



VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

Weekly Bible Study - 28:10:2009

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STUDY 31: SOME REASONS FOR UNANSWERED PRAYERS

James 4:1-3

God delights to answer the prayer of His people particularly when:

- (1) the believer is in right relationship with Him (Psalms. 32:3-5, 66:18),
- (2) prayers are offered in faith (Hebrews 11:6) and
- (3) requests are made according to His will for the individual (Matthew 6:10).

In our study, James highlights some reasons why certain prayers may go unanswered. These are discussed below.

LUSTS (James 4:1,2,3, 1:14; John 8:44; Galatians 5:16; Numbers 11:34; Psalms 106:14).

Lust is a desire to please the flesh – self pleasing or personal gratification. It is therefore a state of the heart akin to a carnal mind that cannot please God (Romans 8:8).

MURDERS (James 4:2; Matthew 5:21)

Murder exists in the sense of continuing resentment which Jesus Christ equated with the taking of one another's life (Matthew 5:21-22). Any one who hates his brother is a murderer. (I John 3:13). The physical actuality can be seen in Cain's envious hatred of Abel (Genesis 4) and David's lust for Uriah's wife (II Samuel 11:2-5).

COVETOUSNESS (James 4:2)

To "desire" as used in our study is to covet. Covetousness (envious, greedy or jealousy) comes from the heart (Mark 7:22) and breeds greed, murder (Proverbs 1:19; Isaiah 56:11), denial of God (Proverbs 30:8-9), temptations and lusts (I Timothy 6:9-11). Examples of covetousness are seen in Demas - pleasures (II Timothy 4:10), Festus - money (Acts 24:26) and Ahab's murderous covetousness of Naboth's vineyard (I Kings 21:2-16).

FIGHTING AND WARS (James 4:2)

It is that inner thing, the putting of self at the centre, the demand that self should be satisfied, which leads to wars and fightings among "believers". Prolonged animosities (wars) and sudden quarrels (fightings) all alike spring from the single cause - lust.

ASKING AMISS TO SATISFY LUST (James 4:3)

Wrong motive (self-indulgence or self-centredness) will not encourage persistence in prayer (Luke 18:1-18). Self-centredness breaks our harmony with God. A preacher on this passage once remarked, "we must either cleanse our hearts or stop our prayers".

Finally, let us remember that at conversion (salvation) all actual sins are forgiven. At sanctification inbred sin is purged and cleansed and the heart is purified (Titus 2:14; I Thessalonians 5:23).

Your Spiritual Welfare Is Our Concern