**DOES GOD ALWAYS ANSWER PRAYERS?**

1. At times, our prayers are not granted. Ever wonder Why?

 1. We need to realize that when God says "No," He has answered our prayer.!!

 a. Moses prayed to enter the promised land, but was not allowed.

 b. Paul prayed that his thorn in the flesh might be removed, but it wasn't.

 2. God answered their prayers, but He said, "No."

 B. God has imposed conditions on prayer, and they can be summed

 up under these three questions.

 1. Do our prayers pass the test of God's superior wisdom?

 2. Are we guilty of sins and attitudes that cause our prayers to be rejected?

 3. Have our prayers met God's positive requirements?

**I. THE TEST OF GOD'S SUPERIOR WISDOM.**

 A. God's wisdom and knowledge are beyond man's comprehension.

 ***Rom. 11:33-36 3O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!34For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?35Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?36For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.***

1. **His understanding, wisdom and knowledge…**

**Psalm 147:5….*5Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite.***

1. **He has perfect knowledge.**

# **Job 37:16..** ***16Dost thou know the balancing’s of the clouds, the wondrous works of him which is perfect in***

#  ***knowledge?***

1. **He knows all things.**

**1 John 3:20…*20For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things***

1. **His thoughts and ways are far above man's thoughts and ways.**

**Isa. 55:8-9…*8For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.9For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.***

1. **The foolishness of God is wiser than all of man's wisdom.**

**1 Cor. 1:*2525Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.***

1. **God's superior wisdom will cause Him to reject some prayers.**

***2 Cor. 12:7-107And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.8For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.9And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.10Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.***

 1. The Greek mythical king Midas wished that all He touched would

 turn into gold.

 a. He was granted his wish, and later, when he tried to eat,

 his food it turned into gold. He was starving amidst riches.

 b. He got what he wished and later regretted it.

 2. Probably, nearly all of us have prayed for something and later were pleased

 it was not granted.

 a. A man admitted that, as a child, he prayed to have his

 uncle's gift. When he grew up, he was glad God didn't grant his wish.

 His uncle was to be able to remove his teeth and put them in a

 glass of water at night.

 3. As someone said, "We need to thank God for all the prayers

 He has not granted!"

1. **God's wisdom impartially takes the needs of all into consideration.**

***Matt. 5:43-45 43Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.44But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;45That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.***

***Acts 10:34… Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:***

 1. Some may be praying that it might not rain so that they can

 go on their long planned outing; however, at the same time

 farmers might be praying for rain so that their crops might

 not fail.

 a. The question here is …Which prayers do we think God, in His superior

 wisdom, would grant?

**II. SINS AND ATTITUDES THAT CAUSE REJECTION.**

1. **Failure to ask.**

**James 4:*2Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.***

 1. Notice what was said of king Asa who otherwise was a fairly good king.

**2 Chron.16:*1212And Asa in the thirty and ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians.***

1. **Selfishness.**

***James 4:3 3Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.***

1. **Refusal to hear God's word.**

***Prov. 28:9 9He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.***

 1. Notice how God's word and prayer are linked together in

***John 15:7. 7If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.***

 2. Too many leave God's word out of the picture but want answers to their

 prayers.

 **D. Sinful living.**

***1 Pet. 3:1212For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil***

1. God will not listen to those who are in sin.

***Isa. 1:15; 15And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.***

***Micah 3:4; 4Then shall they cry unto the Lord, but he will not hear them: he will even hide his face from them at that time, as they have behaved themselves ill in their doings.***

**Psalm 66:18*18If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:***

1. Many worldly and evil people, when trouble or disaster strikes, begin to

 furiously pray; however, God will not listen to such people.

***Prov. 1:24-33 24Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;25But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof:26I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh;27When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.8Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:29For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord:30They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof.31Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.32For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.33But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.***

 2. We need to repent and remove sin from our lives and then

 God will hear us.

 3. A man said that he once worked in a saw mill cutting the

 logs into lumber. Occasionally, they would cut redwood.

 When he handled the boards, the redwood would stain his

 hands. These stains would turn hands black, and were just

 about impossible to remove. He said he tried using regular

 soap and water to remove the stains. He tried using Heavy

 duty detergent. In desperation, he even tried using

 gasoline. Nothing seemed to removed the stains.

 a. One day, he mentioned his dilemma to an old timer who

 had cut lumber for many years. He advised me, "Try

 lemon juice."

 b. Lemon juice? He doubted that Lemon Juice could do

 what gasoline wouldn't, but he decided it was worth a

 try. He was absolutely amazed at how effectively the

 Lemon Juice removed the stain. Apparently, there is

 something in lemon juice that changes the chemical

 composition of redwood stain.

 c. Because we are all sinners, we have the stain of sin on

 our lives. The only thing in all the universe capable of

 removing it is the blood of Christ.

***Rev. 1:5; 5And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,***

***1 Pet.1:18-1918Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;19But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:***

 d. We need to remove our stain and our prayers will be

 granted.

1. **Neglecting our part.**

**Prov. 21:13*18Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;19But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:***

 1. There is a prayer on a plaque which says: **"Lord, grant me**

 **the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the**

 **courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know**

 **the difference."**

 2. Prayer, plus action, is taught often in the Scriptures.

 a. **Pray for all men**

**(1 Tim. 2:1-3*), I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;2For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.3For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.***

**……but do good to all men**

**(Gal. 6:10*). 10As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.***

1. **Pray for enemies**

**(Matt. 5:44*), 44But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;***

 **but if our enemy hungers,feed him**

**(Rom. 12:20)**.***0Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.***

1. **Pray for forgiveness**

**(Matt. 6:12*), 12And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors***.

 **but continue to walk in the light to receive forgiveness**

**(1 John 1:7*).But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.***

1. **Pray for daily bread**

**(Matt. 6:11)**,***11Give us this day our daily bread.***

 **But** **we must work or not eat**

**(2 Thess. 3:10*). 10For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.***

1. **Desire the Lord to save us**

# **(Mark 10:17)**;

***17And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?***

 **but do the Lord's will**

**(Matt. 7:21-23). 1*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.22Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?23And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.***

 3. **Prayer is not a substitute for obedience**.

**III. NOT MEETING GOD'S POSITIVE REQUIREMENTS.**

1. **Must pray in faith**.

**James 1:5-7 5*If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.6But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.7For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.***

 1. Some resort to prayer in desperation. They reason: "Nothing

 else has worked, I might as well try God. What harm could it

 do?"

 2. Prayer is not a gadget we use when nothing else works.

1. **Must be according to God's will**.

**1 John 5:14 *14And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:***

1. We are not at liberty to make just any kind of request and expect God to

 answer it.

 a. "According to His will" limits our prayers to what is best for us.

1. **Must be in the name of Christ**.

**John 16:23-24*3And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.24Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full***.

1. Christ is the only mediator between God and man.

**1 Tim. 2:*55For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus***

 b. He is our Advocate with the Father.

**1 John 2:1-21 *My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:2And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.***

 c. He is our High Priest who intercedes for us.

**Heb. 4:14-16*4Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.15For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.16Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.***

1. **Must be persistent.**

**Luke 18:1-8  *And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;2Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man:3And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.4And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man;5Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.***

 1. If an ungodly judge was moved by the woman's persistence,

 how much more will God be moved?

 3. Through prayer we can continually resort to a place of

 strong refuge.

**Ps. 71:3 3*Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort: thou hast given commandment to save me; for thou art my rock and my fortress.***

1. Let our prayers be rich, full, and brief.

**Matt. 6:9-13*9After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.10Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.11Give us this day our daily bread.12And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.13And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.***

 1. Please consider how long the model prayer given by Jesus is.

 2. An older lady reported: "My three-year-old granddaughter,

 Rebecca, had been well-behaved throughout the morning

 services until the preacher began his long closing prayer.

 With no end of the prayer in sight, Rebecca stood up on the

 pew and said loudly, 'Amen, Preacher, Amen!' The

 congregation erupted in laughter as the preacher stopped.

 Then in a somber voice, he continued, 'And a little child

 shall lead them. In Jesus name. Amen.'"

**Concl.**

 A. In this lesson we have seen three reasons why prayers may not

 be granted.

1. God's superior wisdom may act as a filter to cause our prayers to not be

 granted.

 2. Sin and wrong attitudes in our lives cause our requests to

 not be bestowed.

 3. Not meeting God's positive requirements also results in our

 prayers not being granted.

 B. Our God is not like the Canaanite god "Baal" who paid no

 attention.

Chart #1

**I. THE TEST OF GOD'S SUPERIOR WISDOM.**

A. God's wisdom and knowledge are beyond man's comprehension. Rom.

11:33-36

B. God's superior wisdom will cause Him to reject some prayers. 2

Cor. 12:7-10

C. God's wisdom impartially takes the needs of all into

consideration. Matt. 5:43-45

Chart #2

**II. SINS AND ATTITUDES THAT CAUSE REJECTION.**

A. Failure to ask. James 4:2

B. Selfishness. James 4:3

C. Refusal to hear God's word. Prov. 28:9

D. Sinful living. 1 Pet. 3:12

E. Neglecting our part. Prov. 21:13

Chart #3

**III. NOT MEETING GOD'S POSITIVE REQUIREMENTS.**

A. Must pray in faith. James 1:5-7

B. Must be according to God's will. 1 John 5:14

C. Must be in the name of Christ. John 16:23-24

D. Must be persistent. Luke 18:1-8

E. Let our prayers be rich, full, and brief. Matt. 6:9-13