

5/22/2022

Ever Wonder if Prayer Works? Yup – Absolutely!

***But that doesn't mean you always get WHAT you pray for WHEN you pray for it THE WAY you prayed for it.**

"Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working." James 5:16 (ESV)

[Jesus] "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you." John 15:7 (ESV)

"I the LORD do not change..." Malachi 3:6 (NIV)

I. God answers prayers in many ways: "YES, NO, NOT NOW, REPENT, GROW."

- ✦ Lessons from Joshua – Yes – Joshua 10
- ✦ Lessons from Paul – No – 2 Corinthians 12:8-10
- ✦ Lessons from Abraham – Wait – Genesis 12 – 21 (25 years)
- ✦ Lessons from Ninevah – Repent - Jonah 3

II. How to respond when God seems to say "No":

- ✦ Examine your HEART and test your MOTIVES.
- ✦ Trust God's TIMING and GOODNESS.
- ✦ Keep PRAYING and SEEKING God's will.

III. What Hinders My Prayers?

1. Lack of love.

"Those who shut their ears to the cries of the poor will be ignored in their own time of need." Proverbs 21:13 (NLT)

2. Pride and Selfishness.

"When you pray for things, you don't get them because you want them for the wrong reason, for your own pleasure." James 4:3 (GW)

3. Unbelief and Doubt.

"It is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to Him must believe God exists and that He rewards those who sincerely seek Him." Hebrews 11:6 (NLT)

4. Family Discord.

"Husbands, in a similar way, live with your wives understanding since they are weaker than you are. Honor your wives as those who share God's life-giving kindness so that nothing will interfere with your prayers."

1 Peter 3:7 (GW)

5. Unforgiveness.

"And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins"

Mark 11:25-26 (NIV)

6. Unconfessed sin.

"Because of your sins, He has turned away and will not listen anymore."

Isaiah 59:2 (NLT)

IV. Why should I keep praying?

"Then Jesus told His disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up." Luke 18:1 (NIV)

✦ Persistent prayer **FOCUSES** my attention.

"Here's what I want you to do: Find a quiet, secluded place so you won't be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God."

Matthew 6:6 (Msg)

✦ Persistent prayer **CLARIFIES** my request.

"The Holy Spirit helps us in our distress. For we don't even know what we should pray for, nor how we should pray. So the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that can't be expressed in words."

Romans 8:26 (NLT)

✦ Persistent prayer **TESTS** my faith.

"Fire tests the purity of silver and gold, but the Lord tests the heart."

Proverbs 17:3 (NLT)

✦ Persistent prayer **MATURES** my spirit.

"Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."

James 1:4 (NIV)

"So ... Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers."

Eph 6:18 (NLT)

Keep the Conversation going...

Small Group Discussion Questions

1. On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your time spent with God this week?
2. How honest are you when you pray?
3. What is something that keeps you from talking to God on a regular basis?
4. How can you overcome the obstacles that keep you from having a consistent quiet time with God?