

What the Bible says about - Unanswered prayer

Unbelief hinders prayer – Prov. 15:8

The Lord detests the sacrifice of the wicked,
but the prayer of the upright pleases Him.

Lack of faith hinders our prayers – Jas. 1:6-8

when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. ⁷ That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. ⁸ Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.

Unconfessed sin hinders prayer – Ps. 66:17-19

I cried out to Him with my mouth;

His praise was on my tongue.

¹⁸ If I had cherished sin in my heart,
the Lord would not have listened;

¹⁹ but God has surely listened
and has heard my prayer.

Lack of humility and repentance hinders our prayers – 2 Chron. 7:13-15

¹³ “When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people, ¹⁴ if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land. ¹⁵ Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place.

Pride hinders our prayers. Problems keep us humble (they can also develop our character – Rom. 5:3-4, holiness and maturity) and God’s power is more obvious when we are weak – 2 Cor. 12:7-10

in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. ⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. ⁹ But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. ¹⁰ That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Hypocrisy hinders our prayers – Mk. 12:38-40

Jesus said, “Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, ³⁹ and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. ⁴⁰ They devour widows’ houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. These men will be punished most severely.”

Selfish motives hinder our prayers – Jas. 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.

Disobeying God’s commands hinders our prayers – 1 Jn. 3:21-22

Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God ²² and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him.

Praying against the will of God hinders our prayers – 1 Jn. 5:13-15

¹³ I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. ¹⁴ This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.

Not forgiving others hinders our prayers – Mk. 11:24-25

Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. ²⁵ And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”

Continue to pray regularly and as the need arises even when your prayers seem to be unanswered – 1 Th. 5:16-18

Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray continually, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.

Asking for the wrong thing or at the wrong time hinders our prayers

The answer may be “No” or “Not yet (Wait)”.

Failure to persevere in prayer may hinder our prayers – Luke 18:1-8 (Parable of the persistent widow)

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. ² He said: “In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. ³ And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, ‘Grant me justice against my adversary.’

⁴ “For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, ‘Even though I don’t fear God or care what people think, ⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won’t eventually come and attack me!’”

⁶ And the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. ⁷ And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? ⁸ I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?”



Sometimes God answers prayer only after prolonged asking – Mt 7:7-11

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

⁹ “Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹ If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

Asking for the things that are not good for believers hinders our prayers. Remember that God always works for the good of those who love Him – Rom. 8:28

We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Making demands instead of requests can hinder our prayers

We need to wait patiently, because God’s will can become clear in time.

A model prayer

When He faced crucifixion, Jesus prayed: “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.” (Mt. 26:39).

