

FOUR WAYS GOD ANSWERS PRAYER

Part 2

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1. Often God answers both our request and our desire.

a. God's answer may come through an unexpected means.

The way God got Paul to minister in Rome. Cf Romans 1:9; Acts 28:30-31

b. Sometimes God's answer may be delayed.

God sometimes makes us wait so that we realize that it had to be God and not circumstances.

Some times the answers to our prayers may be delayed as a result of the angelic conflict. Cf Daniel 10:2-3 Daniel 10:12-14

2. Sometimes God answers our desire but not our request.

Sometimes we don't know exactly how to pray. Cf Romans 8:26-27

3. Sometimes God grants our request but not our desire.

Numbers 11:4-6 The rabble who were among them had greedy desires; and also the sons of Israel wept again and said, "Who will give us meat to eat?"⁵ "We remember the fish which we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic,"⁶ but now our appetite is gone. There is nothing at all to look at except this manna."

Numbers 11:33 While the meat was still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the anger of the LORD was kindled against the people, and the LORD struck the people with a very severe plague.

Psalms 106:15 So He gave them their request, But sent a wasting disease among them.

They desired meat for their own pleasure.

They got what they requested, but not what they desired.

1 Samuel 8:4, 7 Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah;⁵ and they said to him, ". . .

Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations."
...⁷ The LORD said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them.

1 Samuel 8:19-20 Nevertheless, the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel, and they said, "No, but there shall be a king over us,²⁰ that we also may be like all the nations, that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles."

They wanted a king like the other nations because they thought that would make them more secure.

They got what they asked for, but not what they desired.

Their own king became their oppressor.

They still were subject to conquest by other nations when they were in rebellion against God.

Mark 5:12-13 *The demons* implored Him, saying, "Send us into the swine so that we may enter them."¹³ Jesus gave them permission. And coming out, the unclean spirits entered the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, about two thousand *of them*; and they were drowned in the sea.

The demons requested to enter the swine.

They desired bodies to inhabit.

They got what they requested but not what they desired.

2 Kings 20:1-3 In those days Hezekiah became mortally ill. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him and said to him, "Thus says the LORD, 'Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live.'"² Then he turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD, saying,³ "Remember now, O LORD, I beseech You, how I have walked before You in truth and with a whole heart and have done what is good in Your sight." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

2 Kings 20:4-6 Before Isaiah had gone out of the middle court, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, ⁵ "Return and say to Hezekiah the leader of My people, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of your father David, "I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; behold, I will heal you . . ."' ⁶ "I will add fifteen years to your life . . ."

But it was during those 15 years that Hezekiah did two things that eventually lead to the destruction of the nation.

He made a fatal alignment with Babylon.

He had a son named Manasseh

The most wicked king in Israel's history

Hezekiah's request was granted to his own detriment and to the detriment of the nation.

Ecclesiastes 5:2 Do not be hasty in word or impulsive in thought to bring up a matter in the presence of God. For God is in heaven and you are on the earth; therefore let your words be few.

4. Sometimes God grants us neither our request or desire.

a. God generally says no when there is sin in the believer's life.

Psalms 66:18 If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear

Isaiah 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.

• Wrong motives

◆ **James 1:6-8** 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.

- ◆ **James 4:3** You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend *it* on your pleasures.
- ◆ **Job 35:12-13** "There they cry out, but He does not answer Because of the pride of evil men. ¹³ "Surely God will not listen to an empty *cry*, Nor will the Almighty regard it.
- Selfishness
 - ◆ **Proverbs 21:13** He who shuts his ear to the cry of the poor Will also cry himself and not be answered.
- Marital discord
 - ◆ **1 Peter 3:7** You husbands in the same way, live with *your wives* in an 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.
- Injustice
 - ◆ **Isaiah 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.
- Prayers to impress others
 - ◆ **Matthew 6:5** "When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.
- Meaningless repetition
 - ◆ **Matthew 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.
- Indifference to God's word

◆ **Proverbs 28:9** He who turns away his ear from listening to the law, Even his prayer is an abomination.

b. God does not answers prayers that are contrary to His will.

1 John 5:14 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.

These can be due to ignorance, wrong expectations, or rebellion.

c. God does not answer prayers that are not in our best interest.

2 Corinthians 12:7-9 Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, 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." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

1 Kings 19:4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree; and he requested for himself that he might die, and said, "It is enough; now, O LORD, take my life, for I am not better than my fathers."

Cf 2 Kings 2:11

d. God does not generally answer the prays of a non-Christian.

Proverbs 15:29 The LORD is far from the wicked, But He hears the prayer of the righteous.

John 9:31 "We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears him.

Final Words of Encouragement

John 15:7 "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

Romans 8:26-27 In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with groanings too deep for words;²⁷ and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to *the will of God*.

Romans 8:28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.

Ephesians 3:20 Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us