



#### ARTICLE: Are There Unanswered Prayers?

Great question. Your response may be related to how many prayers God has responded to favorably. It is only human to wonder if God is listening when the needs are so dire. Where is God when an immediate response appears delayed or never coming? I submit to you that God is always where God has been. He is everywhere all at once. There is no escaping His gaze.

If so, then you may ask, why has God not answered? He has and does. Sometimes the response is “No.” Sometimes the response is “Yes.” Sometimes the response is “Do your part, I will do the rest.” Sometimes the response is “Not now.” So, how can the believer sort this out? When does “No” mean No? How long is “Not now?” Does God understand or can He relate to how this is tearing us apart? All of these are great questions and perfectly normal to which to wrestle.

Brace yourself for the response. NO, I will not ask you the crushing questions God asked Job in the book of Job chapters 38-40. Instead, I want you to imagine, you are not alone as we consider Jesus. He routinely prayed to God the Father. At one point, the Father seemed unresponsive. Three times, in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus asked for the bitter cup to be removed. Bitter because His crucifixion was approaching and dread covered Him like a heavy, freezing, harsh reality. He was confident the Father had the power to remove the cup. Under deep duress, Jesus ended His prayer with, “Not my will, but Thy will be done.” It was an acknowledgement that the Father does everything well. That Jesus’ fate was in the tender care of the Father. No wonder before Jesus gave up the ghost (died on the cross), he commended His spirit into the hands of the Father. Revealed is an unquestionable trust between Father and Son. So endearing and powerful enough to bridge from eternity past to eternity future. Yes, God knows what it feels like when prayers seem ignored. His perspiration mingled with blood demonstrated the deep anguish He experienced as His crucifixion was approaching. His so-called unanswered prayer and Jesus’ ultimate sacrifice set into motion a renewed relationship between God and mankind. To them that believe, God gave power for them to become sons of God. His denied prayer became our only answer for abundant life. Admittedly so, it was an unfair exchange. So let’s not squander this very gracious gift.

What is the takeaway from this historical encounter? While Jesus knew the reasons why, we may not. It is ok to express frustration, anguish, and trepidation. But it is not ok to forget the God who deserves our complete trust. He alone has power of the soul and its final destination. He alone shall set aright every wrong. He alone is the answer to every prayer. He has brought us thus far. He will carry us all the way home into eternity with Him. No, our prayers ARE answered. While we may not understand or even appreciate the response. We can find solace in knowing God knows what He is doing and that God does everything well. Keep praying. Keep seeking a response. Keep hoping and keep embracing the best hope for humanity. And that hope is Jesus, the Christ, the Son of the Living God, who is God the Son, and God with us. As God, He knows our deepest grief more than we know His. If I had to choose to have all my prayers answered OR to have Jesus. I would gladly pick Jesus because He trumps everything else!

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