

Why Won't God Say Yes (#2)

Text : **James 4: 1-8 ; Luke 11: 5-13**

A. Men have created such powerful machines they are almost inconceivable. S#1.

1. The U.S.S. Gerald R. Ford aircraft carrier most power military ship ever built. (12.8) S#2.
2. The 9 billion dollar Hadron Collider can hurl particles (ions) near the speed of light.
 - a. The ions are propelled by 9 super magnets which produce a force 100,000 times more powerful than earth's gravitational pull.
 - b. The particles are going so fast that when they collide they create heat 100 times hotter than the center of the sun.
3. NASA's Saturn V rockets produce 7.5 million pounds of thrust.
 - a. The rocket weighs 6.5 million pounds.
 - b. Was designed to carry a 261,000 lb. payload into earth orbit. (90K to moon)
4. Men build cruise ships that are as large as a small city like ours. (14 mw of power)
 - a. The 1,100 ft. Freedom of the Sea carries 4,375 passengers and 1,360 crew = 5,730
 - b. It weighs 154,407 tons, but three powerful engines push it 25 miles per hour
4. **Prayer** is the more powerful than anything man can create and it is at our disposal.

B. God has commanded Christians to pray. S#3.

1. Remember how our text from last week started :
Luke 18: 1 – Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart, ...
2. The Apostle Paul instructed us to pray :
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. S#4.
3. The Apostle Peter instructed us to pray :
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.
4. The Apostle John instructed us to Pray :
I John 5: 14-15 – This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 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. S#5.

C. In spite of these commands and promises, our prayers are often denied. S#6.

1. **Luke 22 ...** The Only Begotten Son of God prayed fervently, but was denied.
2. **II Cor. 12: 7-9 ..** The Apostle who healed many prayed for healing, but was denied.
3. Though we ardently pray, we often have our prayers denied as well.

D. In our last lesson we observed some reasons God denies prayers.

1. Those who don't believe their prayers will be answered will be denied.
 - a. **James 1: 5-8** – But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives **S#7.**
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.
 - b. **ILL. – Man prayed mountain would be removed from behind his house.**
Cf- Mk 11:22f **Woke up in the morning and looked out, “I knew it would be there.”**
2. Those who reject the word of God are rejected by Him.
 - a. **Prov. 28: 9** – He who turns away his ear from listening to the law, **S#8.**
even his prayer is an abomination.
 - b. Back in the 1600s, the Puritan, Thomas Brooks wrote, “If you want God to
hear you when you pray, you must hear Him when He speaks.”
3. If one harbors evil in his heart, his prayers will be rejected : (**Isa 1: 15**)
Psa. 66: 18 – If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear;
4. If there is discord between brethren, their prayers will be hindered :
Matt. 5: 23-24 – Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, **S#9.**
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.

With this lesson we will observe three more things that block our prayers.

I. Not making prayer a priority will cause prayers not to be granted. S#10.

- A. Bro. James observed that many do not receive, because they do not ask.
 1. **James 4: 2** – You do not have because you do not ask. **S#11.**
 2. Jesus said that in order to receive from God, we should ask from Him.
Matt. 7: 7-8 – Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock,
and it will be opened to you. **8 For everyone who asks receives, and**
he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.
 3. The prophet Samuel thought it was sinful not to pray.
I Sam 12: 23 – Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against **S#12.**
the Lord by ceasing to pray for you; but I will instruct you
in the good and right way.
- B. A prayer uttered out of duty is a routine, not a relationship. **S#13.**
 1. **James 5: 16b** – The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

- a. A prayer offered out of duty is not “**fervent.**”
 - b. Thus, a prayer that does not express the heart of the devotee is not “**effective.**”
2. In the 1600s Miguel de Molinos wrote : “*Prayer is an ascent of the mind to God.*”

C. Praying from our heart is fundamental to our relationship with God. S#14.

- 1. When we pray we are talking to “**our Father who is in Heaven.**” (**Matt. 6: 9**)
- 2. When we address our Heavenly Father it is an intimate relationship. **Abba .. Dad**
Rom. 8: 15 – For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!”

D. As Christians, prayer should be one of the priorities of our life. S#15.

- 1. As His servants, everything we do should be mission oriented.
Gal. 2: 20 – I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.
- 2. Our life belongs to Jesus so our prayers should be for His will to be accomplished.

II. Vain repetition of prayers will produce no benefit for the devotee. S#16.

A. We are clearly instructed not to use “meaningless repetition” when we pray.

- 1. **Matt. 6: 7 – And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. 8 "So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.** S#17.
- 2. Even today the idolaters repeat the words of others over and over.
 - a. When doing baptisms, weddings, funerals and such like they read the same prayers.
 - b. Instead of sharing their heart with God they will repeat “The Lord’s Prayer.”
- 3. Repeating prayers is used as a form of punishment.
 - a. 25 Hail Marys
 - b. 50 Our Fathers (The Lord’s Prayer)

S#18.

B. Repeating the words of another does not accomplish the purpose of prayer.

- 1. True prayer unites the heart of the devotee with the heart of God.
- 2. Prayer is a time of communion and fellowship with God.

S#19.

C. Those who pray out of duty squander an opportunity to draw near to God.

- 1. They tend to repeat or recite prayers.
 * As children we learned “*Now I lay me down to sleep ...*” and never outgrew it.

2. Well-meaning men repeat the prayers they lead in public. (*Not done here*)
3. People tend to recite the same perfunctory prayer at meal times.
4. To such people prayer amounts to little more than a religious ritual.

D. It's a great privilege to enter the throne room of the sovereign ruler.

S#20.

1. It is only those who are in Christ who are welcomed into God's presence.
2. **John 9: 31** – We know that God does not hear sinners;
but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears him.
3. **Matt. 7: 13-14** ... Christians are the few who enter through the narrow gate.

III. Prayers offered with wrong motives are not granted.

S#21.

A. Those who pray only when they want something from God are rejected.

S#22.

1. **James 4: 3** – You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives,
so that you may spend it on your pleasures.
2. We are His servants; God welcomes requests that are for use in His kingdom, but He does not welcome requests for selfish uses.
- * 3. We often make excuses saying that what we pray for is to benefit the church.
 - a. Woman prays that she will win the lottery so she can help the church.
 - b. A man told Alton Howard he wished he was rich like him so he could donate more to the church. Alton asked him, "How much money do you have in your pocket?" The man had \$50. Alton told him, "Show me what you do with that \$50 and I'll show you what you'd do with a million."

B. Too often we ask God for things out of discontent rather than from need.

1. If we put Jesus first, He has promised to supply our needs.
Matt. 6: 31-33 – "Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' **32** For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. **33** But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." **S#23.**
2. For some prayer becomes a lobby for benefits from God.
 - a. God does not respond to pressure
 - b. God's purpose is not to make us happy.
3. We must learn to be content with that which God entrusts to us.
I Tim. 6: 6-8 – ... men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. **6** But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. **7** For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. **8** If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. **S#24.**

C. Our prayers cannot reduce God to the status of an errand boy. S#25.
He is the Master and we are the servant, not the other way round.

1. Pray an assignment list : Lord, bless me in this way ... Do that for me ...
2. Help me to Gimme, gimme, gimme
3. Requests are fine, **but** God's purpose is not to keep us happy
4. He gives us our needs, **but** God wants to be more than our supplier. S#26.

CONCLUSION :

A. Prayer has an effect on those who pray. S#27.

1. It builds and reinforces faith.
2. It strengthens the relationship between God and His children.
3. It unleashes the greatest power in the universe in his life.

B. Prayer is at the heart of a congregation's personal communion with God.

C. When God says no, we should think through the reasons why He refused. S#28.

1. Is it because we have not made prayer a priority; we haven't stayed in touch ?
2. Is it because we are repeating the prayer of someone else over and over ?
3. Is it because we have asked for things with a wrong motive ? (**Heavenly ATM**)

D. You and I were called out of the world so we would proclaim God's glories. S#29.

1. **I Pet. 2: 9 – But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;**
2. Our prayers should reflect God's marvelous light and our walk in that light.
3. ***Our prayers should facilitate our mission.***

INVITATION :

S#1. ... 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 11: 5-13

5 Then He said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and goes to him at midnight and says to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; **6** for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; **7** and from inside he answers and says, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.' **8** I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs.

9 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. **10** For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened. **11** Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he? **12** Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he? **13** If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"