

# Does God always answer prayer?

by Denver Cheddie

There are many scriptures in the Bible where Jesus seems to promise that He would answer every one of our prayers and grant all our requests. Here is a partial list: Matt. 7:7; 17:20; 21:22; Mark 9:23; 11:22-24; John 14:13,14; 15:7,16; 16:23;26. In these scriptures no condition is mentioned. But then in 1 John 5:14,15, we are promised that God answers every prayer that is according to his will. So which is it? How do we reconcile these scriptures? Also bear in mind that none of us actually get all our prayers answered.

In all of those scriptures there are actually conditions implied, though not explicitly stated. Yet many believers expect all their prayers to be answered, and when it does not happen they invent theories why all their prayers are not answered. Here are some of them.

## **Some theories why our prayers are not answered**

### ***LACK OF FAITH***

This is a reason why some of our prayers are not answered (Mark 11:22; James 1:8-10), but it certainly does not imply that every unanswered prayer is due to lack of faith. See my article on [faith](#) for more.

### ***SECRET SIN***

Again this is a reason for unanswered prayer (Isa. 59:1, 2; James 4:3; 1 Pet. 3:7), but not every unanswered prayer can be attributed to secret sin.

### ***WRONG WORDING OF PRAYERS***

Here is where it gets ridiculous. Some people believe that if we ask for something ignorantly, our words activate spiritual laws that may even

bring us curses rather than blessings. What rubbish! The Bible declares that God knows what we want before we even ask (Matt. 6:7, 8). It is not our choice of words that moves God, but our attitude of faith in Him. He knows the intentions of our heart, so even if we cannot express it properly, He knows what we mean. God is not looking for any technicality to avoid having to answer our prayer. Others say that God has no legal right to answer our prayers if the devil finds some fault in them. The God of the Bible does as He pleases (Ps. 115:3), not as the devil pleases. In fact the devil does as God pleases (Job 1:12; 2:6; Acts 4:27,28).

### ***ANSWERING PRAYER VS. RECEIVING THE ANSWER***

Others claim that God does answer every prayer the minute we ask for it, but that does not guarantee that we receive the answer. They cite Dan. 10:12, 13 where Daniel's prayer was heard on day 1, but only after 21 days of fasting was the angel able to come to him with the answer. What this passage teaches is persistence in prayer (Luke 11:8; 18:1). But again not every unanswered prayer is the result of lack of persistence. If God wanted to give us something, He will make sure it comes to us in due time, just like He did with Daniel. The devil tried to hinder Him, but did not succeed. God made sure the answer came to Daniel. No doubt God also put it in Daniel to keep on praying and fasting (Phil. 2:13).

In the above video, Top Cat tosses a coin in the direction of the bell boy. But attached to the coin is a string that allows him to pull away the coin and escape as the he catches it. Is that how you see God? Then your understanding of God is not based on scripture. God does not give us blessings with strings attached only to cruelly take it back. Remember Abraham and Isaac.

## God Does Not Answer Every Prayer

In 1 John 5:14, 15 John stated that any request according to God's will would be answered. But what about the other scriptures that say God will answer all our prayers? John was present when Jesus promised that all our prayers would be answered. It is obvious that he understood that a condition was implied - that the prayers must be according to God's will.

Jesus was not addressing people with a 21<sup>st</sup> century western mentality. He was speaking to those who had forsaken everything to follow him. It was highly unlikely that such people would make outrageously selfish requests outside of God's will like we do. God grants us all we need for life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3). He does not satisfy our greeds (James 4:3) but our needs (Phil. 4:19). Like a good parent, God knows if something is not good for us, He will not grant it. His answer would either be "no", "not yet" or "just trust me".

When Jesus promised that God will answer all of our prayers, he was addressing people who were so sold out to God's will that they would only pray according to his will. When carnal believers started joining the church, John saw the need to explicitly state the previously implied condition - only prayers according to God's will are answered.

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