

Answering Prayer

“Then the LORD said, ‘I have seen how stubborn and rebellious these people are. Now leave me alone so my anger can blaze against them and destroy them all...’ But Moses pleaded with the LORD his God not to do it...So the LORD withdrew his threat and didn’t bring against his people the disaster he had threatened.” Exodus 32:9-10,14

“Prayer does not change God, but it changes him who prays.” Soren Kierkegaard

1. What changed as a result of Moses’ prayer? Did God’s character change? His purposes? His specific dealings with the people?

2. Why did God initiate this conversation with Moses before he went down to meet the people?

“The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and wonderful results.” James 5:16

“God instituted prayer in order to lend to his creatures the dignity of causality.” Blaise Pascal

3. Is the sole purpose of prayer to improve our own spiritual condition or do our prayers have a causal effect on the world around us?

4. How does partnering with God in prayer provide us a sense of ownership and responsibility? Why is this important?

“And so I tell you, keep on asking, and you will be given what you ask for.” Luke 11:9

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding” Proverbs 3:5

6. Why does God call us to be persistent in prayer?

5. What role does faith play when it appears God has not answered our prayers? What are some practical ways to maintain a healthy perspective?

“Afterward the disciples asked Jesus privately, ‘Why couldn’t we cast out that demon?’ ‘You didn’t have enough faith,’ Jesus told them.”

-Matthew 17:18-20 NLT

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

James 4:3 NIV

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Isaiah 55:8-9

7. According to the verses above, what are some reasons that God doesn’t grant our requests?

8. What can we learn from our prayers that are unanswered?

9. Take a few minutes now and pray. Ask God to reveal to you possible reasons why a prayer in your life seems to go unanswered.

Discussion Guidelines:

1. Allow everyone a chance to speak. If you are bursting with ideas and tend to share a lot – great – but occasionally pause a bit before you go, sometimes the quieter ones are just waiting for their chance and they need a little space before they go.
2. Respect the opinions of others, and refrain from giving advice.
3. Keep discussion focused on the material being studied.
4. Maintain the confidentiality of personal things shared within the group.

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