

WHY UNANSWERED PRAYER

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"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James 5:16.

The Bible is filled with verses that deal with prayer in the lives of God's followers. It is a wonderful fact that the creator of the universe wants to hear from us. Not from sad repeated religious prayers from confused religionists, but the simple childlike cry from His children seeking direction. We know he is always there and since He is God knows our needs, but we are encouraged to keep up a prayerful connection with the one who loves us. However, sometimes we pray amiss or the timing is not right or more often the praying saint is not right with God. The life we live can and does affect the answers we receive. Let's consider some of the things that can hinder our petitions. **(1) Hearts Must Be Clean:** *"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."* Psa. 66:18. A leak in the power chain of God is often caused by the believers life that is not right with God. As your children were growing up, if they were rebellious, you held back on buying that toy. Bad grades at school, or rebellion caused you to restrict rewards until better grades were earned. Not only does God want you to stay away from the evils of the world, He knows your disobedience for He sees your heart and knows when you deliberately oppose His will, and fail in keeping His commands. Often believers do well in keeping some of God's rules, but one area you love so much you disobey His will. No matter how hard you reason with it, if it is wrong it will hinder your prayers. Failure to confess your sin or pet pleasure can temporarily unplug your freedom to pray and expect action. The more you please God the

more He will delight in answering your prayers. Deliberate disobedience derails the prayer blessings of the relationship. **(2). Restitution Is Required:** *"Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." Matt. 5:23 & 24.* If your feelings toward someone are not right you will hinder your prayers. It is so very easy to feel angry toward someone, or hurt by what you heard they said about you. Sometimes I think we wear our feelings on our sleeves. You may owe someone an apology, or have disrupted their life in some way. Our prayer line with God must be free of snags and personal feelings, that are wrong toward others. Again, if you owe someone something, pay up. Whatever it is, improper human relationships can hinder heavenly prayer contacts with God. If you want God's love then be sure there is no reason why they don't love you. **(3). Submission Is Vital:** *"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."* Eph. 5:21. Society must have leaders and it is very true within the ranks of believers. A good Bible believing church has leaders, headed up by a Godly pastor. Then there are deacons and trustees and teachers who work together to move the church forward. Often they are in their position because of voting of all the members. They were chosen for their ability and the life they have lived for the Lord in His church. They are worthy of support and prayer and submission to them in their post of service is important. Nothing is worse than a deacon or so that try to run the pastor whom God has called to be a leader. Not only God but your dear pastor expects you to be loyal, and present in every service of your church. Watch out when you argue yourself into skipping prayer meeting or Sunday night services. Such actions are far from pleasing God and clearly can become a hindrance factor to your prayers. The

Bible is very right when it urges each of us to consider the other more important than ourselves. Our love for Christ must be so strong we will love submitting to the mission of our church in our neighborhood. Don't be a dragged along member ready to go somewhere else if things don't go your way. A larger attended prayer meeting will always lead to greater victories in the church. **(4). Faith Is Necessary:** *"Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."* Mark 11:24. It does little good to read, recite, and meditate on prayerful words and expressions. Our world is full of false religious leaders and followers that mouth approved prayers to no avail. True prayer is the simple expression of a spirit filled person who comes to the Father with sincere requests, asking guidance and blessing. Remember, *"Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be known unto God."* Phil. 4:6. Never pause thinking your prayer is too trivial for God, but bring everything to Him. The more faith you muster the better your prayer will be answered. Jesus said, *"According to your faith be it unto you."* Matt. 9:29b. **(5) Persistency Pays Off:** *"And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."* Luke 11:9. Jesus spoke of a man knocking on the door of his friends house until he opened, because he kept knocking. The lesson here is not to give up praying. If you repeatedly ask, seek, and knock, the Lord in His timing and way will answer you. Do not give up quickly, but wait on the Lord. Trust Him to answer according to His will. Often as you pray for a lost loved one it will take time for the Spirit to work on their rebellion towards God. Learn to watch for scripture that will strengthen your faith to pray. After my heart attack Psm. 27:14 jumped up before me. *"Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine*

heart: wait, I say, on the Lord." Scripture very often urges us to pray about everything and trust the goodness of the Lord. Never, never, give up. **(6). Personal Involvement:** *"Therefore my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."* I Cor. 15:58. If you have raised some children you know once in a while they did everything right and you felt like rewarding them. I believe our heavenly father is much the same. He sees your faithfulness, your dedication, and eagerness to please Him, and often rewards such obedient living. Those who keep busy serving the Lord, seem to receive great answers to their prayers. A truly involved believer can expect an express and wonderful answer from God. So keep busy in your church, involved in winning souls and praying for even greater blessings. God rewards those who are truly busy for Him. **(7). Great Vision Needed:** *"Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not."* Jer. 33:3. When I was a boy, I would take my Bible and go out into my dad's woods, where there was a large sycamore tree and a nearby stump. I would sit on the large spreading limb, or stand behind a pulpit stump, and preach. I invisioned myself preaching to the world, and after 68 years of preaching at age 83 I marvel at the thousands that have been saved. A young lad had a vision, prepared with expectation, and now the original World Wide Webb marvels at the results of a God given vision. To God be the glory, but the greater your vision the more you are apt to see great answers to your prayers. Why not view less TV and spend more time in God's prayer network. There is a shortage of willing and dedicated workers today. Start by growing in prayer, and then start going in service, and get to see Him in a wonderful way work in your life. **The Devil Trembles When He Sees The Weakest Christian On His Knees!**