

## WHY DON'T I GET AN ANSWER?

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Sometimes when I dial a number on the phone, I wonder why they are not answering. I keep on trying, and trying until I do reach my party. There are all kinds of reasons that they haven't answered the telephone. Have you ever dialed heaven, only to feel that God was not answering? Have you ever prayed and felt that your prayers didn't go higher than the ceiling? Have you ever seriously called on the Lord, only to not hear back from Him? (At least we thought we were not hearing from Him.) It seemed as if He were silent. Have you ever wondered why God didn't bring to pass what you asked for in sincere prayer? Maybe you felt that you weren't good enough for God to answer your prayer? I am sure that from time to time each of us has been confronted with similar thoughts? God, if you love me, why, why, why?



Don't stop praying about that situation just because you feel that you are not being answered. I can recall, in my Christian experience, praying long and hard for something and it didn't turn out the way that I prayed. Have you ever prayed for a loved one to be healed and they died? Have you ever prayed for pain to go away, and in spite of prayer it remained? First of all, we must believe that God is sovereign. He reigns in all power and authority. He certainly knows what is best for each situation and we must leave it in His hands. For instance if your five-year-old son asks you to buy him a car, you would probably have to tell him to wait a while, because he was not mature enough to handle a car. So with prayer, God determines what we need at the time we pray. When we get to the throne of God, I am sure He will reveal why certain prayers didn't seem to be answered. He will show us the reason, and we will realize it was for the best. And always remember that person for whom you are praying to be saved has a will of his own, and God will not cross the boundary of the will of man. Man has a free moral will. He can make his own choice and pass up the warnings and pleadings of the Holy Spirit. But God can allow things to come in the life of that individual that will make them have a desire for the Lord. So don't give up on them; keep the prayers going up. I recall one of our church ladies prayed 40 years for her husband to come to Christ. What a relief when he accepted the Lord. She never gave up.

The boat may be covered with waves, and Christ sleeps on; but He will wake up before it sinks. He sleeps, but He never oversleeps, and there is no "too late" with Him. So take courage; He knows what is best for us.

Of course, there have been times when I prayed just a simple prayer and almost forgot about it, only to find that it had been answered. Many years ago, while working as a missionary, I had pleurisy. It lingered and lingered and nothing seemed to make it go away. I prayed and prayed and no healing came. That was before a lot of these new antibiotics came along. So one night as I put my babies to bed, I just simply prayed, "Dear God, this is in Your hands." When I awoke the next morning, it was gone and has not returned since. What a simple prayer, but such a big answer.

I don't have the answer to all these questions, but I do know that God hears and answers prayer in His timing and in His way. Sometimes He says, "Yes"; sometimes, He just says "No." And then again, He often says, "Wait a while." That is the one that is difficult to hear because we are not geared to waiting on anything. We want it right now, if not sooner!! Here are some Scriptures passages that have blessed and encouraged me during times I didn't get a prayer answered as soon as I wished.

Isaiah 30:18: *Therefore will the Lord wait, that He may be gracious unto you . . . and therefore will He be exalted.*

Romans 8:26, 27: *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession with groanings which cannot be uttered and he that searcheth the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose.*

Sometimes the delay is for our profit and good. He has other plans for us. God wants our faith and trust in Him to become stronger regardless of the circumstance. Sometimes it may be that we learn more of submission and humility. God's delays don't necessarily mean denial.

The great minister, William Cowper said,

The saints should never be dismayed,  
Nor sink in hopeless fear.  
For when they least expect His aid  
The Savior will appear.

Spurgeon said,

Waiting exercises our grace. Waiting tries our faith.  
Therefore, wait on in hope for though the answer tarry,  
It can never come too late.  
God makes a promise. Faith believes it.  
Hope anticipates it. Patience awaits it.

**Prayer doesn't always change things for you. But it changes you for things.**