



# Unanswered prayers (part 2)

*(This is the second article in our 2-part series on 'Unanswered prayers'.)*

As discussed in Part 1 of this series, there are no simple answers to the questions, "What are the reasons for my unanswered prayers? Is there something wrong with how I pray?"

In this article, Part 2, we will continue to look at aspects we have to consider when trying to understand the delay in receiving answers to our prayers.

## **For consideration** *(continued)*

### **10. Some prayers are carnal.**

Read James 4:2-3 and consider your prayers for a moment. How much of what you pray for is about yourself and your own needs? Many times, people pray for success, but it is only about their own honour and prosperity. Even the prayers promising to 'bring God honour' when achieving success in a matter, can be a trap, and we often quickly forget our promises when such victories are granted.

Whatever we ask for, it should always be for God's glory, lead to more holiness, and bring us into a closer relationship with Jesus. Nothing we ask for must be more important than God. He must be at the centre of it all. We can be earnest in what we ask, but can be blind to the corruption of our own hearts. We can mistakenly think we are busy with God, but all the while it is just about ourselves.

***To do:** Ask the Holy Spirit to show you which of your prayers are only selfish desires. Confess it. Ask Him to show you what you should ask that will bring glory to God.*

### **11. Bitterness and unforgiveness.**

*"And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins." (Mark 11:25).*

***To do:** Ask the Holy spirit to show you any form of bitterness and unforgiveness in your heart and confess it.*

### **12. Bad relationship between husband and wife.**

*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).*

*To do:* Ask the Holy spirit to show you all the obstacles, bad attitudes and wrong conduct you have against your spouse. Ask the Lord's forgiveness and make amends with your spouse.

### **13. God asks that we must look after the poor.**

Whoever shuts their ears to the cry of the poor will also cry out and not be answered. (Proverbs 21:13).

*To do:* Ask God to show you people and situations where you can contribute to alleviate the plight of the poor.

### **14. Remember the influence of the Evil One and that the devil can oppose us.**

In Daniel 10 we read how the angel Gabriel was hindered by the armies of the enemy for 21 days to bring God's answer to Daniel's prayer. Satan can hinder or oppose our prayers. When we sense that the devil is involved, we need to submit to God and resist the devil, but also ask for God's protection (2 Thessalonians 3:3; Matthew 6:13; James 4:7).

*To do:* Ask the Holy Spirit to show you situations where the enemy is busy attacking or opposing you. Resist him and rebuke him in the Name of Jesus Christ.

### **15. Curses.**

People who were previously involved in any occultic activities or who are still involved in it, will often experience that their prayers are hindered. It can also be that someone is sending curses against you.

*To do:* Ask the Holy Spirit to show you all occultic related activities in which you were or are involved. Confess it and consecrate every aspect of your life to God. It is advisable to pray with someone knowledgeable about the occult and to receive deliverance.

### **16. Sometimes we pray manipulative prayers.**

When we have a selfish agenda (James 3:16) and want to force our will onto others. This is when we decide what is right or wrong or what must happen, and then expect in our prayers that God must do as we ask. Such prayers God will never answer. Even if it sounds good on the ear, it does not impress God. Negative and judgmental prayers without mercy and compassion, accusing people in our prayers before God, will not be answered.

*To do:* Ask the Holy Spirit to show you any prayer or situation where you try to force your will upon others to get what you want or to influence it for your own advantage. Confess it and ask God to change your heart and help you discern any such behaviour.

### **17. In God's spiritual school.**

There are times when it still feels as if God is not answering us or listening to us, and we know that it is not the devil or sin or something outside the will of God. This often marks the seasons in our lives when we are put in God's spiritual school of prayer, where He teaches us about faith and the

deeper life with Him. This is where we are prepared and equipped to go into a broken world to talk to people in a state of pain, confusion and bitterness.

*To do: Even though there are things you do not understand, choose to trust God and to listen to Him. Allow Him to mould you into His image so you may display Him more accurately to a suffering world.*

### **18. Learn to pray according to the Word, the promises and commands of God in the Word.**

God commits Himself to honour the promises in His Word. It can happen that we ask for things that are outside of the guidelines of the commands and promises in God's Word. Make sure your prayers are in line with His promises and the Word.

*To do: Ask God to show you which commands in His Word you still need to surrender to in your life.*

### **19. Many times, we want to know in advance what we must do or what will happen.**

God sometimes gives us a prophetic word to show us the way. The important principle is to take one step at a time, to move with the light you have already received until God shows you the next step. If there is no further light, wait.

*To do: Tell God that you entrust Him with your future and to give you discernment and understanding concerning every prophetic word in your life.*

### **20. People often don't find answers to their prayers because they are so busy asking God, but don't make time to listen to Him.**

Many people have never learnt how to listen. Women pray in tears for their husbands, parents pray with desperation for their children, but don't make time to also listen to what God says to them.

Many pray for the 'other' person to change, but cannot hear when God shows them areas in their own lives that need to change. This is most probably one of the main reasons why prayers can go unanswered.

*To do: Ask God to teach you how to listen and discern His voice when He corrects you.*

### **21. Sometimes there are no answers.**

When all is said and done, there will always be unanswered questions about unanswered prayers. Sometimes there are no answers and the only answer then is: I don't know. It is a fact that God does not answer our every question. That does not mean that there are no answers. God is never at His wits end, embarrassed, helpless or unable to do something. He often remains silent for reasons we don't understand. God is God and we are not.

At such times, when answers tarry, we live with the light that we do have. There are things God reveals to us and there are things He keeps hidden. Deuteronomy 29:29: *"The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may*

*follow all the words of this law.* " Live according to what has been revealed and what you understand: act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with your God (Micah 6:8); love your neighbour and love your enemy (Matthew 5:44); glorify God (1 Corinthians 6:20); be tolerant when wronged (2 Timothy 2:24), etc.

### **When God is silent, it does not mean that He is not present**

In Gethsemane, God the Father did not answer Jesus – there was only silence. Do not mistake silence from the Lord as Him being ignorant of you. He always hears our every prayer – in everything we are yet to learn more about His will, and ways – which are higher than our own ways. (Isaiah 55:9).