

Does God Really Answer Prayer?

Yes, in Four Ways

Do you believe God really answers prayer? Really and truly... that God hears your personal prayers and cares enough to respond? Your answer to those questions probably dictates if, when, where, and how you pray.

You know, prayer can serve many purposes, but generally speaking, it's an intimate conversation with God. Prayer involves Him stirring our hearts, us communicating with Him, and then listening for how God may respond to us.

Now, when it comes to prayer, there are a lot of folks who have the idea that God doesn't want us to ask Him questions. But that's not true! God delights in His children asking Him questions. In fact, God was asked questions... big and small... all the way through the Bible.

One of the people who literally put God "on trial" was a man from the Old Testament named Habakkuk. Habakkuk was a prophet in Judah, and he felt the full weight of the problems, pressures, sins, and difficulties of his family and of his nation.

And although Habakkuk lived a long time ago, his story is extremely relevant...especially when you look at modern history and all that we're dealing with in America and around the world.

In Habakkuk 1:2, Habakkuk asked the following of the Lord:

"How long, O LORD, will I call for help, and You will not hear?"

This was one of those big, deep, tough, "life" questions that Habakkuk was asking God. In the midst of all the chaos surrounding his life, he was basically asking, "God, where were you when I needed you the most?"

Habakkuk was grappling with something each of us deals with as believers: unanswered prayer. He was complaining about the silence of God... and in

his heart he desperately wanted to know why God wasn't answering his prayers.

I'm sure you've probably felt this way before. Anyone who's been walking with the Lord for any amount of time has. We want answers when we pray! And it's frustrating when it seems like God is silent. If you've ever felt this way, or even feel this way today, I have a word of encouragement for you. God does answer prayer. But He does it in four different ways.

"I can't hear you." Sometimes the Lord can't hear us when we pray. And it's not because we need to talk louder or speak more clearly. Sometimes God can't hear us when we pray because according to Psalm 66 and Isaiah 5, there is sin in our life.

"No." Sometimes the Lord says "No" when we pray. And while this can be a very difficult answer to receive, it's still an answer...regardless if we understand His decision at the moment or not. God is able to reveal His strength in you and me when we are broken and weak. So there is a purpose when God says "No."

"Yes." There is true power in prayer. And when we pray in Jesus' name, He may also say "Yes." "Yes, I'll forgive. Yes, I'll heal. Yes, I'll step in to help."

"Wait." Sometimes the toughest answer to receive from God is "Wait." When this happens, we need to remind ourselves that God is in control and can certainly handle our situation. We need to allow Him to continue working in whatever way He sees fit. And we can't try to take back the situation, but must truly be patient and wait on God's timing!

And this is exactly what God said to Habakkuk. He told him, "Even though you don't think I'm listening, Habakkuk, I am working on a plan that is so much larger than you."

The truth is, even though Habakkuk couldn't see it, God was working the whole time! And the same is true in your life as a follower of Christ. If you're in a holding pattern, trust that God is working, and that He is sovereign over all the details in your life.

God indeed does answer prayer...and, yes, your prayers!

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