

GOD, WHY IS YOUR ANSWER LATE?

“O Lord, the God who saves me, day and night I cry out before you. May my prayer come before you; turn your ear to my cry. But I cry to you for help, O Lord; In the morning my prayer comes before you. Why, O Lord, do you reject me and hide your face from me?” (Psalm 88: 1-2, 13 -14)

The above scripture is the cry of a man to God. He is praying but his prayers are not answered. It seems that God has neglected him. Why does God tarry? A number of possible reasons can be given by a spiritual leader like, ‘It is not God’s intended time’ ‘God may have to alter circumstances in order to meet your needs in the best way.’ ‘God may have things He wants to work in your life before He answers,’ and many more. But, before inquiring to the Lord or to your spiritual leader, first, ask yourself, ‘Why is your prayer not answered?’ God is always listening to his people but in some situations He will not respond because of uncertainties that only you can answer.

1) Have you prayed? Many of us have serious problem regarding prayer time. All seem to pray but have no consistent or disciplined time in prayer. We can always find time to eat, time to work, time to have fun, but it seems so difficult to find time to pray. We mentally acknowledge the value and importance of prayer, yet time and again we neglect a quality time with God. We evade with excuses like, ‘I am too tired,’ or ‘I am so busy’ or ‘God knows my need already.’ Or, we ask someone to pray for us. Jesus said, *“Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.” (John 16:24)*

2) Have you prayed in the name of Jesus? The power in prayer is only possible by coming to God in the name of Jesus. But to pray in Jesus name is more than just attaching His name to the end of whatever we have prayed. Using the name of Jesus effectively depends on our relationship to Him. Moreover, in making request, our hearts may be aligned with Christ’s purpose: *“And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name and I will do it.” (John 14:13-14)*

3) Have you prayed in faith? *“Have faith in God, Jesus answered. I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him.” (Mark 11:22-23)* Faith for God’s work is the byproduct of our relationship, confidence and trust in Him. When we believe without doubt that the Lord would do as He has promise. *“Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.” (Mark 11: 24)*

4) Have you prayed for essential need? Sometimes when we pray, we ask God for so many things. We imagine that we are in the shopping mall desiring for every displayed item so beautifully. Sometimes we ask for something that we want to spend on certain aspect that cause us to sin (i.e. to spend what God gives us on smoking, drinking, gambling, adultery, etc.) or we ask God to give us the rights of other people . *“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: 3)* The Lord rejects prayer that springs up from sin of greed and selfishness. God wants us to be conformed to the image of His son. And He will not grant us requests that will hurt us or frustrate and undermine His design for our lives or other’s lives. The Lord wants to give us something special: *“Peace I leave with you: my peace I give you, I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” (John 14: 27)*

5) Have you prayed in reverence? *“Do not be quick with your mouth; do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few.” (Ecclesiastes 5: 2)* *“And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.” (Matthew 6:7)* God is the all knowing God who deserves to be worshiped and be adored not just by words but with a listening heart. Prayer is meant to be a two way communication with God. We must realize that during prayer, the Holy Spirit will often give us an inner witness, the sense of peace and faith as we pray in reverence and in awe of God.

6) Have you humbly prayed? Prayer is not boasting but humbling before God. Some are praying not for God to hear, but for people to hear them. *“And when you pray, do not be like hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.” (Matthew 6:5)* *‘A tax collector (a sinner) went to the temple to pray and went home justified because he approached God with humbleness and repentant heart.’ (Luke 18: 10–14)* In humbling ourselves before God we need to confess and ask forgiveness for our sins and weaknesses. But, how will He forgive us and answer our prayers if we do not forgive others. *“For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.” (Matthew 6: 14)*

7) Have you prayed with a pure heart? Deliberate and unrepented sin will hinder and will hinder and destroy our prayer life. *“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.” (Psalm 66:18–19)* In ourselves, we are never worthy to come before God. But Jesus Christ has made this possible for us when He died on the cross for our sins. So we must live a life dedicated to please God and to do His will.

8) Have you prayed with clean hands? *“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.” (1 Peter 3:7)* *“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.” (Matthew 5: 23-24)* It is only that we need to show respect to God, but we ought also to respect one another. It is not only that we need to ask forgiveness from God, but we ought also to ask forgiveness from one another.

9) Have you prayed according to God’s will? *“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.” (Jeremiah 29:11-12)* Sometimes we don’t see what God is giving us because we are waiting to receive according to our will and not His will. Seeking the will of God in our prayers is not only pleasant to God, but we will receive the best and more than what we planned or imagined. *“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.” (1 John 5:14)* The big question is, **How can we know that we are praying in the will of God?** First, God has revealed many specific instructions, commandments, and principles of His will in the Bible. Becoming thoroughly familiar with the word of God will give us confidence that our prayers are according to His will. Secondly, we should seek for a sense of faith and spiritual witness regarding our request. As we pray confidence and peace may come more easily. Maturity in the word of God and in our experience in prayer will bring greater assurance that we are praying in the will of God.

10) Have you prayed fervently and persistently? *“I tell you, though He (God) will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man’s boldness (persistence) he will get up and give him as much as he needs.” (Luke 11: 8)* The important point for us is to remain persistent in prayer for those things we believe are the will of God. God wants us to knock only his door and not to go to other’s door. Through prayers God will teach us to build our faith and trust in Him rather than on material things in this world. Fervent prayer in the will of God requires that our prayers be definite and specific rather than vague and generalized petitions.

My beloved and Beloved: The mode of God in answering our prayers is the way to teach us His ways; to correct us, to discipline us, and to build our capital of faith in Him. All our prayers will be answered in God’s perfect time and will. God’s answer to our prayer is never late or too early. Instead, we ourselves are late to ask and to receive what He is giving us. *“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.” (James 1: 17)* Trust Him and continue to pray.

My Prayer: *Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the cross for my sins, who was buried and rose from the dead on the third day to give me eternal life. LORD I seek your face, teach me how to pray and walk in your ways, this is my prayer in Jesus name Amen.*