

# STRUGGLING WITH UNGRANTED PRAYER

## ANSWERING GOD – PART 5

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### START TALKING. WITH AN ICEBREAKER QUESTION:

- You can find some on page 6 [here](#).
- What is a request your parent's always said, "No." to?

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### START THINKING. ASK QUESTIONS THAT WILL GET YOUR GROUP THINKING.

- Why do we think ungranted prayer is unheard prayer?
- If God isn't going to grant our request, what would you like Him to do so you knew that He at least heard it?
- How do you balance the prayer promises of Jesus, (see one below) with the insert from the message (see at end of these notes).

**John 14:13-14 (NIV)**

*And I will do whatever you ask **in my name**, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything **in my name**, and I will do it.*

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### START SHARING. CHOOSE THE QUESTIONS THAT WILL CREATE OPENNESS.

- What has been the best benefit to you from this sermon series on Prayer?
- Talk about how God's consistent inconsistency in granting requests affects you.
- What is one of the most discouraging non-answers to prayer you have endured? As you look back on it, how has your perspective changed, if it has? Would you pray the same way again?
- How do you struggle with the tension between praying and having faith in God – vs – treating prayer like a magic incantation?
- Take a closer look at Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. (below) What stands out to you?

**Mark 14:36 (NIV)**

*"Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."*

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### START PRAYING. BE BOLD, AND PRAY WITH POWER.

- Father. I trust You, even when I don't understand You, or agree with You. Amen.

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### START DOING. COMMIT TO A STEP AND LIVE IT OUT THIS WEEK.

- 5x5. 5 minutes. 5 days a week. ACTS. Awe. Confession. Thanks. Supplication. Do it. Daily.

## WHY SOME PRAYER IS NOT GRANTED\*

### CONTRADICTORY PRAYER

- 12 people praying for the same job
- 2 Christian nations at war with one another
- Civil War → South had more Christian piety in leadership than North

### TRIVIAL PRAYER

- Give us a sunny day for our soccer game
- Help me get an A on this test I have not studied for
- Prison chaplains say many convicts tell them they only pray when about to get caught

### MANY FOOLISH REQUESTS MADE OF JESUS

**Matthew 20:22 (NIV)**

*"You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said to them. "Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?" "We can," they answered.*

**Matthew 16:23 (NIV)**

*Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."*

### SELF SERVING PRAYER

- Focus on things of men, not things of God

**James 4:3 (NIV)**

*When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.*

### SIN BLOCKED PRAYER

**Psalms 66:18 (NIV)**

*If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened;*

**Isaiah 1:15-17 (NIV)**

*When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide my eyes from you; even if you offer many prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood; wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong, learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.*

**Proverbs 21:13 (NIV)**

*If a man shuts his ears to the cry of the poor, he too will cry out and not be answered.*

**1 Peter 3:7 (NIV)**

*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.*

\*YOU CAN DO ALL OF THIS RIGHT . . . AND STILL HAVE UNGRANTED PRAYER

## PRAYER CHECKLIST → KEEPING YOUR PRAYING ON TARGET

### WHAT DO I REALLY WANT?

- Am I being specific, or just rambling about nothing in particular
- How would I truly know if God granted my request?

### CAN GOD GRANT THIS REQUEST?

- Or it is against God's nature to do so?

### HAVE I DONE MY PART?

- Or am I praying to lose weight without any sacrifice, get an "A" without studying?

### HOW IS MY RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD?

- Are we are speaking terms? Or am I just desperate?

### WHO WILL GET THE CREDIT IF MY REQUEST IS GRANTED?

- Do I have God's interest and glory in mind, or just my comfort and convenience?

### DO I REALLY WANT MY PRAYER GRANTED?

- What would happen if I actually did get my girlfriend back?

### HOW CAN THESE ISSUES HINDER OUR PRIVATE SPIRITUAL PRAYING

- Prayer is keeping company with God
- Every aspect of living affect intimate relationships
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