

Unanswered Prayer



You asked, but the friend or relative you prayed for wasn't healed. The job or promotion you were seeking went to someone else. You are stuck asking, is this really all that God wants for me? Or worse, you just can't find a job at all despite asking for help and guidance. You were knocking, asking God to step in and save or fix your marriage and it's not any better, or worse it's over. Or maybe you asked God to bring you a spouse, but you're still single with no real prospects in sight. Or [insert unanswered prayer here]. What do you do with Unanswered prayers?

DAY 1: Persistence



1. What 3 things does Matt 7:7 (NIV) tell us to do:

2. Now Read Matt 7:7 in the Amplified Bible (Bible.com has the translation if you need it)

Ask *and* _____ and it will be given to you; seek *and* _____ and you will find; knock *and* _____ and the door will be opened to you.

3. What's the difference in the NIV and the AMP?

In Matthew 7:7, the Greek verb tenses carry significant meaning.

- **Αἰτεῖτε (aiteite)** - "Ask"
- **Ζητεῖτε (zēteite)** - "Seek"
- **Κρούετε (krouete)** - "Knock"

Greek Verb Tense and Mood - The verbs **aiteite**, **zēteite**, and **krouete** are in the **Present Imperative Active** tense.

The **present imperative** in Greek conveys an ongoing or continuous action. This means that Jesus is not instructing a single act of asking, seeking, or knocking, but rather a continuous, persistent action. The Amplified Bible got it right.



Jesus instructs us to practice _____ in **Matthew 7:7**

Let's explore why this is vital in our relationship with God, rather than God simply answering instantly:

1. Read Hebrews 11:6
 - a. Without what, it is impossible to please God?

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- b. How could persistent prayer relate to this?
- c. What does He promise to those who eagerly [persistently] seek Him?

2. Lamentations 3:25 (NIV) - *The Lord is good to those whose _____ is in him, to the one who _____ him.*"

3. Proverbs 25:2 - It is the glory of God to _____ a matter; to _____ a matter is the glory of kings.

4. In Prov 2:3-5 we are promised that we will "understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God" if we what?

Prayer is not just about receiving but about **seeking a deeper relationship** with Him. Through persistence, we spend more time in God's presence, aligning our hearts with His will. Persistent prayer moves us from focusing on what we need to focusing on *who God is*.

5. READ Psalm 27:8 How does this verse reflect this desire for relationship?

6. James 4:3 tells us that one of the reasons we don't receive is what?

Through persistence, we begin to seek what God desires rather than just what we want. Persistent prayer refines and reshapes our desires to align with God's will. What we ask for in the beginning might change as we draw closer to Him.

7. Ecclesiastes 3:11 reminds us, "*He has made everything beautiful in its _____.*" Persistence is often about waiting for God's perfect timing. What we may see as a delay is God preparing circumstances, other people, or even our own hearts for the answer.

8. Read Luke 18:1-8.

- a. What did Luke say in verse 1 was the point of this parable?
- b. Jesus says that if unjust judge responds than God will what?
- c. In verse 8 what did he wonder about being able to find on earth?



Read Genesis 32:24-30 – Write in your journal what you can learn about persistence in this story?

God's call for persistence is about more than receiving answers—it's about building faith, deepening our relationship with Him, transforming our desires, and teaching us to trust His

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timing. The process of asking, seeking, and knocking refines us into the people He has called us to be.



ACTIVATION:

1. Simply **Ask** the Holy Spirit to show you what have you given up on that God still wants you to be persistent about. Share it in your EPIC Group's chat.
2. **Seek** others input by simply asking others to speak into what you shared in the EPIC Group's chat. Don't be afraid to be vulnerable here.
3. **Knock** – As you see others knocking in the Group chat looking for input, answer and share prophetic words (Strengthen, Encourage and Comfort).



Day 2: Sovereignty



1. **Read 2 Corinthians 12:7-9.** Paul did not get the answer he wanted instead he was told what?

How does this relate to God's sovereignty?

2. Read **Daniel Chapter 3.**

Spend some time re-reading and reflecting on verse 17 and 18. What stands out?

If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve _____ to _____ from it, and _____ deliver us from Your Majesty's hand. _____ even if he _____, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.

Did they have faith that God would deliver them?

What if He didn't?

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What do you think the Key Point of this story is?



Sovereignty Exercise: Spend some time thinking about the things you have been actively asking God for. Spend some time writing in your journal what they are followed by the phrase: "But even if you don't, I will serve you"

For Example:

- Father, I am asking for a better job, but even if I don't get it, I will serve you.
- Lord, I am asking for my wife to be healed, but if even if she isn't I will serve you.
- Jesus, lead my son into a radical relationship with you, but even if you don't I will serve you.



Have a real conversation with God about the things you wrote in your journal. Yell if you need to. Cry if you need to. Repent if you need to. Tell him how you honestly feel and listen for His response (remember all the different ways He communicates). Ask him what He wants you to learn/gain from continuing to contend for these things.



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Day 3: WAR - There are real things that can delay answers. Let's look at one.



1. Read Ephesians 6:12 – what are we wrestling against?

Let's go back to the Book of Daniel for a bit.

2. **In Daniel 10:1** Daniel is given a revelation about what:

3. **(Daniel 10:2-3)** Daniel fasts and mourns for _____ **weeks** (_____ days), abstaining from rich foods, meat, and wine, while seeking understanding and guidance from God.

4. **(Daniel 10:12-14)**

1. When did God send a response to Daniel?
2. How long did it take the angel to get there?
3. What held him up?

Key Points in the Story:

1. **Immediate Response from God:** The angel reveals that Daniel's prayer was heard **on the first day** he began praying. This shows that God responded immediately to Daniel's humility and earnest seeking.
2. **Spiritual Warfare Delayed the Answer:** The angel explains that he was delayed for 21 days because of opposition from the **prince of the Persian kingdom**. This "prince" is understood to represent a demonic force or spiritual power influencing Persia.
3. **Help from Michael:** The archangel Michael, described as "one of the chief princes," came to assist the angel in the spiritual battle, enabling the message to finally reach Daniel.
4. **Significance of the Delay:** The delay highlights the reality of **spiritual warfare** in the heavenly realms, where angelic and demonic forces contend over God's plans and human affairs. It also emphasizes the importance of persistence in prayer.



Lessons from Daniel's Prayer:

1. God Hears when?
2. Is Spiritual Warfare Real?
Delays in answered prayer may result from unseen spiritual battles. Persistence in prayer is crucial during such times.
3. Daniel partnered with Heaven in the Battle by doing what?

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4. **Angelic Assistance:** _____ play a role in carrying out God's will and fighting on behalf of His people. Daniel's story encourages us to remain faithful and persistent in prayer, trusting that God is working, even when answers are delayed.



Read Ephesians 6:10-18 and write the different pieces of the Armor along with what you think it means (ask the Holy Spirit to help make this personal) in your Journal.



Draw a picture of the pieces of the Armor in your journal. Your artistic skills here are irrelevant. Then write the names of family and friends that you are asking God to protect with his Armor today.

Share a pic of your drawing in your EPIC group chat.

*Bonus – Read James 4:7. Resist the Devil and he must flee. How do we resist? Look back at Eph.6:13-14.





DAY 4 and 5 : Some Other Issues:

Over the next couple of days, let's consider some other possible reasons why our prayers may not be answered.

1. The Wider View.



- **Read Matthew 8:23-27.**
- What did Jesus do that day that was amazing?
- What would happen if every weather-related storm was stopped because of prayer? To Crops? To the temperatures on the earth? Etc.

Can God Control the weather (**James 5:17-18**)?

Will he do so every time someone prays for it (**Matthew 5:45**)?



Read **Isaiah 55:8-9**. Write in your Journal how this may apply to the idea of trusting that God has a wider view of things than we do?



- Read Jeremiah 29:11-12 – What is the promise here for you?
- **I Cor. 2:9-10**: However, as it is written: “What no _____ has _____, what no _____ has _____, and what no _____ has _____” — the things _____ has _____ for those who love him — these are the things God has **revealed to us by his Spirit**. The Spirit searches all things, **even the deep things of God**.

2. **Maybe we are Aiming too low**: Maybe we are asking for something good, but God wants to give us something great. How can we know, how is this revealed?



Spend a few minutes in talking to God to send the Holy Spirit to show you more regarding the prayers that seem to be unanswered. Be Still and listen (in whatever way God speaks to you) Is there any good requests that are unanswered because God wants to give you great?



Write down what you are getting from the Holy Spirit.

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4. Am I Looking more for an Answer then for the Answerer?



- Read Philippians 3:10-14? What did Paul say he wanted to know?
- Read John 15:4 – what's the promise?



Is your unanswered prayer an opportunity to go deeper in your relationship with Jesus? Spend some time in a conversation with God about this. Have you settled in on a paper cup of water on the race's route instead of the real prize – deeper intimacy with Him?

5. **That Pesky Free Will Thing.** I have been praying for my son, my mom, my neighbor [insert name here] yet nothing seems to be happening. . . Consider these verse:



Deuteronomy 30:19

"This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live."

Joshua 24:15

"But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve... But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

Revelation 3:20

"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me."

John 3:16

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

Galatians 6:7-8

"Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life."

1 Timothy 2:3-4

"This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth."

2 Peter 3:9

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"The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead, he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."

Romans 6:16

"Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?"

What's the combine message of these verses?

- What does God desire?
- Whose choice is it?



Let's get creative, God will not by your prayers override a person's Free Will, He will and does allow situations and circumstances to be influenced through prayer. For example, instead of "please make my neighbor a Christian", maybe, "give me an opportunity to demonstrate your love" or "open an opportunity for them to have a conversation with a believer at work about you." Make a list of the people you are praying for and write down a prayer of how God might influence them through a specific situation or circumstance. Remember God loves creative . . . share one or two of these in your EPIC Group chat.

6. OUCH! That's kind of personal . . .



Broken Relationship with God

Isaiah 59:2 - But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.

Psalms 66:18 - If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.

Proverbs 28:9 - If anyone turns a deaf ear to my instruction, even their prayers are detestable.

Broken Relationships with Others

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

Matthew 5:23-24 Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

1 Peter 3:7 - 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.

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Lack of Faith

James 1:6-7 But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord.

Selfish or Wrong Motives

James 4:3 - When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.



OK, OK – what am I supposed to do with all of this?

FIRST

Get some place quiet and pray **Psalm 139:23-24** -Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

"Search me, O God, and know my heart":

Invite the Holy Spirit to examine your innermost thoughts and desires and to show what you need here.

"Test me and know my anxious thoughts":

Ask God to reveal any fears, worries, or doubts that might hinder your relationship with Him. Then surrender those things to Him.

"See if there is any offensive way in me":

Humbly asks God to point out any sin or behavior that is displeasing. Then repent and turn away from it.

"Lead me in the way everlasting":

Ask for God's direction on His path for your life

SECOND

James 5:16 - Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

Grab coffee (a phone call if nothing else) with one other guys from your EPIC Group and talk to them about the journey you went through in praying through Psalm 139:23-24.

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THIRD

1 John 1:9 - If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Walk in the freedom of forgiveness He has given you, knowing that there is nothing you are holding on to that is hindering your prayers.

7. **NONE OF THE ABOVE** – what if you're good with all the above, but still the prayers seemed to go unanswered.



John 16:33 - I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.

- How does this Apply to unanswered prayers?
- Why do we still have trouble (hint see section on Free Will above)?
- What are we promised?

Read **1 Cor. 13:12** - What does this verse tell us about our current understanding of the bigger picture?

The truth is that on this side of eternity, we just aren't always going to get it.

Read **Rev. 21:4** – What are we ultimately promised?



Spend some time looking over this week's material.

- Ask God, what should I be persistent in – write it in your journal?
- What should I let go – say it out loud to God and release it to Him?
- How has your thoughts or attitudes toward prayer been changed this week?
- Text your group leaders and tell them one thing your letting go of and one things that's changed.

