

## HOW GOD ANSWERS PRAYER

### 1. Through MIRACLES

There are numerous examples in scripture of how God answers prayers the instant we pray them. The ministry of Jesus is filled with such answers, especially in regard to healing the sick or casting out the demonic. Most often this is done to demonstrate or validate the claims of the Gospel and the resurrection of the dead. It reveals the Kingdom of God and the power of God over your current circumstances. Unfortunately, it does not always produce conversion. When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead (that's powerful) the religious elite went back to Jerusalem and plotted his death.

### 2. Through NATURAL MEANS

As exciting as miracles are, God often uses natural means to answer prayer. Healing is a good example. God does use medicine and doctors for His purposes in healing. Diet, exercise, forgiveness, and repentance can also be part of the healing process. Another example is provision. God may provide another job or another opportunity for you. Or God may help you get out of debt and pay off your credit cards.

### 3. Through CIRCUMSTANCES

There is a truth to the adage, "When a door closes God opens a window." Sometimes, in the wisdom of God we do not get the answer we want. Only in hindsight can we appreciate the fact that God knew best how to answer our prayers. At first, we may be disappointed. The hardship, difficulty and pain often bring us to the conclusion that God has abandoned us or doesn't care anymore. That is a sure lie of the evil one. God uses prayer to mold our character and develop our trust and faith in Him. He wants us to see His wisdom and ultimate best for us.

### 4. Through DREAMS AND VISIONS

There are many passages in scripture where God answers prayer through a dream or vision. Peter received a revelation from God regarding the Gentiles and went to Cornelius' house. Paul received a vision during prayer and proceeded to Macedonia with Silas on his second missionary journey. God spoke to Solomon in a dream. Pharaoh's dreams were God's way of liberating Joseph from jail and providing bread during famine. Dreams are a means by which God speaks to us without our intellect getting in the way.

### 5. Through PEOPLE WE KNOW AND TRUST

God often uses those we love and trust to help us hear answers to prayers. Often it is our spouse that God uses to help us hear His voice. God also uses our pastor, our prayer group, our spiritual director, friends and sometimes even strangers.

**6. Through \_\_ ANGELS \_\_**

Numerous times in scripture, angels are dispatched to bring us answers to our prayers. In Daniel 10, Gabriel comes to answer Daniels's prayer. Angels come with answers, guidance, instruction and encouragement for God's people. At first their appearance is not always revealed, but later, after the visitation, the fact that it was an angel is evident.

**7. Through \_\_ INTERCESSION \_\_**

One of the greatest examples of this is when the early church was praying for Peter, while he was in prison. God sent an angel to release Peter and the angel appeared in the house where the church was interceding for his release. Peter knocked on the door and when Rhoda, the servant girl, saw him outside she told those who were present that Peter was there. They responded by telling her she was "out of her mind."

**8. Through \_\_ WORD, SERMON, BOOK, SONG, ETC. \_\_**

Often times God uses His word to speak directly to our concern, then we receive the answer to our prayer. We may hear God speak to us through a sermon, a book, a tape or a song. These mediums often communicate the truth of God and as we hear the Word of God, the Holy Spirit makes it personally applicable to our circumstances.

## SCRIPTURAL GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER

### 1.    \_\_IN SECRET\_\_

*And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth; they have received their reward in full. But when you pray go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. Matthew 6:5-6*

### 2.    \_\_WITH HUMILITY\_\_

*Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.' "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. Luke 18:10-14*

### 3.    \_\_UNITY AND AGREEMENT\_\_

*Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them. Matthew 18:19-20*

### 4.    \_\_IN THE NAME OF JESUS\_\_

*I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the son may bring glory to the father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it. John 14:12-14*

*In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete. "Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my father. John 16:23-25*

5. \_\_\_IN ACCORDANCE WITH GOD’S WORD\_\_\_

*If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. John 15:7*

*This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him. 1 John 5:14-15*

6. \_\_\_SEEKING FIRST GOD’S KINGDOM\_\_\_

*So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Matthew 6:31-33*

*Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. Matthew 7:7-8*

7. \_\_\_FAITH AND EXPECTATION\_\_\_

*Have faith in God,” Jesus answered. “I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. Therefore, I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins. Mark 11:22-25*

8. \_\_\_TENACITY\_\_\_

*Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. He said: In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, Grant me justice against my adversary.’ “For some time, he refused. But finally, he said to himself, even though I don’t fear God or care about men, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won’t eventually wear me out with her coming! And the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones,*

*who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you; he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth? Luke 18:1-8*

9.    \_\_IMPORTUNITY (persistence to the point of annoyance) \_\_

*Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples. Then he said to them, suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him. Then the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children are with me in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.' I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man's boldness he will get up and give him as much as he needs. "So, I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. Luke 11: 5-10*

10.   \_\_MOTIVATIONS OF YOUR HEART\_\_

*And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. Matthew 6:6*

Other basic considerations when entering into prayer:

- Self-examination before Communion
- Touching God's anointed
- Honoring the Lord in obedience to the tithe
- Caring for your body, the Temple of God
- Resisting the evil one
- Forgiving oneself for past sins (no condemnation)
- Being under authority

## HINDRANCES TO PRAYER

### 1. \_\_\_\_ UNFORGIVENESS \_\_\_\_

*Mark 11: 25*

*Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you your transgressions.*

### 2. \_\_\_\_ UNCONFESSED SIN \_\_\_\_

*Isaiah 59: 21*

*Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear, 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.*

### 3. \_\_\_\_ SELFISHNESS \_\_\_\_

*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.*

### 4. \_\_\_\_ DOUBT \_\_\_\_

*James 1:5-7*

*If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord.*

### 5. \_\_\_\_ INHUMANITY \_\_\_\_

*Proverbs 28:9*

*If anyone turns a deaf ear to the law, even his prayers are detestable.*

*Proverbs 21:13*

*If a man shuts his ears to the cry of the poor, he too will cry out and not be answered.*

6.    \_\_HARMONY AT HOME\_\_

*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.*

7.    \_\_UNBELIEF\_\_

*Hebrews 11:6*

*And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*

*Mark 11:23-24*

*"Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea, and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it will be granted him. 'Therefore, I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted you.*

8.    \_\_SPIRITUAL WARFARE\_\_

*Daniel 12:12 -14*

*Then he said to me, "Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words. "But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia. "Now I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to the days yet future."*

## PRAYER GUIDE

***Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.***

- Picture Calvary and thank God, you can call Him “Father” by virtue of the blood of Jesus
- Hallow the names of God corresponding with the five benefits in the new covenant and make your faith declarations

<u>Benefit</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
Sin	Jehovah-Tsidkenu	“Jehovah our righteousness”
	Jehovah-M’Kaddesh	“Jehovah who sanctifies”
Spirit	Jehovah-Shalom	“Jehovah is peace”
	Jehovah-Shammah	“Jehovah is there”
Soundness	Jehovah-Rophe	“Jehovah heals”
Success	Jehovah-Jereh	“Jehovah’s provision shall be seen”

***Thy kingdom come; thy will be done.***

- Yourself
- Your family (mate, children, other family members)
- Your church (pastor, leadership, faithfulness of people, harvest)
- Nation (city, state and national political and spiritual leaders, harvest)

***Give us this day our daily bread.***

- Be in the will of God (prayer life, church, work habits, obedience in giving)
- Believe it is God’s will to prosper you
- Be specific
- Be tenacious

***And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.***

- Ask God to forgive you
- Forgive and release others
- Set your will to forgive those who sin against you



***And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.***

- Put on the whole armor of God (put on the Lord Jesus Christ)
  - Loins girded with **truth**
  - Breastplate of **righteousness**
  - Feet shod with the **preparation** (readiness) of the Gospel of **peace**
  - Shield of **faith**
  - Helmet of **salvation**
  - Sword of the Spirit, which is the **Word of God**
- Pray a hedge of protection (you are my refuge, my fortress, my God)
  - Because thou hast made the Lord thy habitation
  - Because he hath set his love upon me
  - Because he hath known My name

***For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever***

- Make your faith declarations
- Return to praise

# **SPIRITUAL WARFARE AND PRAYER**

## **The Unseen Battle**

In our Baptismal Covenant we have three renunciations:

- Do you renounce Satan and all the spiritual forces of wickedness that rebel against God?
- Do you renounce the evil powers of this world, which corrupt and destroy the creatures of God?
- Do you renounce your own sinful desires that draw you from the love of God?

## **Who is Satan?**

- He was one of three archangels mentioned in scripture.
- He was anointed, beautiful, powerful and of high rank in the kingdom of God.
- He fell into pride.
- He led one third of the angels in rebellion against God.
- He was named “Satan” (adversary).
- He became our ruler through Adam’s temptation and fall.

## **Who is Jesus?**

- Jesus is the eternal Son of God.
- Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil (I John 3:8).
- Jesus came to set us free from the dominion of darkness.
- Jesus came to reverse all the damage done by our fall and rebellion.
- Jesus paid the price for our sins.
- Jesus defeated Satan on Calvary.
- Jesus and His Church now are invading Satan’s territory.

## **What is the Prize?**

- We are the prize.
- The battle is over the control of each heart and soul.
- Until we accept Christ we are under Satan's lordship.
- Satan wants us in the dark, deceived and serving sin (him).

## **The Heart of the Battle**

- The battle is ultimately over what we believe about Jesus.
- The war is over the preaching of the word of God.
- God's word is key – it is powerful and brings good news.
- Satan wants to diminish the word of God and neutralize it completely.
- Satan comes immediately to steal the word away (parable of the sower).
- Satan always casts doubt on God's word (hath God said?).

## **The Darkness Exposed**

- The public ministry of Jesus exposed the works of Satan.
- Healing the sick, casting out demons, forgiving sins, raising the dead, calming storms
- feeding multitudes etc., exposed the darkness.
- Exposing the darkness demonstrated the Kingdom of God.
- Exposing the darkness demonstrated Victory over Satan.
- Jesus destroyed Satan's power on the cross (Colossians 2).
- We, the church, are to continue to do the same through the Power of the Holy Spirit.

## **Our Weapons for this Warfare**

1. WORD OF GOD - is called the sword of the Spirit. God's word contains His revealed promises and is given to the church to minister in His name. There are general promises for all people at all times (salvation, forgiveness of sins and eternal life are in this category). And then there are promises that we access through prayer, fasting, faith, unity, discernment and interaction with others (healing, direction, wisdom, guidance and knowledge fall into this category). The more we know of God's word, the more powerful we become in avoiding sin, pleasing God and defeating Satan.

2. PRAYER - Jesus is at the right hand of God and ever lives to make intercession for us. Through his death we have access to the Father and can enter into His presence as sons and daughters. Here we can ask the Lord for all things pertaining to this life. Prayer involves us in conversation with our creator and from His throne comes our every need.

3.     \_NAME OF JESUS\_ We have been given the privilege of ministering in His name and using His name as the source of our power and authority. Jesus commanded us to go in His name and minister in His name for His glory. This is not magic. The use of the name of Jesus is only effective with believers who know Him and serve Him. This is significant. Remember in Acts 19 that the sons of Sceva were trying to cast out a demon by using the name of Jesus. The sons of Sceva had no power of authority, since they were only mimicking others. The demon knew about Paul and feared but turned on these poor sons and beat them up soundly.

4.     FAITH\_\_\_\_\_ - God loves faith. In fact, without faith, we cannot please Him. Jesus modeled a life of faith and confidence in God and taught us to live by faith. Faith in God can move mountains and raise the dead. Faith comes by hearing God's word. It is developed through our trials (James) and experiences of seeing God move in power and in faithfulness. Faith is more like a muscle. Muscles grow strong through resistance. Our faith can and will be tested.

5.     UNITY\_\_\_ - Jesus taught that when two or three gather in His name and agree, things happen in heaven. Unity brings forth a boldness and power. Unity is critical in the battle.

6.     SACRAMENTS \_\_\_\_\_ - The blood of Jesus, holy water, holy oil, confession and baptism are all-powerful weapons in the spirit realm.

7.     WORSHIP\_\_\_ - Satan hates it when God is glorified, praised and worshiped, especially when we do it under harsh circumstances (Paul and Silas in prison sang praises to God). When we gather and worship the Lord, He comes to inhabit our praises. The Spirit comes to anoint us, and this drives out the works of darkness.

8.     \_GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT\_ - Jesus said he would not leave us comfortless, but he would send the Holy Spirit and give us gifts. We have received wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, discerning of spirits, tongues, interpretation of tongues, miracles and prophecy. We can hear from God, get insight from God, power from God, discernment from God and receive miracles from God, all through the Holy Spirit.

9.     TURNING THE OTHER CHEEK\_\_\_ - When we return blessing for curse, pray for our enemies, go the extra mile and demonstrate love instead of hatred, much damage is done to the works of darkness. Our kingdom response to adversity, persecution, injustice, cruelty and the like is a powerful weapon that demonstrates the works of righteousness (Romans 12:17-21) and heaps burning coals upon the heads of your enemies.

## **Satan Operates Through**

- Temptation - using our fallen nature against us
- Doubt - hath God said?
- Fear - of failure, man, persecution, loss, losing face, etc.
- Accusation - accuser of the saints
- Harassment - sheep without a shepherd
- Discouragement - why bother, it doesn't make any difference
- Condemnation - you are unworthy, you are a sinner, shame from past failures