

I Believe!

**So Why Hasn't
God Answered
My Prayer Yet?**

By Peter Warren

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Unless otherwise stated all direct quotations from the Bible come from the New King James Version and are shown in bold type.

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I Believe

First of all let's begin by understanding what believing is and isn't.

Believing isn't just knowing that God can do something for you like healing your sickness, saving your husband or helping you through a driving test. When it comes to prayer, believing is knowing that God WILL do something for you. Often when it comes to prayer many people don't doubt that God can help them, they struggle with His willingness to help them. They use all manner of excuses such as *"My problem is so small that God would want me to sort it myself"* or *"I'm so unworthy."*

A man came to Jesus with leprosy and the Bible says that he spoke to Jesus and said

"If you are willing you can make me clean."

Mark 1.40

The leper knew that Jesus could heal him but he doubted the willingness of Jesus to do it. The good news is that Jesus answered him saying,

"I am willing; be cleansed" Mark 1.41

He is willing to answer your prayer. Believing is knowing that God will answer you when you call on Him, that He will heal you when you pray. He will save your loved ones,

He will meet your needs and deliver you in times of great trouble.

Our believing is based on the Word of God. It is standing in faith on the promises of God, not being moved when trouble comes, or a bad report or if the circumstances look completely contrary to what we are believing for.

Many times I've stood praying for people and spoken to them to encourage them in faith prior to praying and they respond with "*I wish He would brother*". Wishing never gets us anywhere – God responds to faith, faith in Him, faith in His word. Faith in the confidence that comes from knowing God and knowing that He will.

Look at the testimony of Abraham. It is recorded for us in Paul's letter to the Romans. Even when everything looked contrary to what he believed, he was not moved from the word of God, the promise he had received and that gave him great confidence. He believed that God was going to perform every word He had spoken.

“who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "SO SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE."

And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb.

He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief,

but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.” Romans 4. 18-21

Do you believe or are you just wishing God will do something for you?

Having said all that, there are, according to the Bible, some things that may prevent our prayers from being answered even though we believe. I am going to look at some of these briefly here. Read the verses and allow God to speak to you from them. I do not have the room in this small booklet to go into each one at great depth but you can research and study the Bible at your leisure for each heading. These are not listed in any particular order.

1. Double-Mindedness

We have just seen that Abraham was a man who had total confidence in God to perform His word. In Romans we have just read that

“He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God,” Romans 4.20

He did not waver or vacillate at the promise of God. This means he was not double-minded. Have you heard people say ‘I’m in two minds about that’? Double-minded people

falter between two thoughts. This was the sin of God's people at the time of Elijah, when he called fire down from heaven to consume the sacrifice on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18). They were giving their thoughts and worship to God and to Baal at the same time. The Bible calls this wavering unbelief. We cannot afford to waver, vacillate or be double-minded.

James writes,

“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.

For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;

he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”

James 1.5-8

The man or woman who wavers is called unstable, he goes from one way of thinking to another and then backwards and forwards between the two thoughts. This type of person should not expect to receive any answer to their prayer. Double-mindedness hinders your prayer.

Let's look at one more example.

“But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, “Lord, do You not care that my

sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me."

And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her." "
Luke 10.40-42

Martha, the sister of Lazarus, was wavering between listening to the Lord teach and preparing and serving a meal. She asked the Lord to tell her sister Mary to help her. Her request was denied because of her double-mindedness. Note what Jesus said to her, ***"you are worried and troubled about many things"***. She had many things on her mind, but Jesus told her to be single minded, ***"one thing is needed."***

2. Unconfessed Sin

Unconfessed sin will prevent our prayers from being answered. The book of Isaiah states that sin causes God not to hear our prayers. At the end of the book it says,

"Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear." Isaiah 59.1-2

Here it says that God, who is able to hear our prayer and stretch forth His arm in answer to that prayer is prevented from hearing us by sin. Sin separates us from God. This thought is a repeat of what was spoken in the very first chapter.

“When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not hear” Isaiah 1.15

it continues to say

***“Wash yourselves, Make yourselves clean; Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil”
Isaiah 1.16***

Sin is a very big thing with God. It separates us from Him, so there is no fellowship, and it hinders everything we do. Sin needs cleansing. Any person who is truly repentant and asks God for forgiveness will be forgiven,

“Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.” Isaiah 1.18

The Bible also says

“If our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart and knows all things. Beloved if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep

***His commandments and do those things that are pleasing
in His sight” 1 John 3.20-22***

This verse was written by the apostle John to believers, the church and highlights that sin will hinder our prayer life. The born-again believer knows how to repent. So as soon as you sin, or know that conviction, repent of the sin straightaway so that you do not come into condemnation. An old preacher once said that we should keep short accounts with God.

If our hearts do not condemn us [through sin] whatever we ask we receive from Him. If however our hearts do condemn us, we find God is greater than our hearts and can forgive us.

3. Asking Amiss

James 4.3 says

***“You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that
you may spend it on your pleasures.”***

What are you asking for, is it something that is against the will of God or something that will cause you harm, if so then you cannot expect to receive that request.

It would be wrong for anyone to ask God for a big win on the lottery to pay off their debts. Paying off the debts is not

the issue here, God wants us to be free from debt, it is the win on the lottery that would be asking amiss. We will see later that the way out of debt is through giving.

Our asking needs to be in faith and according to the will of God, so it would be very reasonable for you to ask for £250,000 to purchase a large house so you could take in abandoned children, if that was the ministry that God had called you to.

Our motive for prayer is important. A lot of people pray believing for good things, that God wants to bless us with, but with a selfish motive, this is also asking amiss.

I was reading a book not that long ago on revival. In this book the author made a statement about prayer for revival. In it he said something along the lines of this, when Christians and churches pray for revival very often their motive is to fill the church, increase their ministry, increase their offerings etc. The true motive for revival should be that God is glorified, not that the church is blessed.

Why do you want your husband saved? Is it so that you can have an easier life without the stress, or so that he won't go to hell? The motive for salvation of others is that God would be glorified through them and their testimony.

4. How You Treat Your Spouse

The way you treat your husband or wife can prevent your prayers from being answered. Peter tells us how we should treat them.

“Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.

Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.

For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.

Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.” 1 Peter 3.1-7

Wives should be submissive to their husbands giving them honour; husbands should honour their wives and cherish them, recognizing that they too are an ‘heir of the grace of life’. Not doing this will hinder your prayers and stop you from receiving the answers.

To those with unsaved partners this still applies - believe that your godly conduct will win your partner.

5. Negative Confession

This is, in my opinion, one of the biggest reasons why we do not get our prayers answered. We all too often negate our faith by speaking faith-less words.

“Death and life are in the power of the tongue and those who love it will eat its fruit” Proverbs 18.21

The words that you speak govern the way you live. If you are asking God to heal your body, speak as though you are healed and not as though you are sick. Confess that your loved ones will be saved. If you believe that God will answer your prayers, then confess the answer with your words.

***“For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation”
Romans 10.10***

The Greek word '*homologeō*' translated as confess has the implication of a 'binding legal contract' therefore when we confess with our words we enter into a binding legal contract which must be fulfilled.

Don't say 'It's flu season, I'm bound to get it' say 'The Lord is my healer therefore I'm healthy, healed and whole'.

Don't say 'I'm broke' confess 'I am blessed because the Lord is my provider and He meets my needs'

Keep a positive faith confession - a negative one will hinder your prayers. To pray one way and speak contrary to your prayer is being double-minded (see previous part).

Jesus taught an important lesson on words when we pray. Mark records that lesson,

“So Jesus answered and said to them, Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea’, and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.”
Mark 11.22-23

Are you negating your prayers with a negative, double-minded profession.

See also James 1.6-7

6. Withholding In Giving

“Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.” Luke 6.38

This verse contains the spiritual law of giving and receiving. The whole of nature works to this law as well. It works in the spiritual realm and in the natural realm. When we give to God and to others it opens the floodgates of God’s blessing toward us.

“Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.” James 5.16

Look at those words from James ***“pray for one another, that YOU may be healed”*** If you want your prayers answered pray for someone else. Give and it will be given to you. In debt, believe God to deliver you from debt, and give a financial offering to the work of God. Do you need forgiveness then forgive others.

The Bible teaches this law in Galatians 6.7

“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap”.

If you want to reap the answer to your prayers, then sow a seed. Do it with love, joy, a testimony, an encouraging word - whatever you need, sow that. Do you need healing, pray for someone else to be healed.

“Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor will also cry himself and not be heard.” Proverbs 21.13

If we withhold from giving to the poor, even though we may cry out to God, we will not be heard. This same theme is found in the New Testament.

“But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?”

My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him.

For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.

Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God.

And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.” 1 John 3.17-22

7. Lack of Love

1 Corinthians 13 is possibly the greatest chapter on love. In this chapter we read

“though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing” 1 Corinthians 13.2-3

We can have mountain removing faith, we can be givers, care for the needy and make sacrifices but if we do not have love it will profit us nothing.

A lack of love will cause us to harbour unforgiveness in the heart. We will be bitter towards those who have wronged us, hold grudges against them, speak about them. Unforgiveness is one of the most common things that will hinder our prayers.

“And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.

But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.” Mark 11.25-26

When you pray, forgive. In the previous few verses Jesus had taught his disciples about having faith, believing and speaking without doubting. As we have just seen even though we have mountain-moving faith, without love and a forgiving heart it profits us nothing. Forgive, forgive and forgive again, it is vital to getting our prayers answered.

Many people are wondering why they've been praying for their families for years and not seeing any results yet they have something against another which is negating their prayer.

“But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire.

Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.” Matthew 5.22-24

Why did Jesus tell us to leave the gift at the altar? Reconciliation is the key. Putting things right. Act in forgiveness. Otherwise our offerings will not be accepted and our prayers hindered.

A lack of love will hold grudges, be bitter and keep us in an unforgiving spirit. As previously mentioned, these are the things that prevent our prayers from being answered.

8. Idols In The Heart

“Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts, and put before them that which causes them to stumble into iniquity. Should I let Myself be inquired of at all by them?” Ezekiel 14.3

Idols in the heart will hinder our prayers from being answered.

Look at this same verse from the Message*:

“Son of Man, these people have installed idols in their hearts. They have embraced the wickedness that will ruin them. Why should I even bother with their prayers?”

What is an idol? What does it mean by in the heart?

An idol is anything that takes the place of God, be it an object, person, pleasure or desire. Anything that we give our focus, attention and affection to is considered an idol if

* Ezekiel 14.3, The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language, Eugene Petersen 2002, NavPress

it comes between us and God. It takes up the throne in our heart and thus occupies the place reserved solely for God. The Lord God alone is the one we worship. The very first of the Ten Commandments says that we are to have no other god before Him.

Does this mean we can't have these things or give time to them, No of course not. However we must be careful that they do not occupy that place in our heart where we put them before God. We can still go to watch the game, or on that fishing trip but not if we relegate God below it.

I've seen many who were so on fire for God, at all the meetings who go on and get a job promotion, or a new interest and all starts off well but suddenly they begin to skip meetings, their love for the Lord grows colder. The thing has become an idol to them.

Idolatry is sin. One of God's biggest complaints about His people was that they had fallen into idolatry and worship of foreign gods. They 'embraced the wickedness' and stumbled and this cost them dearly. They lost battles, were defeated, conquered and taken into exile. Others lost their families, and their own lives.

What does God say about their prayers? Why should I bother to hear them. As we have already seen, sin prevents our prayers from being answered. Why should God listen to prayer from those with idols in their heart?

There was one occasion in the time of the judges where God said that He would no longer hear them because of their idolatry and that the people should inquire of their own gods.

“Yet you have forsaken Me and served other gods. Therefore I will deliver you no more. Go and cry out to the gods which you have chosen; let them deliver you in your time of distress.” Judges 10.13-14

Of course, these idols in the heart cannot see or hear, nor can they deliver.

***“...you have praised the gods of silver and gold, bronze and iron, wood and stone, which do not see or hear or know; and the God who holds your breath in His hand and owns all your ways, you have not glorified”
Daniel 5.23***

Examine your heart. Allow the Spirit of God to search your heart to see if there is any wicked thing there that will cause you to stumble and prevent your prayers from being answered.

***“Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.”
Psalm 139.23-24***

9. Unworthy Attitude At The Communion Table

“For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.” 1 Corinthians 11.29-30

These verses tell us that the reason so many are weak and sick among us is due to an unworthy manner at the Lord's table.

This does not mean that we should examine our daily walk with God to see if we are worthy to take communion. To partake in a worthy manner is to believe and attribute the full worth of salvation, healing and deliverance to Christ's redeeming work at Calvary.

One of the biggest issues that God had with the children of God while they were in the wilderness was to do with their attitude towards Him, His salvation and provision.

They were constantly judged for their unbelief. This was often brought about by that stinking attitude.

“How often they provoked Him in the wilderness, And grieved Him in the desert!

Yes, again and again they tempted God, And limited the Holy One of Israel.

They did not remember His power: The day when He redeemed them from the enemy” Psalm 78.40-42

They had neglected to remember that He brought them up out of Egypt. He redeemed them from their enemy. He brought them through the Red Sea.

They despised His miracle working provision for them, they longed for the past, life prior to their redemption from Egypt.

“And the people spoke against God and against Moses: “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread.”” Numbers 21.5

“We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; but now our whole being is dried up; there is nothing at all except this manna before our eyes!”” Numbers 11.5-6

The table of the Lord is a table of remembrance, we remember His power at work in us to deliver us from sin and to work in our lives.

When we fail to remember with thanksgiving all that He has accomplished for us in His atoning death we limit God from working in us and answering the prayers we bring.

To continue in that attitude is sin and shows a total lack of respect for Jesus' sacrifice. This lack of respect for the blood of Christ is mentioned by the writer to the Hebrews, where he says that this is an insult to the Spirit of grace. Is it any wonder our prayers go unanswered?

“Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?” Hebrews 10.29

We need to believe that the price has already been paid. There is nothing more we can give or do to receive all the blessings of the full atonement.

David encouraged us to remember these blessings in his well known psalm.

***“Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits:
Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases,
Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies,***

Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's." Psalm 103.2-5

10. Spiritual Warfare

The final reason we are going to look at here is that we have an enemy who wants to prevent us from receiving the blessing of God. He is out to ***“steal, and to kill, and to destroy”*** (John 10.10) the blessing of God and those God blesses.

In the Old Testament we read of an account where the prophet Daniel prayed a prayer. The answer was sent immediately but there was a delay of twenty-one days while the archangel Michael fought a spiritual battle in the heavens.

“Then he said to me, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words.

But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia. ” Daniel 10.12-13

Maybe for you reading this your prayer isn't unanswered, it may just appear that way. Your answer may already be on the way and there is a delay - perhaps the devil is trying to prevent it from getting through to you, hold on in faith. Stand strong and don't give him any reason to steal the blessing from you.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Peter Warren was born in West London, UK in 1967 to Les and Barbara Warren.

At the age of 5 years he invited Jesus Christ into his heart and life, to be his Lord and Saviour. He grew up as a Pastor's kid and attended church regularly from an early age.

At the age of 11 years, the call of God was on his life, and from then on he never wanted to do or be anything else other than a preacher, even saying this to his Careers Advisor at school.

On his 18th birthday, Peter was made one of the ministers of the Full Gospel Fellowship in Wisbech and also became a trustee of Go Evangelise Mission (GEM).

He was married to Jayne on 20th June 1987 at their church in Wisbech and they have two adult daughters, Joanna and Debbie.

He is the founder of 'Voice of Faith Ministries International' and has preached in many places in the UK and overseas.

Peter and Jayne have recently returned to the UK from Malta where they were serving the Lord for six years. They currently live in Leicester, UK

OTHER BOOKS BY THE AUTHOR:

The Answer Is In Your Mouth

The Biblical Principle of Giving

In this book Peter Warren explores ten reasons why sometimes our prayers seem to go unanswered even though we believe that God hears and answers prayer.

What hinders our prayers?

You will discover that unconfessed sin, being double-minded, our motive, having a negative confession and a lack of love are among those things that prevent our prayers from being answered.

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