

Abiding Light Ministries

The Problem Of Unanswered Prayer

Luke 18:1

- Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, ² saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. ³ "Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.' ⁴ "And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man, ⁵ 'yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.' " ⁶ Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said. ⁷ "And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? ⁸ "I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"

Whenever as great a power as prayer is available, there are bound to be hindrances. The world, the flesh, and the devil create these hindrances.

Neglecting Prayer

- Some people think they should receive answers to prayer without praying.
- Jesus said, Ask and ye shall receive (**Luke 11:9**), James wrote, Ye have not because ye ask not (**James 4:2**)

A Wrong Motive In Prayer

- One error in prayer is asking God for things that are not really needed. Things desired for the purpose of satisfying selfish desires. (**James 4:3**) When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.
- The goal in life should be to glorify God. (**1 Corinthians 10:31**) Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

The Problem Of Unanswered Prayer

- Stand up and face the issues. One of the greatest human problems is unanswered prayer.
- Many things are asked for, but not received.
- Many people are prayed for, but they are not healed.

Delay Is Not Necessarily Denial. *The delay in the story of Lazarus provided for a great miracle.*

- To heal is one thing, but to raise the dead is something greater. (**John 11:11**) These things He said, and after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up." (**John 11:25**) Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.

The cripple at the Beautiful Gate (Acts 3)

- Jesus passed him in entering and departing from the temple. This was not a denial.
- Peter and John came to him in God's perfect timing. (**Acts 3:6-7**) Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." And he took him by the right hand and lifted *him* up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.

The ten lepers (Luke 17)

- The ten lepers cried out in prayer. They were not healed at first.

The woman of Canaan (Matthew 15:22-23)

- The woman of Canaan sought the Lord on behalf of her daughter. First the Lord answered not a word. The disciples said, "send her away". (**Matthew 15:22**) And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed."

The blind man (Mark 8)

- At first he was half-healed, with blurred eyes he saw men as trees. (**Mark 8:22-25**) Then He came to Bethsaida; and they brought a blind man to Him, and begged Him to touch him. So He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town. And when He had spit on his eyes and put His hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything. And he looked up and said, "I see men like trees, walking." Then He put *His* hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored and saw everyone clearly.

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Hindrances to Prayer

- A husband's prayer may not be answered because he has a broken fellowship with his wife. (**1 Peter 3:7**) Husbands, likewise, dwell with *them* with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as *being* heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.
- Sin is a great hindrance to prayer. (**Isaiah 59:1-2**) Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden *His* face from you, So that He will not hear.
- Idolatry is a hindrance to prayer. (**Ezekiel 14:3**) "Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts, and put before them that which causes them to stumble into iniquity. Should I let Myself be inquired of at all by them?"
- An unforgiving spirit hinders prayer. (**Mark 11:25**) " And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. **NOTE: A bad spirit renders prayer completely ineffective.**
- Not considering the poor hinders answers to prayer. (**Proverbs 21:13**) Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor Will also cry himself and not be heard. **NOTE: Generosity and Christian victory go together. Much prayer is unnoticed and unanswered because we are deaf to the cries of human needs. The hardness of our heart stops God from giving.**

Asking Amiss

- **James 4:3** You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend *it* on your pleasures.

The Devil Fights Against Prayers Being Answered

- **Daniel 10:12-13** Then he said to me, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. "But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia.