



“Divine Dialogue” Pt 4 ***Prayer Factors related to our Walk***



- I. PERSPECTIVE ON PRAYER -- What is prayer?**
- II. PURPOSE OF PRAYER – Why Pray?**
- III. PREREQUISITES FOR PRAYER – Who can pray?**
 - A. Factors related to the WORK and PERSON OF CHRIST**
 - B. Factors related to the WALK of Christians**

In the last message I presented the requirements related to prayer related to the **WORK** of Christ. This message considers the factors that may affect prayer related to the **WALK** of the believer. Nothing prevents access to talk to God at any time. He invites us to talk with Him and share our requests and the concerns of our heart. Some things may affect His response to those prayers. I call them “Prayer Blockers”. If there are some things that can block our prayers, it follows that the opposite might boost our prayer life. Just because we are free to talk with someone does not guarantee a positive outcome. The Bible records a number of things related to our daily walk that may hinder answers to prayer. These things do not prevent access or union, but may waylay answers or may strain the communication between us and the Father. Our access to God does not depend on us, but often we are the key to when and whether some of those prayers get answered and the quality of our communication. We can affect the enjoyment and significance of our dialogue with God. At times, attitudes and behavior may strain communication not only with people but with God.

Do you wonder why you don't get response to your prayers?

Do you feel like God stopped listening and responding?

Are you unenthusiastic about spending time in prayer?

You are not alone in those feelings.

CONCERN ABOUT GOD HEARING

O Lord God Almighty, how long will your anger smolder against the prayers of your people? Psa 80:4

Do not hide your face from your servant; answer me quickly, for I am in trouble. Psa 69:17

Even when I call out or cry for help, he shuts out my prayer. Lam 3:8

He has barred my way with blocks of stone; he has made my paths crooked. Lam 3:9

You have covered yourself with a cloud so that no prayer can get through. Lam 3:44

As you can see from these passages, many of God's people at one time or another wondered about the effectiveness of their prayer life.

CONFIDENCE ABOUT GOD HEARING

In the day of my trouble I will call to you, for you will answer me. Psa 86:7

I call on you, O God, for you will answer me; give ear to me and hear my prayer. Psa 17:6

He will respond to the prayer of the destitute; he will not despise their plea. Psa 102:17

The things in this list also block communication on a human level. The following scriptures will hopefully serve as check points in your own life related to our prayer life. These notes include more information than presented in the message. I urge you to take time to contemplate the expanded thought presented here.

1. HUMBLE SUBMISSION VS PROUD INDEPENDENCE

An attitude of self-service and pride will block communication with others in a hurry. If one senses an arrogant proud attitude in someone, they are less likely to reciprocate with a warm response. We tend to resist someone who projects that kind of attitude. Scripture indicates God feels the same way.

God gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. James 4:6-8

The Lord detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished. Proverbs 16:5

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. 1 Peter 5:7

Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest? All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the LORD. But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word. Isaiah 66:1-2

Humility involves recognizing who I am in light of who God is.

Humility before God acknowledges who is in charge. I come before God as a willing bondsman dedicated to accomplishing His will in the world.

Humility realizes that God is the source of all gifts, skills, talents, etc. and there is no room for pride. With this view in mind I am better able to demonstrate a proper attitude toward others. I can be free from the necessity of thinking of myself more highly than I ought to think and to view others as more important than myself. My conversation will come from a right perspective.

Because of my wealth and worth in Christ...

I have nothing to prove.

I have nothing to protect.

I have nothing to lose.

I can be an effective team player without the necessity to prove my worth or build a personal kingdom.

I can maintain a proper focus on what God desires to accomplish rather than what I yearn to experience.

I am free to achieve what He asks me to achieve, leaving the eternal results to Him.

Humility is the number one attitude necessary for answered prayer and dynamic relationship.

Jesus called contrasted the prayer of a proud Pharisee and a humble sinner. One actually connected with God because of his humility. The other was in reality praying to HIMSELF.

He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For

everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.” Luke 18:9-14

God responded to King Josiah's humility and submissive attitude toward the Law.

Because your heart was responsive and you humbled yourself before the Lord when you heard what I have spoken against this place and its people, that they would become accursed and laid waste, and because you tore your robes and wept in my presence, I have heard you, declares the Lord.

2 Kings 22:19

God promised that He responds to prayers of humility.

*If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among My people, ¹⁴and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. **2 Chron. 7:11-14***

They do not cry out to me from their hearts but wail upon their beds. They gather together for grain and new wine but turn away from me. Hos 7:14

Until it is clear in our minds and an established fact in our heart as to our place in relation to God and who is master and who is servant, God will resist certain petitions. We must be convinced that our need for God is not partial but total. Do I pray only because good Christians are supposed to pray? Do I have a conviction that seeking dynamic relationship with God is not only effective but absolutely essential for my life as well as being personally rewarding? If I do, then why don't I pray like it?

Failure to be in continual communication with God demonstrates that I am not really convinced of the need. It is a similar attitude flaunted by the Pharisees who "were confident of their own righteousness" and prayed to themselves. They felt more confident in their own gifts and talents and abilities. We on the other hand must approach God with a heart of humility that relies on God for He resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.

2. THANKFULNESS vs THANKLESSNESS

A relationship experiences strain any time we sense our relationship with someone is being taken for granted. When our efforts go unappreciated, it creates a strained atmosphere. It is the same way with God.

For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, Romans 1:23-24

The Bible prescribes thanksgiving as an integral element of one's prayer life.

I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. Eph 1:16

always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Eph 5:20

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. Phi 4:6

I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone - 1Ti 2:1

When I feel self-reliant and self-sufficient, I will have little sense of gratitude. After all, why should I give thanks to God when it was my great abilities that got me where I am today? A thankful heart does not take God's work in our life for granted. A thankful heart acknowledges God's part in every aspect of life. Failure to do so cultivates an attitude of bitterness or pride that may delay the divine supply trucks. Motive also has something to do with answered prayer.

3. GOD'S CAUSE vs MY COMFORT or GOD'S GLORY vs MY GAIN

We are not warmly drawn to someone when it becomes clear that the person seeking our attention only wants something from me. Our approach to God is similar.

You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

James 4:2-3

We are on this earth as ambassadors, bondslaves, stewards, soldiers, sons, subjects. All of these word pictures imply that we have a job to do that may not include our own immediate personal pleasure and comfort. God does not exist for my happiness. God is much more interested in my holiness. It is only when I live holy, am I able to truly happy. Jesus warned us through the parable of the sower how a focus on the pleasures of this life often prevents the effective rooting of the Word in our life. Paul told Timothy:

Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs - he wants to please his commanding officer. 2Ti 2:4

Moses made a difficult decision from the Palace of Egypt.

By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. Hebrews 11:26

It is not that there is anything wrong with pleasure. God is not opposed to feeling good or good times. It is the pursuit of pleasure **rather than** or above the pursuit of the God of pleasure that entangles us.

When someone realizes that the only reason I am talking with them is to get something from them, the quality of communication drops significantly. Just as we want others to have pleasure in life, so God desires our pleasure. The pleasures that come when we are operating with proper priorities are beyond measure.

You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand. Psalm 16:11

We live in a comfort and pleasure oriented culture that denies our senses nothing. They consider denial of self unhealthy. In fact self-denial is considered immoral.

Paul told Timothy that the last days would be like this.

*But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. ²For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, ⁴treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; ⁵holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; and avoid such men as these. **2 Timothy 3:1-5***

What should motivate us to talk to God? Our motivation should be the same as it is for everything we do; to bring honor and credit to the one who saved us by His grace.

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Col 3:17

In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. Matthew 5:16

We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. 2Th 1:12

We should ask ourselves, "Why am I asking for this particular request?" "Is this request really for God's cause or for my comfort?" James makes it clear that if it is merely to spend upon my own pleasures, it will not be answered. Mutual goals and others-centered motives provide a solid base for strong relationships. A self-centered, rather than a kingdom-centered focus will prevent our petitions from being answered.

4. PURITY VS IMPURITY

Personal purity or how we live affects answered prayer and quality of relationship with God. When there are unresolved issues with someone, there can be no close relationship. There may be sustained exchange and cordial conversation but no depth of relationship. In some cases, where the hurt runs deep, fellowship and communication run shallow. In the case of our relationship with God, our offenses often hinder our fellowship and he chooses not to answer a specific prayer until we reestablish that fellowship. The level and quality of communication suffer first when I have deeply offended my wife. I may even have caused offense and not realized it. The offense arises from their view of things not mine. Offenses to God stand in the way of our walk and fellowship with Him. They may even be things that we give no second thought.

a) Unconfessed Sin in our life

Answers to prayer are linked to keeping His commandments and doing the things pleasing to God.

Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. 1 John 3:21-22

Our spiritual practices do not impress God when we continue to accommodate deliberate sin in our life.

Alas, sinful nation, people weighed down with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, sons who act corruptly! They have abandoned the LORD, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they have turned away from Him.

"What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me?" Says the LORD. I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams, And the fat of fed cattle. And I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs, or goats. When you come to appear before Me, Who requires of you this trampling of My courts? Bring your worthless offerings no longer, incense is an abomination to Me. New moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies-- I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly. I hate your new moon festivals and your appointed feasts, They have become a burden to Me. I am weary of bearing them. ¹⁵"So when you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you, Yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are covered with blood. Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil, ¹⁷Learn to do good; Seek justice, Reprove the ruthless; Defend the orphan, Plead for the widow.

"Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool." Isaiah 1:4, 11-19

Does God hear our prayer when we deliberately conceal sin? He hears, but He does not always heed or respond.

Then they will cry out to the Lord, but he will not answer them. At that time he will hide his face from them because of the evil they have done. Micah 3:4 ; 6:14

The Lord detests the sacrifice of the wicked, but the prayer of the upright pleases him. Proverbs 15:8

The Lord is far from the wicked but he hears the prayer of the righteous. Proverbs 15:29

If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened; but God has surely listened and heard my voice in prayer. Praise be to God, who has not rejected my prayer or withheld his love from me! Psalm 66:19-20

When we allow other things to remain in our hearts and occupy space reserved for God and God alone, He cannot respond to our prayers.

"Son of man, these men have set up idols in their hearts and put wicked stumbling blocks before their faces.

Should I let them inquire of me at all? Ezekiel 14:3

When God illumines sin in our life through the inner prompting of the Spirit, the reproof of the Word or the exhortation of another saint, we are responsible to deal with that sin. This is such a simple barrier to remove.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9

There are even times that God, out of His great mercy, responds to our cry despite our sinfulness.

Many times he delivered them, but they were bent on rebellion and they wasted away in their sin. But he took note of their distress when he heard their cry; for their sake he remembered his covenant and out of his great love he relented. Psalm 106:43-45

b) Failure to make restitution

God sent a three-year famine to Israel for the uncorrected sins of Saul. 2 Samuel 21:1,14

God demanded David make atonement for sin before a plague was halted. 2 Samuel 24:25

c) Unalterable consequences to sin

God doesn't answer prayers to reverse certain consequences for sin. When God attaches definite consequences, He must remain true to His word and allow them to occur. No measure of meditation and prayer will alter the laws of the harvest.

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Gal 6:8

Any alteration of consequences lies solely in God's hands. When Israel rejected God's rule and asked for a king, God required them to suffer the consequences associated with that decision.

When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, and the Lord will not answer you in that day." 1Sa 8:18

God destined Israel for discipline and God forbid Jeremiah to pray for their relief.

"So do not pray for this people nor offer any plea or petition for them; do not plead with me, for I will not listen to you. Jer 7:16

"Do not pray for this people nor offer any plea or petition for them, because I will not listen when they call to me in the time of their distress. Jer 11:14 ;14:9-12

Moses pleaded God to be the one to usher the children of Israel into the promised land. God refused to answer that prayer.

Let me go over and see the good land beyond the Jordan - that fine hill country and Lebanon." But because of you the Lord was angry with me and would not listen to me. "That is enough," the Lord said. "Do not speak to me anymore about this matter". Deuteronomy 3:25-26

David appealed to God that he might be the one to build the temple and God refused because he had been a man of bloodshed. 2 Samuel 7:13

God is a God of mercy. He may, by His own determination, decide to ease the consequences or stop them. But this does not come under the promise that if we ask anything He will do it. He has not put Himself under any obligation to answer these kinds of requests. Don't allow yourself to become hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. The only prevention is daily exhortation. Be encouraged however, God's discipline does not last forever. Jer 29:13.

You have unhindered access to the throne. Once there, He will share what is needed in the area of fellowship. If He doesn't bring it up don't sweat it. Provided we are honestly open to hear it.

5. ACTIVE RESPONSE TO THE WORD vs APATHY

If I seek to develop a relationship with another person, it is important that they show some kind of positive response to my words. We feel needed and appreciated when people respond to our wishes and words. When couples give attention and truly want to hear what the other has to say, it enhances the relationship. If there is distraction and discounting, there is strained relationship. God too, responds when we take His words to heart.

If you completely ignore a specific request someone has made, it will most certainly effect your communication.

Turn to my reproof, behold, I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you. Because I called, and you refused; I stretched out my hand, and no one paid attention; and you neglected all my counsel, and did not want my reproof; I will even laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your dread comes, When your dread comes like a storm, and your calamity comes on like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come on you.

Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently, but they shall not find me, Because they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD. "They would not accept my counsel, they spurned all my reproof. So they shall eat of the fruit of their own way, and be satiated with their own devices. For the waywardness of the naive shall kill them, and the complacency of fools shall destroy them. But he who listens to me shall live securely, and shall be at ease from the dread of evil." Proverbs 1:23-33

If anyone turns a deaf ear to the law, even his prayers are detestable. Proverbs 28:9

They made their hearts as hard as flint and would not listen to the law or to the words that the Lord Almighty had sent by his Spirit through the earlier prophets. So the Lord Almighty was very angry. "'When I called, they did not listen; so when they called, I would not listen,' says the Lord Almighty. Zechariah 7:12-13

Do I have an active or apathetic response to the Word? God desires that we long for His Word.

My soul is consumed with longing for your laws at all times. Psalm 119:20

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers. Psalm 1:1-3

Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, 1 Peter 2:2

If we continue to ignore the clear instruction of God's word, we cannot expect that we will experience answers. When we meditate on His words, we will experience success in all that we do. (Psalm 1)

The Word and will of God should be the basis of our prayers. If we fail to pray according to His desires, we should not expect answers. If we offer our petitions based on His revealed will, we should expect results. Results far above all that we could ask or think.

6. COMPASSION TO THE NEEDS OF OTHERS VS INDIFFERENCE

When I fail to respond to the obvious needs of the one I love, or the children of the one I love, I cannot expect that such a relationship will move much deeper.

He who shuts his ear to the cry of the poor will also cry himself and not be answered. Proverbs 21:13

If we continually engage in selfish grabbing rather than selfless giving, the Lord will not hear us. If you ignore someone's obvious needs, it will greatly affect your level of communication.

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." Luk 6:38

If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? 1Jo 3:17

Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers. 1Pe 3:7

Isaiah 58 speaks of a purpose for fasting. Fasting serves others and feeds the hungry and brings the homeless poor into the house to cover the naked and should not be used to avoid helping fellow human beings.

When we do these things, the promise is clear--
Our light will break out like the dawn,
Our recovery will speedily spring forth;
Our righteousness will go before us;
The glory of the LORD will be our rear guard.

THEN we will call, and the LORD will answer; We will cry, and He will say, "Here I am."

FURTHER

If we remove the yoke from our midst
The pointing of the finger and speaking wickedness
If we give ourselves to the hungry,
And satisfy the desire of the afflicted.

THEN

Our light will rise in darkness,
Our gloom will become like midday.
And the LORD will continually guide you,
And satisfy your desire in scorched places,
And give strength to your bones;
And you will be like a watered garden,
And like a spring of water whose waters do not fail.
And those from among you will rebuild the ancient ruins;
You will raise up the age-old foundations;
And you will be called the repairer of the breach,
The restorer of the streets in which to dwell.

The very next chapter addresses the sinfulness of this neglect of human need and its consequences to answered prayer.

Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear. Isa 59:2
If someone ignores the obvious needs of my children, especially if they possess the capacity to do something about them, I will find it difficult to respond to whatever needs they may express to me.

7. HARMONY vs DISSENSION

How others relate to our family and friends affects how we relate to them. Mistreat my friends, I feel it. Mistreat my children, I will find fellowship with you very strained. Our relationship with those God loves affects His relationship with us.

"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift. Mattheew 5:23-24

Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins. " Mark 11:24-25

Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. For, "Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech. He must turn from evil and do good; he must seek peace

and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."

1 Peter 3:8-12

God did not completely restore Job's life until he prayed for his three difficult friends. After Job had prayed for his friends, the Lord made him prosperous again and gave him twice as much as he had before. Job 42:10

The early church experienced phenomenal growth due to the harmony they enjoyed with one another in Christ. *They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers. Act 1:14*

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. Act 4:32

If we cannot agree on what we ask or want, if there is fighting and strife, it is a certain indication that someone is operating out of the flesh and not the Spirit and God too feels offense. If we are to experience effective prayer, we must work together in harmony.

Be diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

8. GOD'S WILL vs MY WHIM or MY WHINNING

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us - whatever we ask - we know that we have what we asked of him. 1 John 5:14-15

"Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will. Romans 8:26-27

We sense confidence in prayer when we ask for things that are in accord with His will.

First--Seek to Know His will

"My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. Joh 4:34

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. Col 1:9

Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. Eph 5:17

We know the will of God from the Word of God. Some things are obvious. Others require much conversation and probing. Still other times we have no other recourse than to say, "If it be your will." Knowing God's will is interconnected with knowing God's mind. To know God's will is to see things from His perspective. When I take the time to look at the issues and problems of life from God's perspective, I can be confident that He hears and heeds.

As we search the Scriptures and listen, we may find that God's will includes something different than my whim or fancy. It may include suffering. (Those who suffer according to the will of God.) It may include a cross. It

may include moving. It may include staying. If any person lacks wisdom (lack the ability to see from God's perspective) let him ask of God who gives to all men liberally without scolding.

SECOND- Subscribe to His revealed Will

I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart." Psa 40:8

For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. Joh 6:38

Often it is necessary to become neutral in a decision, to humble ourselves under the all-knowing plan of God. This kind of prayer is important because we are so shortsighted. We must come to want what He wants. If He doesn't want it, neither do I. We must come to the realization that God knows best and that His purpose is foremost.

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. Philippians 2:12-13

Nebuchadnezzar realized this after God humbled Him:

All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: "What have you done?" Dan 4:35

Paul knew that few things are accomplished outside His will.

I pray that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you. Rom 1:10

THIRD--Solicit His will specifically.

Pray for it. The church At Ephesus argued with Paul to get him to stay away from Jerusalem. and then the passage says:

When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said, "The Lord's will be done." Act 21:14

This helps us to be specific when we pray. Praying His will from Scripture is helpful.

FOURTH--Submit to His will (Do it)

We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly man who does his will. John 9:31

You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. Hebrews 10:36

May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. Hebrews 13:21

We have several examples of prayers or requests that God did not answer.

Inappropriate requests outside his will

1--The disciples at the Mt of transfiguration

*And Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." **Matthew 17:4***

2--James and John wanted to sit a Christ's right hand. Matthew 20:20-23

3--The Disciples asked to call down the fires of judgment.

*And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" But He turned and rebuked them. **Luke 9:54-56***

4--Elijah asked to die.

5--Jesus asked to escape the cup of God's wrath.

God did not answer these requests because they fell outside His determined will.

God sometimes answers bad requests.

Hezekiah wanted an extended life 2Ki 20:5

"Return and say to Hezekiah the leader of My people, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of your father David, "I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; behold, I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD. 2 Kings 20:5

The Israelites were tired of God's food. Num 14:29;Num 11:34

The Holy Spirit's commentary on this incident is found in the Psalms.

In the desert they gave in to their craving; in the wasteland they put God to the test. So he gave them what they asked for, but sent a wasting disease upon them. Psa 106:14-15

Israelites wanted a king over them like everyone else. God said all right, but there will be irreversible consequences and I will not answer your petitions to reverse them. Don't whine and wail about your circumstances until you have come before the Lord to discover what He wants out of those circumstances. Enjoy the freedom of aligning with God's will.

9. FAITH vs DOUBT

It would be difficult to cultivate any depth of relationship with someone who continually refused to trust you with anything important. Faith is about trust in another person.

But let him ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, James 1:6-7

And He did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief. Matthew 13:58

And He said to them, "Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it shall move; and nothing shall be impossible to you. Matthew 17:20

"Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it shall be granted him. ²⁴"Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they shall be granted you. Mark 11:23-24

But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin. Romans 14:23

And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. Hebrews 11:6

Faith is a gift of God but it is like a plant, it grows through cultivation and exposure to the elements. It is also like a muscle that becomes stronger with exercise. Faith grows as we rest in Christ who is the author and perfecter of our faith. We must always keep in the forefront of our mind that it is the object of our faith, not the proportion of our faith that makes the difference.

Faith demands demonstrated dependence.

Faith without corresponding action is not faith at all.

Faith involves full persuasion that what God promised He will do.

Faith chooses to leave the issue with God and accept His plan over my plan.

Faith dares rest on the unchangeable person and purpose of God.

Faith involves a certain amount of risk.

Faith involves stepping into the dark based solely on the word of someone you have come to trust.

"Divine Dialogue" Pt 4 Page 11

Faith calls for committed action.

We put our complete trust in an all-knowing, all-powerful, ever-present, loving Father. Out of that conviction I risk present discomfort and personal confusion and often times act upon His word alone. Faith is not a commodity we exchange for answered prayer. God's answers are not granted because we have great amounts of faith. He said all it takes is "mustard seed faith." Anything less is no faith at all but doubt. Faith responds in obedience on the conviction that God alone is qualified to know what is best and can be trusted to refuse an inappropriate request that will bring harm to myself or His kingdom. If there is not an answer, there is a reason.

GEORGE MULLER

"This is perhaps, of all days the most remarkable so far as regards the funds. When I was in prayer this morning respecting them, I was enabled firmly to believe that the Lord would send help, though all seemed dark as to natural circumstances."

FAITH FADERS

- 1--Ignorance of God's power or His power. (low expectations)
- 2--Idolatry of heart (Low enthusiasm)
- 3--Insubordination (Low obedience)
- 4--Inexperience in the practice.
- 5--Interference from circumstances (Peter)
- 6--Intimidation of the devil (Flaming darts of doubt)

10. PERSISTENCE vs PASSIVITY

We find several lessons in a parable of Jesus recorded in Luke 11.

*⁵And He said to them, "Suppose one of you shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight, and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; ⁶for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; ⁷and from inside he shall answer and say, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.' ⁸"I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs. ⁹"And I say to you, ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. ¹⁰"For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it shall be opened. **Luke 11:5-10***

First, the man is not asking for himself, he is asking for provision for his friend.

Second, he recognizes his inability to supply his friend's need.

Third, he knows that the neighbor has the resources needed.

Fourth, he persists

Fifth, he gets all he needs.

The application that Jesus makes to the parable is to the point. Keep on asking for wisdom and you will receive it. Keep on seeking for provision and you will get it. Keep on knocking and the doors of opportunity will be opened. Persistence is not intended to convince a reluctant God that He should act on our behalf. Persistence increases the attitude of dependence and demonstrates faith.

ABRAHAM persistently interceded for Sodom

ELIJAH persistently prayed for rain and received the answer on the seventh try.

MOSES persistently prayed for victory over Amalek. Exodus 17

A related reason for blocked prayer is to be persistent but use meaningless repetition.

And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him. Matthew 6:7-8

11. PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT vs PRAYING IN THE FLESH

*With all prayer and petition pray at all times **in the Spirit**, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, **Ephesians 6:18***

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God...

1 Corinthians 2:12

*But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith; praying in the Holy Spirit; **Jude 1:20***

And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; ²⁷and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

Romans 8:26-27

HOW? Before, during, after prayer I must be sensitive to my connections. I must realize that I cannot even pray without His enabling grace. Have I grieved Him by my sin? Have I quenched Him by failing to respond? Am I listening? Am I yielding? Am I walking in the spirit?

CONCLUSION

These are the things God requires if we are to experience a life of effective mountain moving prayer. It seems impossible and it is. We must keep in mind that it is He who produces these things in us at the point of our compliance and cooperation.

Right attitudes of humility and thankfulness

Purity in my walk

Continual confession of sin as needed

Desire God's glory not my gain

Sensitivity to the reproofs of the Word

Sensitivity to the needs of others

Harmony at home and beyond

Insight into His will and ways

Unwavering faith in His promise to do what He says

Dogged persistence

Holy Spirit directed conversation

These things are nothing more than the normal life practices of a Child of God.