

MYSTERY OF UNANSWERED PRAYERS

(THE ANSWER WE DON'T WANT TO HEAR SERIES – PART 2)

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THE LORD'S FLOCK GROW DIGEST

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All of us are familiar with the Bible passage where Jesus says that if we ask, seek, or knock, then God will answer and make things come our way (Matthew 7:7). But what about all the unanswered prayers in our life despite praying persistently and passionately? This can be confusing, even frustrating, and we naturally ask “Why does God not answer my prayer? God hears and answers our prayers if we obey His commands.

1. **SIN** is a barrier to prayer.

- 1.1 Sin destroys our relationship with God. Adam and Eve's sin immediately damaged their intimate fellowship with God and they were thrown out of paradise (Genesis 3:24).
- 1.2 Sin creates a “dead zone.” God will not hear us, and our calls to Him will go unanswered because our connection with God is disrupted (Psalm 66:18).
- 1.3 Sin separates us from God. The Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save, neither his ear heavy that it cannot hear (Isaiah 59:1-2). However, our sins separate us from God; thus, He cannot hear our prayers.

2. **UNFORGIVENESS** is one kind of sin that shuts off the power of our prayers. God promises that if we forgive others their transgressions, we will also be forgiven (Matthew 6:14-15). We should release any grudge against anyone so that the Lord will not block His graciousness from us (Mark 11:25).

3. Why does God relate prayer with forgiving others?

- 3.1 Answered prayer is tied to our determination to forgive others who have offended us.
- 3.2 God has forgiven all our sins. He expects us to deal with the sins of others as He dealt with ours.

3.3 If we refuse to forgive, we will find ourselves in a “dead zone” – disconnected from God and He will not hear our prayer.

3.4 If we forgive others, we will receive His gracious mercy and blessings.

4. **What is the problem with forgiveness?**

- 4.1 It is difficult because it is not natural. The natural human impulse is to retaliate or to seek revenge.
- 4.2 It is hard because it is not fair. To forgive without just repayment offends our sense of justice and we want to be vindicated accordingly.

5. **The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant** (Matthew 18:21-35)

- 5.1 Jesus deals with man's two (2) greatest needs: the need for forgiveness (v 21-27) and the need to forgive others (v 28-35). He teaches us to forgive others on the basis of His forgiveness – out of mercy and grace – not because they deserve it or not.
- 5.2 . There is no limit to God's forgiveness; hence, there should also be no limit to our forgiveness of others.

Conclusion: The underlying reason behind unanswered prayers is **SIN**. **UNFORGIVENESS** is one of the most dangerous sins that engenders a “dead zone;” this shuts off the power of our prayer. God's forgiveness of our sins should be our motivation to forgive others.

Reflection: How often do you hold on to the wrongs of others even when you have been forgiven by God? What steps can you take now to remove your “dead zone?”

Prayer: *Heavenly Father, we ask that You open our hearts to understand the depth of Your forgiveness and the importance of extending the same to others. May we have the courage to let go of unforgiveness so we can live in the freedom of Your love and grace. In Jesus' Name. AMEN!*