

Does God Answer My Prayers 10-14-18

If you ask most Christians about the nature of God answering prayers, they would likely answer with an old saying: God always answers prayers, the answer is yes, no or maybe later. That does seem to fit our circumstances; we pray to God for relief, for change or for help, and the situation may or may not change. But is this accurate in the way we portray God?

For example, there is a You-tube clip of a man praying that England would lose the World Cup. The won. Did God answer no? Another news story from 2007 is of a woman who prayed to God to give her financial relief, and she won the lottery. Did God answer her prayer yes? What about the man who prays to get away with murder?

The problem with the "Yes, No, Maybe Later" is that it treats prayer like a Genie's lamp, and it fails to take into account the deeper lessons on prayer. Prayer is not something which God owes us an answer. More deeply, God has already told us what to pray for, and we are to remember this truth. Finally, perhaps most importantly, God is clear that He refuses to hear some prayers, and is offended that some would pray to Him (Isaiah 1:15-16).

So how can we confirm that our prayers are being heard by God? The answer to this is very important: FAITH. It is not the results that demonstrate if a prayer is heard, but our faith. Faith is that which comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17), and is certified by our obedience (James 2). People of faith need to understand that prayers are answered in faith; meaning, we are to know what God has said in order to determine the answer. This is because, in the conversation of prayer, God spoke first.

First, consider that prayer is not just like a help line that we can call anytime from anywhere. We are told this in the Bible: John 9:31 "We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears him." So here we see that before we can pray to God we need to have some type of relationship with Him.

Second, we are also told in the bible that it matters for what we are praying. James 4:3 *You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.* We are told that our prayers need to be part of the will of God (Matthew 6:10, etc.).

Third, there is some sense where just any way of "praying" counts. Yet Jesus' disciples understood that praying was something which we needed to learn: Luke 11:1 *It happened that while Jesus was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples."* Praying is something that the Bible teaches on a great deal, and there is a way to pray successfully before God.

Fourth, sometimes God is responding to our prayer, but we are not listening. We are told that God speaks to us through the Word (Hebrews 1:2, 2 Timothy 3:16-17). Learning how to listen to God is perhaps more important than learning to speak to Him. If we pay enough attention to what God has said, we will soon realize that more often than not, God answered our prayer before we asked