

pray first

the transformative power of a life built on prayer

Pitfall Prayers | PRAY FIRST

Hebrews 10:19-22 & Luke 9:23

“Why isn’t God answering my prayers?” → Pitfall prayers are designed to FAIL!

Today, we dive into "pitfall prayers" – prayers that are designed get stuck. But even when our prayers are failing, they are good for something. They reveal our need for Jesus, who connects us to God and transforms our prayer approach. Discover how Jesus uses unanswered prayers to transform our hearts and lives.

Examples:

Lord, I need this RIGHT NOW.

Father, can you just give me a ferrari.

Lord, i will follow you IF you help me pass the test.

Lord you’ve forgiven me...but i cant forgive my neighbor. He is too loud.

Jesus, YOU ARE AWESOME...and so am i might i add.

Jesus...im not as bad as those other people....you know those other people who arent as good as me.

Lord...i didn’t even know why i call you that...because...well, you aren’t. I do what i want!

God...you know i cant open up to these people...if they only knew what was really inside of me!

God, i have zero problem with the sin in my life...and you shouldn’t have any problem answering my prayers.

Pitfall prayers are designed to get STUCK!→DANGER: JUDGING OTHERS/CONDEMN MYSELF!→2 Cor. 5:17

1. **Impatient Prayer: Ecclesiastes 3:1** (NLT): "For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven."
2. **Selfish Prayer: James 4:3** (NLT): "And even when you ask, you don't get it because your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure."
3. **Divided Prayer: James 1:6-7** (NLT): "But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord."
4. **Bitter Prayer: Mark 11:25** (NLT): "But when you are praying, first forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against, so that your Father in heaven will forgive your sins, too."
5. **Attention Seeking Prayer: Matthew 6:5-6** (NLT): "When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they will ever get."
6. **Prideful Prayer: Luke 18:9-14** (NLT): "But the Pharisee stood by himself and prayed this prayer: 'I thank you, God, that I am not like other people—cheaters, sinners, adulterers. I'm certainly not like that tax collector!'"
7. **Lawless Prayer: Proverbs 28:9** (NLT): "God detests the prayers of a person who ignores the law."
8. **Insincere Prayer: James 5:16** (NLT): "Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results."
9. **Deceitful Prayer: Psalm 66:18** (NLT): "If I had not confessed the sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened."

• Pitfall prayers are prayers prayed by PEOPLE.→They reveals something about us, don't they?

Pitfall prayers DON'T WORK because they reveal something...?

Pitfall prayers reveal we need Jesus.→Even unanswered prayers are good for something!

• Jesus IS our pathway to the Father.→No bridge.→Bridge.→Bridge with verse (Hebrews 10:19-22).

• Jesus IS the pathway of our we were designed to pray. → **Bridge with verse (Luke 9:23)**. Then he said to the crowd, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me. Jesus connects us to God...AND connects us to the way we were designed to pray.

Jesus uses unanswered prayers to change the way we pray. → Unanswered prayers are an invitation.

- God uses prayer to change...US & the way we were designed to pray.
 1. Deceitful Prayer → Confessional prayer admits sin.
 2. Insincere Prayer → Sincere prayer reflects a genuine pursuit of Christ-likeness.
 3. Lawless Prayer → Submitted prayers recognize God as sovereign and His boundaries as gifts.
 4. Proudful Prayer → Humble prayer does not compare my sins to others' sin.
 5. Attention Seeking Prayer → Secret prayer finds acceptance/approval in God alone.
 6. Bitter Prayer → Grace packed prayers. → Grace packed prayers are prayed by forgiven people.
 7. Divided Prayer → Faith filled prayers follow Jesus no matter the outcome.
 8. Selfish Prayer → Selfless, compassionate, & generous prayers are directed to the benefit of others.
 9. Impatient Prayers → Persistent prayers. → NEXT WEEK: Unanswered prayers to unprayed for answers.
- **Download a Prayer Guide:** [CLICK HERE!](#)
- God answered my prayer.
- Prayer: "Lord...help me to be persistent, selfless, faith-filled, honest, forgiving, humble, secretive, lawful, sincere, & patient! Help me to be like Jesus!"

Jesus uses unanswered prayers to disciple us...to change the way we pray.

→ **Transformed prayers reflect transformed hearts!**

TALK ABOUT IT - Questions to GROW through with family, friends, & myself.

1. How do I respond when my prayers don't seem to be answered in the way I hoped?
2. Which pitfall do my prayers often get stuck in? Who helps hold me accountable and walks with me?
3. How do I examine my motives and desires in prayer? Do I seek God's will & His Kingdom?
4. Have I fully surrendered my heart to Christ? Am I holding onto unconfessed sin or unforgiveness?
5. **PRAYER:** "Father, change my heart and transform my prayer life!"

QUOTES / SONGS:

- "Unanswered prayers may be the greatest gift we never knew we needed." - **Unknown**
- "Prayer is not asking. Prayer is putting oneself in the hands of God, at His disposition, and listening to His voice in the depth of our hearts." - **Mother Theresa**

ARTICLES / BOOKS / TOOL:

- **Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God:** By Dallas Willard
- **Chat with God: Prayer Journey:** By Jennifer Webster
- **Download a Prayer Guide:** [CLICK HERE!](#)

SCRIPTURES: New Living Translation unless otherwise noted.

- **2 Corinthians 5:17** (NLT): "This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!"
- **Ecclesiastes 3:1** (NLT): "For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven."
- **James 4:3** (NLT): "And even when you ask, you don't get it because your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure."
- **James 1:6-7** (NLT): "But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord."
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- **Psalms 66:18** (NLT): "If I had not confessed the sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened."
- **Hebrews 10:19-22** (NLT): 19 And so, dear brothers and sisters, we can boldly enter heaven's Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus. 20 By his death, Jesus opened a new and life-giving way through the curtain into the Most Holy Place. 21 And since we have a great High Priest who rules over God's house, 22 let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him. For our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ's blood to make us clean, and our bodies have been washed with pure water.
- **Luke 9:23** (NLT): "Then he said to the crowd, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me."

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