

How Do You Ask?

You know, in recent times, it seems that whenever we have a tragedy and maybe some elected official or someone in the public eye will say something about thoughts and prayers are with the victims. There will be a backlash against it. Usually, when it's an incident where they feel like maybe the officials didn't do something and they'll say, oh, all they're doing is offering prayers. And that really just means nothing.

Is that really what prayer is? It's just a wish, but really not any action. Is that how we should view prayer? How does God answer prayer? Does God answer prayer? Today, we're going to look about what Jesus says about prayer and how God answers it and how we need to be asking.

INTRO

When you offer a prayer to God, how does he answer it? Well, probably the simple answer is God says "Yes." or he says "No". What about "Wait"? What about when he says, "Let me do something else."? You know, when we think about prayer, we oftentimes think of it in terms of making God like a vending machine. We put in our prayer like a quarter in the vending machine, hit the button, and we should get what we expect.

But that's not how God works in prayer. But we should see God as a source of an answer to prayer. In Matthew 7:7-8, Jesus tells us, ask and it shall be given to you. Seek and ye shall find. Knock and the door will be opened to you.

In each of these, ask, seek, and knock, God is telling us here a very important point about prayer.

It's that we need to do it and we need to continue to do it. If there's one thing that we see throughout the Bible about prayer, it's that prayer is supposed to be a constant thing. That we're not just supposed to ask once and be done. It's not a one and done thing. It's a thing that we do continually.

Think about Luke 18:1-8. Or Luke chapter 11:5-13. Both stories that tell us and emphasize the need for constant and consistency in prayer. You know, prayer takes consistency to work. Think about Elijah.

You know, James uses Elijah as an example in James 5:17-18. There he's referencing the events of 1 Kings 18 where it hadn't rained for years. And Elijah prays for rain and it rains.

And James uses that as an example of how prayer is effective. But if you go back to that passage in 1 Kings, you're going to notice it took Elijah a ways to do that. He prayed and he prayed and he prayed.

Seven times he prayed until he just saw a cloud the size of the small of his hand. He kept praying knowing that God was going to give the result. It wasn't an instance that God wasn't listening, but rather that he needed to be consistent in prayer.

You know, we need to think of prayer as something that we continue to do to God and have confidence when we pray. Matthew 21:22, we say, whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive if you have faith. You see there, if we pray not expecting, well, we shouldn't expect anything.

But if we have an expectation in prayer, we need to recognize that God does listen and he will give us what we need. We need to have that believing sense of prayer. But we also need to understand that just because we ask for something doesn't mean that God has to give it to us.

You know, Jesus would use in Matthew chapter 7 the comparison of a father to a son. That if a son asked for an egg, he won't give him a snake. You know, he knows how to give good gifts. We know how to give good gifts.

How much greater does God give those gifts? We as a parent understand. We don't give our kids everything that they ask for because sometimes they ask for the wrong things. And the same thing is true for us. Sometimes when we ask, we ask because we have the wrong desires.

You know, James talks about that in James 4:2. "You desire and you do not have. You murder, you covet, you cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. And when you ask, you ask with the wrong motives." You're asking selfishly. And that's what we need to avoid.

We need to avoid looking at prayer as just something that we are expecting God to do for us, but rather a relationship that we have with our Father. That he gives because he cares about us. And like any father, they want to hear from their children.

God wants to hear from us. That's why we need to ask. That's why we need to seek. That's why we need to knock.

You see, prayer is not a passive solution to a problem. It's an active one. When we pray, we're seeking the God of the universe. But that doesn't mean that we're not doing anything. No, we're following through with our prayer.

We're expecting that God is going to deliver and we're looking for our prayer to be something that benefits not just us, but the whole world. Something that's just not a selfish desire, but rather a concern for spiritual things. It's that kind of prayer life.

It's that kind of asking that will get the results that we truly desire.

Thank you so much for being here with us today. Maybe you have some more questions about prayer. We have a lot of great videos that you can search on [our website](#) to see. While you're there, why don't you [sign up for our free newsletter](#) so you'll get information about our videos as well as a chance to get text messages so you'll know whenever a new video is coming out.

Thank you so much for joining with us and have a great day.