

Why Won't God Say Yes ? (#1)

Text : **James 4: 1-8 ; Luke 18: 1-8**

S#1.
S#2.

A. Do you pray ? Most believers do. (This congregations ...)

1. Why do you pray ?
 - a. Habit
 - b. Duty
2. When do you pray ?
 - a. Before meals
 - b. Before bed
 - c. Before getting out of bed in the morning.

B. The why and the when of pray is most often related to each other.

S#3.

1. Many people pray only when they are in difficult circumstances.
 - a. Sickness or injury in the family
 - b. Lose their job and can't pay the bills (ILL – *Little boy praying for Tokyo*)
2. We pray when we are afraid.
 - a. “No atheists in a foxhole”
 - b. Facing surgery, big test at school, etc.
 - c. Woman walking alone in a dark place,.
 - d. It is altogether appropriate to pray when in distress :

Psa. 4: 1 – Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have relieved me in my distress; Be gracious to me and hear my prayer.

C. God wants for His people to pray.

S#4.

1. He wants for prayer to be part of our lifestyle.

I Thes. 5: 16-18 – Rejoice always; 17 pray without ceasing; **18** in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.
2. We are instructed to tell God what we want.

Phil. 4: 6 – Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication **S#5.** with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.
3. The Apostle Peter reinforces the same command :
 - a. **I Pet. 5: 6-7** – Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, 7 casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.
 - b. Faith involves trusting God to handle that which frightens us.

3. When we are commanded to take our struggle with sin to God.

a. **James 5: 16** – Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. **S#6.**

b. **I John 5: 16** – If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask and God will for him give life to those who commit sin not leading to death.

D. Even though we believe in prayer, pray in many circumstances and pray for many different reasons, we may not get what we pray for. **S#7.**

1. All of us have labored in prayer for the life of a loved one who died.

2. The Only Begotten Son of God had His prayer refused.

Luke 22: 41-44 – And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and began to pray, ⁴² saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done." ⁴³ Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him. ⁴⁴ And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground. **S#8.**

3. God refused to grant the Apostle Paul's prayer for healing.

II Cor. 12: 7-9 – ... for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me — to keep me from exalting myself! ⁸ Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. ⁹ And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." ... **S#9.**

E. Why would God instruct us to pray, including requests, and then say no ?

S#10.

I. Those who don't believe their prayer will be answered are correct, they won't.

A. James tells us that the first prerequisite for prayer is faith.

James 1: 5-8 – 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. ⁶ But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, ⁸ being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. **S#11.**

B. Jesus also taught that faith was a prerequisite to answered prayers.

Mark 11: 22-24 – And Jesus answered saying to them, "Have faith in God. ²³ Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it will be granted him. ²⁴ Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted you. **S#12.**

II. Those who have rejected the word of God will not be heard by Him.**S#13.****S#14.****A. To their destruction, those who do not believe God's word view it as foolishness.**

1. **I Cor. 2: 14** – But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. **S#15.**

2. The unbeliever may reject the word, he will be judged by it.

John 12: 48 – He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.

B. God will reject those who reject Him.**S#16.**

1. **Matt. 10: 32-33** – Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven.
33 "But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.

2. **Prov. 28: 9** – He who turns away his ear from listening to the law, even his prayer is an abomination. **S#17.**

a. Cf. – **Prov. 1: 24-28** ... God will not hear them even in times of calamity.

b. The atheist in the foxhole is all alone. (*Death bed conversions are empty*)

S#18.**III. God will not answer the prayers of anyone who harbors evil in his heart.****A. God has plainly stated this principle.****S#19.**

1. **Psa. 66: 18** – If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear;
2. **Isa. 1: 15** – So when you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you; Yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are covered with blood.

B. God can hear the wick, but He will not respond to them.**S#20.**

1. **John 9: 31** – We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears him.
2. **Isa. 59: 1-2** – Behold, the Lord's hand is not so short that it cannot save; Nor is His ear so dull that it cannot hear. **2** 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. **S#21.**

3. **Psa. 34: 15-17** – The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous and His ears are open to their cry. **16** The face of the Lord is against evildoers. To cut off the memory of them from the earth. **17** The righteous cry, and the Lord hears And delivers them out of all their troubles. **18** The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. **S#22.**

Cf - **I Pet. 3: 12**

IV. Discord with others will prevent one's prayers from being granted.**S#23.****A. God takes discord very seriously.**

1. **Matt. 5: 23-24** – Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, **S#24.**
and there remember that your brother has something against you,
24 leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled
to your brother, and then come and present your offering.
2. We are commanded to maintain a peaceful environment.
Rom. 12: 18 – If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

B. Discord in the family is particularly disruptive to prayer

1. The relationship between spouses can be most disruptive to prayer life.
I Pet. 3: 7-8 – You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an **S#25.**
understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman;
and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your
prayers will not be hindered. **8** To sum up, all of you be harmonious,
sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; **9** not
returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead;
2. Times of intense prayer may require that one withdraw from all distractions.
 - a. **I Cor. 7: 4-5** – The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the **S#26.**
husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority
over his own body, but the wife does. **5** Stop depriving one another,
except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to
prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you
because of your lack of self-control.
 - b. Prayer is something deeply personal which requires deep concentration.
Mark 1: 35 – In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, **S#27.**
left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and
was praying there.
3. Fasting is often associated with prayer for the same purpose, facilitating focus.

CONCLUSION :**S#28.****A. God wants for us to pray, but He will not grant just any prayer.**

1. Prayers must be offered in faith.
2. Only the prayers of those who accept God's word will be granted.
3. God will not answer the prayers of those who harbor evil in their heart
4. Discord can hinder one's prayers.

B. Next week we will observe several more reasons prayers are rejected.**S#29.** ... Communion slide

Lesson Text :**James 4: 1-8**

1 What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? **2** You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. **3** You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. **4** You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. **5** Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"? **6** But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble." **7** Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. **8** Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Luke 18: 1-8

1 Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart, **2** saying, "In a certain city there was a judge who did not fear God and did not respect man. **3** "There was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, 'Give me legal protection from my opponent.' **4** For a while he was unwilling; but afterward he said to himself, 'Even though I do not fear God nor respect man, **5** yet because this widow bothers me, I will give her legal protection, otherwise by continually coming she will wear me out.'" **6** And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge said; **7** now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? **8** I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?"