



WE'VE GOT  
QUESTIONS

Why didn't God  
**answer my prayer?**

Why didn't God  
answer my prayer?

*A fair question.*

## Matthew 21

<sup>21</sup> Jesus replied, “Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and it will be done. <sup>22</sup> **If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.**”

## James 5

<sup>13</sup> Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. <sup>14</sup> Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord.

<sup>15</sup> And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. <sup>16</sup> Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. **The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.**

“Asking is indeed the great law of the spiritual world through which things are accomplished in cooperation with God and yet in harmony with the freedom and worth of every individual.”

DALLAS WILLARD

Why didn't God  
answer my prayer?

*We pray without faith.*

## Mark 6

Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples. <sup>2</sup>When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed.

## Mark 6

“Where did this man get these things?” they asked. “What’s this wisdom that has been given him? What are these remarkable miracles he is performing? Isn’t this the carpenter? Isn’t this Mary’s son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren’t his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him.

## Mark 6

Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home.” He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. He was amazed at their lack of faith.

“Healing prayer assumes that wounded souls will cooperate with Christ in the healing process. It assumes that the wounded have choices to make. They must choose to be honest and humble and surrendered. They must choose to share their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and what they do to numb their pain.”

ADELE AHLBERG CALHOUN

Why didn't God  
answer my prayer?

*We pray with mixed  
motives.*

## Proverbs 15

<sup>29</sup> The Lord is far from the wicked,  
but he hears the prayer of the righteous.

## Psalm 66

<sup>16</sup> Come and hear, all you who fear God;  
let me tell you what he has done for me.

<sup>17</sup> I cried out to him with my mouth;  
his praise was on my tongue.

<sup>18</sup> **If I had cherished sin in my heart,  
the Lord would not have listened;**

<sup>19</sup> but God has surely listened  
and has heard my prayer.

<sup>20</sup> Praise be to God,  
who has not rejected my prayer  
or withheld his love from me!

## John 5

Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals. Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed.

## John 5

One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, **“Do you want to get well?”**

Why didn't God  
answer my prayer?

*We are in the midst of  
a bigger battle.*

## Daniel 10

<sup>1</sup> In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, a revelation was given to Daniel (who was called Belteshazzar). Its message was true and it concerned a great war. The understanding of the message came to him in a vision.

<sup>2</sup> At that time I, Daniel, **mourned for three weeks.** <sup>3</sup> I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips; and I used no lotions at all until the three weeks were over.

<sup>4</sup> On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river, the Tigris, <sup>5</sup> I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist.

<sup>11</sup> He said, “Daniel, you who are highly esteemed, consider carefully the words I am about to speak to you, and stand up, for I have now been sent to you.” And when he said this to me, I stood up trembling.

<sup>12</sup> Then he continued, “Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. <sup>13</sup> **But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia.**

When God doesn't  
answer your prayer...

*Stay persistent.*

**Yes.**

**No.**

**Persist.**

## Hebrews 5

<sup>7</sup> During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.

“Persistent praying weeds out the passive from the serious believers. Persistent praying wears down our obsession of self-control. The more we pray, the more we stop trying to fix our problems in the flesh.”

EZRA BYER

When God doesn't  
answer your prayer...

*Stay personal.*

## Psalm 88

<sup>13</sup> But I cry to you for help, Lord;  
in the morning my prayer comes before you.

<sup>14</sup> Why, Lord, do you reject me  
and hide your face from me?

# Psalm 102

<sup>1</sup> Hear my prayer, Lord;  
let my cry for help come to you.

<sup>2</sup> Do not hide your face from me  
when I am in distress.

Turn your ear to me;  
when I call, answer me quickly.

“Prayer for healing of any kind invites us to stay in the space between desiring healing and demanding it. The space between desire and demand invites us to take a risk on God. Without risk, you can never have trust. Trust is not a concept—it is waiting in the space between desire and demand for what the Lord wants to do.”

ADELE AHLBERG CALHOUN

Why didn't God answer  
*my* prayer?

“Men and women are at their noblest and best when they are on their knees before God in prayer.. To pray is not only to be truly godly; it is also to be truly human.”

JOHN STOTT

## Matthew 26

<sup>36</sup> Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” <sup>37</sup> He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. <sup>38</sup> Then he said to them, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.”

<sup>39</sup> Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “**My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.**”

The path to intimacy with God always includes receiving a “No” from God and yet persisting in prayer with God.