



Conditions For Answered Prayers

"Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out?" (Matthew 17:19).

Bulletin VCM-059

02 December 2012

Many people pray but only a few regularly get their desired answers. Sometimes, things that are regularly done, can be carried out so mechanically that it loses the meaning, value and benefits. When prayers go unanswered, it is not time to find fault, blame others or give up, but like the disciples in Matthew 17:19, we need to take a "deep dive" within to discover the reasons why and address the issues once and for all. As noted by Spurgeon, **"There is always an open ear if you have an open mouth. There is always a ready hand if you have a ready heart. You have but to cry and the Lord hears; nay, before you call, He will answer, and while you are speaking He will hear"**. As we draw to the end of this year, it is vital that we review the conditions for answered prayers so we can eliminate **"the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines"** (Songs 2:15) and tap into the potentials of prayers for our success. A few of the conditions are:

1. Right relationship with God.

The Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9, begins with the phrase **"Our Father..."** emphasising the importance of a "father-child" relationship in answered prayers. Someone once said "If you want an audience with the King of Kings, then you must position yourself to enter His presence and have your petition heard". Right relationship spurs delight in God **"Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart"** (Psalms 37:4).

2. Right relationship others.

Furthermore, Jesus taught **"And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses"** (Mark 11:25-26). Forgiveness repairs broken relationships and opens the channel for answered prayers. The importance of this is brought out in many scriptures such as:

(1) Matthew 5:23,24 Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

"And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you" (Matthew 17:20).



(2) 1 Peter 3:7 Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

(3) 1 Peter 5:5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

3. Forsake sin and live Holy.

As God is Holy, we must approach Him in Holiness to be heard. **"For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil"** (1 Peter 3:12). **"The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is his delight"** (Proverbs 15:8). Isaiah 59:2 tells us that iniquity separates man from God and sin hides His face from hearing our prayers. Psalms 66:18 adds **"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me"** Psalms 24:3-4 points out that the only people who can ascend to the hill of the Lord and stand in His presence are those that have **"clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully"**. Jeremiah 14:10-12 has this stark warning for carefree people who love to wander away from God **"Thus saith the LORD unto this people, Thus have they loved to wander, they have not refrained their feet, therefore the LORD doth not accept them; he will now remember their iniquity, and visit their sins. Then said the**

LORD unto me, Pray not for this people for their good. When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and an oblation, I will not accept them: but I will consume them by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence". (See Isaiah 1:15, Zechariah 7:1-13).

4. Faith, Perseverance and Persistence.

It is often said that money is the currency for transacting with mankind in the same way as faith is the currency for transacting with God. Thomas Watson said **"Prayer that is faithless is fruitless"**. In Hebrews 11:6, Paul pointed out that **"...without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him"** Jesus taught **"Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."** (Mark 11:24). Jesus said in Mark 9:23 that **"all things are possible to him that believeth"**; and in Matthew 21:22 **"And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive"**. James 1:6-8 highlights the danger of unbelief **"But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways"**. One of the evidences of faith is perseverance / persistence till the answer comes (Luke 11:5-10; 18:1-8; Matthew 15:21-28). I Thessalonians 5:17 commands **"Pray without Ceasing"**.

5. Other Conditions.

Hindrances must be eliminated and conditions fulfilled for answered prayers including:

- (1) **Obedience to God and His word:** I John 3:22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. John 15:7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Proverbs 28:9 He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.
- (2) **Ask:** James 4:2 Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.
- (3) **Ask with the Right Motive:** James 4:3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.
- (4) **Pray in line with God's will and Word:** Matthew 6:10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done

in earth, as it is in heaven. 1 John 5:14-15 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him. Jesus set the example when He prayed **"... not as I will, but as you will"** (Matthew 26:39).

- (5) **Eradicate pride, hypocrisy / showmanship:** Matthew 6:5-6 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. (See also Luke 18:11-14).
- (6) **Direct prayer to God In Jesus' Name:** Jesus is the only "way" to God (John 14:6). John 14:13-14 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.
- (7) **Wait upon God:** Isaiah 40:31 But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint. Psalms 27:13-14 I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.
- (8) **Pray fervently:** James 5:16 ... The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. The fervent prayers of the church led to the release of Peter from prison (Acts 12:5). Thomas Brooks said **"Cold prayers always freeze before they reach heaven"**.
- (9) **Pray in the Spirit:** Ephesians 6:18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. Romans 8:26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered
- (10) **Thanksgiving, Praise and Worship:** Psalms 100:4 Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and His courts with praise. I Thessalonians 5:18 In everything give thanks...