

## WHY PRAYERS ARE NOT ANSWERED (IMPEDIMENTS AND PREREQUISITES)

### INTRODUCTION:

A. It has been said that God answers prayers in three ways.

1. Yes.
2. No.
3. Wait a little while.

B. Sometimes it might be that God does not even hear some prayers.

1. Because of some impediment.
2. Or not meeting the prerequisites to prayer.

C. Impediment: "A hindrance; an obstruction, or obstacle." (American Heritage Dictionary).

D. Prerequisite: "Required as a prior condition to something." (Ibid.)

### BODY:

#### I. IMPEDIMENTS TO HAVING PRAYERS ANSWERED! (WHAT HINDERS OUR PRAYERS?).

A. Not praying. "Prayer that ask for nothing-gets nothing. So it is not that some prayer is hindered but that we are hindered from prayer.

B. Doubts in the heart- James 1:5-7 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;

C. Lack of persistence- Lk. 18:1-8 Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.' And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.' " Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said. And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"

D. Not working for what you pray:

1. Phil. 2:12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;

2. 2 Thess. 3:10 For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.

E. Doing wrong- Prov. 28:9 **"One who turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be an abomination."**

F. Mistreatment of one's family- 1 Peter 3:7 Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

G. Selfishness- James 4:1-3 Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.

H. Self-righteousness- Lk. 18:9-14 Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men--extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

I. Insincerity- (Hypocritical) - Matt. 6:5-7 And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.

J. Failure toward others.

1. Failure to forgive others- Matt. 6:12-15 And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. For if you

forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

2. Inhumanity- Prov. 21:13 **"Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor will also cry himself and not be heard."**

K. If the Lord will- James 4:13-15 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit"; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that."

L. Lack of faith- Heb. 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

M. SIN:

1. Ps. 66:18 **"If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear."**

2. Prov. 15:9 **"The Lord is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous."**

3. Isa. 59:1-2 **"Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save nor his ear heavy, that it can not hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God: And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He will not hear."**

## II. PREREQUISITES TO ACCEPTABLE PRAYER. (PRIOR CONDITIONS)

A. Before you fly an airplane you must do some things:

1. You must go to pilots school.
2. Fly solo x amount of hours.
3. Get your license to fly.
4. Check out the airplane, get clearance to take off etc.

B. Before we pray to God in heaven we must meet prior conditions.

C. Must be offered in faith:

1. Must believe. Matt. 21:22 "And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."

2. Heb. 11:6- 6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

3. James 1:6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.

D. Must be offered in humility- James 4:6 But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."

1. GRACE-CHARIS which is used of prayers.

2. God answers the prayers of the humble.

E. Must be according to His will- 1 Jn. 5:14-15 Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

F. Must be with the right motive in mind.

1. James 4:1-3 Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.

2. Do all to the glory of God 1 Cor. 10:31- Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

G. With me having the right spirit toward my brother:

1. Must forgive others. Matt. 6:15 But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

2. Matt. 5:20-24 "For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire. Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

H. In the name of Christ.

1. Jn. 14:13-14 And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.

2. Jn. 16:23-24 "And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full

3. Col. 3:17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

4. Christ is our intercessor.

a. Heb. 7:25 Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

b. He is in the presence of God for us- Heb. 9:24 For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;

5. Christ is our mediator- 1 Tim. 2:5 For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,

CONCLUSION:

A. Many times it might well be that God does not answer our prayers because He never hears them.

B. Sometimes there are impediments to our prayers (things hinder).

C. Sometimes we don't meet the Prerequisites (prior conditions). We try to take short cuts to God. There is none.

D. Become a Christian today so you can pray to God.

I often say my prayers,  
But do I really pray?  
And do the wishes of my heart,  
Go with the words I say?

I may as well kneel down  
And worship gods of stone,  
As offer to the living God  
A prayer of words alone.  
Lord, show me what I need

And teach me how to pray  
And help me when I seek thy grace  
To mean the words I say.

-John Burton-