

¹⁷ [God] will listen to the prayers of the destitute. He will not reject their pleas. ¹⁸ Let this be recorded for future generations, so that a people not yet born will praise the Lord.
– Psalm 102:17-18 (NLT)

Psalm 65:1-5 (NLT)

¹What mighty praise, O God, belongs to you in Zion. We will fulfill our vows to you, ²for you answer our prayers. All of us must come to you.

³Though we are overwhelmed by our sins, you forgive them all.

⁴What joy for those you choose to bring near, those who live in your holy courts. What festivities await us inside your holy Temple.

⁵You faithfully answer our prayers with awesome deeds, O God our savior. You are the hope of everyone on earth, even those who sail on distant seas.

Luke 11:1-10 (NLT)

¹¹Once Jesus was in a certain place praying. As He finished, one of His disciples came to Him and said, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."

²Jesus said, "This is how you should pray:

"Father, may your name be kept holy.

May your Kingdom come soon.

³Give us each day the food we need,

⁴and forgive us our sins,

as we forgive those who sin against us.

And don't let us yield to temptation."

⁵Then, teaching them more about prayer, He used this story: "Suppose you went to a friend's house at midnight, wanting to borrow three loaves of bread. You say to him, ⁶'A friend of mine has just arrived for a visit, and I have nothing for him to eat.' ⁷And suppose he calls out from his bedroom, 'Don't bother me. The door is locked for the night, and my family and I are all in bed. I can't help you.' ⁸But I tell you this — though he won't do it for friendship's sake, if you keep knocking long enough, he will get up and give you whatever you need because of your shameless persistence.

⁹"And so I tell you, keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. ¹⁰For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

Matthew 7:7-8 (NLT)

⁷"Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

Message

"God Answers Prayer"

Elizabeth Daniel

God answers prayer because of His eternal, compassionate nature and through a process that invites our persistence and faith. God's motivation for answering prayer is rooted in His character and His relationship with His people:

Research Notes for "God Answers Prayer"

Why God Answers Prayer

- His Changeless Faithfulness:
 - While the natural world wears out, God is changeless and His years never end.
 - He answers prayer because
 - He is faithful to His covenant and will never desert His people.

- He is faithful, good, and merciful.
- He has committed Himself to provide for us, His children, and
- He already knows our needs before we even ask.
- God is a caring and compassionate God who passionately loves His people.
- He responds to prayers because He is compassionate beyond measure and will never forsake or ignore those who call upon Him.
- God answers prayer because He is faithful to the promises He has made as Creator and Redeemer.
- He is more than capable and willing to care for His creation, providing relief for the fears and anxieties of those who trust Him.
- Compassion for the Destitute:
 - God specifically will respond to the prayer of the destitute and will not reject our plea for help (Ps 102:17).
 - Remember, all in "God's timing...."
 - He is not an uncaring deity but a loving Father who understands and delights in meeting the needs of His children.
- For His Glory and Future Generations:
 - God answers prayer so that His works may be recorded for future generations so they will know and will praise Him for His mercy and deliverance.
- God's Fatherly Nature:
 - God answers prayer because He is a Heavenly Father.
 - Jesus argues from the "lesser to the greater" (qal vahomer): if imperfect human fathers know how to give good gifts like bread and fish to their children, how much more will a perfect Heavenly Father give "good things" or the "Holy Spirit" to those who ask Him.
 - Jesus taught His followers to address God as "Our Father," a revolutionary concept that frames prayer as a child approaching a tender parent.
 - Because God is a perfect Father, He is lovingly inclined toward our best interests and gives careful attention to our requests.
- The Work of Jesus:
 - We can confidently approach God's throne of grace because Jesus made that possible through His death and resurrection.
 - God listens to our prayers because of the intercession of his Son, who serves as our mediator.
- His Sovereign Purpose:
 - God uses prayer to fulfill His grand plan of restoring humanity and creation.
 - In times of trouble and darkness, God answers our prayers to also demonstrate that He reigns over all circumstances.

How God Answers Prayer

- The biblical texts describe a dynamic "how" that involves both human action and divine sovereignty.
- Through the "Ask, Seek, Knock" Process:
 - Jesus provides a three-fold command to be active in prayer:
 - Ask for something from a superior;
 - Asking implies a receptive God who gives to those who request.
 - Seek diligently for wisdom or truth; and
 - Seeking suggests a journey where God reorients us toward His kingdom and reveals His presence.
 - Knock boldly for entry into the Kingdom.
 - Knocking points to the access we have to the "door" of God's presence.
 - The "how" includes an unconditional promise that when we engage these things in our prayers, we will receive, find, and have the door opened.
- Through Shameless Persistence:

- The "Parable of the Persistent Friend" teaches that God responds to insistent begging or "shamelessness" in prayer.
- Persistence is not intended to "cajole" an unwilling God, but to align the child's will with the Father's and demonstrate a bold faith that refuses to take "no" for an answer.
- The parables of The Friend at Midnight and The Persistent Widow serve as direct encouragements for us to continue in prayer with hope and expectation.
- God appreciates our intentions if we are persistent in our prayers and will likely respond positively.
- Conversely, a failure to persist may be a reason why some prayers seem to go unanswered.
- Through the Holy Spirit:
 - The Spirit of God is the "Spirit of prayer".
 - When we are too weak or unsure what to pray, the Holy Spirit helps us, intercedes for us, pleading our case, all to our prayers what they ought to be.
 - In Luke's account, God proves, through the Holy Spirit, His how-much-more-description in response to our prayer.
 - This gift is the source of "good things," providing the spiritual strength and wisdom needed to navigate life.
- In Accordance with His Will:
 - While Matthew 7:7-8 offers a bold promise, it is not a "blank check" for selfish desire.
 - God answers by bringing our will to align to the will of the Father, ensuring that the gifts received are what is truly best for us.
 - God answers in ways that align with his holiness and supreme authority.
 - While He is able to meet every need, his answers may be "yes," "no," or "not yet".
 - A "no" from God is often an invitation to trust God for a better plan, focusing on our transformation rather than just our immediate comfort.
 - Prayer is a two-way conversation that functions as a relational link.
 - Rather than just changing our external circumstances, God often answers by changing us from the inside out, molding our wills into His and adjusting our priorities to match His desires for us.