throne.

Our heavenly Father is an *eternal* Spirit Being. Jesus said, “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. *God is a Spirit*: and they that worship Him must worship Him *in spirit and in truth*” (John 4:23-24).

God exists in another dimension from ours—the spirit world. The method of communication with God our Father, who is Spirit, must therefore, be *spiritual*, not physical. Radio and television are physical. One could dial in any frequency known to man on powerful transmitters and never be heard of God. He is available only on spiritual wavelengths; He is instantly available when *we meet those spiritual criteria*. This is what Jesus meant when he said “who *art* in Heaven” He dwells in the spirit world, and we must communicate with him on a *spiritual level*. This is done through the mind [spirit] of man. We are able to project our thoughts through spiritual channels directly to God’s throne in heaven, directly to the great mind of God Himself, by being on the right spiritual wavelength.

God says “there is a spirit in man” (Job 32:8; Proverbs 20:27; Romans 8:16), and reveals that when He begets us with His Spirit, He gives us a new kind of spiritual power, of spiritual perception “to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man... And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;” (Ephesians 3:16; 4:23). It is not difficult to “tune in” to God. He is instantly able to receive our signals then approach Him using the formula Christ gave, and, instantly, He is receiving—He is listening.

The Spirit of God *in us* makes us spiritual, “But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

“For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, *but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.*”

The Answer to Unanswered Prayer

“Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; *comparing spiritual things with spiritual*.

“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

“But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

“For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.” (1 Corinth 2:10-16). We have the mind of God -the Holy Spirit teaching us spiritual things therefore we are aware *and set our minds on the spiritual*.

So when we approach God in prayer we must have this *spiritual mind set* and “Let us therefore *come boldly* unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” (Heb 4:16). In the spirit *through the mind's eye* approach God's throne in heaven asking for grace and mercy for the forgiveness of our sins and ask for our wants and needs. The next time you pray, pray intelligently, with understanding. When you do, expect answers to your prayers! Claim God's promises *boldly*, as a trusting child goes to his father in perfect *confidence* his requests will be answered.

“Hallowed be Thy name...”

Do you know God's name? There are many other names of God in the Bible: A few are, JAH, which is Jehovah in the special meaning of having become our Salvation; EL, which means “the Almighty, “ and ELOAH, which is God in connection with His will and purpose, used primarily as “the Living God,” in *contrast* to dead idols.

The word ADON is one of three additional titles, all of which are generally translated as “Lord,” but which convey special meanings. ADON is the Lord as Ruler in this earth; ADONAI, the Lord in relationship to this earth, and ADONIM means, generally, the Lord who rules His own.

Jesus Christ said we are to show honor, respect, even awe toward the name of God, by including in our prayer, “Hallowed be Thy Name.” He intended that we come to understand the many names and titles of both Himself and His Father; that we come to know the usage of His names and titles as they relate to various situations. For example, if one were to pray to God for healing, it would be altogether appropriate to *remind* God that one of His very names is Jehovah (or Yawveh Ropheka), “God our Healer.”

The name Jehovah is combined with ten other words in the Bible, forming ten different “titles” for the divine personages.

They are:

- (1) Jehovah-Jireh, meaning God will see, or provide. Read Genesis 22:14 for an example.
- (2) Jehovah-Ropheka, meaning the God who heals us. See Exodus 15:26.
- (3) Jehovah-Nissi, meaning Jehovah my Banner, or Shield. See Exodus 17:15.
- (4) Jehovah-McKaddishkem, meaning the God who sanctifies you, or sets you apart as holy. See Leviticus 20:8.
- (5) Jehovah-Shalom, meaning the God who sends peace. See Judges 6:24.

The Answer to Unanswered Prayer

- (6) Jehovah-Sabaoth, Jehovah of hosts, or multitudes. See 1 Samuel 1:3.
- (7) Jehovah-Zidkenu, meaning God our Righteousness. See Jeremiah 33:16.
- (8) Jehovah-Shammah, meaning God is there, emphasizing the nearness of God. See Ezekiel 48:35.
- (9) Jehovah-Elyon, meaning the Most High God. See Psalms 7:17.
- (10) Jehovah-Roi, meaning Jehovah my Shepherd. See Psalms 23:1.

Using these sacred holy names in prayer when asking God for specifics of provision, healing, forgiveness, salvation is essential for answers to prayer. God's names are meant to convey to us His many divine attributes; His love, mercy, patience; His kindness, gentleness, goodness; His magnificent power; His eternal character.

David exalted the name of God continually, as one Psalm says, "Bless the LORD [Hebrew: Jehovah, or Yahveh, The Eternal] , O my soul: and all that is within me, *ble**ss his holy name***.

"Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:

"Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;

"Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;" (Psalm 103:1-4)

And again, "Praise ye the LORD. Praise, O ye servants of the LORD, *praise the name of the LORD*.

"Blessed be the name of the LORD from this time forth and for evermore." (Psalm 113:1-2).

Here, the Hebrew expression is Hallelu-Jah. Psalms 111 through 113 are known as the "Hallelujah" Psalms. Each is a moving call to prayer, praising the great name of God. The 111th is an acrostic Psalm, and includes the phrase, "Holy and reverend is His name." David is the only man in history who earned the rich accolade, "A man after God's Own Heart." Was it because he was able to deeply repent when he had sinned; because He continually prayed to God, constructed dozens of poems set to music, praising His holy name?

When Jesus said we should pray "Hallowed be Thy Name," He intended we know the great and holy names of God, and to know that those names and titles help us to understand God as our Father in heaven, to really come to know Him.

The first thing we usually say to someone when we meet for the first time is, "Hello, my name is..." We then call them by name. God wants us to know His great names, to appreciate their great significance.

"Thy Kingdom Come..."

Jesus came preaching the "gospel of the Kingdom of God" (Mark 1:14). Many do not take this to mean a literal kingdom, but something spiritual in nature. This is simply not true. The prophecies of the Bible continually teach about a literal kingdom that is to be established on this earth, and the rule of God will be over the whole earth when there will be peace and righteousness and love, and the current ruler Satan the devil will be put in prison for a 1000 years. Jesus said we are to pray for that kingdom to come! Let's take a careful look at what the Bible actually says about this wondrous Kingdom of which Jesus spoke so often, the Kingdom He said we are to pray for!

The Answer to Unanswered Prayer

Many have supposed the “gospel” (which is merely a strange sounding “religious” word to most) is a story *about* Jesus Christ; mostly concerned with His person, what He did, His miracles, His parables, His examples; His life’s ministry, death, burial, and resurrection. Yes that is *one* part of the Gospel message!

But, notice, “And from that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, ‘Repent, for *the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!*’”(Matthew 4:17). Jesus was a Preacher! His message? It was good news or announcement (the meaning of the word “gospel”) *about* the Kingdom of God!

Notice again, “And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and *preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom*, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people” (Matthew 4:23). Matthew’s account refers to Jesus’ message as the “Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven,” while Luke’s parallel account calls it the message about “the Kingdom of God.” The two terms are *interchangeable*—the message was about God’s great government; His law-abiding, reigning Kingdom, which Christ prophesied would come to this earth *from* heaven!

What is a Kingdom? We speak of the “Kingdom of Great Britain,” or this or that kingdom of history, and we know we speak of a political entity consisting of certain peoples ruled by a monarch. Each such kingdom must consist of at least four things:

- (1) a King, or Sovereign;
- (2) territory, over which that Sovereign reigns;
- (3) subjects, or citizens living within that territory; and
- (4) laws—a system of government through which the Sovereign rules.

Notice the Biblical examples of the 4 main parts of a kingdom

The arch angel Gabriel when announcing the conception of Jesus to Mary said, “He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the *throne of his father David*:

“And he shall reign *over the house of Jacob* for ever; and of his *kingdom there shall be no end.*” (Luke 1:32-33). In these two passages we read of:

- (1) the King-Jesus
- (2) His subjects-Israel
- (3) the territory earth-the nations of Jacob are on this earth
- (4) His “Kingdom” or “government” (Hebrew related word “*memshalah*” government) there shall be no end. His government shall rule in Israel and into the gentile nations as well.

The laws of that government of course are the laws of God, “for out of Zion *shall go forth the law*, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.” (Isaiah 2:3). When Jesus “shall be king over all the earth” (Zechariah 14:9); all will “...go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.” (Zech 14:16). At this time all that are “left of all the nations” will worship the king in Jerusalem on the feast of Tabernacles. Christ is the King; the earth is His territory, and the nations of this earth are His future subjects, and the laws of God will be obeyed in all the nations.

The Answer to Unanswered Prayer

God's perfect laws will be enforced during the millennial reign of Christ. And what a happy, joyous time that will be! When we pray for God's Kingdom to come, we should think on the marvelous world that will be in the future—the world of God's love, His laws which are set in motion for our good. Think of a world *without* hunger, disease and war! Christ will impose His government over all this earth so there will be no such thing as crime, no more desertions of mates and abandonment of one's own precious children; no more divorce and broken homes. No more drug addiction, no pornography! When you study the scriptures about God's great Kingdom, contrasting it with conditions on this earth today, it becomes very meaningful to pray—and to really mean it when you pray, "Thy Kingdom come!"

And what a beautiful prayer! When we pray for God's Kingdom, we are asking God to hasten an end to every possible evil; to hasten the glorious, utopian reign of Jesus Christ on this earth! We are showing God our earnest desire for world peace; for an end to war, human tragedy—for an end to death!

When we pray "Thy Kingdom come," we are once again expressing our loyalty toward God, our trust in His promises, our belief in Jesus Christ as King of kings, our confidence He will return to this earth in triumphant glory, to bring world peace at last!

Finally, we are praying for God to hasten the day when we shall be given His ultimate promise—eternal life! The greatest event in all history will be the moment of the establishment of God's glorious KINGDOM on this earth. No wonder Jesus said we should continually pray for that day!

"Thy will be done..."

What is the "will" of God? Jesus called it the "will of the Father." (Matthew 12:50)

The Bible is the written will of God. It can be likened to the "handbook" about mankind. It is revealed knowledge, information we could find from no other source. God's Word does not purport to be a text on science, engineering, chemistry, or architecture. It is a text, instead, which explains who and what God is, and all about mankind! It tells us why we were born, why we were put on this earth, what is the purpose and ultimate destiny of every human creature.

Doing the will of God is *not* threatening. It does not mean a life of asceticism, of abstinence, of "Don't do this, and don't do that." The will of God toward us is that we live life to the full that we meet with success, reward, happiness, and fulfillment! Notice: "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health..." (3 John 2).

God knows there is a cause for every effect. If we would listen to Him, we could learn the cause of all the suffering, heartache, trauma, sickness and disease, failure, poverty, crime and wars which stalk this earth. There is a cause for lung cancer. Millions know one of the main causes—cigarette smoking. Yet, they persist in slowly polluting their lungs, perhaps robbing themselves of many years of life. There are causes for broken marriages, failed businesses, poor health, alienated children, group and tribal instincts which lead to political ferment; causes which produce wars!

The Answer to Unanswered Prayer

God *allows* the natural consequences of man's actions to obtain. He has set in motion natural laws; forces, energies. God is the Creator of this universe, of earth, and all life upon it, including micro-bacterial life. When man breaks God's laws, those laws come crashing down upon him, not only in a spiritual sense at the judgment, but here and now! This is not to say God cannot forgive sin, for He can, and will, when we call out to Him in real repentance. But, when we repent, God wants us to *quit* sinning.

For centuries, man has asked, "Why does God allow wars? If God says He is good and merciful, why then does He permit babies to be born blind, deformed?" A rather abrupt and perhaps slightly insensitive answer would be the analogy of homosexuals praying to God in self-righteous indignation, "O God, why AIDS?" WHY? Simple! God has allowed man to make his own decisions, to either do the "will" of God, or follow *their* own ways! In this sin sick world man has followed sin, which is not the will of the Father, but the will of Satan the devil and human nature. The evils in this world are the *end result of our choices and actions!* Added to that, to be brutally frank, we seem to want God to *allow us to sin*, but to *remove* the penalty!

Now, notice what may appear to be a startling statement at first reading: "Not every one that saith unto me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, *but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven*" (Matthew 7:21).

Why startling? Because it is obvious the recognition of Christ as Savior, believing on Him, calling out to Him by name is *not* sufficient. Yet, millions have heard the strident voice of evangelists pleading, "Only believe!" Many seem to believe that they may be saved by merely "believing on the name of Jesus." Not so. James wrote, "...even the demons *believe*, and tremble." (James 2:19) No, God requires much more than lip service-He wants US to do the "will of the Father."

Many seem to feel God's ways are drab, dull, uninteresting; that He gave us "Ten don'ts" by which we should live. They seem to believe "fun" and "sin" is *synonymous*. Not so! Christ said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). Do you really want God's will in your own life? Notice Jesus said we should pray, not for *our will* to be accomplished, but *God's*.

Even Jesus, knowing that he was about to face torture and death said to the father, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, *thy will be done*." (Matthew 26:42). Jesus subjected himself to the will of the Father knowing full well that God's will is the perfect way to settle the sin problem. Every feeling in his body naturally was to run and seek safety, but the will of the Father was to sacrifice Jesus for the sins of the world. If Christ subjected himself to his human nature, we would have no savior, and this world would be lost! But Jesus did the will of the Father, and now this world can and will be saved through him. As the book of Hebrews says, "but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet *without sin*." (4:15).

People tend to pray *for our will* to be accomplished without realizing it. After all, most don't pray except in emergencies, tragedies, when we hurt, or when we are frightened because of the suffering of a loved one. By the time many get around to prayer, the die is already cast. They only pray in times of desperate need. They are surely going to be asking, "*My will be done—my*

The Answer to Unanswered Prayer

request be granted; *my* desires be fulfilled,” if they are only *moved* to pray in a dire emergency which stresses those needs.

It is not easy for those who rarely pray to ask for *God's will* to be done in their life. But think of it! Whose will would you rather have in your life, yours, or God's? You being a sinful human being who is filled with vanity, jealousy, lust and greed and don't contemplate the *end result* of receiving all the things you desire? Or God's will who is perfect in every way and knows the end from the beginning, which put *cause and effect in motion* and knows what is good for your life, and knows the end results will bless you for the rest of your life?

Now, prayer and Bible study are inextricably linked. It is impossible to draw close to God in prayer without drinking in of His written Word. In that Word, we learn of His will toward us we learn how to ask “according to *His* will.” Prayer, after all, is petition. It is *not* easy to get on our knees with hearts filled with urgent requests, and ask, instead, that God's will be done—and not necessarily our own. It is especially difficult if His will in some matter proves to be the *opposite* of our own.

Notice the experience of the apostle Paul; He had a “thorn in his flesh” He related how he had asked God to remove this affliction: “And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations [referring to the vision he had seen of heaven], there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this *thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.* And He said unto me, ‘My grace is *sufficient for thee*: for my strength is made perfect in weakness’ ” (2 Corinthians 12:7-9).

There are many people whose strength is made perfect through weakness. Paraplegics, who spend their entire lives in motorized wheelchairs, can make those of us who have normal use of our limbs shrink in stature spiritually, *when we see their courage and their faith*. There are innumerable examples of incredibly courageous people who have found seemingly bottomless reservoirs of strength in terrible adversity. After knowing God's will was different from his own, Paul meekly said, “Therefore I *take pleasure in infirmities*, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: *for when I am weak, then am I strong!*” (2 Corinthians 12: 10).

Let's face it; most of our lives are taken up with pursuing *our* will and purpose. The vast majority of our waking hours are spent in three self-directed purposes: self-preservation, self-determination, and self-perpetuation.

We cannot ask that God's will be done unless we are willing to submit to His will. What does He require of us? He tells us we must repent of our sins. And what is sin? God says, “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: *for sin is the transgression of the law*” (1 John 3:4).

Paul wrote, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect WILL of God” (Romans 12:1-2).

The Answer to Unanswered Prayer

God's will toward us is that we come to Him as His children; that we ask forgiveness of our sins, receive baptism, and become a begotten child of God through receiving of His Holy Spirit. "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit," said Peter to thousands on the Day of Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ (Acts 2:38).

Paul says, "Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk [live] in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). God says we can change, that we can start afresh, begin anew! He is willing to wipe clean the slate of our sins and mistakes, blot it all out as if it had never been, allow us to begin a new and different way of life as if a new-born child without a single bad mark against us. It is His will to give us of His Holy Spirit to help us overcome the trials and troubles that seem too big for us.

It is impossible to ask for God's will to be accomplished in our lives if we are not yielded to God's will *His* laws; if we do not sincerely thirst for God's purpose to be accomplished in our own personal life. Such a prayer cancels itself out immediately, for it is obviously insincere. We must not ask for something we do not truly desire, something we are not willing to receive. God is eager to answer the prayers of His children if we pray according to His will. We have only to sincerely want His will in our lives in place of our own.

So when we ask as Jesus and James said *we ought to do*, we must remember, "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, ***if we ask any thing according to HIS will***, he HEARETH us:" (1 John 5:14). Asking for a million dollars and winning the lottery is *your will not* the will of God.

"On earth, as it is in heaven..."

Heaven is depicted to us as the most glorious, beautiful, peaceful, harmonious, fabulous, rapturous paradise possible to imagine. Adjectives fail to encompass the picture we see of God's heaven in the Bible. God reigns supreme; He is the absolute Authority, but God is a benevolent, merciful, forgiving Monarch. In heaven, we see order instead of chaos, beauty instead of ugliness, system instead of confusion; the epitome of all that could possibly be desired in the most perfect state.

But who rules this earth? Many believe that God rules this earth-This is simply not the case; If God ruled, then why all the sin? If God ruled would this earth have all these problems it does today? Why prophecies about the coming Kingdom of God? This message of the Kingdom is called the "Gospel" meaning "Good news." Well if God ruled this earth why would it be called "Good news?"

There is a reason why there is all this chaos down here below-God is *not* ruling! The will of God is not being enforced by God! This world turned its back on God, so God turned its back on it, giving us what *we* want! Instead a different ruler rules this world, and sinful man wants it that way as it says, "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, *and men loved*

The Answer to Unanswered Prayer

darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” (John 3:19). This darkness is called the “power of Satan.” (Acts 26:18). Yes Satan is the true ruler of this evil wicked world!

“In whom the **god of this world** hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” (2 Corinth 4:4). Yes the devil is the “god” of this world, meaning this sin sick age that we live in today the age of man and Satan.

Jesus called Satan the “Prince [Grk. “Archon”-meaning “**ruler**” Strong’s #758] of this world” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). And that this world is under his oppression (Acts 10:38). Many people believe that we are free when we don’t keep the laws of God, free to do what we want to do. But in actual fact that leads to sin, oppression and death-not freedom!

God’s Word reveals Satan is largely responsible for the chaos on this earth, that He influences nations of people, heads of state. He is the one who “deceiveth the whole world” (Rev 12:9). Can anyone truly understand the mind of a totalitarian leader like Adolf Hitler *apart* from Satanic influence?

Clearly, God’s will is not being accomplished on this earth today. The societal structures of man are not of God’s making; not pleasing to God. Man’s civilizations are based upon the human emotions of vanity, jealousy, lust and greed. They are wholly carnal, filled with strife, avarice, cunning, vengeance, hatred. That is why God wants us to pray “Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven!” When we utter these words, we need to see the desperate plight of this war-weary, sin-sick world; to see it from God’s perspective!

God is able to hear the piteous wails of the starving; the crying of deserted, lonely and abused children; the screams of the wounded and dying in the bloody conflicts of man. God sees the inhumanity, the callused disregard for human rights and simple human decency by despotic human leaders. God sees and hears it all!

We must pray for the Father’s will to be done, in our own lives on earth as it is in Heaven, and pray for the Father’s will do be done all over the globe; and that will be done when his kingdom comes, and his will, will be, “as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9).

“Give us this day our daily bread...”

Is it God’s will that His people be poor? No, Christ said, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more *abundantly*” (John 10:10). Abundance not just in material things but more importantly spiritual things, God, family, purpose in your life etc....

Many of the most famous men in the Bible were wealthy. Abraham was the owner of thousands of head of cattle and sheep. His household numbered many servants. Likewise, Isaac and Jacob, who inherited much of their wealth from their parent continued to prosper. David was king of Israel and Judah and lived in a palace for a fair part of his life; yet was a “man after God’s own heart,” *because he never coveted wealth*. Christ is *not* urging poverty. He is not saying it is a sin

The Answer to Unanswered Prayer

to be materially comfortable and God is not especially attracted to the poor over the rich; it is the other way around. The wealthy *rarely* have time or need for God; the poor *recognize* their need.

Jesus encouraged success. The Parable of the Talents in Matthew 25:14-30 demonstrates that fact. Jesus Christ was not an ascetic. He did not enjoin upon us lives of abstinence, poverty, failure. God *does not* glory in the lack of accomplishment, inability, indolence, laziness; this parable shows Christ expects His servants to prosper. God does *not* automatically reject those who are successful.

God says, “A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children’s children...” (Proverbs 13:22). Not only does God expect His people to prosper, He expects them to build a significant enough estate that they leave an inheritance to their grandchildren.

The apostle John wrote to Gaius, a generous, apparently well-to-do member of the church, “Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth” (3 John 2).

God is the owner of all wealth: “The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Eternal of hosts” (Haggai 2:8). God is our multi-trillionaire heavenly Father who owns the universe. He has set down principles, which, if they were industriously followed, would result in material success as well as moral and spiritual well-being. *With God it is a matter of priorities.* Which comes first: material gain, success in business, money, or God’s Kingdom?

Jesus said, “But seek ye *first* the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” (Matt 6:33). And that, “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” (6:24). “Mammon” is an Aramaic word, meaning “riches.”

The lust for money is condemned in the Bible, and called a “root of all kinds of evils.” With this lust for money comes every assorted form of crime and violence known to man. This is the most common form of idolatry in this modern day, the lust for money.

The book of Ecclesiastes is an object lesson in *priorities*. Time and again, Solomon mused on the fact that “one event happeneth to both the wise and the fool,” meaning death; he pondered the final end of those who had spent their lives in *amassing wealth*, only to leave it to others, and to go down to the dust of earth in the same fashion as the poor. Finally, he said, “Therefore I hated life; because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me: for all is vanity and vexation of spirit” (Ecclesiastes 2:17).

At the end of it all he wrote, “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man.” (Eccl 12:13). When Solomon spoke of “vanity and vexation of spirit” he used an expression which means, literally, “striving after wind.” He knew the lifelong struggle for material wealth was like trying to seize a handful of air in one’s grasp. Solomon understood that striving after Material wealth was *not* a priority but seeking the Kingdom of God and all its righteousness was, *for that is eternal in duration.*

The Answer to Unanswered Prayer

Now Jesus said “Give us this day our daily bread...” Jesus Christ did not imply we should live in a state of uncertainty concerning our next meal, that any degree of material success, any accumulation of wealth, is inherently wrong. With Christ, it was all a matter of priorities.

It is a matter of emphasis, “Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought [the Greek word *merimnaō* (Strong’s #3309) means “anxious thought” –conveys fear, worry, concern] for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

“Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

“Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

“And why take ye thought [“anxious thought”]for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

“And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

“Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, *shall he* not much more *clothe* you, *O ye of little faith?*” (Matthew 6:25-30). Where are our hearts and minds? Are we so busily concentrating on making ends meet, earning a living, or attempting to amass wealth, that we have no time for the very purpose for our lives? God wants our priorities *straight first*, then He promises to supply our every need.

With the example of the rich young ruler who had his priorities backwards and loved possessions and not God’s righteousness Jesus said, “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.” (Matthew 19:24). Jesus does *not* say it is impossible for the rich to enter His Kingdom, He merely says it is extremely *difficult*. Why? Priorities. Christ warned, “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” (Matt 6:21). How many truly secure rich people are there? How many are consumed with worry, anxiety? How much is enough? The sorrowful human examples are legion; history is replete with the common human tragedy of the utter devastation wrought in human lives through great wealth

Christ’s instruction to pray for our sustenance “one day at a time” becomes much clearer in the light of James’ statement, “Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:

“Whereas ye know not what *shall be* on the morrow. For what *is* your life? *It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.*

“For that ye *ought* to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.

“But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.” (4:13-16).

Priorities again! When Christ says to pray, “Give us this day *our daily* bread,” He wants us to remember His vitally important statement, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). He wants us to remember the terrible fragility of our lives, our temporality. The prayer of the righteous thinks first of the needs of others, addresses the needs of the poor, the sick, the diseased, the crippled and helpless, the lonely, the injured and the dying. Then, the prayer of the righteous asks, “Give us only that of which we have need,” in a selfless, giving, sharing attitude of concern toward fellow man.

The Answer to Unanswered Prayer

It is not wrong to go to God with a request on our lips; to include the words, “Give us...” in our prayer. It’s all a matter of priorities.

Christ does not smile on poverty for its own sake. It is not “righteous” to be poor, any more than it is automatically evil to be rich. Character is what counts.

It is a supreme test of character to get on your knees and pray, “...and give us this day our daily bread...” and really mean it!

“And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors...”

God wants us to pray for forgiveness. Many people think that God is a stern Judge with no compassion, of judgement. But judgment only comes into play when the sinner *wills not to repent!* “The Eternal IS gracious and full of compassion” (Psalm 111:4).

God is the creator he knows how he built mankind and what mankind has become, this is why he says, “The LORD *is* merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.

“He will not always chide: neither will he keep *his anger* for ever.

“He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

“For as the heaven is high above the earth, *so* great is his mercy toward them that fear him.

“As far as the east is from the west, *so* far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

“Like as a father pitieth *his* children, *so* the LORD pitieth them that fear him.

“For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.

“As for man, his days *are* as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.

“For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.

“But the mercy of the LORD *is* from everlasting to everlasting upon them *that fear him*, and his righteousness unto children's children;

“*To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.*”

(Psalm 103:8-18). Those that follow fear and obey him; these know to repent when they have sinned and when they ask with a repentant heart God forgives them. God also knows we are flesh, we have human nature we are trying to *overcome*, so when the same sins are committed out of old habits and what not, God “knoweth our frame” he understands what we are going through and has compassion on us.

The attitude of broken-hearted repentance is something God almighty loves to see in His children. He says “...to this man will I look, even to him that is poor [Hebrew: ‘ânîy (Strong’s #6041) “lowly, humble”] and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word” (Isaiah 66:2).

When Christ said we should pray for forgiveness, He specifically said “debts,” or “trespasses,” which mean, in a generic sense, “sins.” And what is sin? “... Sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4). Sin is not a vague something that is “displeasing to God,” nor is it a list of taboos concerning personal tastes and life styles, any more than righteousness is turning around three times a second, sprinkling salt over one’s left shoulder, and mumbling a mantra while balancing on one leg. “Debts,” or “trespasses,” are infractions of God’s law.

The Answer to Unanswered Prayer

God's laws are established for the good of mankind. They are not negative; rather, they are the formula for everything we really want; physical well-being, happiness, success, a long life!

Christ tells us to pray for forgiveness on a daily basis, that means we can have a daily "clean sheet" so far as any record of evil deeds is concerned! Jesus Christ is our personal Emissary in heaven; our own personal High Priest. He is there to make daily intercession on our behalf, if we will only call out to God the Father in His name. God says, "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true [as the tabernacle in the wilderness], but into heaven itself, *now to appear in the presence of God for us*" (Hebrews 9:24). If you have little confidence in your own prayers, take confidence in the fact that Jesus our high priest is in heaven as our "advocate ["called to one's side" Thayer's #3875] with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:" (1 John 2:1).

Our personal shortcomings and sins are the *most important obstacle to successful prayer!* God says, "Behold, the Eternal's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear: *But your iniquities [sins] have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear.* For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness. None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity" (Isaiah 59:1-4).

Here is the condition! We want God to answer our prayers but there is a separation between man and God, and that is sin! Jesus said to his disciples, "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.... If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do *it.*" (John 14:13-14). Jesus promises to answer the prayers of his people. However people tend to forget the next verse which has a *condition*, "*If ye love me, keep my commandments.*" (v.15). We must be in harmony with God's will! "...If we ask any thing *according to his will, he heareth us:*" (1 John 5:14). When we ask, it must align with God's righteousness, His Law; we must be in a relationship with God according to his law, which is how we love God by keeping his commandments. If all this is done, prayers will be answered! And yes sometimes God says No! Why? Because it's according to his will. Yet it is STILL AND ANSWER!

And we as Christians, as God forgives, Jesus added, "*as we forgive our debtors*" Here is a condition imposed on *our* forgiveness. We must forgive if we want forgiveness from God. We must have the same compassion on others as God has on us. We all sin; no one is different or more righteous than the other. As we ask for forgiveness and mercy from God, those that ask us for forgiveness and mercy we ought to do the same.

Jesus gives an example, "Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; *and if he repent*, forgive him.

"And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, *I repent*; thou shalt forgive him." (Luke 17:3-4). Many times you often hear of Christians forgiving their tormentors of the crimes they have committed against them. A woman gets raped and says "Since I am a Christian I will forgive the man who raped me." But wait! Did the man *repent* and ask for forgiveness? If he didn't then there is no need. Jesus speaks of repentance!

The Answer to Unanswered Prayer

The incorrigibly wicked when they are cast into the Lake of Fire in the end are those who *refuse* to repent and don't want forgiveness, so God destroys them in the lake of fire. To forgive someone of a trespass one must be *repentant* and ask for forgiveness.

Jesus says this about us being forgiving to those who trespass against us, "Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?"

"Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven." (Matthew 18:21-22). Christ immediately followed this rejoinder with a parable about forgiveness; how a king forgave a huge debt to a man, who, now relieved of his debt, discovered a friend who owed him money, and promptly had him jailed because he couldn't pay. The result was that the king discovered the matter, and threw the first debtor into the dungeon. (vv.23-34)

Christ concluded, "*So likewise* shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts *forgive not* every one his brother their trespasses." (v.35). my experience in the churches of God, forgiveness is lacking in those organizations. Fellow brothers and sisters who repent and ask for forgiveness- yet none is given; especially when it comes to sexual sins. Why is it that sex sins are unforgivable? Did not Jesus *not* condemn the woman who committed adultery? Or Mary Magdalene? Yet why does the church not forgive people who commit sexual sins today? This is contrary to what Christ taught!

When Christ gave His outline for prayer we call "The Lord's Prayer," He said, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:14). That's pretty plain. When we forgive, God hears our prayers for forgiveness. If we harbor resentments, grudges, spites, petty hatreds, remembrances of carnal human hostilities between ourselves and any other fellow human being, it cancels out our prayers as surely as pulling the plug to our lamp. God simply does not hear us if we have the slightest resentment in our hearts, the slightest lack of forgiveness toward fellow man. We all know the biggest little word in the English language: "if." Christ tells us we will be forgiven IF we are willing to forgive others.

We know, then, that God only forgives us as we forgive others. We also know He won't hear us if we have a spirit of lack of forgiveness, or if our own sins have canceled out all communication with God.

To sum up how do we receive an answer to prayer? First, repent of our sins; Repentance means "to turn" The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia states, "It is used extensively by the prophets, and makes prominent the idea of *a radical change in one's attitude toward sin and God*. It implies a conscious, moral separation, and a personal *decision to forsake sin and to enter into fellowship with God*. It is employed extensively with reference to *man's turning away from sin to righteousness* (Deu 4:30; Neh 1:9; Psa 7:12; Jer 3:14)." (Emphasis added). Basically it means to turn from sin and start living God's way, keeping his laws.

Then we call out to God for forgiveness. Do as Peter said, to those who had been so stricken by what He said about Christ on the Day of Pentecost, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). When you repent, go to God feeling deeply, with the clearest possible introspection,

The Answer to Unanswered Prayer

a genuine emotion of self-disgust, self-revulsion over what you have done, what you have become! A part of what we have been, as carnal human beings, is vindictive, spiteful, short-tempered; desiring vengeance! These motives are prominent among those of which we must repent. Once we have repented, and are baptized, then forgive! Forgive others from the heart as they *repent* ask you for forgiveness, even as you want God to forgive you!

Do you sincerely want to receive an answer to prayer? Then do as Jesus Christ says, "... forgive, and ye shall be forgiven" (Luke 6:37). Go to God on your knees and ask Him for forgiveness as part of your prayer requests. God can't turn away from His own children when they come in that attitude. He says so!

"And lead us not into temptation..."

The Greek word for temptation is *pierasmos*, (Strong's #3986) which means adversity, a trying situation, putting to proof, discipline, provocation. Actually, the phrase would better be rendered into our modern English: "Here we have a 'Permissive imperative' as grammarians term it. The idea is then: '*Do not allow us to be led into temptation.*'" (Robertson's Word Pictures). God emphatically says He will not tempt us! (James 1:13).

Satan is called "the tempter." (Matt 4:3) He is called "the god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:4) and the "prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2). Peter described Satan as a "roaring lion, walking about, seeking whom he may devour, whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world" (1 Peter 5:8-9). Satan is a very real being.

God promises His children protection from Satan and his demons. Jesus said to the Father to "keep [Grk. "tēreō to guard" (Strong's #5083) them from the evil [one ALT ASV]" (John 17:15). James says, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). James also wrote, "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the demons also believe, and tremble" (James 2:19). We need *not* be in fear of demons or Satan, but we do need to be aware of their power, of their evil influences. God says it is *the demons who fear*; that, in the presence of Christ and His Spirit, they must shrink away *in fear*.

There are three major sources of temptation of which we should be aware: Satan, society, and our own human natures.

Our Human nature is contrary to the laws of God, "Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." (Rom 8:7). If we allow our human natures to take over that leads us into sin we risk losing our salvation and overcoming our evil desires.

Society itself is under the influence of Satan the devil. Revelation 12:9 states, "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, *which deceiveth the whole world:*" This world is under his grip, and therefore society itself can lead us down the road to sin and death.

The Answer to Unanswered Prayer

At the moment God has a “hands off” policy when it comes to the world at large. He is letting man make his choice, letting him do what he wants to do. Human nature is a mixture of good and evil, and there is some good in this world as far as it goes. But the evil in human nature seems to dominate governments, education, families and religion-these are the temptations in society that the Christian has to overcome when he or she are called out of this world and into God’s church.

When Jesus says we are to pray “And lead us not into temptation,” He means we should ask God for special strength to resist the temptations that come to us every day. God will not lead us into such a situation, even if we do not pray to that effect, for God clearly says He will never tempt us.

God promises to help us overcome temptations. “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: *but God is faithful, who will not suffer [permit] you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it*” (1 Corinthians 10: 13).

Peter wrote, “The Lord knoweth how to deliver the Godly out of temptations...” (2 Peter 2:9). Jesus said, “but deliver us from evil” God is the Savior & can deliver all those from temptations.

And remember, temptations are only the first step toward sin. After temptation comes lust. When lust has conceived, and some action takes place, it is sin. That’s why Christ says pray to avoid and overcome temptation because prevention, after all, really is the best cure.

In the end of the prayer, the word “for,” is to signify that God can do all these things, granting these petitions BECAUSE:

Thine is the kingdom - That is, thine is the reign or dominion. Thou hast control over all these things, and canst so order them as to answer these petitions.

Thine is the power - Thou hast power to accomplish what we ask. We are weak, and cannot do it; but thou art Almighty, and all things are possible with thee.

Thine is the glory - That is, thine is the honor or praise. Not for “our honor,” but that thy glory, thy goodness, may be displayed in providing for our wants; thy power exerted in defending us; thy praise be celebrated by causing thy kingdom to spread through the earth.

“...Amen!”

At the end of all of our prayers we all say “Amen” as Christ did in the Lord’s Prayer. But are Christians familiar with what it means?

The word Jesus used is the Greek version of the Hebrew word, amen, “am-ane” (Strong’s #281). The Hebrew is “aw-mane” (Strong’s #543). The word means “so be it,” or “so let it be done.” The first place the word is used in the Bible is Numbers 5:22, in connection with an oath administered by a priest to determine infidelity in marriage.

The Answer to Unanswered Prayer

In Deuteronomy 27, the word is found 13 times in connection with a series of curses, or condemnations, recited by the Levites. This was solemn public acknowledgment and agreement. They were answering, “We agree, so let it be done—let it be accomplished exactly as stated.”

There are three uses of the word:

1. Initial amen, referring to the words of another speaker. See 1 Kings 1:36, where Benaiah said, “Amen: the Eternal God of my lord the king say so too.”
2. Secondary or detached Amen, the complimentary sentence being suppressed, as in Nehemiah 5:13: “Also I shook my lap, and said, ‘So God shake out every man from his house, and from his labour, that performeth not this promise, even thus be he shaken out, and emptied.’ And all the congregation said, ‘Amen’ and praised the Eternal. And the people did according to this promise.”
3. Final amen, the most common usage, as in the “Lord’s Prayer,” illustrated by the Apostle Paul when he wrote “...I will pray with the understanding... else... how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say ‘Amen’ at thy giving of thanks...” (1 Corinthians 14:15- 16).

There is a further, deeper meaning. “Amen” is used as a name, or a description of Christ, and God. “These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness; the Beginning [Originator Grk. “archē” (Strong’s #746)] of the creation of God” (Revelation 3:14). Since God has self-inherent eternal life the Perpetual, Eternal, Ever-living God—and since “amen” means “So be it,” and God introduced Himself to Moses as “I AM,” meaning the One Who was, and is, and is to come, it is natural that the Hebrew expression which connotes steadfastness, truth, endurance, absoluteness, finality, surety, should be applied to the divine family.

Paul also uses the word in expressing the truthfulness, verity, surety of the gospel and of Christ’s teachings and promises. He wrote, “For all the promises of God in him *are* yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.” (2 Corinth 1:20).

What should go through your mind when you conclude a prayer with the expression, “Amen”?

What should occur to your mind when you conclude your prayer with “Amen” is that it is finished. It is accomplished. God has heard. It will be done. He has promised. It is conclusive, final. Once you have spent twenty or thirty minutes or even an hour on your knees with your heavenly Father, it finally comes time to give the prayer to God; to leave the results with Him. That’s when it’s time to say, “Amen,” which means, “So let it be done.” It means, “It is finished.” And it means something else! It should mean to you—in faith—that you are saying to God, “Father I know you have heard and I know you will answer.”

When you say “amen” you let go of your prayer. You don’t continue to “pick it apart,” worry over it, repeat it over and over again. Now, it’s time to leave the result with God.

The Answer to Unanswered Prayer

Other Conditions for Answer Prayer

People's one big mistake seems to be is that they believe God is like the Genie that startled Aladdin when he polished the ancient lamp. We have but to rub the lamp with the magical words, "Our Father who art in heaven..." or even an informal, "O God, help me!" and expect God to come trotting to our aid.

Clearly is does not work like that. When one looks into the examples of the Bible, one can see that first we must be in a relationship with God, in sync with him keeping his laws and being faithful to him.

However, God seems to answer prayer when things are *out of the control of the believer*. Why is it that some people in the church of God experience car crashes, financial debt, illness and sickness and ask God to help them or heal them yet God doesn't? Are you not responsible for your own health? Are you not in control of your finances? Do you quit school and not get a good education which in turn will give you good employment and a high paying job? What about a car crash? Were you paying attention to the road? Did you check your tires? Have you kept up the maintenance of the vehicle? Will God keep bailing you out due to your *lack of attention to your responsibilities* to your finances or your health and well-being?

In a way God has *already* answered the prayer for good health and good living-the answer is the BIBLE! The Bible is the handbook for man from God and how to live, how we should take care of ourselves. How to be successful in business etc... This in itself is an ANSWER TO PRAYER! People want to know how to obtain these things? The answer from God is, READ THE BIBLE! Put into practice the laws of God in your life and you will receive what you want and pray for!

It seems that when things are out of the control of the believer that is when God answers prayers in a miraculous way. Why did Christ say, "The things which are *impossible* with men are possible with God" (Luke 18:27)? Many things in our lives are out of *our* control, and we look to God for guidance in his written word-That in itself is answer to prayer. Notice what God says to Moses at the Red Sea. Here is an impossible situation. The Egyptians behind them, the sea in front of them, Israel is trapped. Moses knew the promises of God and said to Israel, "...Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. "The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." (Ex 14:13-14).

Once he reassured Israel of God's promises, God said to him, "*Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.*" (v.15). He told Moses "why are your crying to me," Go Forward! God was saying, why are your praying, you know my will, my promises, act and walk. Sometimes there is no need to pray if we know God's will and promises *the answer is already provided!*

But what about *other* things beyond our control, like the lame walking, the blind being healed, things that are impossible for men to heal, but are *possible* with God?

The Answer to Unanswered Prayer

Jesus said to his apostles, “And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

“They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; *they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.*” (Mark 16:17-18)

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall *he do also*; and greater *works* than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.” (John 14:12). These are the promises from Jesus that these signs will follow the believer. Yet many times these go unfulfilled, why?

Doubt

Doubt is the biggest obstacle for the believer when it comes to unanswered prayer. Notice the context of this instruction to prayer in the Gospel of Mark. Here Jesus is saying how God makes the impossible possible. As noted above, God works miracles mostly in impossible circumstances, and Jesus is saying here even though it's impossible, God makes it possible, just *don't* doubt. Barnes's Notes confirms, “This may mean, have strong faith, or have confidence in God; a strong belief *that he is able to accomplish things that appear most difficult with infinite ease*” (emphasis added).

Jesus said:

“Have faith in God.

“For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea [impossible situation for man, but not God]; *and shall not doubt in his heart*, but shall believe *that those things* [the impossible situation that in in your way] which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

“Therefore I say unto you, *What things soever ye desire* [the impossible situation you desire to remove], *when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.*” (Mark 11:22-24). Whatever impossible situation you are in, and many of us have been in many, doubt not in your heart, have faith that God will deliver you out of that situation, believe and God will do it.

The disciples at certain times could not perform miracles due to their unbelief. When they had to cast out a demon, Jesus said, “Because of your *unbelief*: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, *Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove*; and nothing shall be *impossible* unto you.” (Matthew 17:20). The obstacle was casting out a demon, impossible it seems for them, but Jesus told them it was not.

When the disciples fear for their life due to the storm at sea Jesus told them, “Why are ye fearful, *O ye of little Faith*? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.” (Matthew 8:26).

Many times Jesus healed due to *their* faith in *him*, “According to *your faith* be it unto you.” (Matthew 9:29). God can heal, and perform miracles, the individual must believe that God is, and God can do these miracles.

The Answer to Unanswered Prayer

Even Jesus at certain times could *not* perform miracles, not because he could not but due to *peoples* doubt in his ability to do so, “And he could there *do no mighty work*, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed *them*.”

“And he marvelled because of their *unbelief*. And he went round about the villages, teaching.” (Mark 6:5-6). We must not doubt in God’s ability to answer our prayers or, God cannot do a work with you in your life. It is a covenant between you and God and we are “We then, *as workers together with Him* beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.” (2 Corinth 6:1)

Or as Matthew 13:58 states, “And he did *not* many mighty works there *because of THEIR unbelief*.” Not that God cannot heal whether you have faith or not; But Jesus asked a person, “If thou canst believe, all things *are* possible to him that *believeth*.” (Mark 9:23).

But in the case of Nazareth, their unbelief was sealed to the point where it did not matter how much proof there was that Jesus healed people, these people would never be convinced they had hard hearts, and would never be converted. So miracles were not performed because of their *total rejection of Jesus no matter what he did*.

The father of the child said to Jesus, “Lord, I believe; help thou mine *unbelief*.” (v.24). the man *did believe but didn’t believe* and ask Jesus to help him with his unbelief. His faith was mixed. The Arabic and Ethiopic translate thus, “help the weakness of my faith.” (Gill). He found his faith very weak, he desired that it might be strengthened, that he might be strong in faith, and give glory to God, and most Christians approach miracles in this way, they believe God can perform miracles but weak in faith in a sense *they have never seen one and doubt they will ever see one or expect one to happen*.

Matthew 17:20 the disciples could not cure a man due to their unbelief. They were convinced they could not perform miracles even though they tried, and Jesus chastise them for it.

When you pray Jesus will be asking you, “Believe ye that I am able to do this?” We must answer as they did, “Yea, Lord.” (Matthew 9:28)

Pray Always?

How often should a person pray? Jesus always prayed. He went to a Mountain top to pray many times and for a long time. (Mark 6:46; Luke 6:12; 9:28)

In Luke 18:1 the point of the parable was “that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;”

Paul said “Pray without ceasing.” (1 Thess 5:17). Now does this mean we must pray at all times? What about work, and our responsibilities we have? Does it mean we should not do anything but pray? Of course Not! But some take this to mean it does.

Actually it means to “His own elect which cry unto Him day and night.” (Luke 18:7). This means, “*By night and by day*” (Robertson’s Word Pictures). The same phrase is used in 1 Timothy 5:5 and Robertson’s says, “Paul does not say that she should pray ‘all night and day.’”

The Answer to Unanswered Prayer

Every day we should pray it means in the morning and the evening, preferably before work and at night before bed.

David sought God “early” (Psalm 63:1). The word means “in the morning” (Strong’s #7836).

David said, “Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.” (Psalm 55:17). Three times a day Daniel prayed as well (Dan 6:10). Peter prayed at noon (Acts 10:9). Prayers at these times are an ideal time. These coincided with the sacrifices as well (Acts 3:1). Before work, during the break from work and at night before bed to pray.

What about “Pray without ceasing.” (1 Thess 5:17)?

“Not that saints should be always on their knees, or ever lifting up their hands, and vocally calling upon God; this is not required of them, and would clash with, and break in upon other parts of religious worship, and the duties of civil life, which are to be attended to, as well as this, and besides would be impracticable...But the meaning is, that believers *should be daily, and often found in the performance of this duty*; for as their wants daily return upon them, and they are called to fresh service, and further trials and exercises, they have need of more grace, strength, and assistance, *and therefore should daily pray for it*; and besides certain times both in the closet, and in the family, in which they should attend the throne of grace, there is such a thing as mental prayer, praying in the heart, private ejaculations of the soul, which may be sent up to heaven, while a man is engaged in the affairs of life. The Ethiopic version renders the words, ‘*pray frequently*’; do not leave off praying, or cease from it through the prevalence of sin, the temptations of Satan, or through discouragement, because an answer is not immediately had, or through carelessness and negligence, but continue in it, and be often at it;” (Gill’s Commentary, emphasis added).

So basically the Bible is telling us to pray daily, 3 times a day, for our needs, the needs of others for forgiveness of sins we have committed during the day and always be in the *spirit* of prayer. David Guzik wrote, “Jesus does *not* mean that we should always have our knees bent and eyes closed in prayer; but we must always *be in the spirit of prayer*. Many law enforcement officers always carry a gun with them, even when off duty. There is a sense in which they are never ‘off duty,’ but always have a weapon nearby. We are to keep our weapon of prayer always near, knowing that we are never ‘off duty’ as Christians.” (Enduring Word Commentary, emphasis added).

Other points to Answered Prayer:

- God does say no!
- God answers prayer when he feels it is time to answer prayer, not on *your* time.
- Sometimes we get an answer we do not expect.
- God is going to do it his way, not your way
- Don’t ever pray a *personal* prayer in public as Jesus taught. Ceremonial prayers like blessing a meal, and starting prayer before Bible study or church is fine in public.

The Answer to Unanswered Prayer

Appendix

Prayer by ML Andreasen; From the book the Sanctuary Service

In its highest exercise prayer is communion. This needs to be emphasized, for to many Christian's prayer is merely a means of getting something from God. They feel their lack in certain respects. What easier way is there than to ask God for what they need? Has not God promised to supply our lack? As a result of this way of thinking, many prayers consist mostly of asking for things-some of them good, some not so good, some positively harmful, some impossible of fulfillment. To such people God is the source of supply, the great giver, the inexhaustible fountain of good things. All they need to do is ask, and God will do the rest. They measure their Christianity by the favorable answers they receive, and are not satisfied when their request is denied. They are 'continually asking for something, and believe that God should always grant their request. Some even think it a lack of faith to add to their prayer, 'If it be Thy will.'" Like the prodigal son, they pray, 'Father, give me.'" Luke 15:12.

Thy Will Be Done

It cannot be denied that prayers of petition are a legitimate form of prayer. We shall always need to ask God for the things we desire. But it is to be emphasized that prayers of petition are not to be the prevailing form of prayer. Prayers of praise, thanksgiving, and adoration must always have the preeminence. Submissiveness to the will of God, complete dedication to Him, and thorough' consecration would indicate the form prayers should take. When our prayers are changed from an effort to get God to do what we want into an intense desire to find out what God wants, our prayers will not habitually take the form of asking merely for things, and demanding that God forthwith answer our prayers in the specific way we desire.

It would indeed be better for most of us to cease asking for things for a while and concentrate our entire efforts on what God wants us to have or to be. When we find this out we are on sure ground. Then we can ask of God, confident that His will is to be done. The great problem confronting us is to find out God's will, and then search our hearts to make sure that we really want God's will to be ours.

Someone has said that prayers are an effort on the part of the petitioner to have God change His mind. Many are making no effort to find out what God wants, although they are very, clear themselves on what they want. They are struggling with God. They are agonizing in prayer. They are demanding of God what they believe should be done. It does not occur to them that the first thing to find out is, Does God really want me to have the thing that I so much desire? Is it for my good? Is it God's will? Has the time come for it to be done? Is there something I must do first? Am I really willing to submit everything to God, so that if He does not give me what I desire, I will be satisfied and thank Him for what He does give; or am I really more intent on getting what I want than I am on ascertaining God's will?

It may be well to enumerate some things that prayer is not. It is not a substitute for work. A Christian confronted with a hard problem has a right to ask God's help and to expect that He will respond.

The Answer to Unanswered Prayer

But this does not excuse him from hard, taxing labor. God will strengthen the intellect; He will invigorate the mind; but He will not accept prayer as a substitute for mental effort or give to those who are merely slothful. Such as are capable of learning the multiplication table and have the opportunity to do so, must not shun the effort necessary to become proficient in numbers, trusting that God through prayer will do for them that which will make unnecessary any mental exertion. In most cases work and prayer go together. Neither is sufficient in itself.

Let it be emphasized that the aim of prayer is not to get God to do something we want. Some apply worldly methods and have a worldly philosophy in their approach to prayer. They have learned that as far as the world is concerned, to get anything they must “go after it,” and so they take for granted that to get anything out of God they must “go after it.” They act as if God were not willing to grant their petition without a great deal of coaxing, and seem to believe that by persistency and wheedling they can get out of God what He would not otherwise give them.

They take the importunate widow as their example, seeming not to realize that this parable is given to show what God is not. No one can get out of God what he desires merely by continually annoying Him. God is not like the unjust judge. He is a father, more willing to give good gifts to His children than they are to receive them. Wheedling, coaxing, cajoling, teasing, annoying - mere persistency does not avail with God.

Prevailing Prayer

The impression must not prevail, however, that there is no such thing as wrestling in prayer, or that we need only mention to God once and for all what we want and it will be forthcoming. Prayer is not quite so simple as that. There is need of agonizing, prevailing prayer. Prayer that goes to the heart of the subject and is, not satisfied till lives and things are changed. Jesus prayed all night; Jacob wrestled with the angel; Daniel sought the Lord with prayer and fasting; Paul besought the Lord again and again. We need not fewer prayers but more. And we need to learn to pray in faith. This is a vital point.

Prayer is not monologue. It may be audible, or it may be the unspoken desire of the soul. In either case ideal prayer is communion. Some people seem to consider prayer as merely a means of informing God of certain things that need correction and of which He is apparently unaware. They believe that God is in danger of forgetting certain things, and their prayers take the form of reminding God of what He should do.

Having called God's attention to the need as they see it, they feel that they have done their duty. They have “said their prayers,” and with an “Amen” their “conversation” stops. It has been a monologue entirely. They hope that God will use judiciously the information which they have conveyed to Him, and that He will do something about the matters concerning which they have prayed.

Such consider prayer a one-way communication, man speaking to God. Yet this is not the highest form of prayer. In true prayer God speaks to the soul as well as the soul to God. True friendship will not last long where one habitually does all the talking. In our prayers we often do this and expect God to do the listening. And yet, may it not be possible that God would like to communicate with us as well as we with Him? This He often does by bringing certain scriptures to our remembrance. Is it too much to believe that after we have offered an earnest prayer which

The Answer to Unanswered Prayer

we believe God in heaven has heard, He might wish to say a word to us? Is it possible that after we have said “Amen,” God is just ready to communicate with us, but we get up from our knees and do not give God a chance to speak? We hang up the receiver, as it were. We ring off. Does the true Christian forever speak to God and God have no message for him? It must be sinful to

God to be shut out just at the moment when He is ready to communicate with us. It would seem that after this has happened several times, God can come to no other conclusion than that we are not really anxious to have communion with Him. We merely “say” our prayers, and when we are done, we walk away. Such prayers surely cannot be all that God means by “communion.”

Let us repeat, prayer is communion. It is more than conversation; it is intimate fellowship. It is an exchange of views and ideas. It presupposes sympathetic understanding and confidence. It need not always be accompanied by words. Silence may be more eloquent than torrents of oratory. It is rather a kind of friendship grounded in quiet confidence and assurance, unaccompanied by spectacular demonstrations or outbursts.

Meditation

Meditation is a vital ingredient of prayer. It may be said to be its better part. And yet it is mostly neglected. We appear before God, present our petition, and depart. Next time we do the same. We keep God informed in regard to our status, tell Him of things that need attention, and having thus delivered our souls, we close the interview. This we repeat day after day. Is there nothing better?

The psalms, especially those of David, sound the depths of Christian feeling. David passed through some soul-harrowing experiences. Once he was fleeing from Saul into the wilderness. There he penned the sixty-third psalm: the cry of a soul longing for God, for a deeper knowledge of, and acquaintance with, Him. David was evidently not satisfied with his prayer life. God seemed far away. He did not answer. David experienced the feeling of seeming to address nobody, in an empty room. Yet he longed for God. His soul thirsted for the living God. Was there no way in which he could get into real communion with Him?

Then David found the way. He found satisfaction. He learned the real meaning and method of prayer. Of this he speaks in Psalms 63:5, 6: “My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips: when I remember Thee upon my bed, and meditate on Thee in the night watches.” Note the wording: “My soul shall be satisfied . . . when I remember Thee upon my bed, and meditate.” David had prayed before. Now to prayer he adds meditation, and says that when he does this his soul is satisfied. To him it is as “marrow and fatness,” and he praises God “with joyful lips.”

This record is of great value. Many souls, like David, cry out for the living God. They are not satisfied. They believe that there must be something better than they are experiencing. They pray and pray and pray, and yet God seems far off. He does not reveal Himself. Once in a while they have a fleeting glimpse of Him, and then He is gone. Is there anything better in store, or is this all that Christianity and prayer hold for them? There must be something better. David found it.

The Answer to Unanswered Prayer

“My soul shall be satisfied.” How wonderful to have the soul hunger satisfied! And this possibility may become a reality! David points the way when he says that it may be obtained through remembering God and through meditation. Most Christians remember God. They pray. In fact, it may be said, and rightly, that no one can be a child of God and not pray. But not many are practiced in the art of meditation.

They pray but do not meditate. Yet one is as important as the other. It was when David added meditation to prayer that he at last could say that his soul was satisfied.

Few Christians meditate. They are too busy. Their work makes too many demands upon them. They rush from one thing to another and have little time to counsel with their own souls or with God. There is so much to be done. They feel certain that unless they strain every nerve and are busy every moment, souls will be lost. They have no time to sit at the feet of the Master while the world is perishing. They must be up and doing. Activity is their watchword. Withal' they are honest and conscientious.

The Silence of the Soul

Yet how much is lost to themselves and to the world because of lack of meditation! No soul can rush into the presence of God and out again and expect to enjoy communion with Him. The peace that passes understanding does not dwell in a restless heart. “Take time to be holy,” is more than a mere sentiment. It takes time to commune with God, time to be holy. “Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still.” Psalm 4:1. The last statement needs special emphasis. “Be still.” We are too restless. We need to learn quietness with God. We need to be still.

“My soul, wait thou in silence for God only.” Psalm 62:5, A.R.V. Let these words sink deep into each consciousness. “My soul.” This is addressed to every Christian. “Wait thou in silence for God.” This is a command and also a promise. Wait in silence. Wait in silence for God. Wait thou in silence for God.

Wait thou in silence for God only. And the one who waits in silence for God only, at His invitation, will not be disappointed. He will be satisfied.

What a wonderful invitation this statement is. You have prayed, you have poured out your soul to Him who alone understands. Do not say “Amen” and walk off. Give God an opportunity. Wait for Him. Wait in silence. Wait for Him only. And in the silence of the soul God may speak. He has invited you to wait. Let your whole soul be intent upon Him. Wait for Him only. It may be that God, through the still small voice, will make Himself known. Wait in silence upon God. To some Christians this is no new doctrine. They know what it is to commune with God. They have had precious seasons alone with Him. They have learned to wait in silence. And precious have been the revelations which have come to them.

To others, however, this may be a new experience. They have learned to pray, but they have not learned to wait in silence upon God. Meditation as a part of prayer has not been important to them. They have conceived of prayer as a certain form of words reverently addressed to the

The Answer to Unanswered Prayer

Father in heaven. With their “Amen” the communion is at an end. And so indeed it may be, though God does not intend it thus.

Amen may mean the end of man's speaking, but it should not be the end of the interview. God invites us to wait in silence. He may wish to speak, or He may not. In any event we are to wait. Many are inclined to speak too much. We have all had experience with persons who come ostensibly to seek counsel, but who in reality come only to present their own views. They seem anxious for the interview; yet hardly an opportunity is afforded for any counsel, for they occupy the time themselves and seem satisfied when they have presented their story. When some measure of agreement with their view is expressed, they are content. The impression is distinct that they did not come for counsel but to impart information.

So, too often, with prayer. But the most important part is not our speaking to God but God's speaking to us. True, God loves to have us pray. Our prayers are music to Him. We cannot tire Him. And yet, would it not be well to give God an opportunity to communicate with us? Would it not be well for us to do exactly what we are counseled to do—wait in silence for God only? Surely, God will not let us wait in vain. Who has not felt the tremendous power of the few moments of silence after the benediction? Who has not felt the presence of God in the stillness of the sanctuary? It would be well for us to explore the power of the realm of silence. God is there.

Going to Extremes

There is always danger of going to extremes. There are those who reject or think lightly of the instruction given in the Bible and depend almost wholly on impressions. Such are in great danger. We believe that God will lead those who are willing to be led, but we believe also that such leading will always be in harmony with God's revealed will, and will not in any way contradict the written Word. Wonderful as is the privilege of communing with God, and wonderful as is the privilege of meditation, there is danger of their misuse. Especially should the younger Christians be on their guard. Only long experience in the things of God, backed by a life of obedience to God's will, enables one to judge the processes of the mind. Satan is always ready to suggest his own thoughts, and spiritual discernment is needed to know the voice speaking.

This, however, should not cause even young Christians to omit meditation. Far from it. God is ever near to help and guide, and we may believe that the quiet hour spent with God will yield large results for the kingdom. We are only issuing a warning to such as would be led by a voice speaking to the soul and neglect the voice speaking through the Word.

In the sanctuary of old, sacrifice and prayer were combined. Sacrifice stood for repentance, confession, restitution, dedication. When the lamb was placed on the altar, the repentant sinner in type laid himself and his all on the altar. It signified his acceptance of the justice of the law that demanded a life; it signified his consecration to God. Without this attitude the sacrifice of a lamb was only a mockery. So our prayers may be only a mockery unless we from a sincere heart abstain from sin and dedicate ourselves entirely to God. Prayer must have sincerity as a foundation and background. It must be grounded in repentance and godly sorrow for sin. It must be evidenced by confession and restitution. A prayer thus conditioned will not remain unanswered. God is true to His word.