

# UNANSWERED PRAYER

*“If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven...” —2 CHRONICLES 7:14*

There are times when we come to God with legitimate requests and great concerns, but all remains silent from heaven. Then we wonder and may even demand... “Where is God when I need Him?” The Bible warns of times that God does reject prayer, and there are four barriers or conditions we must meet if our prayers are going to be effective.

God looks strictly upon the heart and sees our motives. Are we praying for God’s glory or are we trying to build our own? If our motives are self-centered, we may ask, but we won’t receive. Secondly, are we harbouring sin in our hearts? Is there something we know is wrong in the sight of the Lord that we can’t let go of? Persistence in sin will grieve God. David writes, “If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened” (Psalm 66:18). Being sinless is not an option, but we cannot allow ourselves the liberty of retaining sin and expect to hear from God.

Thirdly, are we living in submission to Christ? Are we obedient to Him and pleasing Him? We cannot bring God in only when it’s convenient for us, and the rest of the time live by our own rules. Christ as ‘Saviour’ and ‘Lord’ are two different roles, but they are inseparable. In submission to Christ, our hearts are right with Him, and we can come with our prayers in confidence before God. Lastly, how is our relationship with others? Jesus said, “First go and be reconciled to your

brother; then come and offer your gift” (Matthew 5:24). He also said, “If we do not forgive men their sin, our heavenly Father will not forgive us” (Matthew 6:15). Are our relationships with others set right and thereby right with God?

Four barriers to prayer life: Our attitude to self, to sin, to submissiveness and to others. Jesus addresses all of these in the Lord’s Prayer. Attitude toward self and submissiveness... “Your kingdom come, your will be done.” Attitude toward sin... “Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.” Attitude toward others... “Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.” Prayer is serious and we must examine ourselves before we entertain the thought that God does not care. He always cares and He requires the same from us. It may seem harsh when God doesn’t answer our prayers, but in His silence, perhaps He is, and is waiting for us to comply with His will.

***PRAYER: Dear Lord, I pray that my heart will always be right with You. Help me to live a life where nothing interferes with our communion. Thank You, Lord.***

***TO REFLECT UPON: Has there been a time when my prayers have gone unanswered? If so, how would my life have stood up against the barriers?***