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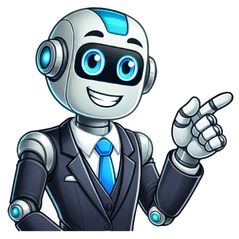

Do you ever feel like God isn’t answering your prayers? I heard from someone last week who asked “How long am I supposed to pray if God continues to ignore me?”It might feel like God is ignoring you when He doesn’t answer your prayers the way you’re hoping. But Scripture offers us insights as to why God might appear to be silent. One verse that I’ve found most helpful in my own life – when it comes to unanswered prayer – is Psalm 84:11, in which the Psalmist said “No good thing will [God] withhold from those who walk uprightly.” I find three principles (and loads of encouragement) in this verse for why God might not be answering my prayer or yours. Why Isn't God Answering My Prayers?This feeling of spiritual silence can be disheartening, leading to doubt and frustration. However, this experience is so common, and there are various perspectives that might help you navigate this challenge. Let's explore five key insights that address this dilemma, each offers a unique way to understand and find meaning in the experience of unanswered prayers, helping to guide you toward greater clarity and peace.1. God’s idea of a “good thing” might be different than yours.You might be praying for a husband, a job you’ve been hoping for, or to win the lottery. Why would God not give you any or all of the three? Because even though you might feel it’s good for you to be married, or to be working in a job you like, or to have more money, God’s opinion might differ. Just because something makes us happy doesn’t mean it’s good for us, eternally. And God has our eternal best in mind. In Matthew 7:11 Jesus said, “If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him.” We want our children to be happy, but not at the expense of their health, and therefore we don’t give them candy at every meal. We want them to hold down a good job, but we won’t do that job for them because learning responsibility and the consequences of a bad decision are more healthy and good for them in the long run. Trust that God, your Heavenly Father, knows what is best for you. And while you may be heartbroken at His “no,” He may very well be sparing you a bigger heartache down the road. 2. God is waiting for you to be obedient.Scripture exhorts husbands to be considerate of their wives and treat them with respect so that their prayers aren’t hindered (1 Peter 3:7). And Psalm 84:11 says “no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly.” Are you walking uprightly? Is your life not only obedient, but surrendered to Him? If not, God may be withholding or refusing to acknowledge your prayers to get you back into line with His will and purposes. 3. It isn’t the right time.God has three answers. Yes, no, and wait. Because He can see what’s eternally best for us, and He can also see what’s coming down the road (and we can’t), trust His judgment. Don’t second-guess Him. His timing is always better than yours. If you are walking uprightly and what you’re asking for is truly a good thing then, according to Psalm 84:11, God is not withholding after all. It just isn’t time. 4. You aren’t asking in faith.How we pray is just as important as what we pray for. In James 1:5-8 we are told: “If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.”Furthermore, Hebrews 11:6 says, “And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.” So ask in faith and without hesitation or doubting. God may be waiting for you to truly believe He can do what you are asking for.5. God has something better for you than what you are asking for. This is my favorite reason for why God says “no” but we so often forget to consider it. Because He is good and knows what’s eternally best for us, and doesn’t want us to settle, God sometimes says no or closes a door because He has something better for us that we haven’t even thought to ask for. He is One who can do “immeasurably more” than all we can ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20). Trust His timing. Trust His “no.” And trust His idea of what is eternally best for you. He really is a good father.Related: Listen to our podcast, Teach Us to Pray with Christina Patterson. You can find all the episodes at LifeAudio.com.Cindi McMenamin helps women and couples deal with the struggles of life through her books, When Women Walk Alone (more than 125,000 copies sold), When a Woman Overcomes Life’s Hurts, When Couples Walk Together and When God Sees Your Tears. For more on her 15 books, national speaking ministry, and free resources to strengthen your soul, marriage or parenting, see her website: www.StrengthForTheSoul.com.Photo courtesy: Thinkstockphotos.comOriginally published April 05, 2021. Do you ever feel like God isn’t answering your prayers? I heard from someone last week who asked “How long am I supposed to pray if God continues to ignore me?”It might feel like God is ignoring you when He doesn’t answer your prayers the way you’re hoping. But Scripture offers us insights as to why God might appear to be silent. 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In James 1:5-8 we are told: “If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.”Furthermore, Hebrews 11:6 says, “And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.” So ask in faith and without hesitation or doubting. God may be waiting for you to truly believe He can do what you are asking for.5. God has something better for you than what you are asking for. This is my favorite reason for why God says “no” but we so often forget to consider it. 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For more on her 15 books, national speaking ministry, and free resources to strengthen your soul, marriage or parenting, see her website: www.StrengthForTheSoul.com.Photo courtesy: Thinkstockphotos.comOriginally published April 05, 2021. Feeling like your prayers aren't being answered can be frustrating and disheartening. There might be several reasons for this silence. It could be a struggle with faith, unconfessed sins, or impure motives. Maybe you're being impatient, or your desires don't align with God's will. Broken relationships or insufficient effort might also play a role. Sometimes, it could be a test of your faith. Curious about what might be affecting your prayers? Lack of Faith When you lack faith, it can create a barrier that prevents your prayers from being answered. Faith is the foundation of your relationship with God. When you pray without truly believing that God will respond, it's like sending a letter with no address. Your doubts can cloud your connection with Him and make it difficult for you to receive His guidance and blessings. Think about it: if you don't trust that God will fulfill His promises, why would He act on your behalf? Faith isn't just about believing in God's existence; it's about having confidence that He's actively involved in your life and will respond to your needs. James 1:6-7 says, “But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person shouldn't expect to receive anything from the Lord.” ESV Preaching Bible (Goatskin, Black) Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary Set NIV Life Application Study Bible, Third Edition (LeatherLike, Berry, Indexed, Red Letter) ESV Study Bible, Large Print (Genuine Leather, Black) NKJV Holy Bible, Super Giant Print Reference Bible, Blue Leathersoft, 43,000 Cross references, Red Letter, Comfort Print: New King James Version To overcome this, focus on strengthening your faith. Spend time reading scripture, praying earnestly, and surrounding yourself with believers who encourage your spiritual growth. By building a strong foundation of faith, you'll open the door for God to work powerfully in your life. Unconfessed Sin Unconfessed sin can create a significant barrier between you and God, hindering your prayers. When you hold onto sins without seeking forgiveness, it can disrupt the open line of communication you desire with God. Imagine trying to talk to a friend while there's a wall between you; that's what unconfessed sin does to your relationship with God. Acknowledging and confessing your sins is essential. God knows your heart and the areas where you've fallen short, but He's waiting for you to come to Him in humility and repentance. In Psalm 66:18, it says, 'If I'd cherished sin in my heart, the Lord wouldn't have listened.' This verse highlights the importance of addressing sin to maintain a clear connection with God. Take a moment to reflect on your actions and attitudes. Are there areas in your life where you've strayed from God's commandments? Confession isn't just about listing wrongdoings; it's about genuine remorse and a commitment to turn away from those behaviors. Don't let unconfessed sin be the reason your prayers go unanswered. Seek God's forgiveness, and you'll find that your relationship with Him and the effectiveness of your prayers will be restored. See also 10 Signs God Wants You to Leave a RelationshipWrong Motives Prayers often go unanswered because your motives might be self-centered rather than aligned with God's will. When you pray solely for personal gain or out of selfish desires, you're missing the essence of true communication with God. It's easy to fall into the trap of asking for things that serve your own interests without considering how they align with God's greater plan. James 4:3 clearly states, 'When you ask, you don't receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.' Evaluate why you're asking for what you're praying for. Are you seeking to fulfill your own desires or to advance God's kingdom? Selfish motives can cloud your judgment and hinder your prayers. God sees the heart and knows your true intentions. He desires for you to seek His will and purpose above your own. To align your motives with God's will, focus on praying for things that reflect His character and plans. Ask for wisdom, compassion, and opportunities to serve others. When your prayers are rooted in genuine love and a desire to follow God's will, you'll find a deeper connection and more meaningful answers. Lack of Patience Waiting for God's timing can test your patience and faith. You might feel frustrated when your prayers seem unanswered, but remember, God's timing is perfect. He sees the bigger picture, and sometimes, He's working on something within you. Patience is a virtue that strengthens your character and trust in God. When you're impatient, it can cloud your judgment and lead to doubts. Here are a few reasons why lack of patience might be hindering your prayers: Growth in Faith: God might be using this waiting period to grow your faith. Trusting Him during uncertain times deepens your relationship with Him. Preparation: Sometimes, you're simply not ready for what you're asking for. God might be preparing you for something greater. Alignment: Your desires need to align with God's perfect plan. Waiting helps you refine your goals and align them with His will. Being patient doesn't mean doing nothing. Actively seek God, stay in His Word, and keep praying. Your patience reflects your trust in His timing and wisdom. Not God's Will Sometimes, the reason your prayers aren't answered is simply because what you're asking for isn't aligned with God's will. You might've a specific plan or desire in mind, but God's plan could be entirely different. He sees the bigger picture and knows what's ultimately best for you. Even if your intentions are good, it doesn't necessarily mean that what you're asking for is part of His divine plan. See also 8 Signs Your Boyfriend Would Make a Perfect Christian HusbandWhen you're praying for something, it's essential to remain open to the possibility that God's answer might be 'no' or 'not now.' This isn't a reflection of your worthiness or faithfulness, but rather an indication that there's a different path you're meant to follow. Trusting in His wisdom can be challenging, especially when you're deeply invested in a particular outcome. Instead of focusing solely on your specific request, try praying for God's will to be done in your life. Ask for guidance, wisdom, and the strength to accept His plan, even when it's not what you envisioned. Broken Relationships Broken relationships can often hinder your prayers because unresolved conflicts create barriers between you and God. When you're at odds with someone, it's like erecting a wall that blocks the flow of divine communication. You might feel disconnected and wonder why your prayers seem to fall on deaf ears. It's essential to address these broken relationships to restore your spiritual connection. Consider the following points to understand how broken relationships impact your prayers: Unforgiveness: Holding onto grudges or bitterness can obstruct your relationship with God. Unforgiveness acts like a poison, affecting not only you but also your prayer life. Lack of Reconciliation: If you're unwilling to make amends or seek forgiveness, you're allowing unresolved issues to fester. This lack of reconciliation disrupts the harmony God desires in your relationships. Resentment: Harboring resentment can cloud your heart and mind, making it difficult to focus on your spiritual needs. It's like carrying an extra burden that weighs down your prayers. Addressing these issues can help clear the path for more effective communication with God. Make a conscious effort to resolve conflicts and seek peace in your relationships, as doing so will open the door for your prayers to be heard and answered. Insufficient Effort Putting insufficient effort into your prayers can often be a reason why they go unanswered. When you approach prayer with a distracted mind or a half-hearted attitude, it's like having a conversation without truly listening or caring about the outcome. God desires a genuine connection with you, and that requires dedication and sincerity. Consider these aspects to gauge your effort in prayer: Aspect Description Frequency Are you praying regularly or only when in need? Focus Are you easily distracted or fully engaged? Passion Do you pray with emotion or out of obligation? Persistence Do you give up easily or keep praying consistently? Faith Do you believe in the power of your prayers? If you find yourself lacking in any of these areas, it might be time to reassess your approach to prayer. Make a conscious effort to set aside dedicated time for prayer, free from distractions. Focus on communicating authentically with God, expressing your deepest hopes and concerns. Show persistence, and maintain faith in the power of your prayers. By putting in the necessary effort, you may find that your prayers become more meaningful and, ultimately, more likely to be answered. See also 8 Ways to Spice Up a Christian MarriageTesting Your Faith When your prayers seem unanswered, it might be because God is testing your faith to strengthen and refine it. This period of waiting can be challenging, but it's crucial to recognize that these moments are opportunities for growth. God's silence isn't a sign of neglect but a call to deepen your trust in Him. Consider these points to help you understand why your faith might be under test: Preparation for Future Blessings: Sometimes, God withholds answers to prepare you for greater blessings. He knows your future and wants to make sure you're ready to handle what's coming. Building Patience: Waiting can cultivate patience, a vital virtue in your spiritual journey. Patience helps you develop a stronger relationship with God, relying on His timing rather than your own. Strengthening Character: Trials and delays can refine your character, making you more resilient and steadfast in your faith. Every test you face builds spiritual strength and maturity. Embrace these trials as opportunities to grow closer to God. Remember, He's not ignoring you—He's getting you ready for something greater. Trust in His perfect timing and remain steadfast in your faith, knowing that God's plans are always for your good. Conclusion In your journey of faith, remember that God hears you, but sometimes the answer isn't immediate or obvious. Strengthen your faith, confess your sins, and check your motives. Be patient and trust God's will, even when it's hard to understand. Work on mending broken relationships and put in the effort to grow spiritually. Your faith is being tested, but with dedication and authenticity, you'll find His answers in His perfect timing. Keep believing and praying. Bob Russell Sept. 9, 2019I get a little impatient with super-spiritual saints who leave the impression that they have a deeper grasp of prayer than most. Such folks teach if believers understoodGod’s Word better—or had more faith in prayer—God would answer all their requests. They would never suffer illness or poverty again.Such leaders seem to ignore the fact that Jesus was poor and the Apostle Paul struggled with a thorn in the flesh throughout his life. Paul prayed for God to remove the pain, but the Lord did not answer this petition. God is not a cosmic genie who promises to answer every request if we just believe strongly enough in His power. There are qualifiers. Someone once said that God answers prayer in one of four ways: 1) “Yes,” 2) “No,” 3) “Wait” or 4) “You’ve got to be kidding Me!” Cutting off answers The following are seven biblical reasons why God doesn’t answer our prayers as we request. 1. Unconfessed sin. “Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear” (Isaiah 59:1-2).2. An unforgiving spirit. “And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins” (Mark 11:25).3. An unbelieving heart. “But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does” (James 1:6-8).4. Improper motives.“When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures” (James 4:3).5. An alienated marriage relationship. “Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers” (1 Peter 3:7).6. An anemic effort. “So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him” (Acts 12:5). “Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years” (James 5:17).7. The sovereignty of God. “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion. It does not, therefore, depend on man’s desire or effort, but on God’s mercy” (Romans 9:15-16).Trust and obey Job challenged God’s fairness and asked why so many horrible things happened to him when he had lived a righteous life. God finally responded by asking Job where he was at the dawn of creation or if Job could explain the formation of a baby in the womb. God didn’t give any clear answers. He just reminded Job that He was God and Job should trust Him to work things out in the end.The Lord Jesus provided ample evidence of His love by coming to earth and suffering and dying for our sins. He gave us proof of His power by rising from the dead. So we have good reason to believe that “all things work together for good to those that love God and are called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28).God doesn’t promise that all our prayers will be answered just as we express them. He does promise that He hears our prayers and in the end all will be made right. In the meantime, ours is not to understand or explain, but to trust and to wait. This is a lesson every church leader should be teaching to members of the flock.Photo source: istock More on Prayer Nearly every Christian I’ve met desires to have an effective prayer life. Many, however, don’t realize that the Bible outlines several things that will actually cause our prayers to be unanswered. In order to pray effectively, we must avoid the following things: 1. Wrong motives“When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.” – James 4:3The easiest way to avoid wrong motives is to consider whether the request is selfish or not. For example, “Lord please give me a Ferrari” is a selfish prayer. We must ask according to God’s will and not our own. What is God’s will? The Bible has a lot to say about that. 2. Unconfessed sinBut your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear. – Isaiah 59:2James tells us that the prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. (James 5:16) If, however, we don’t find ourselves in a righteous state, we are praying ineffectively. The good news is that we can made righteous as soon as we confess our sins! 1 John 1:9 tells us that when there is sin in our lives God will cleanse us from all unrighteousness the moment we confess it. Then we can approach a Holy God with boldness and confidence (Hebrews 4:16) because of what Jesus has accomplished for us on the cross.He makes us righteous! He makes our prayers effective.3. PrideBut he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says:“God opposes the proud, but shows favor to the humble.” – James 4:6 Pride was the first sin ever committed. (Isaiah 14:12-26) It separates us from a loving Father who wants to know us and answer our prayer. How do you get rid of pride? It’s a choice. You must choose to submit your will to God and trust that His will is better than your will. Pride says, “I know what’s best for me.” Humility says, “Not my will, but yours be done.”4. DoubtBut when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. – James 1:6Faith is always a key component to prayer. During Jesus’ time on earth we saw him attracted to faith, yet there was a city where he couldn’t perform any miracles because of people’s doubt and lack of faith. When we come to God in prayer we have to believe that God can actually do the very thing we’re praying for.5. Family conflictIn 1 Peter 3:7, Peter shows us that if there is marital conflict our prayers will be hindered. Peter is particularly addressing the fact that husbands were to honour their wives.So men, love and honour your wives, not only will your prayers be more effective, but your overall (Matthew 15:38) satisfaction in life will increase drastically.6. Not the right timeFor my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. – Isaiah 55:8-9Just because we haven’t received an answer to prayer doesn’t mean it’s a no. Sometimes, it’s not yet. My boys really want to drive our car, but my answer is a hard ‘no’ until they are old enough. I want them to eventually have independence and enjoy things like driving, but it would be irresponsible for me to let them drive now. God knows what’s best for you. Trust that He knows what’s best and that His timing is perfect.7. You never askedYou desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. – James 4:2Probably the biggest reason for unanswered prayers is simply the fact that we do not ask. Our heavenly Father is a good God who loves to answer our prayers and give good gifts to us. In fact, we honour Him when we ask Him to do the things that only He can do. I love my kids and want the very best for them, “how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask?” (Matthew 7:11) Have you ever asked, “Why hasn’t God answered my prayer”? This is a question many of us have pondered at one time or another. If not this question, then similar ones like, “What is stopping the answer to my prayer?” or “Does God hear my prayer?” If you’re wondering why you haven’t seen an answer to your prayers, here are some possible reasons: Sometimes, we may find ourselves complaining to God instead of asking Him in faith for the solutions to our problems. While God understands our need to vent and comforts us in our troubles, He also desires that we ask for His help. He is our Creator Father who loves to be included in every aspect of our lives, and He delights in answering our prayers. He wants to answer your prayers! You are His beloved child! Bible Reference: “You do not have because you do not ask.” —James 4:2 (NASB) The question may not be “Why has God not answered my prayer?” but “How is God answering my prayer?” God may have already answered, but in a way that we haven’t recognized, or He may be working out a plan that’s still unfolding. God is always at work, even when the answers aren’t visible. Bible Reference: “My Father has been working until now [He has never ceased working], and I too am working.” (John 5:17 AMP). Faith plays a crucial role in how we pray and receive from God. Hebrews 11:6 tells us that “without faith it is impossible to please God.” Praying without truly believing that God will answer can hinder the effectiveness of our prayers. Strengthening our faith and praying with confidence is key to seeing answers to our prayers. Bible Reference: “And 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 seek Him.” —Hebrews 11:6 (NASB) Faith in God’s goodness is the foundation of our relationship with Him. Sometimes, past disappointments can dampen our expectation and faith in prayer. If we’re not expecting God to answer, we may find ourselves stuck in a cycle of doubt and disappointment. It’s essential to give our regrets and disappointments to God, trusting that He will either answer our prayers or provide something even better. In working with many people, I have found a little prayer that sets many people free and opens the prayer communications with God. Simply say, “God I give all these disappointments to you. Take them now. Cover me with your precious blood and forgive me for not trusting you completely.” Now linger a moment and expect to feel lighter. Expect to feel His presence and see answers to prayers in the coming days and months. Bible Reference: “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” —Hebrews 11:1 (NASB) Not only do we need to remember to ask God, but we also need to consider the kinds of questions we’re asking. For example, George Washington Carver, a great American scientist, once asked God profound questions about the universe and human life. God’s response was to guide him to ask about something more specific and manageable—like the peanut. Through this process, Carver discovered hundreds of uses for the peanut, which affect our lives today. This story teaches us that sometimes, instead of asking broad or overwhelming questions, we should ask more specific ones that align with God’s purpose for usWe can ask for help in what questions to ask! This can open the door to receiving answers in ways we may not have expected. Bible Reference: “But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.” —James 1:5 (NASB) Sometimes, we may not hear God’s answer because we’re too focused on our own desires and plans. God often speaks in a still, small voice, and we need to quiet our hearts and minds to hear His direction. Taking time to listen for God’s guidance can lead to clarity and understanding in situations where we’ve felt unheard. Learn how to hear God’s voice more clearly. Bible Reference: “Your ears will hear a word behind you, ‘This is the way, walk in it,’ whenever you turn to the right or to the left.” —Isaiah 30:21 (NASB) God may not answer your prayer if there is something hindering your prayers. One possible barrier is unconfessed sin. God always hears a repentant heart, but if we are knowingly living in disobedience, it can block the flow of blessings. Another possible hindrance could be spiritual warfare, as seen in the book of Daniel when his prayer was delayed due to a spiritual battle. If you feel your prayers are being hindered, consider seeking God’s guidance to reveal any sin or obstacles in your life. Repent where necessary and continue to pray with faith, just as Daniel did. Bible Reference: “But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear.” —Isaiah 59:2 (NASB) Also, issues in relationships, especially within marriage, can affect the effectiveness of your prayers. Maintaining healthy, loving relationships is important for effective prayer. Bible Reference: “You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, . . . and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.” —1 Peter 3:7 (NASB). Sin can block our relationship with God and hinder our prayers. The Bible emphasizes the importance of confession and repentance to restore our connection with Him. Bible Reference: “If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear.” —Psalm 66:18 (NASB) Unforgiveness, bitterness, and offence can be a significant barrier to answered prayer. In Mark 11:25, Jesus teaches that we should forgive others when we pray so that our Father in heaven may forgive us. Holding onto unforgiveness can block the flow of God’s blessings in our lives. Bible Reference: “Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you your transgressions.” —Mark 11:25 (NASB) When we pray, it’s crucial to align our requests with God’s will. 1 John 5:14-15 tells us that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. Praying in alignment with God’s will might mean asking Him to guide our desires and requests so that they reflect His heart and purpose. Bible Reference: “This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.” —1 John 5:14-15 (NASB) Prayers driven by selfish motives or personal gain can be hindered. God desires that our requests align with His will and purposes. Bible Reference: “You ask and do not receive because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.” —James 4:3 (NASB) Sometimes, God may not answer your prayer because you haven’t followed through on what He has already asked you to do. It’s important to reflect on whether you’ve been obedient to God’s previous instructions. Our faith requires action, and sometimes, we need to take the first step before God moves on our behalf. For example, when praying for healing, God may prompt us to take practical steps like seeking medical help, eating healthier, or exercising. Our willingness to obey can pave the way for God to answer our prayers. Bible Reference: “But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.” —James 1:22 (NASB) Some prayers are bigger than others and require endurance in prayer. Some things require more prayer than others, and a lack of persistence in prayer can affect the outcome. Jesus taught about the importance of perseverance in prayer. In the ask, seek, knock verse quoted below, the original Greek language indicates continuous action. Thus, Jeus taught the disciples to continue praying, continue seeking, and continue knocking until the answer comes. Bible Reference: “So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.” —Luke 11:9 (NASB) There are times when what we ask for doesn’t align with God’s greater plan for our lives. While we may not understand His reasons at the moment, we can trust that His plan is ultimately for our good. God sees the bigger picture, and sometimes His “no” is a way of leading us to something far better than we imagined. Bible Reference: “For I know the plans that I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.” —Jeremiah 29:11 (NASB) If your prayer involves other people, remember that they have free will. God respects the choices of others, and sometimes, their will may be set against what you are praying for them. God may not answer your prayer if it involves overriding someone’s personal choices. For example, if you pray for a loved one to accept a particular job or make a specific decision you want them to make. Their own desires and choices influence the outcome. It’s always important to continue praying for the salvation of others, which is always God’s will. God loves them and will continue to work in their hearts, but He won’t override their free will. Bible Reference: “This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” —1 Timothy 2:3-4 (NASB) God’s timing is different from ours. Ecclesiastes 3:1 reminds us that “there is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens.” What seems like a delay may be God’s perfect timing, orchestrating events in a way that brings about His best for us. Bible Reference: “He has made everything appropriate in its time. He has also set eternity in their heart, yet so that man will not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end.” —Ecclesiastes 3:11 (NASB) Patience and perseverance are vital virtues in the Christian life. Sometimes, God delays answering our prayers to teach us these qualities. The Bible is full of examples where God’s people had to wait on Him, developing perseverance that shaped their character. Bible Reference: “Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.” —Romans 12:12 (NASB) Sometimes, unanswered prayers can signal that God wants to do something new in our lives—something we haven’t even thought to ask for. God often works in ways that are beyond our understanding, and what seems like an unanswered prayer may be the beginning of a new direction, opportunity, or growth in our relationship with Him. Bible Reference: “Behold, I will do something new, now it will spring forth; will you not be aware of it? I will even make a roadway in the wilderness, rivers in the desert.” —Isaiah 43:19 (NASB) God’s timing is always perfect, and what seems like a delay in our prayers may be part of His divine plan. He sees the end from the beginning and knows when the time is right to fulfill His promises. Waiting on God teaches us patience and helps us trust that His timing is always best. Bible Reference: “Wait for the Lord; be strong and let your heart take courage; yes, wait for the Lord.” —Psalm 27:14 (NASB) Sometimes, God’s “no” or delay in answering your prayer is a form of protection. He may be shielding you from something harmful that you’re not aware of, or He may be redirecting you towards something better. It’s important to trust that God’s perspective is higher than ours, and He knows what’s best for us. Bible Reference: “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” declares the Lord. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.” —Isaiah 55:8-9 (NASB) God values our character more than our comfort. Unanswered prayers can be a way for God to teach us virtues like patience, humility, and reliance on Him. Romans 5:3-4 speaks of how suffering produces perseverance, character, and hope—qualities that are more precious than immediate answers. Bible Reference: “And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope.” —Romans 5:3-4 (NASB) Trusting God in the face of unanswered prayers is one of the greatest tests of faith. Proverbs 3:5-6 urges us to trust in the Lord with all our heart and not lean on our own understanding. This means believing that God is good and that His plans are better than ours, even when we don’t see the answers we desire. Bible Reference: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.” —Proverbs 3:5-6 (NASB) At times, God allows seasons of unanswered prayer to test and refine our faith. These periods of waiting and uncertainty can strengthen our trust in Him, deepening our relationship and dependence on Him. This is the season to go deeper into the Bible and in prayer. Seek Him with all your heart during this season. Bible Reference: “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.” —James 1:2-3 (NASB) Unanswered prayers can sometimes be a way for God to draw us into deeper fellowship with Him. When we don’t receive immediate answers, it can push us to spend more time in His presence, seeking His will and growing in our relationship with Him. This deepened intimacy is often the greater blessing that comes from our persistence in prayer. Bible Reference: “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.” —James 4:8 (NASB) Unanswered prayers can be an invitation to grow in spiritual maturity. As we continue to seek God and trust in His wisdom, our faith deepens, and we become more resilient in our walk with Him. This growth in maturity is a significant part of God’s work in our lives. Bible Reference: “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” —James 1:2-4 (NASB) While unanswered prayers can be challenging, they are often opportunities for growth, trust, and deeper intimacy with God. We can align our requests with God’s will and trust in His perfect timing. We can navigate these seasons with faith and know that God is always working for our good. Although this is a general list of possible reasons why God has not answered your prayer, I trust one of these reasons has addressed your specific need. I pray that God will open your eyes and heart to His working in your life every day! May He give you the desires of your heart. May abundant blessings be upon on your Christian journey, dear readers! . . . What Does God’s Voice Sound Like? Learn How to Hear God’s Voice Clearly Knowing God’s Presence Series of Articles Related Articles: NOTES: Photo by Hassan OUAJBIR from Pexels Sometimes when God does not answer your prayer, you get blamed for it. Someone may tell you it is because you don’t have enough faith. This is often the case when people deal with chronic issues.I have a dear friend of mine who has been battling health issues for a long time. She has prayed and God has not healed her yet. However, he has been sustaining her for a very long time. She has shared with me on several occasions how many people have told her if she had more faith, she would have been healed by now. Again, this falls into the category of bad teaching that falsely believes we can move God’s hand and make him do what we want.Let me reiterate, we can’t. In her situation, I am certain it is not about faith. If you know you are believing God for the answer, then don’t let anyone else blame you if God has not answered the way you want.Final ThoughtIt is possible you may never know why God does not answer your prayer. As you can see, it is not always about something you are doing or not doing. Prayer, by nature, is an activity of trust. When you pray and God does not answer your prayer in the way or in the timing you want him to, then you must continue to trust him. It doesn’t mean the answer is no, it might mean the answer is wait. I cannot guarantee that a yes is coming to what you are praying for. I can guarantee that God will answer your prayer in the manner that is best for you. When you pray, make your request known because that is what God wants you to do. After you have done that, then believe God will do what is in your best interest. Knowing this brings his peace and with that you can accept his answer whether it is yes, no, or wait.More from this authorThe One Result You Should Expect Every Time You PrayOne Aspect of God’s Will Most People Overlook3 Simple Church Growth Strategies We May Have Forgotten AboutPhoto credit: ©Getty Images/pcess609 Do you ever feel like God isn’t answering your prayers? I heard from someone last week who asked “How long am I supposed to pray if God continues to ignore me?”It might feel like God is ignoring you when He doesn’t answer your prayers the way you’re hoping. But Scripture offers us insights as to why God might appear to be silent. One verse that I’ve found most helpful in my own life – when it comes to unanswered prayer – is Psalm 84:11, in which the Psalmist said “No good thing will [God] withhold from those who walk uprightly.” I find three principles (and loads of encouragement) in this verse for why God might not be answering my prayer or yours. Why Isn't God Answering My Prayers?This feeling of spiritual silence can be disheartening, leading to doubt and frustration. However, this experience is so common, and there are various perspectives that might help you navigate this challenge. Let's explore five key insights that address this dilemma, each offers a unique way to understand and find meaning in the experience of unanswered prayers, helping to guide you toward greater clarity and peace.1. God’s idea of a “good thing” might be different than yours.You might be praying for a husband, a job you’ve been hoping for, or to win the lottery. Why would God not give you any or all of the three? Because even though you might feel it’s good for you to be married, or to be working in a job you like, or to have more money, God’s opinion might differ. Just because something makes us happy doesn’t mean it’s good for us, eternally. And God has our eternal best in mind. In Matthew 7:11 Jesus said, “If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him.” We want our children to be happy, but not at the expense of their health, and therefore we don’t give them candy at every meal. We want them to hold down a good job, but we won’t do that job for them because learning responsibility and the consequences of a bad decision are more healthy and good for them in the long run. Trust that God, your Heavenly Father, knows what is best for you. And while you may be heartbroken at His “no,” He may very well be sparing you a bigger heartache down the road. 2. God is waiting for you to be obedient.Scripture exhorts husbands to be considerate of their wives and treat them with respect so that their prayers aren’t hindered (1 Peter 3:7). And Psalm 84:11 says “no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly.” Are you walking uprightly? Is your life not only obedient, but surrendered to Him? If not, God may be withholding or refusing to acknowledge your prayers to get you back into line with His will and purposes. 3. It isn’t the right time.God has three answers. Yes, no, and wait. Because He can see what’s eternally best for us, and He can also see what’s coming down the road (and we can’t), trust His judgment. Don’t second-guess Him. His timing is always better than yours. If you are walking u